

"In uno plures" (?) EU Cultural Policy and the Governance of Europe

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Cultural Policy and European Integration in Anthropological Perspective¹

Culture has an important intrinsic value to all people in Europe, is an essential element of European integration and contributes to the affirmation and vitality of the European model of society and to the Community's influence on the international scene.

European Parliament
2000, 1

Although its goal is to develop a feeling of belonging to a shared culture, the EU is also keen to preserve the specific aspects of Europe's many cultures, e.g. minority languages.

CEC
2002, 5

As the two quotes cited above indicate, the theme of Europe's "culture" (or "cultures") has become an issue of growing concern for the European Union (EU). Yet there is something curiously contradictory in the way the concept of culture is conceived and deployed in EU official discourses, a confusion that is

perhaps symptomatic of a more profound philosophical ambiguity over the status and definition of the Union and its people(s). In short, is the European Union (or, to use its earlier incarnation, the *European Community*), one people or many? And what is, or should be, the relationship between peoplehood and culture in the EU's emerging system of supranational governance? Whereas the European Parliament's statement speaks of "the European model of society" and the "intrinsic value of culture" to "all people in Europe," a statement that belies a consensual idea of culture and society and conspicuously avoids the use of plural nouns, the European Commission's statement reminds us of the "many cultures" that the EU is "keen to preserve" and which constitute Europe's essential cultural unity. This contrast between Europe conceived as a unified and singular cultural entity, and Europe conceived as a space of diversity, an amalgamation of many cultures, and by implication, of many peoples and interests, also underlies some of the key political divisions in the way European integration is imagined. As I shall argue below, none of the EU's stock metaphors of "unity in diversity," "cultural mosaics," or "family of cultures" adequately address this fundamental contradiction between the foundational idea of Europe as an "ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe," understood as a plurality, and the idea of integration as a process leading to a "European people."

If the quotes above are indicative of an increasing official emphasis on the role of "culture" in the construction of the new Europe, they also epitomise the

important link between policy, identity-construction, and power or, to use terminology more typical of EU parlance, between "social cohesion," "European construction" and "governance." The drawing together of these themes around the notion of culture is of recent origin. According to modern myth, it was Jean Monnet, the celebrated French statesman and founding father of the European Communities, who first remarked, when looking back on a lifetime's work dedicated to creating a united Europe, that "if we were to start all over again, we would start with culture." In fact, Monnet never said anything of the kind, and none of the EU founding fathers had a vision of culture as a binding force for European unity. Like most myths, the significance of this story lies less in its historical accuracy than in its telling, and in the fact that it is still frequently cited by European Union policy elites to support the argument for increased European-level intervention in the field of culture. Monnet's oft-cited apocryphal quote is important for two reasons. First, because it is indicative of the growing political weight that European policy professionals, since the 1970s, have come to attach to the idea of "culture" as a key ingredient, indeed, a catalyst, in the integration process. Secondly, because it highlights a key point of this article: namely that the development of EU cultural policy cannot be properly understood outside of the context of the EU's wider political project of "European Construction" and its transition from a loosely structured free trade area into a fledgling, albeit ill-defined, supranational state.² This has precipi-

tated a progressively more interventionist and—notwithstanding the advance of neoliberalism or the repeated claims about respecting the principle of "subsidiarity"—a typically top-down and *dirigiste* approach by EU elites to the problem of European integration. What is also significant about the EU's "cultural turn" is that it is often seen, erroneously in my view, as marking a major departure from the traditional "neofunctionalist" approach to integration that prevailed during the 1960s and 70s. That approach, sometimes symbolised as the "Monnet method," was based on American social science assumptions that regional integration in Europe would follow almost automatically from the steady cumulative effects of small incremental steps towards harmonisation and regulation in relatively uncontroversial areas of national policy-making that, on the surface, pose little challenge to strategic national interests or sovereignty. The idea behind this plan was that the integration process would generate its own political dynamic—i.e. a "spillover" effect—whereby integration in one sector or policy field would generate momentum for integration in others (cf. Haas 1958; Lindberg 1963).³

How then should we make anthropological sense of the evolution of EU cultural policy, and what can the micro-history of this small field of policy tell us about deeper changes in the way the integration process is conceptualised by European Union officials and political leaders? Given the absence of references to "culture" in any of the founding treaties, we might also ask, what exactly is

EU cultural policy *for*, and what political functions does it serve? For anthropologists the very idea of a "cultural policy" raises epistemological dilemmas. Ever since the so-called "linguistic turn" and reflexivity of the 1980s, and arguably well before that, we have had to come to terms with the idea of contingency and the knowledge that our notions of "culture" are themselves abstractions or cultural constructions, and that ethnography—like nationalist historiography—is itself a technology for creating and reifying culture(s) (Wagner 1975; Clifford and Marcus 1986). In short, we invent "culture" in the very act of writing about it. This does not mean we should abandon the word culture as a vacuous fiction; rather, it should alert us to the fact that definitions of "culture" (English, Anglo-Saxon, Ruritanian, European or whatever) are a matter of ideology and politics, and to ask in each instance *whose* definition of culture is this?

The idea of "cultural *policy*" adds a further layer of complexity to this epistemological dilemma for by definition "policy" implies a course of action that is expedient, rational and goal-oriented; an objectified programme for penetrating and acting upon the social.⁴ This begs the question, what is "culture" that it can be transformed into an object of expediency and policy-making? As I hope to illustrate, one of the key consequences of turning the hitherto rather nebulous and undefined domain of European culture into a target of EU intervention is to enlarge the scope of EU governance and control. To put it in more theoretical terms, the invention and expansion of EU-wide policies towards "culture" is in

itself a measure of the development of a new type of rationality of government; or what we might call, to adapt a term from Foucault (1991), "EU governmentality." In this sense, the study of EU cultural policy should be treated as part of what Foucault terms the "diagnostics of power."

To date, there has been little detailed analysis of EU action in the field of culture. This is partly because EU cultural policy, in the strict legal sense, is a relatively recent phenomenon: until the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, culture was not a recognised area of European Community competence. However, it also reflects the lack of status political scientists and EU analysts have traditionally accorded to culture and the narrow definitions of culture they have traditionally employed.⁵ What I want to do here is examine the development of EU cultural policy from an historical and anthropological perspective by addressing three main questions. First, why has "culture"—a subject that prior to the 1980s was deemed of only marginal and esoteric interest—emerged as such a central concern for EU policy makers? Second, what are the implications of the EU's increasing intervention in the cultural domain for the future of the EU as a political and social system? Third, if the aim of aim of EU policy elites in the Parliament, the Commission, and the Council of Ministers is, as they have often claimed, to promote the identity and external image of the Community through symbolic initiatives, "cultural action," and the creation of a "European culture area," what notions of "culture" underlie these strategies?

One of the main propositions I want to advance is that despite substantial changes in the content, breadth, and direction of EU cultural policy since the 1980s, the underlying aim and rationale that drives that policy—the imperatives of European construction—remain largely unchanged. Three overriding themes in particular have shaped, and continue to shape, the development EU cultural policy. The first is the EU's search for legitimacy and popular consent. The second, related to this, is its concern with the question of European identity and the belief among many in the European Commission and Parliament that cultural policy can be used as an instrument for forging a common sense of heritage, history, and belonging—the goal being to turn member-state nationals into a "body politic," or European "demos." The third theme concerns the wider question of EU governance and the rationality of policy in a broader sense. As anthropologists have observed, policies can be usefully thought of as "political technologies," that is as instruments for ordering bodies in space and time and for acting upon human subjects and subjectivities (Shore and Wright 1997). Seen from this perspective, the creation of EU cultural policy can be seen as part of the EU's "will to power." By isolating and classifying a specific domain of "European culture" and then establishing programmes to intervene and order that sector for purposes of employment and social cohesion, EU cultural policy not only functions to bolster the legitimacy of the EU project, it also enlarges the scope of EU power and authority, extending its competences into new "occupied fields" of governance.

Since the 1990s, EU cultural policy, and the question of European identity more generally, has increasingly been framed around the idea of "unity in diversity." This policy motif has become extremely influential in attempts to define European identity in a way that avoids the pitfalls of both moral universalism and cultural particularism (Delanty 2003).⁶ It also offers a useful formula for countering the claims made by critics that the European Union is a nascent super-state engaged in nation-building practices similar to those that fuelled the rise of the nineteenth-century nation state (Laffan 1996; Shore 1996). Supporters and advocates of the EU project strongly reject that argument. They insist that the EU's "unity in diversity" approach points to a fundamentally different conception of identity politics, and to a European identity based on diversity and "the compatibility of contrasting identities" (Pantel 1999, 46). I suggest, by contrast, that "unity in diversity" is a bureaucratic formula fraught with ambiguities and problematic assumptions about the nature of culture, central to which is the question of how far, if at all, cultural diversity can be reconciled with the quest for unity. Let me begin, though, by considering why "culture" has become so important for EU elites, and what they mean by this overworked and misunderstood term.

Why Culture Matters: Peoplehood, Identity, and the Problem of Cultural Legitimacy

The theoretical background to this can be briefly stated. All political systems, particularly democratic ones, seek legiti-

macy in the cultural field (see Habermas 1992). In order to have legitimacy and authority, political institutions must enjoy the consent of the citizens in whose name they govern. The cultural foundations of modern citizenship, as Stephen Kalberg (1993) notes, are civic responsibility and social trust, both of which depend upon the sense people have of *belonging* to a political community. To date, however, lack of popular support for the EU remains a key obstacle to its project for European integration. Stripped to its basics, the problem is that the peoples of Europe have failed to embrace European institutions and ideals in the way that was hoped for or, indeed, predicted by traditional theories of integration. According to influential theorists of integration, including Ernst Haas (1958) and Leon Lindberg (1963), popular loyalty to the European Communities would grow as each successive step towards ever-closer union demonstrated the material benefits to be gained by further integration. This instrumental loyalty, so the argument went, would provide sufficient "permissive consensus" to enable each subsequent step to be implemented (cf. George 1985; O'Neill 1996). Since the 1990s, however, that "passive consent" has withered and support for further social and political integration has declined throughout much of the EU, a factor some attribute to the deflationary policies adopted by those governments seeking to qualify for membership of the EU and the single currency, and others to the continuing revelations of fraud and mismanagement within the EU institutions themselves.

The challenge facing EU leaders is

how to transform this remote "Europe of institutional structures" into a more popular "people's Europe"? Despite substantial increases in its legal authority and regulatory power, the EU still has no tangible or self-identifying "European public" to lend legitimacy to its institutions. As Graham Leicester (1996, 4) reminds us, the most successful federations of our time have a national body politic, a "demos" whose representatives are able to base their authority on the claim that they speak for "We, the People." The EU's problem is that a "union of peoples" is not a demos, and as Spanish MEP Miguel Herrero de Miñón (1996) notes, a democratic system without a demos is a contradiction in terms, or worse, simply "cratos" (i.e. power).

The legitimacy of EU institutions rests on their claim to represent the "European interest," but without a European society or body politic, such claims ring hollow and are likely to be seen as just a modern version of the old formula of *raison d'etat*. The point here, as both Leicester (1996) and Herrero de Miñón (1996) concur, is that without the critical underpinning of a truly transnational democracy, the EU's attempt to impose a new constitutional order on the peoples of Europe will fail. The lack of direct connection between the European Union and its citizens is often referred to as the "democratic deficit." However, I suggest a more useful way to conceptualise the problem is in terms of a "cultural deficit"—or what Bruno de Witte (1993) calls the European Union's lack of "cultural legitimation."

All of this highlights a point made long ago by Ernest Gellner (1983) that if

political institutions are to be robust and legitimate, political and cultural identities must be congruent. As Gellner (1983, 86) put it, "[m]odern man is not loyal to a monarch or a land or a faith, whatever he may say, but to a culture." If this is the case, a question worth pondering is towards what sort of culture might modern Europeans be loyal? This, however, raises yet another dilemma for the EU. If it does go down the road of using its cultural industries and cultural policy to create social cohesion around a putative shared heritage and common civilisation (i.e. using cultural action to forge a sense of "We Europeans"), it will be tinkering with the very foundations of European integration. EU constitutional expert Joseph Weiler sums it up succinctly;

one of Europe's articles of faith, encapsulated for decades in the preamble to the Treaty of Rome . . . [is] . . . that the Community and Union were about "lay[ing] the foundations of an ever closer union among the *peoples* of Europe. Not the creation of one people, but the union of many. In that, Europe was always different from all other federal states which, whether the USA, Germany, Australia, and elsewhere, whilst purporting to preserve all manner of diversity, real and imaginary, always insisted on the existence of a single people at the federal level (Weiler 1999, 327).

In other words, the idea of forging a "European people" or of European nation building should be anathema from a strictly constitutional point of view. It is against this background that the full implications of EU cultural policy, with its emphasis on promoting awareness of

Europe's shared cultural heritage, begin to make sense.

EU Involvement In Culture 1957–1992: From Social Cohesion to forging a "People's Europe"

The 1957 Treaty of Rome which laid the constitutional foundations for the EU contained only two minor references to culture, the first relating to "non-discrimination" and the second to exceptions to the free movement of goods where a special case can be made for "the protection of national treasures possessing artistic, historical, or archaeological value."⁷ The absence of any specific treaty reference to culture meant that, prior to Maastricht, the EU had no legal basis for direct involvement in cultural affairs. Technically, there was no such thing as a European Community cultural policy; just various ad hoc "cultural actions" based on European Parliament Resolutions and agreements by Ministers of Culture. Despite this, both the European Parliament and Commission had already established several specialised committees related to culture, including a Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Media, and Sport. To circumvent the lack of legal competence, Community officials invoked economic arguments to achieve cultural and political objectives (Forrest 1994, 12). This was not difficult as there are no obvious or impermeable boundaries between economic and cultural affairs. As Delors summed it up in his first speech as Commission President to the European Parliament in 1985:

Under the terms of the Treaty we do not have the resource to implement a

cultural policy; but we are going to try to tackle it along economic lines. It is not simply a question of television programmes. We have to build a powerful European culture industry that will enable us to be in control of both the medium and its content, maintaining our standards of civilisation, and encouraging the creative people amongst us. (qtd. in Collins 1994, 90)

This is precisely what the Commission sought to do, using arguments about the need to promote and defend Europe's "cultural industries" while simultaneously arguing that Europe must define and encourage its "core values" vis-à-vis the rest of the world. This policy was helped by the Copenhagen summit of 1973 when, prompted by the oil crisis and the desire to revive the integration process, EC leaders adopted a communiqué on European identity and pledged to review "the common heritage" of the member states. As the historian Bo Stråth (2000) argues, this turn towards "identity" marked an important shift in the official discourse of European integration. Henceforth, ambiguous and contested terms like "Europe's heritage," "the European identity" and "European civilisation" were reified into major organising concepts in the discourse on European construction. In its 1987 "Fresh Boost" report, the European Commission went even further in its appropriation of outmoded terminology from the social sciences. In Durkheimian fashion, it not only proclaimed its mission as the quest for "social cohesion," it also affirmed the existence of a European "collective consciousness" (Pahl 1991; Collins 1994).

"Europe's cultural identity," it proclaimed, "is nothing less than a shared pluralistic humanism based on democracy, justice, and freedom" (CEC 1987, 5). As one of the many European Commission-sponsored history textbooks produced during the 1990s declares:

anyone visiting Europe with open eyes can easily see that, over and above language differences and different life styles, we are bound together by a family spirit and share the great values in common.

Greece is the cradle of our European civilisation. Rome left its indelible mark on it, Christianity gave it a soul and modernity guarantees its future. We are, whether we like it or not, the heirs to that magnificent legacy. (Couloubaritsis et al. 1993, 180)

An essential European identity and unity was thus deemed to reside in certain "core values" and in the shared legacy of classical civilisation.

In many respects, the history of EU cultural policy provides an exemplar of the way European integration (and the Monnet method described earlier) works in a more general sense, and how EU institutions have manoeuvred to acquire increasing jurisdiction over the hitherto jealously guarded national policy domains of its member states. It also highlights the tension between the EU's desire to promote greater freedom of trade in cultural goods and services *within* Europe and those who wish to mobilise culture as a defensive shield to protect Europe from the perceived dangers of competition and globalisation from with-

out. The first budget lines specifically for culture voted by the European Parliament during the 1970s mostly concerned heritage matters and involved relatively small amounts of money. However, these budgetary inroads enabled the Commission in 1973 to create a small unit dedicated to cultural affairs, thus establishing a strategic bridgehead for advancing further claims for competence in cultural affairs. The Commission then used its initial activity to justify further activities. Through its various Communications on Community Cultural Action, it also set about re-writing the history of its involvement in culture, portraying this as a response to a "widely felt need for greater co-ordination."⁸ This was done, according to Terry Sandell (1996, 269), "by putting forward bureaucratic, quasi-Marxist definitions of culture in order to shoe-horn it into the framework of the Treaty." "Culture and the arts" thus became "the Cultural Sector" and "the Cultural Sector"⁹ became "the socio-economic whole formed by persons and enterprises dedicated to the production and distribution of cultural goods and services."

In addition to redefining culture to render it more amenable to Community intervention, the Commission exploited these new definitions to involve itself in cultural action of a more symbolic kind designed to promote "European identity" and bring Europe "closer to its citizens."¹⁰ Prompted by the low turn-outs in the 1984 European Parliament elections,¹¹ the European Council established an ad hoc Committee for a "People's Europe"—the Adonnino Committee. Its brief was to suggest measures "to strengthen and

promote the Community's identity and its image both for its citizens and for the rest of the world" (Adonnino 1985, 5). The Committee, which included both PR and marketing experts as well as senior Commission officials including its future Secretary General, David Williamson, subsequently produced two reports outlining cultural strategies for "promoting the European idea." These included, *inter alia*, a Europe-wide "audio-visual area" with a "truly European" multilingual television channel; a European Academy of Science; a Euro-lottery whose prize-money would be awarded in ECU ("to make Europe come alive for the Europeans", *ibid.*, 21); the formation of European sports teams; the transmission of more factual information about Community activities and their significance for European citizens, including "the historical events which led to the construction of the Community and which inspire its further development in freedom, peace, and security;" the inauguration of school exchange programmes and voluntary work camps for young people; and the introduction of a stronger "European dimension" in education through the creation of new school books and teaching materials. (Adonnino 1985, 21–25).

The idea behind these populist measures was to help forge a collective European consciousness and identity by "Europeanising" the cultural sector. But the Committee went further. To create a "People's Europe," it argued, also required new symbols for communicating the principles and values upon which the Community is founded. Foremost among these were the new European

logo and flag: a circle of twelve yellow stars set against a blue background, a design taken from the Council of Europe; the "harmonised" European passport and European driving licenses; the creation of European car number-plates; and a new European anthem, the rousing "Ode to Joy," taken from the fourth movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

To boost the Community's image, the Adonnino Report also recommended EC-sponsored sporting competitions and awards, "public awareness" campaigns, and a host of high-profile cultural initiatives from the conservation and restoration of the Parthenon and the formation of a European Youth Orchestra and Opera Centre, to the formation of a "European literature prize" and hundreds of "Jean Monnet Awards" for creating new university courses and posts in European integration studies with the aim of "Europeanising" university teaching. The Commission also attempted to reconfigure the ritual calendar by creating new festive "European Weeks," "European Culture Months," and a series of "European years" dedicated to the promotion of certain EU-chosen themes, such as the "European Year of Cinema," or the "European Year of the Environment." It also proposed that May 9th, the anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, be designated official "Europe Day" and a public holiday. Added to these was the highly successful "European City of Culture" initiative; a move that effectively united European Community cultural policy with regional policy, thus giving a clear spatial dimension to the former.

Behind these seemingly mundane

cultural initiatives lay a more profound objective: to transform the symbolic ordering of time, space, education, information, and peoplehood in order to stamp upon them the "European dimension." In short, to reconfigure the public imagination by Europeanising some of the fundamental categories of thought.¹²

EU Cultural Policies Since 1992: The Politics and Semantics of "Unity in Diversity"

By 1992, official EU cultural action still amounted only to a random collection of low-key projects based on Council resolutions for which the Commission could find small amounts of money under its own authority. These included audio-visual programmes, book projects, networking of cultural organisations, harmonisation of controls on export of cultural goods, restoration projects on symbolic sites of archaeological heritage, and various small schemes to sponsor cultural exchanges, training, business sponsorship of the arts, the translation of important works of European culture, and the admission of young people to museums and cultural events. By contrast, unofficial, or indirect, cultural action now involved the activities and spending of seven other Directorate-Generals—and an estimated budget of Euro 2.47 billion in the period 1989–93, an average of Euro 494 million per annum (see Sandell 1997, 272).

This situation changed with the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, or Treaty on European Union (TEU). Among its innovations, the TEU created the European Union and introduced "European Citizenship" as a legal category—yet another idea first

advocated in the 1985 Adonnino reports. It also brought several new areas within the Community's jurisdiction, including education, youth, consumer protection, public health, and culture, thereby substantially enlarging the EU's sphere of governance. By placing culture *de jure* as a treaty matter, it also legitimised the EU's earlier cultural activities and interests. Although culture occupied relatively few words of the Maastricht Treaty, giving culture its own chapter was highly significant. As Article 128 declared:¹³

(1) The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.

(2) Action by the Community shall be aimed at encouraging co-operation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in the following areas:

- improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples;
- conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance;
- non-commercial cultural exchanges
- artistic and literary creation, including in the audio-visual (CEC 1992, 13).

According to former European Council official Alan Forrest (1994, 18), Article 128

represented "a model application of subsidiarity" as it gave the EU no legal mandate to lead or control policies in the cultural sector, simply a requirement to "encourage" cultural co-operation between states and support and supplement their action "if necessary." Paragraph four also stated that "the Community shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of the Treaty," thus recognizing that culture is a crosscutting issue relevant to many other areas of policy. To prevent any centralisation of cultural policy, paragraph five declared that any harmonisation of laws under Article 128 is ruled out, and that the Committee of the Regions must be consulted before any action is taken.

One criticism of Article 128, however, is that its terms of reference were extraordinarily vague, and that phrases like "contributing to the flowering of cultures" are not justiceable. Another is that EU cultural policies, like those of most member-states, are often contradictory in practice. How does one celebrate national and regional cultural diversity while simultaneously "bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore"? And what exactly does this shared "European cultural heritage," which European citizens seem curiously unaware of, actually entail?

These questions are particularly germane to debates about cultural diversity. Since the 1990s, and largely in response to these questions, the EU has adopted the slogan "unity in diversity" as its central policy motif. Precisely when this phrase was adopted is unclear, but it is hardly original. The Indian Prime Min-

ister Nehru used it long ago to define Indian national identity. Western European Communist parties also used it to promote the idea of "Eurocommunism." So what does "unity in diversity" mean in the European context? From the EU's perspective, it is intended to project the idea that the EU seeks to celebrate and promote cultural pluralism. This is consistent with its repeated emphasis on the idea of Europe as a "mosaic of cultures," and a "culture of cultures." But it also suggests that the EU offers a new layer of identity under which the regions and nations can unite.

The message conveyed in various official reports and documents is that "we" Europeans are bearers of a common history and shared heritage; together, we belong to a unified "European culture area." As one mass-circulation EU pamphlet puts it: "the city of Venice, the paintings of Rembrandt, the music of Beethoven, or the plays of Shakespeare are an integral part of a common cultural heritage and are regarded as common property by the citizens of Europe" (Borchardt 1995, 73). These ideas are powerfully captured in the 1993 "Committee of Expert's Report on EU Information and Communication Policy." Drawing explicit parallels with the nation-building strategies of the United States, the report states:

The United States of America recognized the need for symbols to rally many disparate peoples and cultures to a common cause, to reaffirm and reinforce its unity summarized in its national motto: "*E pluribus unum*."

The USA's solution, "*out of many one*," cannot be Europe's solution, since we have been one ever since Greeks, Romans, Celts, Norsemen, Teutons, Slavs, and others Europeans realized long ago that they shared a common heritage. We are Europeans, and are proud of it. What is happening is that we are realizing our identity. In asserting our position in the world, we assert the richness of our culture, which is diverse and deep, a rich mosaic rather than an artificial "*-ism*." European Union has deep, diverse, and powerful roots. We are many in one: *In uno plures*, and we want to keep and nurture our diverse cultures that together make us the envied focus of culture, civilization (de Clercq 1993, 33)

At first blush, "unity in diversity" seems to suggest that EU policy-makers have embraced a more pluralistic and less instrumental approach to culture. Closer analysis indicates otherwise. The rationale underlying EU cultural policies appears to be less about celebrating "difference" or embracing multiculturalism than about promoting the idea of Europe's overarching unity through that diversity. National and sub-national cultural differences are typically represented as the fragmented elements of a shared "civilisation," whose origins are located in ancient Greece, Rome, and Christendom.

These ideas were further developed through various EU-funded initiatives to design textbooks that portray history from a "European perspective," thereby challenging the hegemony of nationalist historiography. This EU-sponsored

attempt to re-write history is epitomised by Jean-Baptiste Duroselle's *Europe: A History of its Peoples*, although other historians including Brugmans (1987) and Couloubaritsis (et al. 1993) have also made notable contributions. Duroselle's 416-page *magnum opus*, part text-book, part manifesto, presents the last three thousand years of European history as the story of Europe's faltering journey toward political union and federalism: a gradual coming together in the form of the EU, or what politicians call Europe's "vocation federal" ("federal destiny"). The chapters portray European history as the unfolding of an evolutionary chain of events, starting in the Neolithic period, then moving forwards in a march of progress from Classical Greece and Rome, to Christianity, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Scientific Revolution, European conquest and discovery, individualism, and the rise of liberal democracy. This EU historiography is both teleological and highly selective in what it includes and excludes from this canon of elite references. The result is a sanitised and extremely Eurocentric construction of the past, which largely ignores the darker side of European modernity, including Europe's legacy of slavery, imperialism, and racism.¹⁴ In the words of Jan Nederveen Pieterse (1991, 4) "[O]fficial European culture, reproduced in declarations, textbooks, media programmes, continues to be the culture of imperial Europe."

Philip Schlesinger (1994) makes similar observations; EU constructions of European culture, he claims, privilege an elitist, bourgeois intelligentsia vision of culture. This claim is borne out by the

main EU cultural programmes between 1996–1999, such as KALEIDOSCOPE ("programmes supporting artistic and cultural activities with a European dimension") ARIANE (translation of European literature), and RAPHAEL (cultural heritage project, notably restoration of the Acropolis, Mount Athos, and Burgos Cathedral). Other specifically named recipients of EU cultural support include the European Community Chamber Orchestra, the European Youth Opera Foundation, and the European Opera Centre. Clearly, "high culture" (opera, classical music, and grand architecture) features prominently in EU conceptions of cultural action.¹⁵

What is striking about the way EU documents describe Europe's cultural heritage is that they make virtually no mention of the contribution of writers, artists, scholars, and cultural practitioners of non-European descent. An estimated 17 million Muslims live within the EU, but as Yasmin Alibhai Brown argues (1998, 38), "they do not yet see themselves as part of the [European] project in any meaningful sense." This is hardly surprising, she adds, when Europe's identity is being constructed around assumptions about shared Graeco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian roots, and Beethoven's Ninth symphony. As critics argue, the flip side of Eurocentrism today is "Islamophobia" and a right-wing agenda that seeks to exploit fears about the threat to "fortress Europe" posed by criminals, Muslim fundamentalists, illegal immigrants, and "bogus" asylum seekers (see Runnymede Trust 1997 for a well documented analysis of this).

It is not only black, Asian, Muslim, or Third World peoples who are excluded from the canon of "European" culture, but also those from the United States, which is somewhat surprising given the appetite European consumers seem to have for Americana. While the Commission's own think-tank on audiovisual policy concluded that "if Europe has a common film culture, it is that of American films" (Vasconcelas et al. 1994, 60), EU politicians and officials view this with alarm. In their view, Hollywood and American TV exports represent a form of cultural imperialism that threatens to undermine the integrity of European culture. Successive French governments in particular have made the defence of European culture against globalisation (often construed idiomatically as "Americanisation") a major policy priority. This stance is exemplified in debates about imposing quotas on the "European content" of public broadcasting, which critics claim is anti free trade and serves merely to mask a protectionist agenda. However, cultural factors may be more important here than simple commercial calculations. EU policy elites still view Hollywood movies, hamburgers, blue jeans, jazz music, and Japanese consumer goods as objects that stand outside of "European culture." By contrast, old Dutch Masters, the plays of Shakespeare, and Beethoven's symphonies represent the quintessential European heritage and, moreover, are regarded as part of our treasured common patrimony. In practice, ideas of popular culture, multiculturalism, cultural pluralism, and hybridity appear to be anathema to official conceptions of European culture.

Conclusions: Unity-in-Diversity or the Governmentalisation of Culture?

It is, as Marx noted, one of the characteristics of representative systems . . . that all that is solid melts into air. But the reverse can also be true—representation can make even the most vapid connection between people real enough to endure. (David Runciman 2001, 5)

We began this discussion with the question "what is EU cultural policy *for*?" The official answer usually given is to "promote artistic and cultural cooperation" and create a "common cultural area characterised by its cultural diversity and shared cultural heritage" (CEC 2006). However, the evidence clearly points to another, more political agenda in which "cultural action" and EU cultural policy provide both instruments and legitimation for increasing European-level intervention into the social. This is what Clive Barnett (2001) has aptly termed the "governmentalisation of culture": it is effectively a continuation of the traditional Monnet-method for forging sectoral integration, only this time the emphasis is on the instrumentalisation of "culture" rather than the economic or the single market as the political arm of nation-building at the European level. As I have tried to show, however, the dilemma for the EU is that its approach to culture contains some fundamental contradictions that violate the very *telos* of European integration that was enshrined in the preamble to the EU's founding treaties. These tensions are again evident in the European Commission's recent pamphlet, "A Community of Cultures,"

and in the way it tries to promote "European citizenship" as the new container concept for the "unity in diversity" principle:

Creating an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe. These words may be a bit dry (these are taken from the preamble to the Treaty on European Union, signed in Maastricht in 1992), but the intention is to create a "Europe of the peoples." And that means using culture as a vehicle. . . . The Treaty on European Union also created "European Citizenship—to supplement, but not replace, national citizenship. This idea of European citizenship reflects the fundamental values that people throughout Europe share and on which European integration is based. Its strength lies in Europe's immense cultural heritage. Transcending all manner of geographical, religious, and political divides, artistic, scientific, and philosophical currents have influenced and enriched one another over the centuries, laying down a common heritage for the many cultures of today's European Union. Different as they are, the peoples of Europe share a history which gives Europe its place in the world and which makes it so special. (CEC 2002, 3)

European identity is thus portrayed simultaneously as a transcendental historical given founded upon "fundamental values" that are distinctly "European," and at the same time as something so insipid and non-existent in the mind's eye of ordinary Europeans that it has to be created instrumentally by elites, "using culture as a vehicle." The overriding objective that informs EU cultural policy

therefore seems to have changed little since the 1980s. The goal is not "diversity" but "unity": not "ever-closer union of the peoples of Europe" but the creation of a "European people" through the bread-and-circus antics of its various "People's Europe" campaign initiatives. The positioning of the apostrophe in this stock EU epithet is revealing. Where cultural diversity *is* promoted, it is invariably within a conception of a greater, composite, pan-European whole. The assumption is that national cultural differences can be brought together and blended, in Gestalt fashion, to create a higher, overarching European identity that is greater than the sum of its parts, and that a supranational tier of identity can be created over and above existing local, ethnic, regional, and national identities, like so many Chinese boxes. This is the "family of cultures" that collectively define the "European cultural area" and the distinctiveness of European values. The phrase "European civilisation" may no longer be used, for reasons of expediency and political correctness, but it is still implied. Unfortunately, the European tier of identity is characteristically thin, ersatz, and elitist, and no substitute, either morally or practically, for national affiliations.

"Unity in diversity"—like the Latin motto, "in uno plures"—offers EU policy-makers a convenient rhetorical mediation between the incompatible goal of forging a singular European consciousness, identity, and peoplehood on the one hand, and claims to be fostering cultural pluralism on the other. However, the tension between these contradictory impulses is not reconciled by this verbal

sleight of hand. As Gerard Delanty (2003) points out, "unity *in* diversity" is not the same as unity *and* diversity, and the idea that Europe's unity lies *in* its diversity is not as liberal or pluralistic as it seems. What it reflects is a kind of "postmodern communitarianism" designed to overcome the pitfalls of previously essentialist and Eurofederalist conceptions of Europe. Delanty suggests that this represents the emergence of a new ideology of culture in the EU in which the principle of unity is no longer posited as a universalistic or higher unity, but as an "inner unity" constituted through diversity. It would seem as if "diversity" is to be encouraged, but only if it does not obstruct the quest for unity or further integration. Thus for Delanty, "unity in diversity" is a deeply problematic concept where it is not a meaningless piece of rhetoric suggesting intercultural understanding. Here I concur. However, Delanty's conclusion that the really common European value is the enduring and pervasive Europe-wide belief in "social justice" and the "European social model" I find just as rhetorical and ideological.

Where the Commission has actively encouraged cultural pluralism and greater local autonomy in the form of a "Europe of the regions," I think this policy too is largely shaped by a neofunctionalist ideology of integration and a desire to undermine the hegemony of nation-states by developing a supra-national alternative to the national principle.

In its 1996 "Report on the Consideration of Cultural Aspects in European Community Action," the Commission concluded with the statement that:

Cultural policy forms part of the European enterprise and, in this respect, is an integration factor within an "ever-closer union between the peoples of Europe's . . . cultural policy must make a contribution to strengthening and to expanding the influence of the "European model" of society built on a set of values common to all European societies. (CEC 1996, 102)

Leaving aside the question of what "the European model of society" entails in practice, or *whose* definition of the European model we are talking about, a key problem with this claim—and with much of EU cultural policy in general—is the assumption that "culture" can be harnessed as a tool for advancing the EU's project for European construction. Leaving aside the question of ethics, the very idea that European identity needs to be invented, or more correctly, "re-branded," in order to advance the EU's programme for "building Europe" represents a project of social engineering uncomfortably reminiscent of other failed modernist ideologies of the twentieth century. That project could easily backfire should culture be perceived as a domain that is becoming too overtly politicised. It also assumes consensus for a "European model" of society that does not exist and which, even if it did exist, would be of questionable value to democracy in a modern transnational and multicultural context. The attempt by EU elites to invent Europe at the level of popular consciousness by unifying European citizens around a supposed common cultural heritage or civilisation will invariably be at the cost of excluding "non-Europeans;" those peoples and cul-

tures that fall outside the EU's somewhat selective representations of Europe's cultural heritage. This problem is compounded by the fact that the category of "non-European citizens" is often conflated with terms like "aliens," "illegal immigrants," "asylum seekers," and undesirable "*extracommunitari*." The danger here is that promoting European culture could, inadvertently, help to fuel racism and xenophobia by providing what Stolcke (1995) calls "new rhetorics of exclusion" and forms of cultural chauvinism.

EU supporters insist that the goal is not to "invent" a new European identity but rather to stimulate what Jacques Delors called "a renewed awakening of European awareness" (CEC 1987, 4–5). What is seldom asked, however, is why Europeans need to be made aware of their cultural Europeaness in the first place, or why EU elites have arrogated to themselves this exalted role.

Notes

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented as a keynote address at the May 2003 conference of Nordic Ethnology in Helsingør, Denmark. I wish to thank the participants and organisers of that conference for their comments and responses. The ethnographic research upon which this paper is based was carried out in Brussels between 1995 and 1996. I would like to express my thanks to the ESRC for their generous help in supporting this work.

² For a more detailed anthropological analysis of the EU's project for "European construction," see Shore 2000.

³ For a useful overview and critical analysis of neofunctionalism, see the contributions to O'Neill 1996 and those in Nelson and Stubb 1998.

⁴ The main definition of the term "policy" given in the Oxford English Dictionary is "a course of action adopted and pursued by a government, party, ruler, statesmen, etc; any course of action adopted as advantageous or expedient" (<http://dictionary.oed.com>). The question here though is "advantageous for whom?"

⁵ See the Commission's 1996 report (CEC 1996) for a more considered debate about the potential scope of the culture concept.

⁶ A good illustration of the way this motif has been appropriated as a vehicle for discussing European identity today is Taylor's (2001) edited reference book, *Unity in Diversity*—a 450 page glossy compendium of short essays by leading political commentators and academics.

⁷ Treaty of Rome 1957, articles 7 and 36 (CEC 1983). France later invoked this clause during the GATT world trade negotiations in defence of the French film industry against the threat of Hollywood (cf. Collins 1994).

⁸ The Commission's narrative regarding the evolution of its cultural policy is exemplified in a number of its key documents, including *New Prospects for Community Cultural Action* (CEC 1992) and *First Report on the Consideration of Cultural Aspects in European Community Action* (CEC 1996).

⁹ As used by the EU, this term typically includes information, communication, audiovisual, heritage, sport, and the arts. Earlier definitions also included education and "youth."

¹⁰ The 1976 Tindemans' Report on European Union represents the first embryonic statement of Community cultural policy. Significantly, this developed the new catchword of "Citizen's Europe," although it was not until

Maastricht, sixteen years later, that this idea was translated into the legal concept of Citizenship of the Union. A second key event was the 1983 Solemn Declaration on European Union signed by the European Council in Stuttgart. This introduced the idea that European co-operation should extend to cultural co-operation, to be pursued not for its own sake but "in order to affirm the awareness of a common cultural heritage as an element in the European identity" (qtd. in de Witte 1987, 136).

¹¹ In fact, the overall electoral turnout in 1984 was 61%, the second highest vote ever recorded in a European election. Subsequent elections have produced successively lower turnouts, 59% in 1989, 57% in 1994, and just 49% in 1999.

¹² For a more detailed anthropological analysis of these symbolic initiatives and cultural actions, see Abélès 2000 and Shore 1996 and 2000.

¹³ The Treaty of Amsterdam modified article 128 to read: "The Community shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of this Treaty, in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures."

¹⁴ Gerard Delanty (1995, 111) makes a further point: "It has conveniently been forgotten today that fascism and anti-Semitism were two of the major expressions of the idea of Europe."

¹⁵ The "Culture 2000" initiative (with a budget of 167 million ECU over a five-year period from 2000 to 2004) represents the next step in this agenda. This programme builds on the work of Kaleidoscope, Arian, and Raphael and aims to develop what is termed a "common European culture area" through the facilitation of co-operation between creative artists, cultural operators, and member-state institutions involved in the "cultural sector."

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