

# At the Borders of Europe From Cosmopolitanism to Cosmopolitics

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**Abstract:** The essay addresses uses of “cosmopolitanism” and “cosmopolitics” in the current global political conjuncture, from a European point of view. Against the assumption (by Jürgen Habermas in particular) that Europe could become the typical cosmopolitan continent through a natural continuation of its universalist traditions, it argues that the universal exists only in the form of conflicting universalities. Eurocentrism therefore deserves not only a refutation, but a genuine deconstruction. Expanding on previous contributions, I focus on the *historical transformation* or the “border” as a quasi-transcendental condition for the constitution of the political, which is paradoxically reflected in its center. The “central” character of the “periphery” acquires a new visibility in the contemporary period. A “phenomenology of the border” becomes a prerequisite for an analysis of the citizen. I examine tentatively three moments: first, the antithesis of war and translation as contradictory overlapping models of the Political, which I call “polemological” and “philological” respectively; second, the equivocality of the category of the stranger, who tends to become reduced to the enemy in the crisis of the nation-state; third, the *cosmopolitical difficulty* of Europe to deal with its *double otherness*, regarding other Europeans and non-Europeans who are targeted by complementary forms of xenophobia.

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In this essay, I want to address questions of common interest about the use and relevance of such notions as “cosmopolitanism” and “cosmopolitics” in the current global political conjuncture, and I will do so mainly from a European point of view. This might seem a contradiction in terms, since the overcoming of a certain Eurocentrism forms one of the preconditions for the development of a cosmopolitical discourse. I have two reasons for doing so, both linked to a certain practice of critical theorizing.

The first is that—in spite of some very interesting references to the idea of cosmopolitanism, or its transformation, in so-called postcolonial discourse—the continuous reference to cosmopolitanism today seems largely a product of the self-con-

sciousness of Europeans seeking to understand, if not to promote, Europe's autonomous contribution to the regulation of conflicts in the new Global order. Habermas's "return to Kant" (and others as well, from which I do not except myself) is typical in this respect. It is as if, after becoming the first imperial "center" of modern history, Europe could become the typical cosmopolitan continent through a natural continuation, or perhaps a dialectical reversal, building its new political figure in this perspective. This implicit claim, shared by many of us, has to be compared with realities, and examined as a discursive formation.

The second reason refers to an even more general perspectives of "politics of the universal," which would take into account the conflictual character of universality as such, or the fact that the universal historically exists only in the form of conflicting universalities, both inseparable and incompatible. Universalities become conflictual because they are built on the absolutization of antithetic values, but also because they are enunciated in different places by different actors in the concrete process of world history. From this point of view, "Eurocentrism" has a paradoxical, if not unique, position: it is the discourse whose pretense at incarnating universalism in the name of reason, or culture, or legal principles, is most likely to become increasingly challenged and refuted, as the history of the European and "new European" conquest of the world becomes re-examined from a critical point of view. But it is also a symbolic or conceptual pattern which is likely to remain untouched while rejected or reversed or to become transferred to other imagined communities. As a consequence, Eurocentrism deserves not only a rejection or a refutation, but a genuine deconstruction—that is, a critique which dissolves and transforms it from the inside, in order to produce a self-understanding of its premises and functions. In this sense, a deconstruction of Eurocentrism performed by the Europeans themselves—with the help of many others—is not only a precondition for the undertaking of any postimperial "cosmopolitics," it is part of its construction itself.

A distinction of *cosmopolitan discourse* (or theory) and *practical cosmopolitics* seems now to have gained a very wide acceptance, and, while I make use of it, I certainly claim no particular originality. It apparently results from three interrelated considerations. First, from the idea of reversing utopia into practice, or re-

turning from the elaboration of a cosmopolitan *idea* (which could serve as a regulatory model for the development of institutions) to the programs, instruments, objectives, of a politics whose actors, be they states or other social individualities, immediately operate and become interrelated at the world level. Note that such an idea can be associated with the consideration of globalized processes in the field of economy, strategy, communications, in opposite ways. It can be argued that the overcoming of the utopian moment of cosmopolitanism arises as a consequence of the globalizing phenomena themselves. The material conditions would now exist for cosmopolitanism to pass from utopia into reality, if not “science.” There would even exist already something like an “actually existing cosmopolitanism,” to recall the title of one of the sections in Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins’s influential anthology (1998), which could become politicized or provide a cosmopolitics or *Weltinnenpolitik* with its practical and affective support. But it can be argued also that globalization *destroys the possibility* of a cosmopolitan utopia, or deprives it of any nonideological function, because cosmopolitanism was only possible as an idealized counterpart for the fact that, however global or transnational its objectives might be, which is particularly the case of socialist *internationalism* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, actual politics remained rooted in local, and particularly national, communities (see Balibar 2006a). This ideal projects a solution or final settlement for the actual conflicts, and for that reason would grant a foundational value to the prospect or project of *peace*, in particular the establishment of peace through the implementation of law.

This leads us to another powerful reason for the substitution of a practical notion of cosmopolitics for the classical ideal of cosmopolitanism, which has to do with the broadly shared idea that the proper realm of politics is *conflict*. What Globalization has mainly achieved is a generalization of conflicts of multiple forms, reviving old ones (for example, between religious and secular forces) and perpetuating recent ones, displaying them all at the level of the whole world: and so the ultimate horizon of politics in the global age, with no predictable end, would be the fighting of conflicts or the attempt at regulating them, but never putting an end to them. Such an idea is common to many authors today, albeit with important nuances: it is there in Ulrich Beck’s thesis that the “cos-

mopolitical gaze” presupposes that “war is peace” or their respective realms are no longer fully discernible (Beck 2006). It is there also in Chantal Mouffe’s representation of an “agonistic pluralism” that informs the macropolarities of the progressively emerging post-national political sphere (see Mouffe 2000). And it is there in Etienne Tassin, who along Arendtian lines, but also drawing the consequences from a postmodernist critique of the notions of political consensus and collective identities, seeks to articulate different concepts of resistance to the destruction of the “common world” which results from the uncontrolled processes of capitalist globalization (see Tassin 2003). But again there is a wide range of discursive positions here, including a certain equivocity of the use of the category “conflict.” At one end we have conflict understood as a *specific form* of political practice, in a tradition that could be Marxist but also Weberian and, indeed, Schmittian; at the other, we have the idea of conflict as *matter or object* of political intervention, which takes the form of regulation or, to use the now fashionable terminology, “governance.” The core of contemporary politics, which pushes it to the level of “cosmopolitics,” would be to find how to keep regulating or governing conflict, that is ultimately establish consensus and hegemonies, beyond the declining monopoly of the nation–state in its violent or legal capacity to create peace and order within certain territorial boundaries. Such is clearly the prospect evoked in the work of David Held, with its opposition between a growing state of injustices, disorders, and inequalities created by Globalization as a counterpart for the universalization of exchanges and communications, and a global “social-democratic governance,” whose quasi-legal instrument would be a “planetary contract” among states and social actors (see Held 2013). But it is also the horizon of Mary Kaldor’s (2013) idea of the “Global Civil Society” and its politicization as “an answer to war,” although in a more nuanced and empirical style.

And finally this leads us to the third interrelated motive that I believe underlies the current insistence on “cosmopolitics” as the concrete form of cosmopolitanism or an alternative to its utopian character, which lies in the primacy of the issue of *insecurity* or—to put it again in Ulrich Beck’s terms—“risk society” at the global level. This is an additional element because the issue here is not simply to confront *alternative replies* to the same insecurity, or to

the same *dominant form of insecurity* (be it terrorism, war, economic instability, mass poverty, the destruction of the environment, and so forth), but more fundamentally, in a sort of *generalized Hobbesian problematic*, to define and hierarchize the *different forms* of “insecurity” which are perceived and expressed by actors and power structures in today’s world. It is this second degree in the political contest on insecurity that, far from remaining purely theoretical, directly impacts the antithetic positions on the function of international institutions, inherited from the ancient cosmopolitan ideal, as was plainly illustrated by the controversy between George Bush and Kofi Annan in 2003 at the opening of the United Nations’ General Assembly, just before the invasion of Iraq.

Again, I claim no originality in my discussion of these themes. My specific contribution, which I have been trying to elaborate in a more or less explicit manner in the last two decades, has progressively focused on the *historical transformation* or the “border” (or the “frontier”) as a concrete institution which, far from forming simply an external condition for the constitution of the political, empirically associated with the hegemony of the territorial nation–state, represents an *internal, quasi-transcendental* condition of possibility for the definition of the citizen and the community of citizens, or the combination of inclusion and exclusion which determines what Arendt called the “intermediary space,” or *Zwischenraum*, of political action and contestation, where the right to have rights becomes formulated. In this sense, the border is only seemingly an external limit: in reality it is always already *interiorized* or displaced towards the center of the political space. This could be considered since the origins—even before the emergence of the modern Nation–State—a “cosmopolitical” element, which profoundly transformed the meaning and *institution* of borders but did not invent them. The question then becomes how to understand why this paradoxically “central” character of the “periphery” acquires a new visibility and a more controversial status in the contemporary period, in any case in Europe. The same kind of issue is currently being discussed and investigated in depth, especially in Italy, by Sandro Mezzadra and Enrica Rigo from a more juridical and constitutional point of view (see Rigo 2006). But I also try to develop what I call a “phenomenology of the border” as prerequisite of an analysis of the globalized citizen, which combines sub-

jective experiences with objective structural transformations in a highly unstable, overdetermined manner. It is this kind of phenomenology that I would like to evoke now, by sketching three developments: first, on the antithesis of war and translation, or polemological and philological models of the border; second, on the equivocity of the category of the stranger and the tendency to reduce it to a figure of the enemy through the development of border wars against migrants; and third, on what I call the “double otherness” affecting the status and representation of foreigners in today’s Europe, to reach a final interrogation on the paradoxical identity of what we might call the “subject of cosmopolitics,” as a figure determined locally as well as globally. But before that, I must return, as briefly as possible, to some considerations concerning Europe, “Eurocentrism,” and the cosmopolitical issue.

It will be easier and also politically revealing, I believe, to refer here to some well-known propositions by Jürgen Habermas and the way they have progressively evolved under the impact of the recent “war on terror.” This is not only a way to pay a well deserved tribute to a great living philosopher, whose questions and interventions continuously inform our reflection even when we disagree with his premises or depart from his conclusions, but also a way to illustrate this self-critical, internal relationship to the “European” definition of cosmopolitanism that I mentioned at the beginning. It did not remain unnoticed that Habermas’s positions concerning cosmopolitanism had significantly changed in the last period, before and after 9/11 and the subsequent new wave of US military interventions in the world, especially the unilateral invasion of Iraq in 2003 without a warrant from the Security Council. Many of his declarations and contributions have been internationally widespread, including the declaration from May 2003 reacting to the statement by European States supporting the US invasion, which was also endorsed by Jacques Derrida, with the title “After the War: Europe’s Renaissance,” in which he hailed the simultaneous anti-war demonstrations in various European countries as a moment of emergence of the long-awaited European public sphere (see Habermas and Derrida 2003). This was later developed in the acknowledgement of a “split” within the Western liberal–democratic alliance, arising from the antitotalitarian commitment in the post-

World War II period, which separated the unilateralist power politics of the US from the orientation of the European “core states” (*Kerneuropa*) which was supposed to act in the direction of the constitution of a “global domestic politics without a global government” (*Weltinnenpolitik ohne Welregierung*) in the Kantian spirit (see Habermas 2006). This involved not only a limitation of national claims to absolute sovereignty, but the equivalent of a “constitutionalization of international law,” subjecting and transforming the national politics of states through the self-imposed recognition of the primacy of universal legal and moral rules forming a politics of human rights.

More recently, Habermas has expressed disappointment and skepticism with respect to this cosmopolitan function attributed to Europe, or its historical avant-garde, but he has maintained the commitment to the same general objective (see Habermas 2009). This amounted to granting a practical reality and effectivity, in a critical situation which would appear as a turning point in Modern history, to the more speculative idea already explained at length in Habermas’s “post national constellation” essays from the previous decade: the constitution of a supranational European ensemble, limiting the sovereignty of its member-states without giving rise to a new imperial superstate, was presented there as a form of “transition” between the old power politics of states based on their identification as substantial historical communities, in other terms the hegemony of nationalism, and the coming of the new cosmopolitan order where the relationship of individuals to their communities and allegiances is subjected to the formal and ethical recognition of universal legal norms. The argument bears analogies with the manner in which, in Kant’s practical philosophy, the respect for the moral law or categorical imperative is supposed to impose a constraint on the “pathological” affective element of individual personality, or in Kant’s own terms, to permanently “humiliate” its power. Accordingly, we would have the unmistakable sign of a shift from nationalism to the dominance of a pure “patriotism of the constitution” (*Verfassungspatriotismus*), intrinsically governing the development of the European Union, and conferring upon it a meaning and an influence widely superseding its local function.

Now, it would be too easy to dismiss Habermas’s views as utopian and grossly overestimating the cosmopolitan content and

capacities of the European construction, and to call for a sobering return to the facts, showing that the *Weltpolitik* of the European Union, or perhaps we should say, rather, its *lack of a Global project of its own* in the last period, has patently refuted any illusion of a progressive function, especially with respect to the creation of a Global order and a system of international law genuinely independent from power interests. I believe that a more interesting series of remarks can be proposed. With a nasty spirit, I was always tempted to draw a formal analogy between the way Habermas presented the European construction as an intermediary step between nationalism and the coming cosmopolitical juridical order and the way, after the adoption of the idea of “socialism in one country” around which the world revolutionary movement should gather and redefine its strategy, the construction of the Soviet Union and the Socialist camp was presented as a “transitional phase” in the long process of political transition from capitalism to communism. This is only a formal analogy indeed, but that testifies to the extent to which teleological models of historical progress arising ultimately from the Enlightenment permeate both the cosmopolitan and the internationalist discourses, or dominate their concepts of history in a manner that is relatively independent from the divisions between rival political ideologies. It testifies also to the extent to which such discourses are inseparable from a deep Eurocentric representation of history, even when they claim to be critical of something like a “European nationalism,” or “pan-European ideology.”

But there is more to be said, and namely that such a paradox also affects discourses which, in the same circumstances, tried to be more critical with respect to the achievements of the European construction. I am thinking of the way in which, in their book on “cosmopolitical Europe,” Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande (2004) described the European construction as a “reflective moment” or the emergence of a “politics of politics” in which the feedback effect of globalization and its specific problems associated with “global risks” would progressively transform the very idea of a national interest and allow Europe to correct its own Eurocentrism and lack of cosmopolitanism. Accordingly, the intermediary position in which Europe finds itself would dialectically foster its own internal transformation and allow it to play a crucial role in the transformation of the global distribution and definition of power.



And, if I may invoke my own elaborations here, I am even thinking of the manner in which, borrowing the dialectical image of the “vanishing mediator,” I tried to explain in 2003 that Europe as a society, a new moment in the history of political forms, could only exist on the condition of becoming the instrument of a resistance to the polarizations of the War on Terror as well as a multilateral competition between *Grossräume* or geopolitical rival entities, which is centered on a combination of state power and cultural exceptionalism. It should “decenter” its self-consciousness and acknowledge the extent to which it had become itself transformed and reshaped by the aftereffects of its violent interaction with the world, particularly through the postcolonial transformation of its population and culture (see Balibar 2003a). However “dialectical” this presentation of Europe may appear (as a potential vanishing mediator in contemporary politics, which could transform others on the condition of becoming transformed itself by the others), it clearly contained an element of European messianism which I shared with many others.

It is perhaps owing to my self-critical reflection on the extent to which the messianic idea of Europe as the “vanishing mediator” in fact reproduces or pushes to the extreme the Eurocentric scheme inherent in other contemporary uses of the cosmopolitan ideal that I can put into question what I believe is one of the deep philosophical structures underlying the combination of universalism and Eurocentrism in the cosmopolitan tradition: namely, the idea that the transformation of the local, particular, national citizen into a “citizen of the world” through a relativization of memberships and borders requires a singular *mediation* (or even a mediator), which *turns the empirical interest against itself*, performing the negation of particularity *from the inside*. There is no doubt to my mind that the cosmopolitical discourse in its classical form, as it was elaborated philosophically in Kant and others—including Marx, in his own way—formed a conceptual system organized around the transcendental dualism of the empirical individual and the universal person, or the “generic individual” (as Hegel, Feuerbach, and the young Marx would reformulate it), namely the individual who carries within themselves a representation of the species, therefore also a commitment to the superior interest of the human community as such. The universal subject can be a “univer-

sal class,” or a “universal political project” called *post national constellation*. In any case the mediation has to be performed by a membership or a community endowed with the character of a self-negating subject, which means a community (of citizens) without a “communitarian” collective identity, or not reducible to it, therefore without exclusionary effects, and with a revolutionary potential of universalization. Such is the case of “cosmopolitan Europe” in the discourses that I was quoting.

What I am suggesting is, in fact, a reversal of this pattern (which perhaps in the end will prove to be again one of its metonymic reformulations). At the same time I am admitting that the incapacity of Europe to emerge as a cosmopolitical mediation is not to be separated from its only too obvious current stalemate as a political project. There is something intrinsically contradictory in the idea of framing a postnational Europe which is a public space of conflicts, regulations, and civic participation, although it does not take the form of constructing a superstate—perhaps *especially* if it does not take that form. In a moment I will try to indicate that this intrinsic contradiction can be linked to the fact that the European construction as such emphasizes all the elements of *otherness* inherent in the representation of Europe as a whole, or simply as an ensemble. But this requires a detour through the consideration of the role of borders, from which I hope to gain a metamorphosis in the self-perception of Europe, in which its definition never simply comes from its own history, but *returns to it from outside*, from the consequences of its externalization. This is a point of view that seems more likely to become adopted in what constitutes *the peripheries of Europe* in the broad sense: cultural and political zones of interpenetration with the rest of the world—Britain or Turkey or Spain, say, rather than France or Germany, where Habermas implicitly localized the European “core states.” But in reality, owing to the consequences of colonialism, and later postcolonial migrations and hybridization of cultures, it is also a possibility open for the whole of Europe that should be discussed in common, passing from one country to the other and one language to the other.

Let me now concentrate on what I called a “phenomenological approach” of the border as institution—and in a sense an *institution of institutions*, whose fundamental characteristics appear

historically when it determines specific political practices, setting their quasi-transcendental conditions, as it were. In the the past, analyzing the repressive functions performed by the border especially with respect to some strangers, but also some nationals, I coined the formula “a nondemocratic condition of democracy” (Balibar 2003b). I now want to emphasize the ambivalent characteristics of this condition, which represents both *closeness and aperture*, or their permanent dialectical interplay. Thus, a phenomenology of the border is a very complex undertaking. It is now becoming one of the major objects of reflection and points of interdisciplinary cooperation for anthropologists, historians, geographers, political theorists, and so on. Even philosophers may have something to say from within their intellectual tradition and disciplinary logic (see Balibar, Mezzadra, and Samaddar 2012, and Mezzadra and Neilson 2013). To take the institution of the border as privileged vantage point in the discussion on cosmopolitics and its tensions does not produce the same effect as adopting, say, the point of view of culture, or territory, or urban society—although there clearly are reciprocities between these different paradigms. In previous essays I suggested, following a suggestion from Kant’s early Latin dissertation on the “regions of space,” that borders are never purely local or bilateral institutions, reducible to a simple history of conflicts and agreements between neighboring powers and groups, which would concern only them, but are always already “global”—that is, a way of dividing the world itself into *places*, a way of configuring the world or making it “representable” (as the history of maps and mapping techniques testifies). Hence the development of a “mapping imaginary” which has as much anthropological importance as the imagination of historical time and is not to be separated from it. I should add that borders are, therefore, constitutive of the transindividual *relationship to the world*, or “being in the world” when it is predicated on a plurality of subjects. This might already explain why the imagination of borders has a privileged relationship with utopias, albeit in a very contradictory manner. Either it works through the assumption of their closure, when utopian societies are imagined as isolated from the world, or it works through the anticipation of their suppression, their withering away giving rise to a “borderless world” for the whole of mankind. But the borders are not only structures of the imagination; they are a very real

institution, albeit not with a fixed function and status. And as conditions for the construction of a collective experience, they are characterized by their intrinsic *ambivalence*.

Here I generalize a reflection on the category of the foreigner and “foreignness” that I find in particular in Bonnie Honig’s excellent book (2001), to which I will return. This ambivalence begins with the fact that borders are both *internal* and *external*, or subjective and objective. They are imposed by state policies, juridical constraints, and controls over human mobility and communication, but they are also deeply rooted in collective identifications and a common sense of belonging. We may continue with the fact that borders are at work within opposite paradigms of the political, particularly what I call *the paradigm of war* and *the paradigm of translation*, with antithetic models for the construction of the “stranger,” or the institution of difference between the “us” and the “them,” which are both exclusive and nonexclusive. As a consequence, while recognizing the importance of the border in the development of utopian discourses, I prefer to consider that the border as such is a *heterotopia* or a “heterotopic” place in Foucault’s sense—that is, both a place of exception where the conditions of normality and everyday life are “normally suspended,” so to speak; and a place where the antinomies of the political are manifested and become an object of politics itself. It is borders, the drawing and the enforcing of borders, their interpretations and negotiations that “make” or “create” peoples, languages, races, and genealogies... Let me try to indicate three moments of this heterotopic phenomenon of borders from the point of view of their current transformations, especially across and beyond Europe. The emergence of “European borders” which need to be constantly displaced or redrawn is indeed one of the main concerns underlying this very sketchy theorization.

The first element I want to emphasize is the fact that borders and frontiers are simultaneously defined as functions of *warfare* (or the interruption of warfare in the form of territorial settlements and an equilibrium of power codified by international law), and as functions of *translation*, or linguistic exchange: I call this second aspect a philological model of the construction of the political space—particularly the nation in modern history—where the appropriation of a collective identity and its equivalence with

others mainly rests on establishing a correspondence as tight and effective as possible between linguistic communities and political communities. They must have the same boundaries, which are enforced and developed through education, literature, journalism, and communication (as Benedict Anderson famously demonstrated in his study of “imagined communities” and the becoming hegemonic of the national form of the state—see Anderson 1983). The construction of borders through war and the suspension of war, and their interiorization through the community of language and the possibility of translation (namely the activity that takes place when one stands *on the border itself*, either very briefly or for a long period, sometimes coinciding with the whole life), are clearly antithetic, but it does not mean that the two models are completely external to one another. On the contrary they are bound to continuously interfere and merge. In a sense, or in specific circumstances, war arises about translation and translation remains a war—because it involves a confrontation with the conflictual difference, or the irreducible “differend” with the other (in Lyotard’s terminology) that can be displaced but not abolished, returning under the very appearance of consensus and communication. This reciprocity of war and translation within the establishment of lasting cultural power structures or hegemonies has been particularly emphasized by post-colonial studies which concern both the old peripheries and the old “centers,” where so called “universal” or “international” languages have been created and institutionalized, and more recently by critics of the idea of a “world literature” (see, for example, Apter 2005). This is one of the major themes in Chakrabarty’s work, *Provincializing Europe* (2000), where he insists on the conflict between antagonistic ways of “translating” life worlds, or the experience of the world, into labor (that is, abstraction in the merchant and capitalistic sense), and history (that is, majoritarian and minoritarian traditions and belonging). Perhaps we could suggest that what characterizes our experience of the globalized world, both virtually common and divided among incompatible representations of the sense of history, is a new intensity of this overlapping or undecidability of the relationship between war and translation. This would come also, on the side of war, from the fact that war has become immersed in a much more general economy of global violence, which is not less but *more* murderous, and in fact includes perma-

ment aspects of extermination. Ethnocide or culture wars are part of this economy.

The pattern of a “global civil war” that is looming in such diverse interpretations as those proposed by Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Negri and Hardt, or Agamben, is useful here but it is also misleading because it tends to quickly reduce to unity the enormous heterogeneity of the violent processes overlapping in this global economy, ranging from so-called “new wars” which involve state and nonstate actors, and subvert international law, to the seemingly natural catastrophes which foremost affect the populations targeted by mass impoverishment and made “superfluous” from the point of view of the capitalist rationality. On the other side the labor of translation which permanently confronts the antinomy of equivalence and difference, is a way of acknowledging the irreducible nature of the untranslatable elements: through its confrontation with this “impossible” task it produces a *universal community of languages*, or a “pure language,” as Benjamin explained in somewhat messianic terms in his famous essay on “The task of the translator” (on this point, see Balibar 2006b). With the process of globalization, especially as it is seen “from below”—that is, not from the global Republic of Letters, but from the working populations themselves, this labor has also become much more complex and conflictual. In a postcolonial world the *hierarchy* of idioms, therefore of possibilities of translation towards the same “languages of reference,” which serve as general equivalent for all the others, is becoming less and less indisputable and unilateral; it is therefore continuously enforced in a brutally simplified manner through the monolingual discipline of internet communication. The association of linguistic hierarchies with borders and collective identities appears much more clearly as a structure of national and transnational *power*: there is as much violence and latent political conflict, as much questioning of established sovereignties, in the possibility for Algerian citizens to simultaneously use their three historical languages (including Arabic, French, and Amazigh), as there is for Urdu, Turkish, Arab, and African languages to become recognized as equal parts of the “conversation” among the populations of multinational and multicultural Europe, therefore granted the same educational and administrative status as the “genuinely European” national or regional languages (some of which have for centuries been ex-pro-

riated—that is, they no longer “belong” to the populations of European descent). I suspect that similar problems could be raised with respect to Spanish and Asian languages in the North American realm.

This brings me to the second aspect of a phenomenology of borders as preliminary to the cosmopolitical issue. Zygmunt Bauman, who is certainly one of the great anthropologists of the cultural side of “globalization” today, emphasized that “all societies produce strangers, but each kind of society produces its own kind of strangers, and produces them in its own inimitable way” (Bauman 1997). I take this phrase to mark an important step in a story of sociological and philosophical reflections on the figure of the stranger and the foreigner (the duality of categories already marking the difficulty in assessing the priority of the interior or the exterior, the juridical or the cultural aspect), which derive from the famous essays by Simmel and Alfred Schutz, and continues today with Gilroy, Babha, Honig, Spivak. Whether it was the existence of borders that created the stranger, imposing an institutional mark of otherness on the complexity of cultural and local differences, or the preexisting difference among nations and genealogies that led to the institution of borders and the closure of territories, is a question that was never completely solved. It would seem that the establishment of the new borders of Europe, and the way they are enforced against the self-determination and the right of circulation of migrant and refugee populations, with the continuous relocation of these police demarcations, sheds a brutal light on this issue because of its discretionary character, as embodied in the Schengen rules.

In previous essays, I intentionally gave a provocative dimension to this discussion by suggesting that the introduction of a notion of European citizenship based on national memberships within the European Union produces something like a European *apartheid*, a reverse side of the emerging of a European community of citizens, by incorporating anybody who is already a national citizen in any of the member states, and excluding anybody, however permanently settled and economically or culturally integrated, who comes from extra-Communitarian spaces. The exclusionary aspect arises from the simple fact that differences of nationality, distinguishing the national and the foreigner, which formerly applied in the same manner to all aliens within each nation state, now institute

a discrimination: some foreigners (“fellow Europeans”) have become *less than foreigners*, in terms of rights and social status (they are no longer exactly strangers), while other foreigners, the “extra-Communitarians,” and especially immigrant workers and refugees from the South, are now *more than foreigners*, as it were—they are *the absolute aliens* subjected to institutional and cultural racism. To this general idea, Alessandro Dal Lago and Sandro Mezzadra (2002), Didier Bigo (2005), and other sociologists or politologists who work on the “normalized state of exception” to which migrants are increasingly subjected in order to uphold the distinction between legal and illegal categories of immigrants, have added another element: the violent police operations (including the establishment of camps) performed by some European states on behalf of the whole community (with the help of neighboring client States, such as Libya or Morocco), amount to a kind of *permanent border war against migrants* (see, also, Balibar 2003c). The extent to which this policy is an intentional one can be disputed, but what I draw from their analysis is especially the growing indiscernibility of the concepts of *police* and *war* (also present in other forms of sovereign violence in today’s world): hence the tendency towards a reduction of the *foreigner*, or the “real stranger,” to a notion of virtual *enemy*, which pertains to a power permanently running behind a lost sovereignty, or the possibility of controlling populations and territories in a completely independent manner (see Brown 2010).

Reducing the figure of the stranger to that of the enemy is one of the clearest signs of the crisis of the nation–state, or the historical *national form of the state*, as was already signaled by Hannah Arendt (1951). It shows that the crisis of the nation–state, focusing on its borders but also continuously dislocating these borders, does not coincide with a linear process of withering away. On the contrary, it makes the nation–state, or any combination of nation–states, return to a relatively lawless mode of exercising power, which strongly suggests a comparison with the early modern moments in the construction of the monopoly of violence that Marx interpreted as “primitive accumulation.” They probably have to do with a new phase of primitive accumulation of capitalism on a global scale. But, as Bonnie Honig (2001) rightly suggests, they also testify for an extremely ambivalent character of the political process itself: in fact, whole populations of strangers are now os-



cillating between a condition of *outsiders* and *insiders* in the construction of a postnational and postcolonial order, for which Europe appears as a violent, conflictual “laboratory.” Strangers could become (and very often actually become), either *internal enemies*, who are looked upon with suspicion and fear by the state and the “majoritarian” population, or *additional citizens*, whose very difference enlarges the fabric of rights and the democratic legitimacy of the institutions. Their inclusion in the domain of the “right to have rights” would illustrate what French political philosopher Jacques Rancière called *granting the shareless their share* (Rancière 1998). Indeed, this symmetry is heavily unbalanced yet never completely destroyed, or it is at stake in the daily resistances and vindications of basic rights on the part of the foreigners, making them members of an active community of citizens even before they are granted formal citizenship, thus concretely anticipating a cosmopolitical transformation of the political.

This consideration may sound very optimistic indeed, and I will qualify it through adding a third and last point. I became aware of this when I started reflecting on the consequences of the failed attempt at establishing a European Constitution in 2005, and its relationship to the development of so-called “populist” attitudes in Europe, in fact a revival of nationalist feelings, of which the strangers are the inevitable victims—not only when they come from outside Europe, but between its own “peoples.” *What is cause and what is effect* in this matter can be disputed, but perhaps it does not matter so much, and we must develop a symptomatic interpretation. The French and the Dutch played the role of the bad Europeans in the story, but shortly after the even former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt—not a bad connoisseur—expressed his conviction that, if popular referendums had been called everywhere in Europe, the result would probably have been a “no” in a majority of countries, including Germany. I don’t believe this to illustrate the perpetual conflict between reactionary nationalism and enlightened cosmopolitanism. I also don’t think that the reason for the failure of the “federal” project entirely lies in the social and economic causes that were emphasized by the French Left, when it insisted that the draft constitution had been rejected because it completely endorsed a legitimization of the neoliberal conception of the public sphere, and a dismantling of collective social rights. Even if this is

largely true, which I tend to believe it is, it would not produce a nationalist revival on its own. It could also—at least ideally—foster the development of pan-European social movements, for which democratic advances written into the Constitution (notably in the Charter of fundamental rights) could serve as an instrument. Something else must be acting as well. I believe this might lie in a vicious circle created by the addition of different kinds of xenophobia: on the one hand, negative feelings toward *other European peoples*, or “fellow Europeans,” in each European country; and on the other hand the xenophobia directed against *non-European populations of migrants (or of migrant descent)*—with such highly ambivalent cases as Romanians, Turks, Balkan peoples, or populations of North African descent who have been part of “European history” for centuries in a colonial or semicolonial framework.

This is what I call the *cosmopolitical difficulty* of Europe to deal with its *double otherness*, an internal and an external otherness which are no longer confronted in absolutely separated spaces. This is also the difficulty of Europe to completely distinguish between *internal borders* (between member states) and *external borders* (with the rest of the world, and especially the South), or abolish this distinction and return to a classical status of the national border and the definition of the stranger. To put it in one phrase, European racism directed against immigrant “extra-European” populations, which hampers the development of social movements against neoliberal policies, also results from a projection of the nationalist feeling opposing European nations to one another, which the European construction in its current form has only superficially cloaked. It forms a derivative for a repressed mutual xenophobia. But the reverse is also true: it is the incapacity of European nations, and the unwillingness of European states, to grant migrants and populations of migrant descent equal rights and recognition, as well as the permanent temptation from populist parties and leaders to exploit antimigrant fears and hatreds for domestic purposes, which prevents Europeans from imagining that they could address their most urgent common social and political problems as a single constituency, thus giving rise to a new more “cosmopolitical” moment in the history of democratic citizenship. There is something like a “missing nation” in the middle of Europe, a nation made of several long-established migrant communities with different histories but

a similar final destiny, and also some common cultural characters easily seen as threats to European culture. Once it might have been called the “sixteenth nation” when there were fifteen official member states, now it could be called the “twenty-sixth nation” (an idea already proposed by Catherine di Wenden—see Wenden 1997; with more recent admissions to the EU, including Croatia, one should perhaps more accurately say “the twenty-ninth state”). And it is *this missing nation in the middle* returning in a fantastic manner as a virtual internal enemy that makes it so difficult for all the other nations to perceive themselves as building a single constituency, automatically depriving them of the capacity of collectively influencing the global trends of politics, culture, and the economy.

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