National identity and the idea of European unity

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Since the project of European integration began, at issue has always been whether a European political identity could develop to underpin political unification. Is a genuine European identity possible? Anthony Smith takes up the question from the standpoint of his work on nationalism. Why is it that we are witnessing a revival of nationalism even as the globalizing trends of post-industrial society become clearer? Established cultures are essentially antithetical to the development of a cosmopolitan culture, he writes, which poses problems for a European identity. If this is to do more than coexist weakly alongside national and subnational identities, it may come at a dangerous price—only if Europe defines itself exclusively against other world actors.

There is nothing new about the idea of European unity. It can be traced back to Sully, Podiebrad, perhaps even Charlemagne and the Holy Roman Empire. Nor is there anything new about national identity. Even if not as old as nationalists would have us believe, national consciousness can be traced back to the later Middle Ages, to the wars of the Scots, English and French in the fourteenth century, to Joan of Arc, to Spanish unification under the Catholic monarchs, and certainly to the Elizabethans and the age of Shakespeare; though not until the next century, in the Puritan Netherlands and England, can one discern the first flowerings of popular (albeit religious) *nationalism*, and not until the American and French Revolutions does nationalism appear as a fully fledged secular ideology.[1]

So why should there be such interest now in the European idea and its relationship to national identities? Is it simply the fact that European unification, in whatever form, is for the first time a distinct possibility—that we can 'make Europe' where previous generations could only dream about it? Or is it rather that the sheer pace of social and political change has forced us to reassess rooted structures like the nation-state, and hallowed values like national identity?[2]

[1] On the forerunners of the idea of European unity, see Denis de Rougemont, *The meaning of Europe* (London Sidgwick & Jackson, 1965)

[2] This article was prepared for a seminar series on 'Europe in the 1990s forces for change', held at the RIIA in 1991 and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council

Clearly, modern technologies and communications have led many people to question the old certainties They grope in some confusion towards a new type of social order, yet are afraid to let go of the old. They wonder whether the new structures and identities that may be forged will answer to their needs and interests as well as the habitual and familiar ones. What exactly will a vast, overarching 'Europe' mean for individuals and families? Will the seat of authority become still more impersonal and remote? Will it be less sensitive to local problems and needs? What does growing European unification mean for the values, heritages and cultures of Europe's many ethnic communities, regions and nations?

There is a more fundamental reason for the current interest in the cultural impact of European unification It lies in the problem of 'identity' itself, one that has played a major part in European debates over the past 30–40 years. At issue has been the possibility and the legitimacy of a 'European identity', as opposed to the existing national identities For nationalists, the nation is the sole criterion of legitimate government and of political community Does this exclude the possibility of a European identity and political community? Or can, and must, a unified Europe be designated a 'super-nation'? Alternatively, should we regard a United States of Europe as a new type of 'supranational' identity and community? What exactly does that mean? These issues are central to the continuing debates between pro- and anti-Europeans, between federalists, Gaullists and today's Bruges Group.

I hope to show that some of these debates are exaggerated in their assumptions and scope. It is true that at the practical level of policy the claims of these competing identities—the European and the national—may come into conflict. This appears to have been the case recently, when the states of Europe, responsive to national public opinion, were in disarray over foreign policy over the Gulf War and then over Yugoslav conflicts. A common European cultural identity, if such there be, does not yet have its counterpart on the political level; to date, each state of the European Community has placed its perceived national interests and self-images above a concerted European policy based on a single presumed European interest and self-image.

At the conceptual level, however, the contradiction between a European identity and existing national identities may be more apparent than real. It rather depends on the version of nationalist doctrine held. If we hold to a Romantic doctrine and view the nation as a seamless, organic cultural unit, then the contradiction becomes acute. If, on the other hand, we accept a more voluntaristic and pluralistic conception and regard the nation as a rational association of common laws and culture within a defined territory, then the contradiction is minimized. For in this version—which is the one generally accepted in Western countries—individuals may choose to which nation they wish to belong, and there is, as we shall see, room for competing focuses of identity So the conflict between the claims of the nation and those of a looser European identity becomes more situational and pragmatic, even if in a political crisis it could never be eliminated I shall return to this key question below.

First considerations: method

Though there have been many studies of the economic organizations and political institutions of the European Community, relatively little attention has been devoted to the cultural and psychological issues associated with European unification—to questions of meaning, value and symbolism. What research there has been in this area has suffered from a lack of theoretical sophistication and tends to be somewhat impressionistic and superficial. This is especially true of attitude studies, in which generalizations over time are derived from surveys of particular groups or strata at particular moments. In few areas is the attitude questionnaire of such doubtful utility as in the domain of cultural values and meanings.[3]

Clearly, what is needed in this field is a series of case-studies over time of *changes* in collective perceptions and values, as recorded in literature and the arts, in political traditions and symbolism, in national mythologies and historical memories, and as relayed in educational texts and the mass media. Such studies rarely focus on the European dimension as such. Rather, they address changes in the content of *national* symbolism and mythology, ethno-history and collective values and traditions, which may or may not include an opening towards a wider, European dimension, but whose central focus is the continuing process of reconstructing or re-imagining the nation.[4]

Such studies form a useful point of departure for investigations into the complex relationships between national identities and the processes of European unification in the sphere of culture and values. Here I shall concentrate specifically on the cultural domain and its links with politics, leaving on one side the processes of economic and political integration that form the main concern of European studies. I shall focus on five interrelated areas.

- The impact and uses of the pre-modern 'past' or 'pasts' of ethnic communities and nations in the continent of Europe, and the ways in which pre-modern structures and images continue to condition modern processes and outlooks
- The origins and nature of collective, cultural identities, and more specifically of *national* identities, and their consequences for social and political action.
- The growth of globalizing tendencies in communications, education, the media and the arts, which transcend national and even continental boundaries, bringing a truly cosmopolitan character to society that surpasses internationalism.
- Allied to these tendencies, fundamental geopolitical and ecological changes in the world at large—often of an unpredictable nature, like the dangers of

[3] Studies of European economic and political integration go back to Karl Deutsch *et al*, *Political community and the North Atlantic area* (Princeton, NJ Princeton University Press, 1957) and Ernest B Haas, *Beyond the nation state* (Stanford University Press, 1964) Cf William Wallace, *The transformation of Western Europe* (London Pinter/RIIA, 1990), ch 4

[4] See, for example, the essays in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds, *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1983), and also in Elisabeth Tonkin, Maryon McDonald, and Malcolm Chapman, eds, *History and ethnicity* (London Routledge, 1989)

a shrinking Soviet Union or a Middle Eastern vortex, or of pollution and epidemic disease—which affect changing values.

- The processes of regional or continental unification, of which Europeanization is only the most explicit and advanced example Here the question is not just the history of an idea or process, but the changing contents and boundaries of 'Europe' in the context of a rapidly evolving world.

Multiple identities

A comparative method using case-studies of national identity and culture needs some kind of theoretical framework; and given the nature of our problem, a logical starting-point is the concept of collective cultural identity. This would refer not to some fixed pattern or uniformity of elements over time, but rather to a sense of shared *continuity* on the part of successive generations of a given unit of population, and to shared *memories* of earlier periods, events and personages in the history of the unit From these two components we can derive a third: the collective belief in a common *destiny* of that unit and its culture. From a subjective standpoint, there can be no collective cultural identity without shared memories or a sense of continuity on the part of those who feel they belong to that collectivity. So the subjective perception and understanding of the communal past by each generation of a given cultural unit of population—the 'ethno-history' of that collectivity, as opposed to a historian's judgement of that past—is a defining element in the concept of cultural identity, and hence of more specific national and European identities.[5]

From this starting-point we might go on to characterize the cultural history of humanity as a successive differentiation (but also enlargement) of processes of identification In the simplest and earliest societies, the number and scale of such identities were relatively limited; but as populations organized themselves into more complex agrarian societies in a variety of political formations, the number and scale of such identifications multiplied Where once gender, age, clan and tribe had provided the chief units of identity, now there were also village communities, regions, city-states, religious communities and even empires. With the growing stratification of such societies, classes and status groups (castes, estates, ethnic communities) also took on vital roles as focuses of identification in many societies

In the modern era of industrial capitalism and bureaucracy, the number and in particular the scale of possible cultural identities have increased yet again. Gender and age retain their vitality; class and religious loyalties continue to exercise their influence; but today, professional, civic and ethnic allegiances have proliferated, involving ever larger populations across the globe Above all, *national* identification has become the cultural and political norm, transcending other loyalties in scope and power.

[5] For studies of ethnic identity, see George de Vos and Lola Romanucci-Rossi, eds, *Ethnic identity cultural continuities and change* (Chicago, Ill University of Chicago Press, 1975), and A L Epstein, *Ethos and identity* (London Tavistock, 1978)

Yet however dominant the nation and its national identification, human beings retain a multiplicity of allegiances in the contemporary world. They have *multiple* identities. These identifications may reinforce national identities or cross-cut them. The gendered perceptions of the male population may reinforce their sense of national identity, whereas those of the female part of the same collectivity may detract from it. The class allegiances of upper and middle classes may subjectively fuse with their sense of national identification, whereas the class solidarities of workers may conflict with their national loyalties. Similarly, some collective religious sentiments can reinforce a sense of national identity, as we witness today in Ireland, Poland and Israel; whereas some other kinds of religious loyalty transcend and thereby diminish purely national identities, as in the case of Roman Catholicism and Islam.[6]

Under normal circumstances, most human beings can live happily with multiple identifications and enjoy moving between them as the situation requires. Sometimes, however, one or other of these identities will come under pressure from external circumstances, or come into conflict with one of the individual's or family's other identities. Conflicts between loyalty to a national state and solidarity with an ethnic community, within or outside the boundaries of that state, may lead to accusations of 'dual loyalties', and families may find themselves torn between the claims of competing communities and identities. There is in fact always the potential for such identity conflicts. That they occur less often than one might expect is the result of a certain fluidity in all processes of individual identification.

At this point it becomes important to observe the distinction between individual and collective identification. For the individual, or at any rate for most individuals, identity is usually 'situational', if not always optional. That is to say, individuals identify themselves and are identified by others in different ways according to the situations in which they find themselves; as when one goes abroad, one tends to classify oneself (and be classified by others) differently from one's categorization at home.[7]

Collective identities, however, tend to be pervasive and persistent. They are less subject to rapid changes and tend to be more intense and durable, even when quite large numbers of individuals no longer feel their power. This is especially true of religious and ethnic identities, which even in pre-modern eras often became politicized. It is particularly true of national identities today, when the power of mass political fervour reinforces the technological instruments of mass political organization, so that national identities can outlast the defection or apathy of quite large numbers of individual members. So we need to bear this distinction between the collective and the individual levels of

[6] On the relationships between religion and nationalism, see Donald E Smith, eds, *Religion and political modernisation* (New Haven, Conn Yale University Press, 1974), and Pedro Ramet, ed, *Religion and nationalism in Soviet and East European politics* (Durham, NC Duke University Press, 1989) For some case-studies of the relationships between gender and nationality, see Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds, *Woman–nation–state* (London Macmillan, 1989)

[7] For the concept of 'situational ethnicity' see J Y Okamura, 'Situational ethnicity', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 4 4 (1981), pp 452–65

identity in mind and to exercise caution in making inferences about collective sentiments and communal identifications on the basis of individual attitudes and behaviour.[8]

National identity: some bases and legacies

This preliminary survey of the types and levels of *cultural* identity provides a general framework for analysing specifically *national* identities. Here it may be useful to take together the first two areas of analysis—the impact of the pre-modern past and the nature and consequences of national identity—since in Europe at any rate it is mainly through such identities that these 'pasts' have been retained and mediated.

The concept of national identity is both complex and highly abstract. Indeed the multiplicity of cultural identities, both now and in the past, is mirrored in the multiple dimensions of our conceptions of nationhood To grasp this, we need only enumerate of few of these dimensions. They include:

- the territorial boundedness of separate cultural populations in their own 'homelands';
- the shared nature of myths of origin and historical memories of the community;
- the common bond of a mass, standardized culture;
- a common territorial division of labour, with mobility for all members and ownership of resources by all members in the homeland;
- the possession by all members of a unified system of common legal rights and duties under common laws and institutions.

These are some of the main assumptions and beliefs common to all nationalists everywhere. Drawing on these, we may define a nation as a named human population sharing a historical territory, common memories and myths of origin, a mass, standardized public culture, a common economy and territorial mobility, and common legal rights and duties for all members of the collectivity [9]

This definition is just one of many that have been proffered for the concept of the 'nation'. But, like most others, it reveals the highly complex and abstract nature of the concept, one which draws on dimensions of other types of cultural identity, and so permits it to become attached to many other kinds of collective identification—of class, gender, region and religion National identifications are fundamentally multidimensional. But though they are composed of analytically separable components—ethnic, legal, territorial, economic and political—they

[8] On the 'individualist fallacy' see E K Scheuch, 'Cross-national comparisons with aggregate data', in Richard L Merritt and Stein Rokkan, eds, *Comparing nations the use of quantitative data in cross-national research* (New Haven, Conn Yale University Press, 1956)

[9] This definition summarizes long and complex discussions of the many definitions of 'nation' See, *inter alia*, Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and social communication* (2nd edn, New York MIT Press, 1966), ch 1, and Walker Connor, 'A nation is a nation, is a state, is an ethnic group, is ', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1 4 (1978), pp 377–400

are united by the nationalist ideology into a potent vision of human identity and community.

The ideology of nationalism which emerged in Western Europe and America in the late eighteenth century was premised on the belief in a world of exclusive nations. The basic goals of nationalists everywhere were identical: they sought to unify the nation, to endow it with a distinctive individuality, and to make it free and autonomous. For nationalists, the nation was the supreme object of loyalty and the sole criterion of government. There was no legitimate exercise of political power which did not emanate expressly from the nation, for this was the only source of political power and individual freedom.[10]

Yet there were also important differences between nationalists in their conceptions of the nation. In fact we can usefully distinguish two main models of the nation, which emerged out of different historical contexts and which retain a certain importance even in our era. The first, or 'Western', model of the nation arose out of the Western absolutist states whose rulers inadvertently helped to create the conditions for a peculiarly territorial concept of the nation. The second, or 'Eastern', model emerged out of the situation of incorporated ethnic communities or *ethnies* (from the French), whose intelligentsias sought to liberate them from the shackles of various empires.

The Western model of the nation tended to emphasize the centrality of a national territory or homeland, a common system of laws and institutions, the legal equality of citizens in a political community, and the importance of a mass, civic culture binding the citizens together. The Eastern model, by contrast, was more preoccupied with ethnic descent and cultural ties. Apart from genealogy, it emphasized the popular or folk element, the role of vernacular mobilization, and the activation of the people through a revival of their native folk culture—their languages, customs, religions and rituals, rediscovered by urban intellectuals such as philologists, historians, folklorists, ethnographers and lexicographers.[11]

The contrast between these two concepts of the nation should not be overdrawn, as we find elements of both at various times in several nationalisms in both Eastern and Western Europe. And it is perhaps more important for our purposes to underline the distinction between the concepts of the nation and of the state. The latter is a legal and institutional concept. It refers to autonomous public institutions which are differentiated from other, social institutions by their exercise of a monopoly of coercion and extraction within a given territory.[12] The idea of the nation, by contrast, is fundamentally cultural and

[10] For fuller discussions of nationalist ideologies, see Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London Hutchinson, 1960), Elie Kedourie, ed., *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (London Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971), and A D Smith, *Theories of nationalism* (2nd edn, London Duckworth, 1983) On the multi-dimensionality of national identity, see A D Smith, *National identity* (London Penguin, 1991), ch 1

[11] On the distinction between these types of nationalism, see Hans Kohn, *The idea of nationalism* (2nd edn, New York Macmillan, 1967), and A D Smith, *The ethnic origins of nations* (Oxford Blackwell, 1986), ch 6

[12] I have adapted the definitions given in the introductions to Charles Tilly, ed., *The formation of national states in Western Europe* (Princeton, NJ Princeton University Press, 1975), and Leonard Tivey, ed., *The nation-state* (Oxford Martin Robertson, 1980)

social. It refers to a cultural and political bond which unites in a community of prestige all those who share the same myths, memories, symbols and traditions. Despite the obvious overlap between the concepts of state and nation in terms of common territory and citizenship, the idea of the nation defines and legitimates politics in cultural terms, because the nation is a political community only in so far as it embodies a common culture and a common social will. This is why today no state possesses legitimacy which does not also claim to represent the will of the 'nation', even where there is as yet patently no nation for it to represent. Though the vast majority of contemporary states are 'plural' in character—that is, they have more than one ethnic community within their borders and so cannot claim to be true 'nation-states' in the strict sense—they aspire to become at least 'national states' with a common public culture open to all citizens. Their claim to legitimacy, in other words, is based on the aspiration of a heterogeneous population to unity in terms of public culture and political community, as well as popular sovereignty [13]

This reiterated reference to a community of common public culture reveals the continuing influence of ethnicity and its common myths, symbols and memories in the life of modern European nations. On the one hand, these nations seek to transcend their ethnic origins, which are usually the myths and memories of the dominant ethnic community (the English, the northern French, the Castilians); on the other hand, in a world of growing interdependence, they very often feel the need to revert to them to sustain community as well as to justify their differences The link with the distinctive pre-modern past serves to dignify the nation as well as to explain its mores and character. More important, it serves to 'remake the collective personality' of the nation in each generation. Through rituals and ceremonies, political myths and symbols, the arts and history textbooks—through these the links with a community of origin, continually reshaped as popular 'ethno-history', are reforged and disseminated.

In this respect, national identifications possess distinct advantages over the idea of a unified European identity. They are vivid, accessible, well established, long popularized, and still widely believed, in broad outline at least. In each of these respects, 'Europe' is deficient both as idea and as process. Above all, it lacks a pre-modern past—a 'prehistory' which can provide it with emotional sustenance and historical depth. In these terms it singularly fails to combine, in the words of Daniel Bell *à propos* ethnicity, 'affect with interest', resembling rather Shelley's bright reason, 'like the sun from a wintry sky'.[14]

Recently it has been suggested that nationalism's halcyon days are drawing to a close, and that the current spate of fissiparous ethnic nationalism runs counter to the 'major trends' of world history, which are towards ever-larger economic and political units. In other words, that substance is belied by

[13] See Walker Connor's seminal article, 'Nation-building or nation-destroying?', *World Politics* 24 (1972), pp 319–55, and Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Oxford Blackwell, 1983)

[14] See Daniel Bell, 'Ethnicity and social change', in Nathan Glazer and Daniel P Moynihan, eds, *Ethnicity theory and experience* (Cambridge, Mass Harvard University Press, 1975)

appearance—that today's ethnic nationalisms are divisive and have lost the breadth and power of the former mass democratic and civic nationalisms of Western Europe.[15]

Others take the view that the current renewal of ethnic nationalism represents the shape of the future 'post-industrial' society, one whose economy is based increasingly on the service sector and on the social and cultural needs of consumers. They argue that in such societies the means of communication and information become much more important than mass production of commodities; that the mass media, telecommunications and computerized information spawn smaller but dense networks for those who share the same ethno-linguistic networks of language, symbols and culture. This, they argue, is the reason why we are witnessing the proliferation of ethnic nationalisms; they are intrinsic to a post-industrial 'service society'.[16]

There are in fact a number of reasons why we are witnessing an ethnic revival today, and why it is challenging the accepted frameworks of the national state. For one thing, the state itself has become immensely more powerful, both as an international actor and *vis-à-vis* society within its boundaries. Its powers, scope and capacity for intervention in every sphere of social life—and will to do so—have increased profoundly since 1945 (helped, no doubt, by the powers conferred on it by the exigencies of two world wars). Second, the spread of literacy and the mass media to the remotest hinterlands of European and other states has raised the level of consciousness and expectations of minority peoples, who witness national protests and movements in neighbouring territories almost as soon as they occur. Third, the impact of public, mass education systems, while on the face of it uniting a given national population into a single civic culture, also creates divisions along pre-existing ethnic lines. By forcing all its different peoples to employ a single civic language and by preaching allegiance to national symbols and historical myths, the state's elites may actually stir up resentment and bitterness at the neglect of minority cultures and the suppression of minority peoples' histories. The latter have not been entirely forgotten among the relevant peoples themselves; they remain embedded in separate folklore, customs, myths and symbols. State intervention, literacy and civic culture, and mass education and the mass media tend to rekindle these memories and regenerate these ancient cultures in new forms.

So recent political developments in Western as well as Eastern Europe, not to mention the Third World, offer few grounds for hope of an early end to the proliferation of ethnic nationalisms, even if their intensity periodically diminishes. What we are currently witnessing is no more than the latest of the periodic waves of ethnic nationalism that have swept different parts of the world since the early nineteenth century, and such demotic ethnic nationalisms

[15] This argument is presented in the last chapter of Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1990)

[16] This argument is presented with force and clarity by Anthony Richmond in 'Ethnic nationalism and post-industrialism', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 7 1 (1984), pp 4–18, it is also implicit in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London Verso, 1983)

have always accompanied the more territorial state-based nationalisms of ethnic majorities since the first stirrings of Serb, Greek and Irish nationalisms. There is therefore little warrant for regarding recent ethnic nationalisms as inimical or irrelevant to the 'major trends' of economic development or world history, as long as most of the world's trade, production and consumption is still organized in terms of relations between sovereign (if increasingly interdependent) national states.[17]

If we disregard the evolutionary undertones of these recent interpretations of nationalism, we are left with the problem of determining the relative strength and influence of European nations, their cultures and their myths from their ethnic pasts at the turn of the second millennium. Anthropologists have begun to explore some of the cultural aspects of the ethnic identity of such European nations as the Basque, the Breton and the Greek, but much research still needs to be conducted into the continuing impact of ethno-histories, of ethnic myths and symbols, and of the different value systems embodied in various popular traditions, ceremonies and rituals. There is also much work to be done on the recent revival of cultural heritages and political traditions in the wake of new concepts of multiculturalism, which have gained ground following demographic shifts and population migrations.

Given the multiplicity of language groups and ethnic heritages in Europe, it is reasonable to expect the persistence of strong ethnic sentiments in many parts of the continent, as well as the continuity or periodic revival of national identities, fuelled by the quest for ethnic traditions and cultural heritages of distinctive myths, memories and symbols

A globalizing culture?

Against these predictions must be set the 'major trends' of world history that so many have discerned and welcomed. These include

- the rapid growth of vast transnational companies, with budgets, technologies, communications networks and skill levels far outstripping those of all but the largest and most powerful of contemporary national states,
- the rise and fall of large power blocs based on one or other military 'superpower', and forming a military–political network of client-states in an increasingly interdependent international system of states; and
- the vast increase in the scale, efficiency, density and power of the means of communication, from transport to the mass media, from telecommunications to computerized information and transmission.

What this means, in the most general terms, is an accelerating process of globalization. of trends and processes that transcend the boundaries of national

[17] The ethnic revival in the West in the 1970s suggests the difficulty of 'reading' any 'major trends' of world history Regions and ethnic communities are being revitalized *alongside* a strengthened national state and an over-arching European Community On ethnic nationalisms in the West see Milton Esman, ed , *Ethnic conflict in the Western world* (Ithaca, NY Cornell University Press, 1977), and A D Smith, *The ethnic revival in the modern world* (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1981)

states and ethnic communities, and that serve to bind together into common economic, political and cultural patterns the various populations into which the globe is at present divided.[18]

That such trends and processes can be observed is not in question It is not difficult to point to processes that transcend national boundaries, and appear to unite different populations in those respects. This is as true of patterns of world trade, nuclear proliferation and diplomatic language as it is of styles in modern art, fashion and television serials. The question is whether there is anything new in such boundary-transcending activities and processes, and whether they serve to unite distinctive populations in more than superficial respects. Do they, in other words, portend that global cosmopolitanism of which Marx and Engels, as well as so many liberals, dreamed?

We should perhaps recall in this context the many imperial cultures that sought to integrate, even homogenize, ethnically different populations, from the Hellenizing policies of Alexander and his successors right up to the Russification policies of the later Romanovs. Here, too, the conscious intention to overleap local boundaries was evident, as was also the case with the 'world religions' of Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. It is true that today the English language and American cultural styles can reach an even wider audience and penetrate much more of the globe. But do they, can they, have as profound an effect? Can there be a truly cosmopolitan culture, one that is genuinely 'post-national' in form and content? The answer to such a question may have a profound bearing on the possibility of a European cultural identity.

It is undeniable that we are witnessing an immense and rapid growth of communications and information technology, spanning the globe; and with it a slower but definite, albeit uneven, increase in literacy and mass education in many countries. There is also considerable convergence in parts of each state's education system: an emphasis on technology, a concern with mathematics and science, an interest in at least one other lingua franca, and so on In other parts of each education system, however, there is a conscious retention of national difference in literature, in history, in the arts. In so far as the state can control and use the instruments of mass education effectively, this policy of national self-maintenance is not to be underestimated.[19]

This is not to deny the possibility that governments may actively intervene to try to change popular perceptions of their identity. One could cite here not only the recent efforts of the British government to change the content of the history curriculum to accord with its perceived 'national interests', but also the efforts of France and Germany to change earlier perceptions of each other, through the use of symbols, through massive youth exchange programmes, and by subsidizing academic studies of common history, all of which have after 25 years had a significant effect (Whether the efforts of the Council of Europe to

[18] For a discussion of globalization, see Mike Featherstone, ed , *Global culture nationalism, globalisation and modernity* (London Sage, 1990)

[19] For a searching analysis of the role of mass, public education systems in shaping national identities, see Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*

encourage changes in national histories, on both the academic and the official levels, have been effective is open to doubt)

At the same time, there are clear limits to what governments can achieve. Thus the recent uneasy position of the German government during the Gulf War shows up clearly the constraints on governments which are at all responsive to public opinion The same is true for other governments in such recent foreign policy crises as Yugoslavia or the Lebanese hostage situation.

There is another side to the question of cultural globalization—what will a truly cosmopolitan culture involve? Will it resemble the imperial prototype, on this occasion various versions of Americanization? Or will it be something genuinely new? The evidence to date suggests neither alternative What a 'post-modernist' global culture is more likely to resemble is the eclectic patchwork we are witnessing in America and Western Europe today—a mixture of ethnic elements, streamlined and united by a veneer of modernism on a base of scientific and quantitative discourse and computerized technology [20]

This is not to deny the global diffusion of some aspects of modern Euro-American culture, especially popular music, films, videos, dress and some foods. The worldwide spread of consumer commodities, of art styles in furnishing, of architecture and the visual arts, not to mention the mass media and tourism, is evidence of a global nexus of markets for similar products and the ability of consumer industries to mould shared tastes, in some degree at least But even here, ethnic and class factors intrude The appreciation and assimilation of Western styles and cultural products is generally adaptive the audiences in Third World countries tend to interpret these products and experiences in ways that are specific to the perceptions and understanding of their own peoples [21]

Side by side with this adaptive Westernization, there is also a more or less conscious rediscovery of and return to indigenous styles and values. This process was stimulated by political nationalism or by a vaguer consciousness of and pride in the past of particular peoples and cultural areas, and has been continuing since the early nineteenth century—first in Central and Eastern Europe, then in the Middle East and India, then in the Americas, and finally in Africa and Eastern Asia. In each case, myths and memories of an ancient ethnic past (not necessarily strictly that of the revivalists themselves) have been reappropriated, often through a process of vernacular mobilization in which the peasant masses are treated as a repository of truth, wisdom and culture.

The revival of ethnic myths, memories and traditions, both within and outside a globalizing but eclectic culture, reminds us of the fundamentally memoryless nature of any cosmopolitan culture created today Such a culture must be consciously, even artificially, constructed out of the elements of existing national cultures. But existing cultures are time-bound, particular and expressive. They are tied to specific peoples, places and periods. They are bound

[20] The argument is presented fully in A D Smith, 'Towards a global culture?', *Theory, Culture and Society* 7 (1990), pp 171–91

[21] This point is documented in Philip Schlesinger, 'On national identity some conceptions and misconceptions criticised', *Social Science Information* 26 2 (1987), pp 219–64

up with definite historical identities. These features are essentially antithetical to the very nature of a truly cosmopolitan culture. Herein lies the paradox of any project for a global culture: it must work with materials destined for the very projects which it seeks to supersede—the national identities which are ultimately to be eradicated.

The European 'family of cultures'

This, then, is where the European project must be located: between national revival and global cultural aspirations. Thus expressed, it makes the old debate between pan-Europeans and anti-Europeans seem faintly antiquated.

That debate centred on the possibility and desirability of creating a unified Europe 'from above', through economic and political institutions, perhaps on the model of German unification in the nineteenth century. Pan-Europeans conceded that there would be local delays and problems, but believed that European unity was imperative to prevent a recurrence of any European 'civil war', to create a third power between East and West and to secure a prosperous future for Europe's peoples. They also argued that the route of 'state-making' from above through bureaucratic incorporation and the building of institutions was the only way forward. Just as in the past dynastic states had moulded the first nations in the West, so today the framework of a United States of Europe and swift political union, based firmly in the Western heartlands, would forge a European consciousness in place of the obsolete national identities.

Anti-Europeans countered by pointing to the 'unevenness' of Europe's peoples and states, to the difficulties of deciding the boundaries of 'Europe', to the continuing strength of several European national states and to the linguistic and ethnic pluralism of Europe's mixed areas. But at the root of their opposition to pan-Europeanism, whether unitary or federal in character, was their belief in the overriding importance of existing national identities and the ethnic histories and cultures they enshrined. Behind the economic facade and the agonizing over subsidies and monetary union, the embattled camps of Brussels and Bruges agreed on the mutual incompatibility of 'Europe' and 'national' identity.[22]

But is there any warrant for this dichotomic view of cultural identities and for the battle cries on either side? We have already seen that, sociologically, human beings have multiple identities, that they can move between them according to context and situation, and that such identities may be concentric rather than conflictual. None of this is to deny the cultural reality and vivid meanings of these identities, which, transmitted through successive generations, are not exhausted by the often fickle volitions and changing perceptions of individuals. At the same time, there is plenty of historical evidence for the coexistence of concentric circles of allegiance.[23] In the ancient world it was

[22] For the early debates between pan-Europeans and anti-Europeans, see Miriam Camps, *What kind of Europe? The Community since de Gaulle's veto* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), and Wallace, *The transformation of Western Europe*, ch. 4.

[23] On the idea of concentric circles of allegiance see James Coleman, *Nigeria: background to nationalism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1958), appendix.

possible to be Athenian, Ionian and Greek all at the same time, in the medieval world, to be Bernese, Swiss and Protestant; in the modern Third World to be Ibo, Nigerian and African simultaneously. Similarly, one could feel simultaneously Catalan, Spanish and European; even—dare one say it?—Scottish-or-English, British and European

But if the possibility of being intensely French or British *and* intensely European exists, what does it mean to feel and be European? Is 'Europe' merely the sum total of its various national identities and communities? If so, is there not something quite arbitrary about aggregating such identities simply because certain otherwise unrelated communities happen to reside in a geographical area which is conventionally designated as the continent of Europe?—Which raises further questions about the eastern and southern boundaries of Europe, as well as about important internal geographical and historical divisions within that continent.

On the other hand, if 'Europe' and 'European' signify something more than the sum total of the populations and cultures that happen to inhabit a conventionally demarcated geographical space, what exactly are those characteristics and qualities that distinguish Europe from anything or anyone else? Can we find in the history and cultures of this continent some thing or things that are not replicated elsewhere, and that shaped what might be called specifically 'European experiences'?

There are a number of areas in which one might seek for specifically European characteristics, qualities and experiences. The first is linguistic. Though not all the languages of Europe belong to the Indo-European family, the vast majority do, and though there are important linguistic fault-lines between Latin, Germanic and Slav subfamilies, there has been sufficient movement across these lines to speak of at least a tenuous interrelationship which is modern as well as prehistoric At the same time, the disastrous political consequences of drawing ethnic inferences from purely linguistic relationships suggests serious limitations in this area for any support for the European idea in ethno-linguistic terms.[24]

A second area of enquiry is that of cultural geography and territorial symbolism. The recent idea of a European 'home' from the Urals to the Atlantic is supported by the lack of any serious geographical barriers (apart from the Alps and Pyrenees, and perhaps the Carpathians and the Rhine—and the Channel?), and by the protected geopolitical space between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean into which successive 'barbarian' ethnic communities poured and in which they found permanent shelter and adjacent homes But what may be true in the north and west has no counterpart in the south and east. The Mediterranean forms a unifying internal (Roman?) lake—*mare nostrum* —rather than an impermeable boundary, while to the east the rolling plains, as

[24] On Europe's linguistic divisions, see Andrew Orridge, 'Separatist and autonomist nationalisms the structure of regional loyalties in the modern state', in C Williams, ed, *National separatism* (Cardiff University of Wales Press, 1982), and John Armstrong, *Nations before nationalism* (Chapel Hill, NC University of North Carolina Press, 1982), ch 8

the terrified populations found in the face of Hun and Mongol onslaughts and as the shifting boundaries of Poland–Lithuania and Russia–Ukraine bear witness, afford neither defence nor borderland. Besides, where is the geographical centre of the European homeland? In Burgundy or along the Rhine? In Berlin or Prague, or Budapest? In the Benelux countries, or in Provence or northern Italy? All these are historical claims, not geographical 'facts'.[25]

Third, there is the old issue of religious cleavages. Might this not provide a test of European inclusion and exclusion? There is a clear sense, going back at least to the Crusades and probably even to Charles Martel, in which Europeans see themselves as not-Muslims or as not-Jews. The history of resistance to Arab and Turkish Muslim encroachment provides potent memories, though there is the great exception of Spain and its Moorish and Jewish conduits for the enormous legacy of Arab Islam to Christian European culture.

What of the inter-Christian divides? The most potent is still that between 'Western' Christendom (Catholic and Protestant) and Eastern Orthodoxy. Hungarians, for example, emphasize their Western connections through their historic 'choice for the West' over 1,000 years ago, in contrast to the Russians, for example, who chose Greek Byzantine Orthodoxy. But this brings problems of its own, not least for the position of Greece and potentially Serbia in the European Community If religion is a real criterion of identity, should not Poland, rather than Greece, be a member of the new Europe? And what of that other great division, between the Protestant and Catholic states of Europe? Politically, Catholic–Protestant divisions may have declined, but how far, again, does this extend to the vast majority of Europeans in small towns and villages? This is another aspect of the wider question of the gulf between urban elites and rural masses in Europe over perceptions of and attitudes to Europe and European unification.

Fourth, there is the more inchoate sense of the 'outsider', which has recently found expression in various European countries, directed at immigrants and guest-workers. Might not the older nationalistic exclusive attitudes to foreigners now become 'Euro-nationalist' exclusion of blacks, Asians and other non-Europeans? There is some evidence for this But it is difficult to disentangle it from the older attitudes If it is the case, it supports the idea that there is a continuum between collective cultural identities, as I have argued. This may well be reinforced after 1992, when common passports and European frontiers will help to 'create' an element of perceived common identity for those who travel beyond the European frontiers—and for those who seek to enter (or return to) them. The effect of such frontiers on creating an *out-group*, so vital to the formation of identity, depends of course on the degree of unity of perceptions and sentiments among the Europeans themselves, and on the degree

[25] On Europe's protected geopolitical position, see introduction, Tilly, ed , *The formation of national states*, for Europe's problematic eastern boundaries, see Raymond Pearson, *National minorities in Eastern Europe, 1848–1945* (London Macmillan, 1983), and Roger Portal, *The Slavs* (London Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969)

of common political action, especially in the field of defence and foreign policy, which a more united Europe can evolve. The evidence in these fields to date has not been encouraging.

We are thrown back on history, and specifically on political and legal traditions and cultural heritages and symbolisms Here, if anywhere, we may hope to find experiences and collective memories that differentiate the communities of Europe from other communities, and which, in some degree at least, provide common reference points for the peoples of Europe.

This is an area which, of its nature, is not amenable to rigorous positivistic criteria. We are dealing with shared memories, traditions, myths, symbols and values, which may possess subtly different meanings and significance for different communities in the area conventionally designated as Europe The Roman heritage, for example, penetrated certain areas more than others, and some not at all. Christianity embraced most of the continent eventually, but it did so unevenly and split early into separate cultural and ethnic traditions. The various attempts to recreate the Roman Empire foundered, but they left their imprint on some areas of Europe more than others. Even such 'event-processes' as the Crusades, the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment affected some areas, peoples and states more than others, and a few hardly at all.

So what is common to all Europeans? What can they be said to share and in what respects can they be said to differ from non-Europeans? To these kinds of questions there can never be satisfactory answers Europeans differ among themselves as much as from non-Europeans in respect of language (Basques, Finns, Hungarians), territory (Russians, Greeks, Armenians), law (Roman, Germanic), religion (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant) and economic and political system (democracy, communism, unitary state, federalism, etc.)—*as well as* in terms of ethnicity and culture.

On the other hand, there *are* shared traditions, legal and political, and shared heritages, religious and cultural. Not all Europeans share in all of them, some share in particular traditions and heritages only minimally. But at one time or another all Europe's communities have participated in at least *some* of these traditions and heritages, in some degree.

What are these partially shared traditions and heritages? They include traditions like Roman law, political democracy, parliamentary institutions, and Judeo-Christian ethics, and cultural heritages like Renaissance humanism, rationalism and empiricism, and romanticism and classicism. Together they constitute not a 'unity in diversity'—the official European cultural formula—but a 'family of cultures' made up of a syndrome of partially shared historical traditions and cultural heritages.

The idea of a 'family of cultures' resembles Wittgenstein's concepts of 'family resemblances' and of the 'language game', which features several elements, not all of which figure in each particular example of the game. What we have instead is a 'family' of elements which overlap and figure in a number of (but not all) examples. So, for example, the Italian Renaissance and its humanism found its way into many, but not all, parts of Europe, as did the spirit

and methods of the French Enlightenment. 'Europe' here represents a field favourable to diffusion and cross-fertilization of cultural traditions, but one of uneven receptivity. Specific European states or communities may reveal only certain of the above traditions or heritages, or only to a limited extent But the sum total of all Europe's states and communities has historically revealed a gamut of overlapping and boundary-transcending political traditions and cultural heritages, which together make up what we may call the European experience and the European family of cultures.

There has always been such cultural cross-fertilization in various parts of Europe. What now needs to be established is how far those shared traditions and heritages have become part of each of Europe's national identities, how far each national tradition has embraced and assimilated these 'trans-European' cultural heritages; how far Romanticism, Roman law or parliamentary democracy has taken on a peculiar national form, or conversely the extent to which French, or German, classicism and humanism partake of some shared trans-European tradition.

It is important here to distinguish between families of culture and political or economic unions. The latter are usually deliberate creations; they are consciously willed unities, rationally constructed sets of institutions, the kind of frameworks that some European states are trying to hasten and others to delay. Families of culture, like a lingua franca, tend to come into being over long time-spans and are the product of particular historical circumstances, often unanticipated and unintentional. Such cultural realities are no less potent for being so often inchoate and uninstitutionalized. Thus the sentiments and identities that underpin the Islamic *umma* or community of Muslims are no less significant than any official Islamic social and political institutions.[26]

But this very lack of institutionalization poses severe difficulties for the researcher. One of them is the problem of interpreting recent trends and developments as, in some sense, European manifestations. Can the growth of mass tourism, for example, be interpreted as a contribution to a more European identity? The fact that many more Europeans can and do travel abroad is open to several interpretations. When the British working classes took package holidays to Spanish beaches, were they even exposed to Spanish, let alone European, culture? Has the long-standing German love affair with Italy made any difference to the intensity of German nationalism, in this or the last century? Or shall we rather agree with Karl Kautsky that the railways are the greatest breeder of national hatreds (and by implication the most potent force for anti-Europeanism)?[27]

Or take the astonishing growth of large-scale 'European' music festivals and

[26] On the Islamic *umma* and the Muslim states, see Erwin Rosenthal, *Islam in the modern national state* (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1965) Pan-Europeans have sometimes tried to construct culture areas through the deliberate manufacture of myths, symbols and traditions see Lord Gladwyn, *The European idea* (London New English Library, 1967)

[27] On Karl Kautsky's argument, see Horace Davis, *Nationalism and socialism Marxist and labor theories of nationalism* (London, New York Monthly Review Press,1967) There is evidence that mass tourism among the younger generations of Western Europe, which grew up in an era of peace, has confirmed their lack of national antagonisms

travelling art exhibitions. Do these great events testify to a new 'European spirit'? Can they not equally be seen as expressions of local pride, be it in Edinburgh or Spoleto, Moscow or Leeds, in the Royal Academy or the Louvre or the Prado? By their nature such artistic events are all-inclusive; great artistic events are as likely to be shown in America or Japan and include contributions from all parts of the world. Europe may well have become a 'great museum' for the heritage industry, but only its greater openness and capitalist spirit have given it the edge over other tourist centres and 'great museums' in the Middle East or Asia.[28]

Given these problems, where may we look for signs of a possible European identification—and among whom? It is one thing for elites in Brussels, Strasbourg and some European capitals to identify with and work for a united Europe, quite another to attribute such sentiments and beliefs to the great mass of the middle and working classes, let alone the surviving peasantries of Southern and Eastern Europe Whence will *they* derive a sense of European identity?

One answer often given suggests the mass, standardized, public education system. The problem here is that there is no pan-European system, only *national* systems; and what they teach, or omit to teach, is determined by *national*, not European, priorities. In other words, education systems are run by and for national states. Until there is single, centralized, unitary European state, we cannot expect too much from the national education systems of each European state. This can be confirmed by a glance at schoolroom texts in history, civics and literature. Even when they include positive reference to contemporary Europe, the bulk of such texts are national in content and intent. The recent study of French school history textbooks by Suzanne Citron is a striking case in point[29]

What about the mass media? Are they equally tied to purely national criteria of choice and content? Here there is clearly more variety as between different European national states Yet even here, national priorities are very much in evidence: news stories tend to be relayed or at least interpreted from a national standpoint, drama, comedy shows, children's tales, even the weather reports accord the national state and its literature and outlook first place. Given the linguistic and historical barriers and the national frameworks of most mass media institutions, this is only to be expected.

Some changes are occurring in these areas, and given the political will of the elites, more rapid changes may soon take place. But the question still remains:

[28] European elites, going back to feudal nobility and clergy, have always been more cosmopolitan and open to outside influences than the middle and lower classes see Armstrong, *Nations before nationalism*, ch 3, and Smith, *The ethnic origins of nations*, ch 4

[29] Suzanne Citron, *Le mythe national* (Paris Presses Ouvriers, 1988), analyses the strongly nationalistic content and framework of French school history textbooks based on Lavisse, which came into use during the late nineteenth century under the Third Republic The continuing debate in Britain over the place of British, even English, history, as opposed to European and world history illustrates the same issues, see Raphael Samuel, ed , *Patriotism the making and unmaking of British national identity* (London Routledge, 1989), vol 1, and Juliet Gardiner, ed , *The history debate* (London Collins & Brown, 1990)

how will the new 'European message' be received? Will it be reinterpreted by audiences and pupils in ethnic and national terms, as with so many cultural products? For until the great majority of Europeans, the great mass of the middle and lower classes, are ready to imbibe these European messages in a similar manner and to feel inspired by them to common action and community, the edifice of 'Europe' at the political level will remain shaky. This is all too clear today in respect of foreign policy and defence, where we are witnessing the need for European governments to respond to their national public opinion and the failure of Europeans to agree on a common policy. Once again, the usual divisions of public opinion between European states have been exposed, and with them the tortuous and divided actions of Europe's governments. Once again, too, the division between Britain and the Continent has become plain, and with it the crucial relationship of all European states to American political leadership. The 'European failure' only underlines the distance between the European ideal and its rootedness in the popular consciousness of Europe's national populations—and hence the distance between European unification at the political and cultural levels and the realities of divergent national identities, perceptions and interests within Europe.

Clearly these are areas for detailed and intensive research, which would focus not on ephemeral attitudes but on what is taught and portrayed and how it is received by the majority of Europe's populations. In more concrete terms, this means examining the ways in which news and documentaries are purveyed; how far a European dimension is added to, and received in, matters of art, music and literature; how far education systems are harmonized and teachers and taught acculturated to the different values, goals and forms of education and training, and how far history textbooks are rewritten to accommodate a European standpoint [30]

If this were not problematic enough, there is the deeper question of popular myths and symbols, and historical memories and traditions. Here we are placed firmly back in the pre-modern past of each national state There is no European analogue to Bastille or Armistice Day, no European ceremony for the fallen in battle, no European shrine of kings or saints. When it comes to the ritual and ceremony of collective identification, there is no European equivalent of national or religious community Any research into the question of forging, or even discovering, a possible European identity cannot afford to overlook these central issues.[31]

We encounter similar problems when it comes to the question of a genuinely European political mythology. The founding fathers of the European

[30] Even this does not take us to the heart of the problem We need also to explore people's attachments to national landscapes, or myths thereof, to certain events and heroes from the national past, to certain kinds of social institutions and mores, food, family life and village community, and how far all these are felt to override, conflict with or deny a more over-arching European identity that is inevitably more abstract, intellectual and political

[31] The centrality of such rites and ceremonies for creating and maintaining collective cultural identities is only now receiving the attention it deserves See, e g , John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the state* (Manchester Manchester University Press, 1982), ch 16, Hobsbawm and Ranger, eds , *The invention of tradition*

movements, such as Coudenhove-Kalergi, recognized the problem. They tended to look back to the imperial myths of the Carolingian and Ottonian Holy Roman Empire and to the medieval urban civilization centred on the Rhine as their models of a 'golden age' of European Christendom But as a modern political *mythomoteur*, these models are deeply flawed. Secularism has made deep inroads into the political consciousness of most classes in several European states, too deep for any genuine religious revival to be less than divisive Besides, the imperial format of such myths is profoundly inimical to the spirit of democracy which the West espouses and Eastern Europe so ardently seeks There is also the persistent unease over locating one's guiding myth in a particular part of Europe at the expense of the rest. Once again, these models assert the primacy of 'the West' as the home of innovation and progress, traceable to that early spirit of capitalism in the free cities of late medieval Europe.[32]

It is clear that such historical *mythomoteurs* are inappropriate for the modern European project But where else can one look for the necessary political mythology? Is it possible for the new Europe to arise without 'myth' and 'memory'? Have we not seen that these are indispensable elements in the construction of any durable and resonant collective cultural identity?

Here lies the new Europe's true dilemma a choice between unacceptable historical myths and memories on the one hand, and on the other a patchwork, memoryless scientific 'culture' held together solely by the political will and economic interest that are so often subject to change In between, there lies the hope of discovering that 'family of cultures' briefly outlined above, through which over several generations some loose, over-arching political identity and community might gradually be forged.

Europe in a wider world

At present the tide is running for the idea of European unification as it has never done before This is probably the result of dramatic geopolitical and geocultural changes, which remind us that the future of 'Europe', as indeed of every national state today, will be largely determined by wider regional, or global, currents and trends. The most immediate of these, of course, has been the dramatic shift in world power resulting from the adoption of perestroika in the Soviet Union and the liberation of the states of Eastern Europe and the republics of the former Soviet Union to determine their own political future. But this same current may serve simultaneously as a model and a warning; what may flow so suddenly and vigorously in one direction may equally swiftly change course, for reasons that have nothing to do with intra-European developments, and in so doing reverse the climate that seemed so conducive to the project of European unification

[32] The primacy of Western Europe as a 'core' to the northern, southern and especially eastern 'peripheries' (which in medieval times were sparsely inhabited) was seized on by the myth-makers of the European idea, see Gladwyn, *The European idea*, and de Rougemont, *The meaning of Europe*

There are many other currents and trends affecting the chances of fulfilling a European project. We may cite several:

- dramatic regional developments, like the vortex of conflict in the Middle East, into which European states may be drawn, severally or together;
- the dangers of ethnic conflict, separatism and large-scale wars in other parts of the world such as the Indian subcontinent or Africa, which may again involve one or more European states and so divide the interests of those states and even threaten, by example, their stability and cohesion;
- the impact of waves of migrants and guest-workers on the economies and societies of European states, which may differentially affect their attitudes and priorities;
- larger problems of environmental pollution and ecological disaster, as well as epidemic disease, which may require both individual action by each European state and wider, perhaps global, responses which may pre-empt the integration of Europe; and
- problems of large-scale crime and terrorism, which may again call for immediate action by individual states, or by bodies larger and more powerful than any European organization

The point of this list, which could be extended, is simply to underline the dramatic pace and scope of change within which the project of European unification must locate itself. Unification is in fact one of several possible responses to wider changes; but these trends do not all work in the same direction, and they may be reversed. Hence the importance of basing any European project on firm and deep cultural and social foundations that are to some extent independent of economic and political fluctuations, even of the much vaunted trends of mass democracy and popular capitalism.

There is another and equally important issue raised by the project of European unification and its relationship with nations and nationalism. Identities are forged out of shared experiences, memories and myths, in relation to those of other collective identities. They are in fact often forged through opposition to the identities of significant others, as the history of paired conflict so often demonstrates Who or what then, are Europe's significant others? Until now, the obvious answers were the protagonists of the ideological Cold War. In this context Europe was often seen as a third force *between* the respective superpower blocs, though there was always something unreal about such a posture. Now, however, the problem of relationship to other identities has become more perplexing. To whom shall Europe be likened, against whom shall it measure itself? Today's geopolitical uncertainty makes a direct comparison and relationship with the United States ambiguous; Europe is increasingly wholeheartedly a part of the 'capitalist' and 'democratic' camp of which the United States is likely to remain the military leader. Shall Europe look to Japan as its *alter ego*? But Japan is an ethnically almost homogeneous society, it poses no military or political threat, and its economic rivalry is still mainly directed at the United States.

There is another, a less pleasing, possibility: the relationship of a unifying Europe to a disaggregated Third World. There is the prospect of an increasingly affluent, stable, conservative but democratic European federation, facing, and protecting itself from, the demands and needs of groupings of states in Africa, Asia and Latin America. To some extent this prospect is still mitigated by the remaining ex-colonial ties between certain European and certain African or Asian states. But were the European project to achieve its political goals, it would also entail, not just economic exclusion, but also cultural differentiation and with it the possibility of cultural and racial exclusion The forging of a deep continental cultural identity to support political unification may well require an ideology of European cultural exclusiveness

These dangers are well known in respect of the maintenance of national identities by individual European states. In many respects, it is European institutions that are leading the struggle against racial discrimination, ethnic antagonism and anti-Semitism, though with mixed success. The deeper question remains Is not the logic of cultural exclusion built into the process of pan-European identity formation? Will not a unified Europe magnify the virtues and the defects of each of Europe's national identities, precisely because it has been built in their images? And might a European 'super-nation' resemble, in its external as well as its internal policies and relations, this national model?[33]

This is a fear that has been often expressed It is one that still haunts the European political arena, as each of Europe's national states seeks to influence the future shape of a European union along the lines of its own self-image. In its relations with minorities inside Europe, as well as with states and peoples outside the continent, these images have not been appealing ones Here too lies an agenda for policy-oriented research, one beset by sensitive issues and thorny problems.

Facing and understanding these problems is a precondition for forging a pan-European identity that will eschew these undesirable and self-defeating images and features Shaping a cultural identity that will be both distinctive and inclusive, differentiating yet assimilative, may yet constitute the supreme challenge for a Europe that seeks to create itself out of its ancient family of ethnic cultures.

[33] A fear summed up in Johan Galtung, *The European Community a superpower in the making* (London Allen & Unwin, 1973), but with recent events taking on a new meaning namely, the fear that Germany's economic domination might influence the political shape of a future Europe, and the chances of greater cultural and racial exclusiveness, at the expense mainly of Third World migrants but stirring all too vivid memories of the Nazi past Fears, like memories, are no less real for being intangible and difficult to research