

Preface

The present volume assembles essays from a broad cultural and professional spectrum around the question of European cultural identity. The heterogeneity of the contributors — their differing points of departure and methods — attests to a tension in intellectual communities which today is more intense than ever. Europe's identity crisis is not merely an empirical matter. It reflects a far deeper, and far older, *discursive* crisis. The mandate of Europe's traditional intellectual institutions to preserve and police their own cultural heritage has proved incapable of evolving in a manner sufficient to account for the mutation in its object: European culture. It is not merely that Europe's identity, like any identity in the flux of history, has changed. Rather, the notion of identity, the very basis of any questions of who we are, where we are going, and the appropriate political forms and social institutions for further existence, all rely on a logic of identity which has, at best, become extremely problematic. It is this problematization which provides the common thread unifying the following essays. Each contributor, in his/her own way and with respect to his/her own research object, confronts the adequacy of the concept of cultural identity. The hidden presuppositions of this concept are indeed remarkable, and the logic of cultural identity prescribes that they remain undisclosed.

A tradition is a kind of cultural communication based on an absolutely distinct origin which it is absolutely impossible to locate

distinctly. While it is clear that a cultural identity cannot be constructed from nothing, all aspire to be its superintendent, all struggle to command the monopoly of its legitimacy. The question involves the politics of culture in the ordinary sense, that is, the managing of the institutions which organize, sanction and legitimize cultural heritage. Yet at the same time, politics finds itself subsumed within the broader logic of culture. Politics is a culture, a cultural production which responds to the necessity of a certain cultural logic.

In the opening essay of Part I, "Origin(s) and End(s) of Cultural Identity," the author locates the foundation of culture in the dialectic of cultural identity. This dialectic, the fruit of Enlightenment political thought and Romantic idealism, joins the cultural sovereignty of individuals or individual groups to the universality which is both their aspiration and the demise of their particularity. Any cultural identity, it is argued, presupposes a structure which anchors that identity while at the same time refusing to participate in it. Thus arises the paradox of culture and the impossible necessity of cultural identity. Uffe Østergård analyzes the Danish response to a certain move beyond national culture as an organizing unity. Yet, as he notes, the return to the "Danish question," to a mapping out of Danish national cultural territory, corresponds to a trend toward the reaffirmation of European culture. At the same time, European culture is deeply involved in a renegotiation of its relation to the Third World. The domination of the West is, in effect, problematized by the culture of plurality which results from the decline of national cultures. Neither the universalism mandated by European Enlightenment thought nor the relativism which some see as a necessary response to centuries-old racism holds the answer to the plurality of cultural values. In the next essay, Theodor Barth develops an anthropology of postmodernism which serves as a basis for discursive analysis. The exhaustion of modernity is to be understood not merely as a signpost in the history of ideas, but also as the consequence of the socio-cultural trajectory of the Western intelligentsia in late modernity. The emergence of new disciplines and a new prototype of the intellectual are the results of this development in academia. New world views thus emerge, not simply as mutations in the spiritual make-up of Western civilization, but rather as the result of a complex of institutional and individual developments. It is against this backdrop that Barth

investigates the status of the "ethnographic document." Social anthropology, he argues, presents a paradigm for generative research. By virtue of the grammar of the field diary, social anthropological fieldwork refuses to limit itself to the logic of scientific objectivity, as recognition and recording are transformed into *productive* instruments of cognition.

Trond Berg Eriksen opens Part II, "Finding/Making Cultural Identity," with an essay problematizing European self-understanding by signaling the central signposts which historically contribute to its construction. The history of the intellectual geography of Europe is the history of the antagonisms and struggles in the name of the sovereignty of an image. The myths of European identity, he claims, have always served the political interests of certain Europeans. The eschatology of the image is the trajectory of an ideology of power. In his contribution, Iver B. Neumann plots Russia's political identity as a function of the alterity of Western European self-understanding. Europe has constructed Russia as its own "other" and, what's more, as an entity which is becoming itself through a process of "learning" from its "other": Western Europe. Europe thus constitutes itself, reasons Neumann, as the other of its other, in the process of becoming itself. Neumann develops three figures of this learning process in alterity: that of the "barbarian," the "gatekeeper" or protector of the *status quo* culture, and the "gateway" to the future guaranteed by its own immanent development. According to Peter Normann Waage, the reconciliation which dramatized the end of the Cold War in Europe merely serves to underscore a deeper more perplexing question: What justifies the larger cultural division between Eastern and Western Europe? Waage locates the unity of European culture in the structure of its division and, above all, in the Christian *mythos* which underlies it. A history of Christianity and of the ideology of its otherness serves as a reconstruction of the concept of Europe. God is at once unified and sovereign, and divided as Christ. It is in this sense that Waage rediscovers the roots of Soviet culture – the "Soviet-Byzantine Empire," as he calls it – in Eastern traditions of Christianity. In an essay on the phenomenality of communication, Anders Johansen examines the concept of fellowship as a function of the fusion of proximity and immediacy. He thus rediscovers the "now" of modern communications

as the nexus of culture. Through analyses of the "geography of time" and the "genealogy of distance," Johansen produces a nuanced model for understanding collective cohesion in the post-national era. The "family of man" thus becomes a product of technological progress, the modern consequence of the experience of modern communication.

In the first essay of Part III, "At Home and Abroad (in Europe)," Ola Tunander uses the logic of the wall to present an analysis of the present juncture of Europe, thereby creating a synthesis of theories of the collapse of territoriality. The trajectory from Hegel to Schmitt to Baudrillard follows the path of an increasing problematization of the sovereignty of space in geopolitical discussions. Tunander locates the logical structure and the cognitive generality of the border in the figure of the wall. The other lies across the border of the one and the same. In the following contribution, Thomas Hylland Eriksen takes his point of departure in "Brussels" as a figure for Europe in its difficult yet somehow unified diversity. Brussels is at once the very capital of Europe and a kind of ubiquitous entity without properties for those not directly associated with the daily operation of the European Union. Europeans are becoming more unified and, as if by necessity, more preoccupied with their deep differences. For Hylland Eriksen, Europe is a process, a continuous movement of internal differentiation and cultural fragmentation. Politically, he argues, this leads to a certain oscillation between the erasure of boundaries and the development of new boundaries. The nation thus "debunked," Hylland Eriksen asks what the destiny of a post-national Europe can be, what kinds of networks will support its internal diversification, and what kind of bonds will unite the movement of globalization which marks the lives of Europeans. Europe both threatens and constitutes; it is both civilization and wilderness; it is the truth of history and of the self. In the following essay, Oscar Hemer reflects upon the experience of travel and the notion of the "adventurer." Adventure, he argues, is narrative, a linking together of live-events and a problematizing of the notion of story-telling. Where does the adventure begin, where does it end? Travel, suggests Hemer, is indeed a homecoming, a return to the self as other, a necessarily new experience of oneself.

How can we explain the renewed fascination with the East in Western intellectual circles? This "renaissance," says Peter Sloterdijk, in

the first essay of Part IV, "The Oriental West," is essentially a false one. By creating a false Asian renaissance, the West seeks to find a new future, a potential future, in a deep and foreign past. Sloterdijk thus discloses a certain logic of renaissance. Renewal, far from being a reconstruction of what was, is indeed a (re)construction of a virtual past whose reality simply plays no role in its function as a building block for myths of the future. The Asian renaissance corresponds to a kind of radical self-alienation of culture. We have become so foreign to ourselves, says Sloterdijk, that the ancient past of Asia, seems to be, as though through the force of the Freudian *uncanny*, strangely familiar. This observation leads him to reflect upon the essence of the new and of modernity's inner logic of progress. He thereby proposes a "theory of mobilization" as an alternative to critical theory. In the next essay, Iver B. Neumann & Jennifer M. Welsh reveal "Turkey" and "the Turk" as a constituting other for (Western) Europe. They argue that history of the opposition between Christianity and the Ottoman Empire offers the basis for a historical trajectory which consistently poses "the Turk" as the axis of development for Europe's historical orbits. The terms of civilization, progress, reason, security, etc. are canalized to reveal their (negative) dependence on the East in general, and Turkey, in particular. In the next piece, Ole Wæver takes his point of departure in the decline of the metaphor of "neo-medievalism." In its absence, he turns to the ancient Mesopotamian empires in search of a figurative expression for the present state of international theory. Figures of empire, he claims, are organized around diffuse centers of power which mirror both the European tradition of "centeredness" and the contemporary discourse of "decentering." European security then becomes understandable in terms of "non-sovereign" centers, recognizing both the persistence of the nation-state and the diversification of its forms of power. "Non-sovereignty" as a political figure may then be explored and offered as an alternative to present theories of international theory.

Jean-Marie Guéhenno opens the following section, "Nation and Culture," by setting forth an articulation of an increasingly common observation: that of the demise of the nation-state. Guéhenno focuses on the historicity and thus the *contingency* of the notion of nation. Its passing, he suggests, is only the most recent moment in its two-century-long development: the nation is a product of modernity, or more

precisely, Europe's modernity. Max Gallo provides a concrete illustration of the stakes involved in tampering with the metaphysical value of the nation-state. He shows that the struggle for Europe evinced in the Second World War is above all a struggle for the concept of the "European," a concept profoundly rooted in national particularity. Against those who would de-historicize the discourse on Europe in order to at last tame this unwieldy concept, Gallo argues that historical heterogeneity in the form of geopolitical heterogeneity is the sole instrument of preservation of political diversity. We must, he argues, take notice of the nearly implicit potential for abuse of the concept of Europe, recognize that similar abuses fill the present discourse on Europe, and act prudently with regard to the concept of Europe. He thus greets the notion of a European destiny with considerable skepticism. He contends that the historical theory which claims that the primitive networking which in some ways united the European continent in the late Middle Ages in no way meshes with the contemporary notion of network so essential to the ideology of European integration. The only organically self-constituting and self-sustaining network is the nation. For Gallo it is the nation which is the final, irreducible form of social unity and network. Ulla Holm concludes the section by articulating the opposition between cultural nation and political nation in the heritage of French Enlightenment thought. The republican concept of state, she notes, can be traced to the complex of *will* sketched in Rousseau's *The Social Contract*. Holm argues that the French nation, far more than the product of juridical pretext, is a construction based upon a notion of engagement. Revolution as a manifestation of will was the basis for the notions of political legitimacy and forms the root of European self-understanding. The state is then an instrument which serves to transform the individual into a citizen, to canalize the non-instrumental substance of the person into a systematizable member of a legally legitimate entity: the nation-state. This is indeed the basis of modernity and the modern conception of progress. The integration of diverse individualities into a universal conception of citizenship is the force and the weakness of the European project.

James Der Derian concludes the volume with his vision of post-Europe *en effet*: a kind of post-European field diary. With the war in Bosnia as a screaming backdrop, Der Derian interrogates the minds of

Europe, both the military and the scholars of peace. From the other-worldliness of high-tech military exercises at Hohenfels military base in Germany, to discussions and interviews in London, Oslo, Paris, and Oxford, Der Derian measures the pulse of a continent in search of itself.

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J. Peter Burgess
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