



## The Cultural Semiotics of "European Identity"

*Between National Sentiment and the Transnational Imperative*

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## *ABSTRACT*

This chapter aims to explore the ramifications of meaning and effect of the notion of 'European Identity', from the perspective of a cultural-political semiotics of European integration. Whilst conceptually separating the notion from the more broadly understood and often politically intended term 'the identity of Europe', it tries to unravel 'European Identity' in its twofold relations to 'European politics' on the one hand, and 'European culture' on the other. It approaches 'European Identity' as a three-layered structure: i) a top-down set of discursive constructions emanating from the EU centre; ii) as positioned in relation to the basic parameters of Self-Other dualities in the context of the member-states, as a terrain of symbolic contestation; and iii) in the ways that this concept has been reappropriated and assessed from 'below', by representatives of European populations.

The basic perspective of the paper is that the liminalities and paradoxes inherent in questions of 'European Identity' are the displaced results of the concept's precarious position, wedged between its symbolic analogue, national identity and sentiment, and the contemporary imperative of political-economic transnationalism - an imperative that increasingly transcends traditional nation-state interaction. The thesis is that it is this crunch that basically determines both the need for seeing European integration in terms other than mere pragmatic cooperation, and also the difficulties in realising the concept in any comprehensive and affective sense - as witnessed by all 'Eurobarometer' surveys probing the question of 'how often one feels European'. The paper will finally examine to what extent the concept of 'European Identity' has been affected by the end of the Cold War and the post-Maastricht scenario.

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'[...] if the sign does not reveal the thing itself, the process of semiosis produces in the long run a socially shared notion of the thing that the community is engaged to take as if it were in itself true.' (Umberto Eco)<sup>1</sup>

'[...] la crise de sens frappe le continent [...] parce que le projet européen [...] se montre incapable de donner une signification symbolique et unitaire à une Europe fondée sur des allégeances multiples.' (Zaki Laïdi)<sup>2</sup>

## 1. Introduction: The uses and abuses of a case of identity engineering

Quite a while has passed since Jean Monnet, in 1943, wrote that 'there will be no peace in Europe if States are reconstructed on the basis of national sovereignty [...]. Prosperity and vital social progress will remain elusive until the nations of Europe form a federation or a "European entity" which will forge them into a single economic unit' (Monnet, 1988, pp. 20-21).

This was basically a pragmatic vision of European unity, as the emphasis on 'prosperity' and 'economics' indicates, still fairly far removed from any homogenising, idealistic notion of 'European Identity' - a pragmatic twist that Monnet reportedly came to regret, as symbolised by his famous statement shortly before his death in 1979 to the effect that 'if I were to start all over again, I would begin with education and culture'.<sup>3</sup>

However that may be, this kind of mundane pragmatism is replicated in the 'Schuman Declaration' of 9 May 1950 - the founding document of European integration - where 'United Europe' was conceived not in terms of a grand blueprint where unification would take place in one fell stroke, but rather as a '*de facto* solidarity' (original emphasis), whose role was primarily negatively defined, i.e. intended to eliminate the 'age-old opposition of France and Germany', and only secondarily more positive: to take the 'first step in the federation of Europe'.<sup>4</sup>

In the scholarly field of European integration, this approach, suspended between nation-states and their eventual withering away, found its systematic expression in different variants of neo-functional 'spill-over' and 'sovereignty-pooling' theories,

envisioning a process of semi-automatic progression from divided to unitary interests on the road to 'an ever closer Union', as the Treaty of Rome chose to phrase it.

However, though this approach, practically as well as theoretically, did not lend itself to grand formulations of European unity, it is apparent that the tensions and contradictions on which the imagined road to unity is predicated do contain - at one pole - all the makings of discourses and perceptions of a 'European Identity'. Monnet's 'European entity', the 1950 Declaration's mention of 'federation', the Treaty of Rome's invocation of 'an ever closer Union' ... all potentially transcend the orthodox relations of interstate cooperation and conflict and thus sow the seeds of what the first Delors Commission - on the background of evident signs of 'Eurosclerosis' in the early 80s - dared both to formulate and actively pursue: a 'European Identity', based not only on (presumed) common interests and common political objectives, but also on a common European cultural heritage, on common values, norms, and symbols, and on a future-oriented, intra-European 'mission civilisatrice'.

Apparently, the time had come to move the Community down the road from a 'Gesellschaft' of sorts to a 'Gemeinschaft' of destiny, or at least towards the development of a feeling of 'we Europeans'. Concurrently, 'Eurobarometer' surveys of 'How frequently does one feel European?' started to attract added public and scholarly attention, and 'European integration' started to become a matter of concern for not just political scientists, economists, and students of law, but also for champions of Cultural Studies and the History of Ideas, and students of communication and intercultural competence as well. 'European Identity' became a catchword, often fuzzily conceived, but nonetheless a potent signifier for the need to go beyond short-term, interest-based instrumentalism, and interstate behaviour conceived in Neo-Realist terms. Where analysts up until then had, at best, conceived of an 'Identity of Europe' (e.g. Weidenfeld, 1985) - i.e. a set of common political, historical, and economic interests strong enough to resist centrifugal tendencies, the necessary political 'Zweckrationalität' ('purposive rationality') of a Community that was 'more than' a regime or a customs union but less than a state (William Wallace, in Wallace, Wallace, and Webb, eds, 1983, p. 403) - the late-80s discourses of 'European Identity', forcefully boosted by the Commission, carried a hitherto subdued existential ring, echoing - as symbolic analogy and real backcloth - the affectively cosmological connotations of 'national identity'.<sup>5</sup> This was the time of Edgar Morin's and Hans-Magnus Enzensberger's competing visions of European identities (Morin, 1987; Enzensberger, 1987); of the Commission's 'A Fresh Boost for Culture in the European Community' (1987); of the systematic linkage between 'European Identity' and the '1992 Single Market Campaign'; of the

creation of an increasing number of pan-European symbols, twinning arrangements, and educational exchange networks; of the writing of Jean-Baptiste Duroselle's purportedly all-European history (Duroselle, 1990), etc. In the Treaty on European Union (the 'Maastricht Treaty'), this line of perception enters as the need to 'assert [the EU's] identity on the international scene' (Title 1, Article B), but on a less political note also as the 'conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance' (Title IX, Article 128).

For this was also the time when 'European Unity', in its culturally engineered form as 'European Identity', started to become broadly perceived as the historical endpoint of a long history of the 'idea of Europe', a romantic conception according to which it was the logical extension of a train of thought reaching far back in history, but now for once in circumstances conducive to its material realisation (Hedetoft, 1995, Part I, Ch. VII). 'Europe' became a catchword vehicle for a centuries-old intellectual dream of unity-in-diversity, an identity of identities (Bance, 1992). For pro-Europeanists, it was a time of optimism, mission, and progress.

All this enthusiasm - now, post-Maastricht, pervasively replaced and thrown into relief by its cyclical opposite, pessimism, defeatism, and the uncertainty of conceptual flux - cannot conceal, however, that 'European Identity' is a vague, contradictory, contested, and volatile notion. As far as contradiction is concerned, a close study of one of the Commission's core statements on the concept - its statement on a 'people's Europe' from 1988 -<sup>6</sup> reveals a number of such features, primarily that European 'symbols' are advocated simultaneously as the manifestation of European commonality and also as the means towards *creating* this 'realisation' of 'European Identity' in the minds of Europeans, a realisation of 'cultural homogeneity in all its different manifestations' (*Bulletin/88*, pp. 8-11).

It is also noteworthy that the homogeneity of 'European Identity' as emphasised in some passages is counterposed by statements to the effect that the identity of Europeanness consists in efforts to preserve the separate identities within Europe; hence, the Commission is set to 'maintain the different national and regional cultural identities and thus [sic] the European identity' (*ibid.*, p. 26), to 'respect the national identities of its Member States' (TEU, Title 1, Article F), 'contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States' and hence to 'take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of the Treaty' (TEU, Title IX, Article 128). In this way, the very concept intended to idealise European unity and create it through discourse itself contains a clue towards an interpretation of the reality it refers to in less harmonious terms.

And as for vagueness, volatility, and contestation, it suffices, for now, to think of a 'Eurobarometer' poll from 1991 (no. 36, p. 18) where responses to the standard question on 'How frequently does one feel European?'<sup>7</sup> elicited the interesting result that, measured in those terms and in that way, citizens belonging to countries outside the EC (notably Romania and Albania) possessed far more 'European Identity' than any of the peoples inside the Community. Where in Romania only 18% answered that they 'never' felt European, in the UK the corresponding figure was 69% (the EC average was 49%).<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps it is this volatility and multiperspectuality - the fact that 'European Identity' is a concept that readily lends itself to exploitation by different interests for different purposes - that has worked as a barrier to more thorough attempts to uncover its meanings and effects.<sup>9</sup> Wedged between bland idealism and the pursuit of national interests, between symbolistic discourse and popular scepticism, between 'positive' atrophy and 'negative' sense,<sup>10</sup> the concept has too often been shrugged off, taken for granted, or downright avoided. At best, it has been more or less consensually equated with a 'discordia concors' of a cultural nature. As in the case of nation-state consciousness, the notion of identity and that of culture have been conflated,<sup>11</sup> 'European Identity' apparently evincing the very same pattern of unity-in-diversity as can be ascribed to the European cultural context on an historical backcloth.<sup>12</sup>

This chapter proposes to make some conceptual as well as empirical observations on 'European Identity' in its various constituent patterns and ramifications of meaning, as a topic deserving of attention in its own right, and within the context of a cultural-semiotic reading basically informed by Peircean concepts (Peirce, 1931-58, vols I-VIII; Peirce, 1991; Eco, 1976; Ahonen, ed., 1993) and contemporary theories of the discursive construction of social realities (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Giddens, 1984; Handelman, 1990; Herzfeld, 1992; Lincoln, 1989). Some of the points addressed will be introduced in the form of theses that need to be further elaborated and empirically investigated. Others will be given fuller treatment. But, generally, the main thrust of this chapter is theoretical. The methodological framework will be laid out in the following section. Section 3 will address European Identity 'top down', as constructions and discourses of 'elite' meaning. Section 4 will situate 'European Identity' in relation to the orthodox Self-Other dialectic of national mentalities, as a terrain of dislocated and contested patterns of meaning. Section 5 will investigate 'European Identity' 'bottom up', in terms of the forms it assumes when imagined by European citizens. Finally, Section 6 will present some concluding and synthesising remarks on the concept of 'European Identity' suspended between its analogue, national identity, and the trans-

national imperative of global interdependence,<sup>13</sup> a crunch regionally encrusted and partially 'solved' in and through the institutions and the teleology of the European Union.

## 2. Peirce on 'European Identity': Framing the question in semiotic terms

Having seen little of the 20th century and neither of the two world wars, for obvious reasons Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914) never tried to conceptualise or explain 'European Identity' (henceforth: *EI*).<sup>14</sup> He did, however, occasionally address questions of social identity from a pragmatic-communicative perspective, i.e. the way the social individuation process takes place through a 'semiotic' process of appropriating the world through symbolisation and dialogue (Singer, 1984, chapter 1). This is even more characteristic of a number of contemporary scholars that have drawn important inspiration from Peircean semiotics; Umberto Eco, Milton Singer, Richard Parmentier, Thomas A. Sebeok and many other students of semiotic-cultural processes have, often from the vantage-point of the anthropologist, demonstrated the germaneness of Peircean sign theory for the understanding of identity,<sup>15</sup> though to my knowledge *EI* has never been made the subject of such investigation.

My point in this chapter is not to conduct a highly detailed analysis of *EI* along these lines, but rather to outline in broader terms an alternative way of conceptualising it, a way that can be imagined in terms inspired by Peircean semiotics. The basic point is simple, and can be simply articulated: It makes sense to think of *EI* as one point (the 'Sign'-part) of a triangle conceived as a Peircean 'triangle of signification', a triangle consisting of 'Object', 'Interpretant', and 'Sign' (see diagram p. 13).

In this context there is no need to enter into the intricacies, ramifications, and (sometimes esoteric) academic squabbles surrounding both each of these concepts in isolation (mainly 'Interpretant') and their interrelation as well.<sup>16</sup> The point of this presentation is not epistemological but ontologically analytic, and, in Peirce's pragmatic vein, the proof of the pudding (i.e. the meaning and relevance of these semiotic concepts) lies mainly in the eating (i.e. here their explanatory power vis-a-vis *EI*). Nevertheless, a brief comment on the 'triangle of signification' *per se* is appropriate before proceeding to its contextual application.

Peirce himself, in a well-known statement, defined a Sign as 'something by knowing which you know something more'. Umberto Eco, following the same line of thinking, defines it as 'everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for

something else' (1976, p. 7). Thus defined, the Sign is inherently relational, always - as a Sign - refers outwards, 'stands for', 'substitutes', hints, connotes etc., even though what it signifies 'does not necessarily have to exist', as Eco emphasises (ibid.), except perhaps in the imaginings of people - and even though the relation between the Sign and its 'referent' may be indirect, oblique, tacit, contradictory, or even non-realised by the producer of the Sign.

This is partly because the linkage between the Sign and its ultimate 'referent', the Object for the Sign, is transmitted via the Interpretant - i.e. a unit or framework of perception and interpretation (e.g. cultural norms, values of a generalised, 'objective' nature) - that necessarily interposes itself in order to try to make sense of the Sign, to 'translate' it, invest it with meaning. And though the Interpretant is often/always intrinsic to human agents, Eco correctly makes a point of stressing that '(t)he interpretant is not the interpreter [...]. The interpretant is that which guarantees the validity of the sign, even in the absence of the interpreter. [...] the most fruitful hypothesis would seem to be that of conceiving the *interpretant as another representation which is referred to the same 'object'*" (1976, p. 68; emphasis in the original).

This takes the Interpretant beyond individual whim and total contingency, without presuming any logical or structural constant between these two points of the triangle. In an important sense, the Interpretant is just another sign that functionally, according to perspective, works as the prism of interpretation, the 'medium' or 'frame' according to which the Sign is made to 'refer' to the Object. But from another perspective, the Interpretant may transform into Sign (and vice versa), within a process which Eco defines as 'unlimited semiosis' (ibid., p. 69), a cultural system of signification and meaning that works as its own cause and effect, is epistemologically self-contained and self-perpetuating, and hence may refer to - respectively create - its 'reality', the Object (be this internal or external to the human mind), in multifarious ways. Hence, logically, Eco provocatively describes a general semiotics as '*in principle the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie*' (ibid., p. 7). In other words, the Object is always read in terms and contexts that are both self-defining and intrinsically multiple and deflective: Through Signs that refer to Objects through Interpretants (also Signs) that need Interpretants (also Signs) ... ad infinitum. No 'triangle', therefore, is stable, but its structure of meaning will shift with any change of any definition/reference/interpretation of any of its three poles.

This kind of semiotics may well, as many have done, be described as idealistic and phenomenological rather than pragmatic (though it does not crudely imagine a direct line from referent 'Object' to immanent 'Sign' - this is precisely its sophisticated

feature).<sup>17</sup> It is indubitable that the thesis of 'unlimited semiosis' has a reality-defying (and occasionally conceptually obfuscated) bent that does make it tempting to categorise Peircean semiotics with idealist philosophy of the Berkeleyan or medieval 'Realist' kind, and may make it attractive to esoteric forms of deconstructivism.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, the epithet 'pragmatic' (i.e. the semiotic process always ultimately referring back to the external context, in which it is both produced and used) makes sense if we think of the explanatory value that this 'process-' and 'purpose'-oriented (i.e. ultimately teleological) semiotics can have if applied to specific issues and discourses. Let us therefore retrace our steps, back to *EI*, which presents us with a clear case of triangular signification.

Starting from the perspective of the Object - i.e. the notional-teleological referent always implicated in *EI* discourses as their stable underpinning - it is constituted by 'European political integration', in whatever precise form or shape. Integration is the overarching objective underlying efforts to engineer a 'European Identity' - its *sine qua non*. Without this presumption, *EI* would make little sense. The (by some) striven-for 'identity' of Europe is ultimately of a political nature,<sup>19</sup> a question of states, state interaction, institutionally embedded cooperation of a unique type, an always volatile balancing point between intergovernmental and supranational modalities of integration, of framing the disputed sovereignty question in radically new ways.<sup>20</sup> Thus politics, without always being directly implicated in the discourses and symbolics of *EI*, makes up its signifying and indispensable subtext,<sup>21</sup> as a kind of integration that calls for a mentality of unity (as both condition and effect).

It is precisely because we are here faced with an 'identity of Europe' that looks to go beyond mere intergovernmentalism that constructions of a less politically charged nature are needed, constructions that also transcend what's merely instrumental and politically bounded. The 'identity of Europe' always veers towards a more value-oriented 'European Identity', symbolically and emotively imaginable along lines akin to the structuration of *national* identities, on the one hand because of the political dimension of integration, on the other in an effort to relegate this dimension to a terrain of 'subtext' rather than overt 'text' (not as manipulative efforts, but based on structural necessity). However, in thus construing the political commonalities of 'Europe' as *EI* - a presumptive community of destiny - *EI* does not merely replace the Object, i.e. 'politics', but turns into a Sign of that which it stands for, a 'pretextual' area of discourse and signification.<sup>22</sup>

Initially, however, this manifests little more than a negation, a signifying void that needs to be filled - not just in the sense that the Sign craves inventors and interpreters (i.e. 'Euro-politicians' and their intellectual supporters), but more acutely

in that it needs some substance beyond the sphere of politics that may lend itself as the Interpretant for this new type of intra-European regime, this postmodernised revamping of the duality between National Self and European Other (see section 4 below). And for this purpose the political sphere itself, with its mundane and instrumental connotations, will not do. The sphere breathing vibrancy, purpose, and justification into *EI*, to 'make sense' of it beyond politics<sup>23</sup> to larger social strata as well as to the constructors of the European Union themselves, must be and has been located elsewhere.

This is where 'culture' enters by the back door. As Pieterse (1993) correctly observes, a cultural definition of Europe as a 'community of nations [...] largely characterised by the inherited civilisation whose most important sources are: the Judaeo-Christian religion, the Greek-Hellenistic ideas in the fields of government, philosophy, arts and science, and finally, the Roman views concerning law'<sup>24</sup> has by now become so pervasive as to be almost 'official', or as I have elsewhere termed it, a new orthodoxy.<sup>25</sup> The orthodoxy contains ideal constructions of a (putative) common value basis for all European nation-states, interpretations and inventions of cultural homogeneity (respectively a 'unity-in-diversity' construct) across national borders, a blueprint in turn used for the forging of a contemporary symbolic-cultural context serving as a vehicle for the well-known idealisation of European integration: the EU flag; the passport; the Ode to Joy; the circle of stars; discourses of communitarian purpose; interventions into the world of sports (so far only partially successful); the twinning of towns; the exchange of students; the protection of European media culture from American encroachments (on these issues, see Shore, 1993). At a recent meeting (late 1994) convened by Jacques Delors to discuss *EI*, *pace* a Danish member of his so-called 'think-tank',<sup>26</sup> participants were reportedly agreed that at least two features characterised a pan-European culture: universalism and relativity/self-criticism. However, more interesting than the precise characteristics singled out (they have an uncanny tendency to vary) is the fact that there, as in almost all other contexts, the Sign (Identity) was obviously discussed vicariously in terms of its Interpretant (Culture) - something that should not merely be pointed up as a 'logical' circle, but more importantly as a practical orchestration of that which is constantly being assumed and thus thematised: 'European Identity'.

By discursively signifying *EI* in those terms, it is somehow created in the very same process; the discourse becomes reality (as Sign, however much this Sign may 'lie'), and hopefully accepted in those terms by larger sections of the European popular landscape (however much this may prove to be a pipe-dream; see section 5 below). Ultimately, the Interpretant will have shaped the Sign in the minds of people.<sup>27</sup> This is

given an extra, contemporary twist by the Danish think-tank member in the same article - 'When Europe Was Muslim': Islamic 'civilising' influences on the history of Europe are proffered as an argument for the widening of Europe/EI to include Islamic countries/values, or at least for the softening of the present Islamic enemy image.

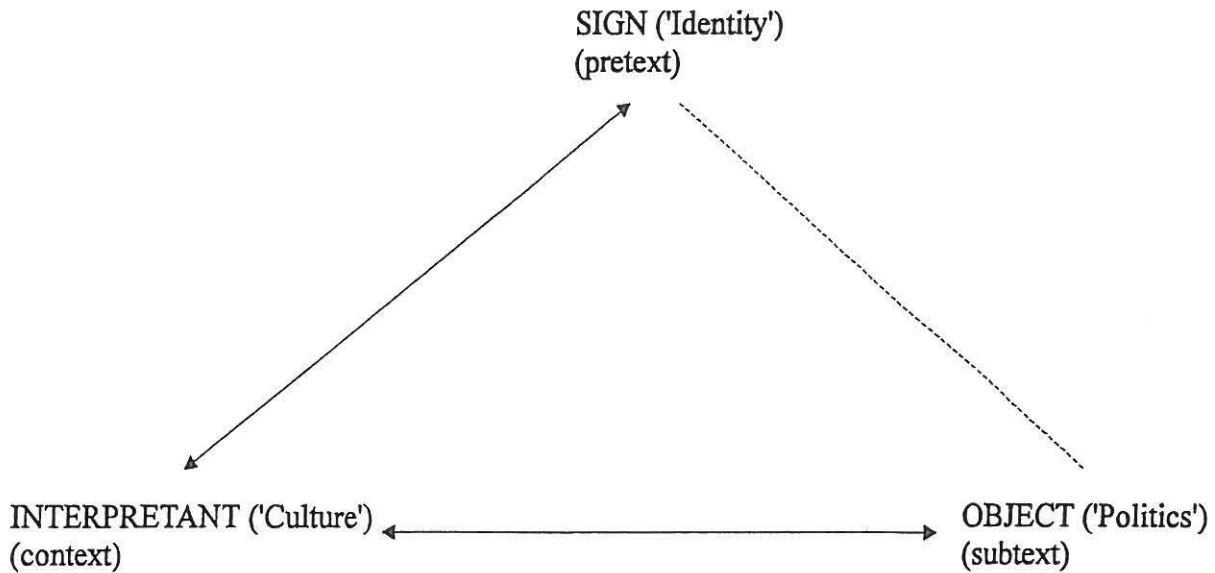
In semiotic terms, attempts such as these to inscribe European integration into an interpretive framework consisting of 'culture' - to use culture as the contextual Interpretant mediating between Object and Sign - are saddled, however, with two serious and fundamental problems. One is that the Sign, for which the Interpretant is supposed to stand in and which it is meant to refer to, is anaemic, typified by perceptual atrophy. Hence, no matter how effective or substantial the cultural-symbolic constructions may (or may not) be, their eventual success is dependent on being interpreted in their intended, 'productive' relation to what is signified. This is far from certain.

The other is that the political Object for which this Sign-Interpretant nexus is ultimately a representation is equally heterogeneous, characterised by differences in national viewpoint, objectives, interpretations of European integration, and so forth. Not just is the Sign-Interpretant linkage dependent on the progress and status quo of political unity, but it is ultimately far more than a representation; it is also an important independent variable, an inherent instrument in the creation of political unity - i.e. in the construction of the homogeneous Object which is simultaneously its 'subtextual' underpinning. Quite a burden to place on a relatively innocuous sign relation, and one that makes it significantly different from its national analogue.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, it should not be overlooked that the very Interpretant, the homogeneity of European culture, is also, as indicated, a highly questionable assumption, at worst a gloss over a fabric of contradictory cultural strands (torn between centres and peripheries, elites and masses, definitions and practices, mainstreams and subcultures), at best a rather myopic intellectual interpretation of the history of European ideas in universalistic terms: An example of harnessing history to present-day political teleologies, a vision not exempt from, indeed feeding on historical amnesia, barring the pervasively encountered invocations of the need to overcome strife, divisions, intra-European warfare etc. Undoubtedly, there is such a need. But whether a litany of common cultural heritage and an identity-as-differences will do the trick is highly doubtful. In the past, this heritage did not prevent Europeans from being at each other's throats - rather the contrary. At present, factions with a large amount of shared history and common culture are busy killing each other in ex-Yugoslavia. It seems that 'common culture' only signifies in a political context when the political will towards the

creation of a common 'identity' is forthcoming. In the EU, the problem is that this will only exist in piecemeal and contradictory forms; hence, *EI* - conversely - often assumes the hue of an almost hyperreal abstraction (Eco, 1987).

As a result of these reflections, the *EI* problematique may schematically be framed in the following fashion:



Two points should be kept in mind when decoding this diagram. One is that the relation between Sign and Object is indirect, mediated through the Interpretant as the point of signifying condensation; i.e. 'culture' becomes the receptacle of 'politics' as well as 'identity', points in two directions simultaneously. And the other is that relations are fluid and changeable, both in the sense that the symbolic, associative charge of each pole may change with circumstance and interests, and in that the process of discursive semiosis implies that the signifying nexus of this 'triangle' will concretely, according to situation, country-viewpoint, and 'levels' (see below), be interpreted in relation to other sign constellations and other normative presumptions.<sup>29</sup> In Nordic countries, for instance, it is common for the sign nexus of *EI* to be related to imaginings of a 'Scandinavian Identity'.<sup>30</sup>

In the following, this framing conceptualisation will be thrashed out on the three levels previously indicated: Primarily, for the reasons given, *EI* will be seen as a top-down invention. Secondly, as it relates to orthodox parameters of Self-Other dualities. And thirdly, as the notion is imagined and conceived of by representatives of EU-populations.

### 3. 'European Identity' from above: Constructions, boundaries, imaginings

This first level can adequately be addressed along four different dimensions (sketched conceptually below, but each in need of more thorough empirical investigation):

1. *EI* as discursive construction and symbolic engineering. This is what I would term the vertically exogenous dimension of *EI*, i.e. embraces a communicative angle having European populations as, hopefully, the eventual recipients and carriers of *EI* - rarely in the sense of orchestrating *EI* as a rival identity, but rather as a supplementary identity layer (Schlesinger, 1987; Shore, 1993; Smith, 1992).

2. *EI* as a construct feeding off imagined differences from 'extra-Europe' as a common Other, i.e. the 'cultural' underpinning of European 'identity on the international scene', as the TEU phrases it (Title 1, Article B). This is the horizontally exogenous dimension, most often these days couched in terms of a European 'security identity' (Wæver et al., 1993) - the modernised European shape given to Karl Deutsch's 'security community' (Deutsch, 1957).

3. *EI* as 'teleological' sign, i.e. as a mode in which future intent and the purposive 'mission' aspect of the EU can be expressed (both 'inwardly' in closed circles of decision-makers, and 'outwardly', for consumption by the media and public opinion), the osmosis from the EU as a sophisticated form of customs union to a community of common meaning and centripetal purpose - though in highly different forms and degrees according to national viewpoint and cyclical situation (here this aspect overlaps with section 4 below).

4. *EI* as institutional 'esprit de corps', the endogenous and 'lived' dimension of *EI* among its political and bureaucratic staff in Brussels, Strasbourg etc. This is where *EU* is, presumptively, closest to Eco's 'socially shared notion of the thing that the community is engaged to take as if it were in itself true' (cf. motto) - though it must be stressed that by 'community' Eco was not talking about the EC, but about 'Gesellschaft' in generic terms.

*re 1:* It has already been indicated that the uniqueness of 'European Identity' as a discursive construction mainly resides in its immanent ontological paradox, and secondarily in that, as Sign, it is signifier and signified simultaneously, in the process of its construction ideally shaping that which it supposedly articulates through 'talk' on the commonality of cultural values and historical roots. *EI* expresses, and tries to fill, a vacuum of meaning and mission at the same time: 'The recognition by the European citizen of this [European] identity will be strengthened by initiatives of a symbolic value', as the formerly mentioned document from 1988 states (*Bulletin/88*, p. 8).

These initiatives, allegedly, should bring home to people something which already exists, in the form of 'recognition'. Inversely, however, the nature of that which is the subject of attention is such that it cannot exist - as 'identity' proper - without being the mental property of the 'European citizen'.<sup>31</sup> It may, of course, be 'symbolised' and thus created, but this discursive ontology alone is an expression of its very 'defect',<sup>32</sup> i.e. that it is caught in a warp between wishful thinking and materialisation, between a confident unifying mission and an uncertain future, between being no more than a Sign of the objectives of (parts of) the political elites in Europe and, through the successful communication of discourse, becoming the subjective identifier of the 'masses'.

However, even more significant than such immanent tensions and expressive absences is the basic grounding of such *EI* discourse in its simultaneous necessity and contradictory nature. True as it may well be, as frequently argued, that the EU is not a zero-sum game, but that all actors stand to gain more than they lose (e.g. in terms of influence, security, or economic benefits), still, as far as 'power/sovereignty' as well as 'identity' are concerned, the opposite option should also be considered (and might not be at odds with the former). As Robert Keohane and Stanley Hoffmann have argued (1989, p. 44 ff.), the European integration process as it impinges on sovereignty, power distribution, decision-making procedures and competencies etc., should perhaps be conceived less in terms of replacing one centre of control with another than as one resulting in a vacuum of control and decision-making and in partial power dispersion: things made impossible or difficult at one end of the 'competency scale' (the nation-state) should not be imagined as being in turn smoothly transferred to the other (the EU). This is a 'negative' structure without a clear centre and a lot of uncertainty and conflict as regards decision-making - a structural 'vortex' (ibid., p. 44) where the rules of the game are being continuously redefined and actors are suspended between two poles of the pendulum of power and influence; but also one that constantly hankers for clear rules and a stable centre, on the analogy of the orthodox nation-state. Such a negative structure may be precisely the breeding-ground for cost-benefit calculi showing figures (political or economic) in the black rather than the red for most actors, but must also be one with a serious identity problem - and hence one that, of necessity, longs for a stable identity core.

Conceived of in this way, *EI* - in spite of its discursive presumption of wholeness and centripetal harmony - is the necessary manifestation of a conflictual political ontology; manifests, in one process, both positive ambitions and their negative underpinning in the shape of one centralising and uniform speechification of identity - and

hence the immanently volatile nature of the (political) Object in the triangle. At the same time it would be consonant with the downplaying (rather than elimination) of cultural homogeneity in the European landscape, for the Interpretant linking political conflictuality with the identity of benefit as well as putative mission is best suited to this purpose if it can be defined as a 'homogeneous patchwork': *discordia concors* - positives and negations in one. This, at the same time, is an identity that does not wish to supplant completely its constitutive underpinning, the national identities of its member states, but part of whose ontology it is to be a supplement. In one sense, this is a contradiction in terms, for an 'identity', however defined, by its very nature lays claims to centrality. In another, this is the very uniqueness of *EI*: conflictuality and marginality posing as core, a negation posing as a 'positive'. That this is possible in turn has a lot to do with the significance of the next point.

*re 2*: Whether conceived of as an 'identity of Europe' in political and security terms, or as 'European Identity' in more existentialist senses, the discourses and forging of *EI* have substantively been, and are still, based on attempts to subordinate the intra-EU duality between Self and Other to a practical redefinition in terms of 'EU-Europe' as Self, and 'extra-EU' as Other. Thus, Europe as (cultural and value-based) sameness has pervasively been proffered as an argument for 'identity' along lines of negative demarcation: Democratic and freedom-loving Europe against Asiatic despotism to the East, against Islamic fundamentalism to the South, and against American materialism to the West.

As long as the first of these equalled 'actualised socialism' and the Cold War lasted, this notion, backed by the political and security demarcations in Europe, seemed tenable, in spite of the fact that 'Europe' patently comprised more than the EC/EU area of Western Europe, and in spite of the fact that the integration processes in Europe had from the very outset been dependent on the aid and support of the USA, institutionally encrusted in the objectives and structure of NATO. In this light, it makes sense that the heyday of *EI* discourses and enthusiasm, top-down, coincided with the 'victory phase' of the West during the Cold War: the late 1980s. Defeated, but not yet gone, the East constituted the best possible moral and ideological backdrop for the cultivation of *EI*, since it negatively reinforced both political cohesion, the belief in the superiority of common democratic values, and the incipient expansionism of European unity and 'identity' to include also parts of the East.

Since the major upheavals in the political landscape of Europe in 1989-90, the production of images of *EI* along such lines of absolute contrastiveness has become seriously weakened. It is now far more difficult to pinpoint the nature of *EI* in terms of

what it is not. The Object's determination of the Interpretant of identity - i.e. 'culture' - has become blurred, as the Object - political integration along lines of widening and/or deepening - has also become less well-defined and conceptually homogeneous. The Sign becomes emptied of meaning. Apart from the fact that national identities are evidently less willing to let themselves be defined, if only discursively, in a position of subordination to *EI*, all the three above-mentioned negative parameters have taken on a hue of paradox and fluctuation: the security question in the East has turned into a dilemma, in the sense that attempts to push NATO eastwards are coming up against Russian remonstrances - objections that can no longer be countered by drawing an 'iron' line in the sand; in spite of renewed spouts of anti-Islamic imagery, the Bosnian conundrum has contributed towards muddying this politico-cultural-religious line of demarcation as well; and although rifts in the transatlantic link have opened up, the USA is not (for combined reasons of power, geography, and history) as useful as a negative backdrop for the creation of unity and identity in Europe as the other two.

This implies that the 'negative' agenda for the construction of *EI* in any of its ramified meanings has deteriorated as the 90s has progressed. The usefulness of a contrastive Other for internal cohesion has abated as questions regarding what basically constitutes European homogeneity have been foregrounded, as the geopolitical lines of demarcation have become blurred, as 'widening' (but how far?) is being seriously considered, as common security and defense is hanging in the balance and is being practically questioned by EU waffling in ex-Yugoslavia, and as lines of dissent concerning world trade (WTO) can be traced internally in the EU. What the 'Europe' of 'European Identity' is, in other words, is becoming increasingly obfuscated (Shore, 1993). The global as well as regional situation for the EU as an international actor is propitious for neither the discourse nor the practical manifestations of *EI*. Somewhat paradoxically, it now seems that such 'identity' is more emphatic and enthusiastic in would-be member states to the East (Poland, the Czech Republic etc.) than within the EU itself, where these suitors - in the form of discussions on future 'widening' - presently (late 1994) have a negative function for perceptions of *EI*: they muddy the situation, create internal disagreements, and thus reveal cracks in the uniform picture of European unity and common mission - to the extent of threatening the well-entrenched hub of integration, the German-French axis, in the process perhaps paving the way for an unholy and hitherto unthought-of alliance between France and the UK.

All this is a sign of what the 'International Herald Tribune' (8 December 1994) has termed 'a shifting identity' for the EU. Within this dimension, it manifests itself as doubts and uncertainties about regional demarcations, and about the lack of a common

security agenda, of clear-cut external contrasts and 'enemy images', and of a common 'external' sense of purpose and unity. *EI* is thus thrown back on its own 'internal' resources and definitions to an exceptional extent, respectively on a reforging of a new regional strategy for acting on the global stage (e.g. common security and defense) in order to recast what will be addressed now, i.e. the unitary teleology of (future) integration.<sup>33</sup>

*re 3:* The third dimension concerns *EI* as a signifier of dynamic, processual 'purpose' and destiny, a trajectory pointing towards a centripetality of future development, towards an increasing degree of coextensiveness between different national positions, between culture, politics, and popular identifications, and between identity and territory. In this sense, this dimension consists of the symbolic-idealistic baggage on a 'train' in constant motion, a train that is perhaps centrally defined in terms of this very process (and its imagined destination) rather than its (putative) end-results, let alone its constituent components in a structural-synchronic context. In other words, we are here addressing e.g. the functionality of original 1950s images of the EEC as a 'peace movement', of the idealistic purposiveness underlying the 'ever closer Union' (in itself a very processual definition), of the visionary content of the late-80s Single Market Programme (including the role of 'European culture and identity') - but also of the lack of such teleological imaginings in e.g. the mid-70s and the early 80s as part and parcel of diverse crises of 'Eurosclerosis' and the like (perhaps the early 90s should be included as well).

Way and beyond any simplistic explanation of this aspect of *EI* as mere 'ideology' or 'justification', a strong case can be made for seeing it as a materially necessary force underlying EC/EU integration - a 'symbolic construction' of a reality in the making; in a significant sense, such unifying visions and missions functionally replace, respectively make up for, the weakness and heterogeneity of the political centre, the diversity of national interests, and can be seen as necessary in order to catapult the EU beyond the status of an instrumental, interstate cooperative regime. This aspect of *EI*, in other words, relies on the EU being, at least partly, 'more than' intergovernmentalism, on being a regime having a supranational component.

For the same reasons, it is understandable how and why such *EI* discourses must originate in and be most strongly cultivated by these very institutions (Commission and Parliament), for such discourses are consistent with the unifying purpose that they represent and try to forge. In this sense, the teleological component, the 'mission', is an important subcategory of the overall construction of *EI* discourses and symbolism as addressed under (1) above, and as such are targeted at the 'anonymous masses' in

Europe.

However, it would seem to be even more significant as an aspect of intra-political communication, i.e. as a coded Sign useful for the sending and receiving of political signals among the political actors on the stage of European integration,<sup>34</sup> i.e. among the national elites supportive of European unity, though in highly different ways and to varying degrees (Schlesinger, 1987). In this sense, *EI* talk about the future of Europe is a signifier of interpretations of and degrees of commitment to European integration along the linear trajectory - but also, of course, since *any* use of such coded speech implies some wished-for extent of integration, in itself signals a vision of common purpose - though how this should be defined in turn becomes a terrain of political contestation (cf. section 4 below).

One thing, therefore, is the defiant and partly divisive import of Margaret Thatcher's well-known Bruges address in 1988, where she directly tackled the question of 'the identity of Europe itself' (Thatcher, 1988, p. 1) along lines such as: 'We British are as much heirs to the legacy of European culture as any other nation' (ibid., p. 1); '(t)he European Community is *one* manifestation of that European identity. But it is not the only one' (ibid., p. 2); and '(c)ertainly we want to see Europe more united and with a greater sense of common purpose. But it must be in a way which preserves the different traditions' (ibid., p. 4) - in the process travestyng the venerable idea she was addressing as 'some sort of identikit European personality' (ibid., p. 4). It is quite another to discursivise the European Community in existential terms as a 'historische Schicksalsgemeinschaft' ['a historical community of destiny'], as did Helmut Kohl in 1984, as homage paid to a supranational ideal, though also there the Kanzler's basically national orientation and underlying national objectives were in plain view.<sup>35</sup> And it is yet a third to enthuse about *EI* in the vein of Jacques Delors, because in the case of the former Chairman of the Commission it was a less-than-coded way of expressing his desire for a federalist Europe, in which *EI* would equal 'national' identity.<sup>36</sup>

The three modes of perceiving and construing *EI* as a common mission represent a continuum within the EU as a whole which, however different, still pivots round a common need for using 'Europe' as a point of discursive reference for commitments, intentions, and teleological self-projections along a line of linear development - a 'process towards ...' - and as a way of distributing blame, shame, and acknowledgement among the member-states involved: All three modalities are potential communicators of images of Oneself as well as of the EU-Other, via the detour of 'European Identity'. (See further section 4 below.)

*re 4:* The fourth dimension - *EI* as institutional 'esprit de corps' - must, though

highly probable, remain somewhat speculative, since relatively few studies have been conducted along these lines,<sup>37</sup> and since empirical data would have to be gleaned through ethnographic studies conducted on the spot (say, in Brussels) and over an extended time-period, investigating through qualitative methods the political anthropology of integration as it affects the personal carriers of 'supranational' functions in the EU - as far as social identification and different national loyalties are concerned. This needs to be done, but until such time the following theses may be proffered.

The basic thesis: that *EI* comes closest to being an actualised, individually carried and socially underpinned, form of an affective and purposeful sense of belonging among the political and bureaucratic actors directly affiliated with the supranational wheels in the EU machinery in Belgium and France: an organisational 'esprit de corps', whose core of identification - it could be termed its 'soziales Glaubenssystem' (Norbert Elias, 1989, 194 f.) or 'the socially shared notion of the thing' (Eco) - can be nothing other than some version of *EI* as that which gives a unifying purpose to, makes sense of, their actions and functions.<sup>38</sup> In that sense, the enthusiasm and belief of a Jacques Delors could be seen to 'logically' encapsulate, in its highest form, this institutionally 'endogenous' form of *EI* on a much broader scale of applicability, approximating a bridging between the contradictions pointed up so far. This would be explicable along the following two lines of analysis.

1. Here we are faced with the institutional encrustation and convergence of the different 'ideas of Europe', with supranational structures whose very functionality and purpose are dependent on notions of some common Europeanness being shared by their core actors. This aspect is underscored by the relatively rigorous selection procedures employed in most member states as regards the appointment of EU functionaries - procedures that also encompass a certain amount of normative, attitudinal, and motivational screening vis-a-vis European orientations - a certain measure of idealism being almost a *sine qua non* (this would most likely work as a pre-application selection criterion as well, in the sense that it is less than likely that anyone would apply for these posts who did not possess such qualities). It would further be strengthened by the nature of the EU personnel as an almost self-contained social entity based on routinised, day-to-day international social interaction (both at work and without), on a relatively high degree of social insulation from the surrounding Belgian environment, on children attending schools catering specifically to the need of 'EU' families on a basis of international mixing etc.

In such a close-knit setting, institutionally its own life-support system and elevated above the normal goings-on of *national* political and social integration, it

makes sense for 'Europe' to become a receptacle of identification and even value-orientation that transcends both discourse and the usual 'cultural' Interpretant: here, the Object signifies on a personal level, mediated through a prism of immediate interaction and common purpose/interests. Europe comes to symbolise an idea that unites, lends credence to one's actions, and provides a common frame of concrete reference. It seems probable, in other words, that this particular institutional setting is a springboard for not just political and bureaucratic practices, but social and identity practices as well - a fusion between (in Anthony Giddens's terms) 'social integration' and 'system integration' (Giddens, 1984, p. 28 ff.) - the 'mission' being what represents the mental leap from 'Gesellschaft' to 'Gemeinschaft'.

2. This second point has to do with the presumption underlying the reference to this kind of *EI* as an 'esprit de corps'. In this case, the martial camaraderie analogy goes beyond loose associative meanings. The EU machinery and its human staffing (particularly in the many DGs of the Commission) are in an important sense the sole representatives of actual unity, positioned in a functional setting where they constantly face a more or less heterogeneous (respectively hostile) member-state environment - in the shape of conflictual claims and expectations; neo-realist patterns of behaviour towards a supranational regime with a eye to promoting national, sectional, or regional interests; and a mostly less than culturally idealising interpretation of EU integration, particularly on the part of the member-state populations which are, ultimately, the communicative targets of *EI* practices and discourses. On this score, the officials are, in a sense, in a situation analogous to that of national states, but in an exacerbated form, since the EU bureaucracy does not have the palliative of legitimacy, sovereignty, and enforcement that states do within their own borders. Further - important in this context - they cannot rely on the existence of a 'European Identity' in any nationally analogous sense - and for that reason must constantly try to construct it in an effort to counteract the inherent weakness of the formal centre - being, as it is, a vortex and receptacle of tensions in terms of *Realpolitik*.

Conversely, however, this very fact may in itself be conducive to a strengthening of *EI* as a mental feature of the EU officials themselves. Here, the combination of 'mission', 'social closeness', 'a non-comprehending external environment', and 'personal idealism' is a potent mixture for the engendering of a siege mentality of identity, one that is likely to strengthen the intent of the functionaries and to forge it into an embattled 'esprit de corps'. Naturally, outside scepticism and obstacles might also lead to institutional demoralisation and purposive anaemia in periods of scepticism and 'Euro-sclerosis' - or to balancing acts between the two.<sup>39</sup> This cannot be predicted in any

abstract sense and is probably subject to cyclical variation. What can legitimately be argued, however, is that to the extent that EU functionaries do, at any given point, feel it incumbent upon them to champion an idea of Europe along the path of 'ever closer union', and to pursue this in their political actions, they will also tend to develop *EI* as 'esprit de corps' within their own environment, pitted against a negative boundary that it would presumably rather be without. And vice versa. The two dimensions must be presumed to mutually reinforce each other in both the 'optimistic' and the 'pessimistic' scenario.

Having tried to get conceptually to grips with *EI* in its different discursive and also centripetally defined modalities 'top down', it is now time briefly to address the outlines of such constructs from a more centrifugal viewpoint - i.e. through the prism of the member-states.

#### 4. 'European Identity' as a terrain of symbolic contestation<sup>40</sup>

As a form of discourse originating in the institutional form of EU cooperation, *EI* as seen from the perspective of the member states takes on another set of meanings and a more instrumental dimension. Basically, it translates into a medium for the distribution of blame and shame, credit and recognition among the member states, into a new receptacle for images and evaluations of both the national Self and the national Other, for signalling the extent and depth of one's European commitments (see above), and turns into a mental and discursive modifier of the orthodox linkage between 'Us' and 'Them' as national categories of self-definition. Thus, *EI* as Sign may be read according to a number of rather disparate Interpretants, in turn referring to - respectively creating - each their own Objects (in terms of the degree, form, and depth of 'integration').

In this way, *EI* - though not the product of the member states *eo ipso* - can be instrumentalised from this perspective as an ideological-symbolic competitive parameter, making it a terrain of contestation rather than unity. *EI* becomes a battleground of discursive interpretation, a prism through which both 'Europe' as well as other nations can be evaluated - a new form of stereotyping mechanism. In June 1991, *The European* headlined an article condensing the results of a survey on European orientations in six member states in this way: 'French enthusiasm puts Danes to shame',<sup>41</sup> in the process providing an apt example of such uses of 'Europe': If member states can be projected as having a pragmatic, 'minimalistic', or reluctant attitude to integration, this can enter into a new politics of blame and become a new negative

stereotype - not only on the part of the genuine enthusiasts at the EU core, but also - more interestingly somehow - by other member states (or potential member states wanting to document their eligibility).<sup>42</sup>

What particularly makes this phenomenon interesting is its immanent contradictoriness: *that* in the process of allocating this kind of blame and shame, the presumption (that the sender must be somehow less 'national' and more 'European') is eroded by the very conditions constituting the efficacy of this peculiar Self-Other dialectic - i.e. being a 'better' European only becomes meaningful within the context of that which the discourse denies, namely national orientation (in the above example, 'enthusiasm' for Europe is still 'French!'); and, consequently, *that* messages of this kind are sent in order to project a 'Self' as better than a particular 'Other' - a Self which is, of course, national. Or, inversely, as I have phrased it elsewhere,<sup>43</sup> 'Europe' as a shorthand commendation of one nation is simultaneously the stigma of another. In this way *EI* becomes absorbed into, becomes part of, national identity constructions, but also modifies them in the sense that the discourse and the symbolics itself constitutes a recreation and reinterpretation of nationalism through the introduction of an important new Interpretant - the present-day European equivalent of Political Correctness in the USA.

Like PC, and for much the same reasons, *EI* is both interpretable and subject to different normative evaluations. It can be constructed as more or less strong, more or less committing, more or less desirable (cf. the Delors-Kohl-Thatcher continuum in section 3 above). What on the part of Germany and (especially) Catholic member states - à la 'French enthusiasm' - has often been constructed as a moral obligation and an avenue towards the diminution of nationalism, has just as frequently been countered by representatives of Protestant ethics in the North as hypocrisy, superficiality, or downright deception. From the latter perspective, *EI* as a national quality encompassing wholehearted commitment is a sham, a front, an intentionally manipulated simulacrum (frequently subverted with reference to the failure of Italy, Spain etc. to comply with EU rules and rulings). And it is countered by what is seen to be less idealizing, more realistic assessments - though still accompanied by commitments to a 'Europe' - sometimes even a 'European Identity' - of sorts. However, this is a kind of *EI* which subordinates any *EI* to the traditional comforts of the National - as 'interest', 'culture', or 'identity' - and wishes to weaken the connotations of 'supranationality' that refuse to be completely eliminated from notions of European unity and identity.

Naturally, this could be approached from the perspective of ideal unity, in which case *EI* would seem to be fraying at the edges - contaminated by national interests and identities. But it is also, and more appropriately, accessible to discussions from another

vantage-point: the construction of (national) Otherness. Here, *EI* re-emerges as an intermediary between national identities and foreign stereotypes, as a factor containing the direct (often negative) construction of the Other. This intra-EU Other may well be branded as menacing and suspect etc., but only indirectly via the morality of 'Europe', respectively *EI* - as units infringing against the non-nationalistic (though not necessarily non-national) objectives and mentality of 'Us'. Sign and Object, signifier and signified grate against each other. *EI* turns into the weakened substance of the competing national interests in the EU, interests that ever more clearly are acknowledged as making up its foundation, but which on the other hand are not allowed to present themselves for what they are (except occasionally in the tabloids, the sports arena, and the sphere of private morality).

As the Maastricht debates demonstrated, EU-Europe is locked into a frequently painful oscillation between national fact and supranational ideal. *EI* is the discursive product thereof, and therefore so volatile. It emerges as a new form of the mutual recognition among nation-states - and it is precisely - and only - in this form of recognising the national Other that even hostile sentiments and objectives are compelled to express themselves, if they want to stay legitimate and above-board. Even the allocation of 'shame' is predicated on recognition, in an ideal pursuit of a common goal. This is the 'cultural' reflection of the institutional interdependence of states that have agreed to modify their competitive anarchy - to sustain their differences in the guise of a unitary idealism. This - the severance between different national interests and their political-ideological form of manifestation - is probably the rational underpinning of the claim (not infrequently encountered) that European integration is a threat to national identities: the less a national identity is permitted to vent itself contrastively (in direct comparison with the Other), the more it is thrown back on its own domestic resources - on properties, values, and achievements that it can legitimately take credit for as national. The alternative is, as already indicated, to transfer exclusivist sentiments to the extra-EU Other.

In the former case, *EI* becomes - at best - a discursive form of tepidly recognising 'Europe' as a common cultural locus and frame of action and reference, and - at worst - an affectively experienced obstacle to full national identity. In the latter case, at best *EI* translates into a negatively determined and cognitively carried Sign of belonging - a relatively vacuous boundary demarcation as far as day-to-day self-constructions are concerned; at worst, inventions of extra-Europe are used to feed into people's communal self-definition as a booster of *national*, rather than 'European', identity. Thus, it is appropriate to proceed to take a closer, more empirical look at how *EI* shapes up 'bottom-up'.

## 5. 'European Identity' from below

It has been mentioned on a couple of occasions above that the ideal - though often not real - target group for the discourses of *EI* are the European peoples, and, thus, the conversion of this plural form into the singular 'people' by means of, *inter alia*, these very constructions and the unity of purpose, belonging, and cultural cosmology underpinning them. It makes sense, therefore, to enquire into the ways and forms that *EI* enters into the value patterns, orientations, and modes of affective belonging of representatives of the 'common man'.

This is most frequently done by means of quantitative surveys along the lines of 'Eurobarometer' - which regularly poses questions on 'feelings of Europeanness' and on the percentage relations between 'nationality' and 'Europe'. Most recently, the issue was covered by 'Eurobarometer' no. 40 (see p. 83), concluding that '40% say they see themselves as (NATIONALITY) only, while 45% feel (NATIONALITY) and European'. Such figures, however, are not only difficult to interpret (Hedetoft, 1995; Shore, 1993; Smith, 1992; Tarrow, 1994) - they are basically ill-suited in getting to grips with a question that calls for more qualitative-interpretive approaches. Figures are not inappropriate as such, but they can provide little more than a possible launchpad for investigations into the structuration of identities. And they are likely to fail miserably when confronted with two kinds of identity (national and European) that must be presumed to rest on widely different ontological bases and hence ought to be treated epistemologically differently.<sup>44</sup>

What follows is an attempt to go about analysing *EI* in a different and hopefully more satisfactory way - to tease out some typical patterns and correlations of 'identity', by comparing the reactions of three sample populations in Britain, Denmark, and Germany, to questions (posed in questionnaires as well as interviews) such as 'Do you ever feel European? If affirmative, in which ways and when? What do you feel you have in common with other Europeans?'.<sup>45</sup>

In the three groups, the issue of 'European Identity' triggered a number of cross-national similarities as well as some very distinct differences between the national texts. The most salient similarities are as follows.

Only very few respondents unequivocally, sincerely, and vocally embrace a European identity. In the Danish group there is none. In the German group 2, or 3 at the most. In the British group 2. These are respondents who do not hedge, present conditions, see Europeanness as an outgrowth of their national identity, define European identity negatively (as 'not being something else'), or downright reject the notion. If

these categories - apart from the last one - are accepted, the number identifying with Europe grows in all three groups, least so in the Danish, and in near-parallel proportions in the German and British groups. Those who more or less emphatically reject the notion of a European identity run to 9 in the Danish group, 6 in the German, and only 3 in the British. I shall return to the qualitative dimension underlying these figures below.

Another similarity resides in the discourse and level of mentality employed.<sup>46</sup> All respondents, without exception, approach the subject - if viewed in a positive light - cognitively and argumentatively, constructing their 'European identity' on a foundation of common culture and history, i.e. what they rationally know, or think they know they have in common with other Europeans - even if what they perceive to have in common is a history of war and divisions: 'Historical events have influenced us across the borders; the Second World War!' (DK-7B); 'Ich habe mit anderen Europäern eine z.T. leidvolle Geschichte gemeinsam, ausserdem eine grosse kulturelle Gemeinsamkeit, einen Lebensstil...' (FRG-34);<sup>47</sup> 'We are molded by the past, and by a variety of cataclysmic common experiences, notably the two world wars, still in living memory' (UK-54). Thus, even where respondents are in the process of erecting positive reasons for their European identity, they cannot refrain from imagining a number of negatives - historical divisions that ought to work as a lesson for present-day unity. And it is only imaginings of such 'negatives', not the sometimes rather elaborate listings of the European cultural legacy, which tap into the area of felt values and a discourse of affectiveness.

This is even clearer in the two remaining 'negative' fields, i.e. the modality within which European identity is situationally confirmed by reference to an extra-European Otherness, and - particularly - that where it is rejected as meaningless or non-existent in view of the strength of positive national identity. As indicated above, the latter is predictably most pronounced in Denmark; interestingly, it finds an inverted corollary in parts of the British text, where 'European identity' is accepted on the negative, self-denying argument that respondents are, or feel, European because they do *not* feel British - this is no doubt one of the principal reasons for the large proportion of British respondents who lay claim to a European identity in one form or another. The weakness of their national identification propels them towards Europe, supported by the British history of cosmopolitanism, and negatively by their American images (see further below). The former argumentative figure can be found in all three groups, but with varying emphasis, contrast, and extra-European point of reference - and is, moreover, most frequent in the German group. Also here, the Danish case stands out

somewhat by drawing a line of demarcation *within* Europe: there is a thoroughgoing tendency for the Danish text to reject 'European identity' and to embrace 'Scandinavian' or 'North European identity' as the international form of orientation acceptable to a large part of the Danes, in the process constructing an intra-European and intra-EC Other which, variously, includes or excludes Germany and Britain (depending on whether 'Us' is defined as Scandinavian or North European). This links up with a surprisingly strong emphasis in the Danish text, regarded as a whole, to manifest suspicion or rejection of South European values and cultures - which for these Danes includes France.<sup>48</sup> On the background of these initial remarks, a few observations on each of the three national texts are in order.

In the *Danish* text, the most prominent feature is the number of respondents answering in the negative to this question, and in absolutist, often very curt verbal forms not found in the other two groups: 'I feel like a Dane only. I suppose we mostly have the skin colour in common with other EC countries' (2); '...it is not really a European feeling' (6); 'I never feel European' (28); 'No!' (31); 'No' (43); 'I feel Danish much more frequently than I feel European, because it seems vague' (44). Others are more doubtful or sceptical: 'Yes, I think so' (3); 'I feel Danish and as such also European. Geographically I am European' (7A); 'Yes, as a rule I feel European when for instance I am together with both Europeans and non-Europeans' (34). This last point is echoed by a few others, e.g. DK-24: 'Yes, when I am together with people from other parts of the world, particularly the 3rd World, but to some extent also with Americans', and also DK-25 and DK-33 argue along such lines, situating their feelings within a range of different (hierarchically structured) relativising dualities, from locality to sports events to attending conferences in the Far East. However, the most striking feature is the above-mentioned incidence of references to 'Scandinavianness' or 'North Europeanness': 'I feel considerably more affinity with the other Scandinavian countries, which historically and culturally are more akin to us than Europe, which is an inhomogeneous mass' (66); 'Yes, as a *Northern European* at any rate' (26); 'Not exactly as a European, more like a Scandinavian' (36); 'I don't feel particularly European, more Scandinavian' (38); '...a common past and history, especially in Scandinavia. For instance, I wouldn't say we have much in common with Albanians' (44). What is striking here is less the fact that Danes conjure up a Scandinavian 'brotherhood', than that this image clearly steps in and takes over from their Europeanness, acting almost as their internationalist, legitimising escape route.

Thus, almost all the Danes deny having a European identity or hedge it around with ifs and buts, qualifications and limitations. At best it is a fleeting, situationally

determined, 'negative' feeling. Only one, in fact, starts her answer more robustly by stating that 'I always feel European', but immediately adds '.... as well as always feeling Danish', while continuing, 'i.e. it is not something I ever think about at all' (5). She qualifies her Europeanness, interestingly, by first noting that '(w)hen I can cross frontiers without any identity documents, then I *am* European' and subsequently by arguing that '(m)y history back in time is part of the history of the others, and vice versa', thus confirming once again the peculiar argumentative European dialectic between Self and Other, and between culture and identity; the fact that the past linked people in *antagonistic* ways is now, by a few (and many more in the other two texts), seen as a reason for their *common* identity; cultural diversity is transformed into an argument for common interests and identity. What, at earlier points in history, was interpreted as the legitimate justification for conflicts, showdowns, and even wars, is now - in this variant - offered as the prime reason for unity. However, in the Danish text this is the odd-one-out. Generally, the Danes reject, in all substantive senses, the notion that they 'are' European in other than negative and/or ephemeral meanings.

This does not imply that the Danish text does not recognise a common cultural background in Europe, but there is no affectiveness linked to the occasional enumeration of historical facts: 'I have a vast cultural heritage in common with other Europeans' (3); 'In spite of the difference between protestantism and catholicism, Europe is an old Christian part of the world...' (7A); 'History, for better or worse...' (24); '...common language roots, (approximately) the same behaviour and many cultural traits in common' (26); 'We have Christianity and an attitude to life in common' (33); '... history, languages that are partly similar, same life-style, etc.' (34); 'The European development, historically viewed; for instance, the massive population movements' (43). All well and good; but, for almost all these Danes, such historical circumstances do not even come close to translating into the internalised value ambit of identity, let alone existentialism, are not appropriated by any will to a European identity which transcends the pragmatic and the cognitive. In other words, the increased measure of outward-bound aggressiveness that is evident elsewhere in the Danish data is specifically bounded and defined as a feature of Danishness proper, and cannot be read as a mediating mentality form between national and international, an indication of any dilution of the perceptual uniformity and homogeneity of Danish identity.

In the *German* data, where one might, perhaps, expect a more 'Europeanist' inclination, the most striking phenomenon is partly the highly guarded and circumscribed nature of the respondents' European sentiments and commitment - here the German discursiveness of rational postnationalism is conspicuously, and predictably,

present - partly the frequency and character of the extra-European thought figure. In addition, it should also be emphasised that a fair number of the German respondents readily concede that they do not feel 'European', though this is, in most cases, coupled with some form of relativised statement (e.g. '(i)ch fühle mich noch nicht als Europäer, da ich in einer entsprechenden Situation noch nicht war' - FRG-23),<sup>49</sup> and is *never* explained - as in the Danish text - with reference to the respondents' *German* identity.<sup>50</sup> In two cases, respondents reject the notion of a European identity by interpreting the postnational argument in humanistic and individualistic terms: 'Ich fühle mich als Mensch. Als solcher versuche ich, menschlich zu sein und zu denken' (17);<sup>51</sup> 'Ich fühle mich, wenn ich es genau prüfe, weder als Deutscher noch als Europäer, sondern als ein Individuum, eingebunden in nähere und fernere Lebenskreise und eben dadurch geprägt. Ich fühle mich nicht als Europäer, aber (...) wir [kommen schon] aus einem gemeinsamen Verstehens- und Verständigungsraum. Wenn Sie so wollen [!], fühle ich mich dann als Europäer. (Vielleicht auch im hilflosen Umgang mir einem fernen Eingeborenen)' (21).<sup>52</sup>

This last point, though clearly deriving from this respondent's repository of forthcoming politeness towards the assumed agenda of the interpreter, nevertheless echoes the most pervasive feature of the German text - i.e. the frequency with which Europeanism, however strongly argued and identified with, is situated in negative, relational 'Ausland' images. Thus, one of the most crucial conceptual figures in the German text as a whole here assumes yet another central role. If the six respondents who clearly feel no European identification at all are subtracted (FRG-17, -18, -21, -23, -25, -27),<sup>53</sup> no less than eight out of the remaining twelve conjure up some image of 'das Ausland' to explain their Europeanness, including the two respondents most unequivocally subscribing to a European identity. A few examples of the modulations this image assumes: 'Eigentlich immer. Insbesondere ausserhalb Europas' (2); 'Ja. Ich will das an einem Beispiel erläutern: Aufgrund meines Auftretens und Aussehens hat man mich bereits in jedem Land für einen Einheimischen gehalten' (4); 'Am ehesten fühle ich mich als Europäerin, wenn ich mich weit weg von Europa befinde, z.B. in den USA. Dann wachsen auch in meiner Sicht die vielen kleinen [!] Staaten zu einem kleinen [!] Europa zusammen' (12); 'Ja, wenn ich mit mir ungewohnten oder mir unangenehmen aussereuropäischen kulturellen Erscheinungen in Berührung komme, und sei es nur über Informationsmedien, z.B. die Stellung der Frau in islamischen Ländern' (31); 'Immer. Ich lebe seit 30 Jahren vorwiegend im Ausland, z.T. auch in aussereuropäischen Ländern und empfinde mich zunehmend als Europäer, vor allem im Gegensatz zu Ländern der 3. Welt' (33).<sup>54</sup> Even one of the respondents who clearly

feels no European identity (FRG-27 - one of the former GDR citizens) volunteers the subjunctive thought experiment that '(i)ch denke, ich würde mich bewusst als Europäerin fühlen, wenn ich in Amerika oder Asien wäre',<sup>55</sup> in the process echoing FRG-12's experientially based statement to the same effect.

The German text thus evinces a clear tendency towards a) negative or conditional statements concerning European identity, and b) a negative, extra-European, and situational European identification. Many of the respondents in the latter category imagine their identity in 'us-them' dualisms of varying depth and degree, and seem to be drawing imaginary circles round themselves: Europe, particularly Western Europe, does constitute a 'them', but an Otherness which is much better and closer than cultures in the next circle, for some comprising Eastern Europe, for others the USA, and a lot easier to identify with than countries/cultures in the Third World, 'Asian', 'Islamic', or whatever, which are placed in the outer circle and provide a residual of hostile images on the background of which Europe seems like 'home'.<sup>56</sup>

Such negative images have, of course, been pointed up by numerous scholars of identity, prejudice, and stereotypes,<sup>57</sup> (see also Hedetoft, 1995, Part I, Chapter III). This raises the important question of whether the preponderance of such negations in the German text (and, as we shall see, in the British one as well) is not, in fact, evidence of the conflation and fusion of national identity with European identity, or, differently, of the slow replacement of national with European identities. The present author would dispute such an argument, however. Apart from the large number of respondents flatly or cautiously rejecting a European identity for themselves, the interesting difference between Self-Other modulations as far as nationalism and Europeanism goes is that in the latter case they are the sole, situationally based determinants of 'European identity' and/or simultaneously grounded in a relatively self-confident *national* sentiment. They lack any independent, positive rationale, beyond that of a rationalising culture-discourse, are far removed from any value-based cosmology. It is no coincidence that those respondents in the German group who most emphatically embrace the notion of a European identity (FRG-2, -4, and -33) are also those who this study has proved to possess a 'Germanness' of a fairly confident nature, in great measure liberated from the shackles of the past, and with hardly any qualms about criticising 'das Ausland'. Also the finer details are here highly telling. FRG-2 and -33, for different reasons having more national self-confidence and being least traumatically tied to the past, both refer to the extra-European space as a primary determinant of their Europeaness; whereas FRG-4, who is slightly more subjectively and emotionally steeped in the past, refers to his having been recognised as a 'native' in and by other

*European* nations. Finally, FRG-34, even more strongly linked to the negative German legacy of guilt and expiation, states that she feels 'vorwiegend als Europäer',<sup>58</sup> and is the one who cites the common European feature of a 'leidvolle Geschichte' ('a history of suffering', i.e. of conflicts and differences. It will be noticed how exactly images of Self and images of Other - even when that Other is imagined as Self - lock into each other and define the structuring of the mental archaeology of nationalism.

As already indicated, the *British* text is, in a sense, the one most explicitly European, and for the reasons given. The embarrassment of contemporary Britishness - 'I feel European (...) in my lack of feeling British, (...) in my desire to be European and to share the cultures of these countries to enrich ourselves' (46) - liaises with the cosmopolitan element of orthodox English-British identity to produce a number of pledges of allegiance to Europe. This is often defined within the same type of negative Self-Other modality as was discussed above in relation to Germany, but the British text also contains a couple of examples of more 'positive' cultural determinants of European-ness, a lot more detailed than the corresponding Danish cases: 'When I hear Chopin being played. When I hear the Marseillaise. When I read Goethe. When I see Pissarro's paintings, when I visit Italy. Especially Florence. I speak about 6 languages. I even tried to learn Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish and Russian. Oh, I almost forgot trying to learn Dutch' (33); 'Yes. I went to Cambridge as a student, and spent ten years there, in a very multi-cultural environment. It seemed to me that I drew on shared experience and common traditions with other Europeans, which I was conscious of having lost talking to my Japanese friends' (54).

The former of these two, UK-33, is the German expatriate, which might partly account for his European orientation. Interestingly, however, the two other expatriates in the British group, UK-28 and -31, both living in Denmark, belonged to the respondents who rejected any feeling of European-ness and aligned themselves with more orthodox British notions of continental Europe: 'No, I don't feel European' (28); 'No - despite my best efforts. I was born on an island, with its island mentality, and I can see others are 'European' but I do not feel it or see it in myself' (31). Also on this count, Britishness, as a 'condition of the mind' for those *in* exile, overrides their attachment to their place *of* exile (or of what it might be seen to represent), unlike the configuration evident in the minds of those living in Britain. However, there does seem to be a general tendency in the British group, consonant with these 'expatriate' perceptions, to refer, as did many Germans, to extra- rather than intra-European experiences or imaginings as the kind of basis on which a European sentiment can be/has been erected: 'Yes, when away from Europe' (1); 'I still tend to regard Europe as starting on the other side

of the Channel, but perhaps feel more European when meeting Americans or Australians' (37); 'Only when outside Europe (e.g. in China, Korea, Africa)' (41); 'I feel I have in common a shared philosophy based on a long, fairly stable historical tradition which is not evident in other countries such as the USA or is completely different, such as Japan, China and many Muslim countries' (43); '...especially when talking to Americans or contemplating American foreign policy; also when thinking about Eastern Europe' (51); 'The luxury of waste in Australia or the US is not for us' (54). However, UK-19 is the one to depict in most detail, and most vividly, his feelings of a 'European identity', pitted against a background of negative 'North American' images and experiences, thus expressing a typical strand of the British text:

'Back in the mid-60s I found that I could not remain living and working in North America. The reason I felt, at the time, was that my emotional and cultural roots were firmly set in Europe. It was in Europe that I felt the values and quality of life better expressed those that I sought. The North American society was somehow alien and alienating. Cultural identification, I think, stems from a sense of history. I feel at home on the streets of most European cities. Not so in North America. [...] It is this comparison with North America that leads me to the conviction that Europe IS my home'.

Neither the British nor for that matter any of the other two texts gets any closer than this to conveying a value-based 'feel' for Europe, something approaching an existentialism of identity. At the same time, it encapsulates a dominant anti-American comparative perspective - supplemented by a 'Chinese', 'Muslim' or 'African' one - in the British text. And still, it is far removed from transmuting into an identity configuration akin to that of 'national identity'. It is, ultimately, a (negative) 'conviction', born of frustrated Britishness. When I asked the same respondent, during the interview, 'what is it that makes you feel at home, say, in Brussels or in Paris rather than in Toronto?', he replied by giving set of clearly 'negative' reasons: '(t)he differences to begin with. The fact those differences are there, and that they are respected. The fact that there is this enormous variation, [...] this huge number of people, with such an enormous number of differences, all living within a relatively small space, shoulder by shoulder, and having for the last forty-odd years succeeded in not fighting any wars with one another of any serious order'. After all, no *identity*, in the sense of the word applied in this study, can flourish just on the basis of what people do *not* (any longer) do to each other, though the recognition of Otherness - domestically as well as internationally - is an

important starting-point (cf. Hedetoft, 1995, Part I, Chapter I).

However, in the same passage of the interview, the respondent confirmed that even he did not wish to see this form of intercultural recognition and tolerance develop into a national identity proper. Talking about the political prospects for EC-Europe, he mulled that 'I do not see any particular dangers, even if Europe were to become a federation. I do not ever think it would be a federation other than of nation-states. I do not think anybody wants more than that. I do not even think in Monsieur Delors' wildest dreams, he wants anything different from that. [...] I do not think Chancellor Kohl wants to be French. I do not even think Chancellor Kohl wants to be European, in the sense that he would have to give up being German to be European. I do not see these things at all. I think that it is, to return to what might now be a cliché, and that is: the differences are the very reasons why it is possible to live on that continent that we call Europe, and why it will remain vibrant, because the cultural differences are there. [...] I think the national differences will persist, and I think the national differences should be encouraged to persist....'.

Thus, Europe may be a place for cultural *identification*, but no place for national *identity*. Interestingly, the concept of 'difference' plays a somewhat chameleon role for this respondent and in large parts of both the remaining British and the entire German texts as well. The differences, more or less pronounced, to America, Asia, Africa, the Muslim world etc. indicate that these respondents are *not* 'American' etc., *but*, on the contrary, European. The differences, more or less pronounced, *within* Europe partly constitute a reason for their Europeanness, therefore, but also a reason why there is no equivalence between this identification with Europe and their national identities, however negatively expressed/perceived these latter may be. Finally, differences within their *nations* are differences of Selfhood - with the exception of the East/West German divide. Crudely put, therefore, differences between Europe and extra-Europe are culturally cosmological (and hence the only domain in which the textual discourse on 'European Identity' occasionally approximates cosmological and existentialist signification); differences within Europe are those of cultural metonymy (cognitive and teleological); and intra-national differences hover between the mode of the cultural simile (e.g. Scotland and England: 'they are *like us*') and the icon of identity (i.e., they are *our likeness*). Each level, thus, bears the inscription of a different kind and complexity of difference, distributed along the scale from negative to positive determination, from culture (cognitive Interpretant) to identity (essentialist Sign).

## 6. Conclusion

The progression from top-down constructions via symbolic contestation to bottom-up liminalities has been a trajectory characterised by ever-growing paradox and indeterminacy. Between the confidence of *EI* discourse and the vacuity of subjective identification with 'Europe' lies a terrain inhabited by noble pretexts and mundane subtexts, a contextual Interpretant of 'culture' that must constantly bear the brunt of whatever the inventors and imaginers of *EI* elect to make it signify - depending on the particular ethos of the period and the constellations and configurations of political interests. Basically - i.e. beyond the specifics of concrete situational variables and the positioning of instrumental coordinates at any given point in time - the argument of this chapter has been that the indeterminacy and contested qualities of *EI* are the displaced reflection of this notion's precarious position between its analogue - *national* identity/sentiment - and what is best formulated as the transnational political-economic imperative - a new form of increased interdependence among nation-states that the EU is a supranational reflection of, but also a response to. It is this crunch that basically determines the need for constructing European integration in terms other than mere pragmatic, interstate cooperation, and also the difficulties inherent in realising the concept in any comprehensive, let alone socially and affectively 'lived' sense.

In semiotic terms, the disparities - sometimes discrepancies - between Sign and Object, pretext and subtext, are too wide to be mended for good. Not because different levels of identity cannot coexist as total determiners of individuation (this is the optimistic argument often posited), but because both national and 'European' identity lay claim to, i.e. are predicated on, a core political presumption, though the Interpretant - more or less effectively - wraps it in the apparel of 'culture' pure and simple.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, *EI* is nothing without the political dimension - and this Object is still too external, too glaring, and yet too heterogeneous to be coated over, or for that matter to be internalised wholeheartedly. Hence, though it pretends to be little more than a supplemental layer relative to national identity, its political core as well as its centripetal presumption *de facto* translate into something more serious: a potential competitor, a role for which it is both ill-suited and ill-equipped.

It follows that *EI* is an extraordinarily dependent variable: dependent on the given predicament and degree of political integration. Jacques Delors' development from optimistic enthusiasm to 'active pessimism' also marks the decline of *EI* notions (and uses) between the late 80s and the early 90s. The question is whether *EI* is little more than a form of 80s 'hype' that went out with the Cold, no longer needed or useful after

the adhesive tape of European integration vanished - or whether what we are witnessing is just another cyclical downturn, soon to be overtaken by renewed spouts of integrationist fusion energy.

No doubt the post-Cold War scenario is less than propitious towards the production and dissemination of *EI* notions: the resurgence of national particularism bears witness to this, as does the declining incidence of *EI* discourse from the EU centre. This does not have to signify the fall of *EI* and the objectives underlying it, however. Other possibilities exist. It may represent a short-lived phase of pessimism following dramatic changes in the European political landscape, while the principal players are trying to get their act together and to reinflate the 'Maastricht' balloon. It may herald a change of EU strategy following the subsidiarity drive after 1992. It may indicate tactical caution while preparing for the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference. And it may reflect a more subtextual confidence that both the forging of a common foreign and security policy and the practical measures taken (and advances made) in the areas of culture, communication, education, research, sports, environment etc. will eventually be conducive towards creating the kind of unity desired - with or without discourses directly addressing the quasi-strawman of 'European Identity'. Or, for that matter, any of the above in different combinations - depending on national vantage-point.

What this chapter has basically tried to argue is that *EI* is, of necessity and in any phase of integrationist development, a contradictory and liminal construct, and that, for that reason, it must logically oscillate between the extremes of 'unity' and 'diversity', 'enthusiasm' and 'defeatism'. It is lodged firmly, though indeterminately, between a certain (political) 'identity of Europe' and its corresponding sign nexus, a common 'European culture'. If I am right about the objectivity of the transnational imperative, however, it will only go away if political Europe no longer chooses to respond to, i.e. partially to counteract, this imperative through unified action towards an 'ever closer Union'. This does not seem likely; at least it is a point that has not yet been reached. Until such time, *EI* and the unique correlations it both contains and works back on, will stay on our agenda, and hence need to be more squarely and comprehensively addressed through a combination of political, semiotic, and anthropological studies. This contribution has hopefully pointed out some avenues worth taking.

## Notes

1. Eco 1990/1994, p. 41. (References are to the Midland Book Edition, 1994.)
2. Laïdi, 1994, p. 117.
3. A lesson conceivably learnt by Jacques Delors when he took over the Commission Chair in 1985 and immediately initiated a cultural campaign for 'Europe'. See further below.
4. Here quoted from *Jean Monnet, A Grand Design for Europe*, Periodical 5/1988, European Documentation Series, Luxemburg, pp. 43-45. Referred to as Monnet, 1988.
5. It is worth noting that the 'European Identity' drive was not launched until after 'national identity', in the course of the 80s, had once again acquired a legitimate ring and become the renewed centre of attention of scholars and laymen alike. Whether this is coincidence or, more likely, the manifestation of a necessary/logical sequel, is a question that cannot be pursued further in this context.
6. *A People's Europe: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament*. COM/88, final edition. Luxemburg: Bulletin of the EC, Supplement 2/1988. Henceforth referred to as *Bulletin/88*. (Quotes in this version of the paper are translations from the Danish edition of this document.)  
See further the clarifying discussion of culture and the 'Citizens' Europe' campaigns in Shore, 1993, particularly p. 783 ff. - one of the few studies to focus specifically on 'European Identity' from the perspective of anthropology.
7. A question that should not be confused with those inquiring into support for European integration - 'support' and 'identity' are miles apart - about as far as rational-choice orientations and emotive allegiance. For an analysis of the 'support' issue, see Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993.
8. Interestingly, the inclusion of East European countries in this particular question pertaining to European Identity has so far been restricted to this one issue of *Eurobarometer*.
9. As indicated already, scholarly discussions of 'European Identity' are relatively scant. However, see Garcia, ed., 1993; Goddard, Llobera & Shore, eds, 1994; Hedetoft, 1995, and 1995b; Shore, 1993; MacDonald, ed., 1993; Smith, 1992.
10. Meaning: having little positive substance and being mainly buttressed by negations (such as 'not being Muslim' - see further below).
11. For a discussion and critique of such fallacies and for an attempt to reconceptualise the relations between culture and identity, see the relevant chapter - V - in Part I of Hedetoft, 1995.
12. These questions will be picked up in the ensuing sections of this chapter.
13. The literature on interdependence and globalisation is too vast to be reviewed in this context. Suffice it to state at this point that my presumptive position in the following will be that such concepts do signify something that 'really goes on out there' in a sense that transcends subjective, rationally 'chosen' forms of institutional interdependence predicated either on the desire to minimise anarchy and secure peace, and/or on deliberations based on the national-interest benefits ensconced in institutional cooperation of a specific nature (though both these sets of considerations must be recognised). In other words, there are 'objective' factors (the movement of capital, regional dislocations, environmental developments, the internationalisation of crime ...) that 'push' nation-states in transnational directions, but in ways that will always tend towards attempts to maintain maximum national control in given circumstances - hence the 'pull' factor towards reasserting national power, sovereignty, and identity cannot be discounted/ignored, as naive forms of globalisation theory sometimes do. The basic position underlying this article on this score is that the EU constitutes a regionally delimited way of both accommodating and counteracting the transnational imperative.
14. Peirce's writings can be found in Peirce, 1931-58.
15. See Eco, 1984, 1987 & 1990/1994; Parmentier, 1994; Sebeok, 1991, as well as several edited volumes (with Jean Umiker-Sebeok) of 'The Semiotic Web' (published annually by Mouton de Gruyter); Singer, 1984.
16. For a taste of some of these discussions, see e.g. Eco, 1976 & 1990/1994; Eco & Sebeok, eds, 1984; Peirce, 1991; Tejera, 1988; as well as the volumes of 'The Semiotic Web' referred to in the previous note. On the meaning of 'interpretant' and other key concepts in Peircean sign theory (apart from what

follows), see the detailed discussion in Eco, 1979, chapter 7, where Eco discusses Peircean realism and pragmatism in its relations to medieval realism, but also points out that apart from being an intellectual or emotional quality, the Interpretant of a Sign may also be 'energetic', i.e. constitute (change of) behaviour, i.e. be directly immersed in dynamic experience. This in turn is the way out of 'unlimited semiosis' - the 'feedback' into practice, the application and 'reality check' of signs. Looking ahead to the discussion of *EI*, this would be pertinent in the sense that the common 'cultural' Interpretant is, on the part of the creators of discourse, envisaged as a stimulus giving rise to practical interpretations of *EI* in concrete socio-national contexts.

17. It must be noted, though, that on this score Peirce himself tended to be quite obscure and to defend somewhat contradictory positions at different times (e.g. by positing that 'icon', 'index', and 'symbol' constituted linkages between Object and Sign unmediated by the Interpretant - which, however, in turn often became redefined as 'ground' in order to remedy the deficit) - a contradictoriness sometimes mediated by differentiating between 'immediate' (semiotically immanent) and 'dynamic' (externally referential) Object, or 'final interpretant'. See e.g. Eco, 1990/1994, chapter 2, where the author engages in a clarifying debate on this subject in relation to both Peirce and Derrida.
18. As is also in evidence in Eco, 1990/1994, *inter alia* as a discussion of the appropriateness of the term 'pragmatic' in relation to Peirce. See his discussion of 'pragmatism' vs 'pragmaticism' in chapter 2.
19. Though underlying (and sometimes undercutting) politics is a not-to-be-ignored economic rationale.
20. On nation-states and sovereignty in Europe, see e.g. Hedetoft, 1994; James, 1986; Keohane, 1993; Walker & Mendlovitz, eds, 1990 - as well as Lisbeth Aggestam's chapter in this volume.
21. On the conceptual distinction between subtext, context, and pretext (my concepts, not Peirce's) - as notions corresponding to Object, Interpretant, and Sign in the analysis of national imagery and foreign stereotypes - see my discussion in Hedetoft, 1995, Part I, Chapter III.
22. See preceding note. 'Pretextual' indicates not just that the Sign - respectively signifier - 'stands for' something else, but that in this function and this process of representing it simultaneously 'naturalises' and 'dislocates' the Object, which therefore becomes 'relegated' to the status of a virtual 'subtext' - present only in the form of the Sign, i.e. of something other (or in Peirce's terminology: 'more') than itself. Cf. also Eco's statement to the effect that "(i)n the course of a semiotic process we want to know only what is relevant according to a given *universe of discourse*" (1990/1994, p. 28). This is particularly pertinent as far as 'European Identity' is concerned, whose major centripetal-unitary status resides in the power of discursive construction. More radically put in Peircean terms: It exists almost solely as 'immediate Object' - 'intensionally', immanent to the structure of signification - not as 'dynamic Object', 'extensionally', in the 'real world' of mentalities.
23. For a recent perceptive attempt to apply the notion of 'making sense' to an understanding of Europe in the world after the end of the Cold War, its difficult integration process, its lacking purposiveness and unity of action, and 'European Identity', see Lāidi, 1994.
24. See also McBride, 1988, who captures the contradictory vacuity of these (re)interpretations of history as 'from Plato to NATO'! In a similar but less scathing vein, Alan Bance has dealt with the history of the idea of Europe under the title 'The idea of Europe: From Erasmus to ERASMUS' (Bance, 1992).
25. Hedetoft, 1995, Part I, Chapters III, IV, and VII.
26. Lars Hedegaard, *Samvirke*, December 1994. The article was entitled 'Da Europa Var Muslimsk' ('When Europe Was Muslim').
27. On this historical role of culture in the shaping of identity, see my reflections in Hedetoft, 1995, Part I, Chapter V, Models 11 and 12.
28. Where national identity is the existential manifestation of instrumentalist 'Gesellschaft', 'European Identity' in the EU is the symbolic shell enveloping the non-existence of a European common consciousness and society, and simultaneously a means towards its hoped-for materialisation.
29. Compared with the applicability of the triangle to *national* identities, two stands could be argued. One is that although it is possible to imagine the relations between culture, identity, and state/politics in roughly the same way (as Interpretant, Sign, and Object, respectively), the difference here would be

that the Object would be far more stable and homogeneous, and the affective Sign value of 'identity' much greater. The other and more radical position would be to argue that the three 'actors' could be seen to change places, in which case 'identity' would become Object (semi-articulated subtext), 'culture' Sign (articulated pretext), and state/politics 'Interpretant' (framing context). Phrased in those terms, the 'anomaly' of the *EI* structure stands out more clearly.

30. For a comprehensive survey of the questions of identity and/in Scandinavia, see Stein Tønnesson's article in *Historisk Tidsskrift*, vol. 73, no. 3 (1993): Tønnesson, 1993.
31. For an indication of the extent of this, see section 5 below.
32. Though this is only so if compared with the ideal blueprint for identity as constituted by nationalism.
33. At the time of writing, Germany seems set to try to unify such an agenda with a widening towards the East, pressing for more deepening, and concomitantly maintaining positive relations to the USA - perhaps even strengthening them. All the other member states, however, seem to be in a relative state of disarray when it boils down to visions for the future, and seem forced into a realignment of alliance strategies more akin to the pre-WW I predicament than to unified European action (e.g. the British-French 'axis' in the offing).
34. Cf. O'Brien, 1992.
35. Kohl, 1984. See my analysis of the 'German' interaction between national and supranational orientations in Hedetoft, 1995, Part I, Chapter VII.
36. In one of his last statements before stepping down, 'Europe according to Delors', he never used the term 'European Identity', but - referring to himself as an 'active pessimist' - addressed the need to push the process further down the road towards more integration, powerful institutions, democratic legitimacy, strengthened inner cohesion, a well-defined and determined security agenda, and altogether a stronger sense of unity and mission in the world of the future. Faced with the prospect of dilution through widening as well as foreign-policy equivocation, he even proposed closer unification in terms of allowing 'the members who are ready and willing to consider extended political and economic integration to unify into a federally constituted community of states', and leaving the rest to take part in no more than a 'common market'. In such a context it might have seemed less than appropriate to speak to a common *identity*. (This document is here referred to in its Danish form as reproduced in *Information*, 9 December 1994, and translated by Birgit Ibsen from a German original in 'Frankfurter Hefte/Neue Gesellschaft'). A comprehensive assessment of Delors' significance for European integration can be found in Ross, 1994.
37. For approximations, see Abélès, 1992; Abélès, Bellier & McDonald, 1993; Ross, 1994 & 1994b.  
This dimension is consonant with Shore's argument (1993, p. 781) that 'ideally the objective is to understand the ways in which EC officials themselves perceive this process; to reveal their models of European union and European identity'. So far, however, this ideal objective has mostly been met by addressing the product of this process in the form of cultural policies and official discourses of *EI* as invented by the 'officials' (and as discussed so far in this chapter), rather than by investigating the extent of internationalisation of *EI* by the officials on a personal-social level. This lacuna is not remedied by Shore's otherwise perceptive article either.
38. The following theses should not be read as a contention that national identity and images of the Other play no role in these institutional settings, but rather that conditions for the counteracting effect of 'internalised' supranationality and the creation of subjective *EI* in any real sense beyond discourse are most propitious here.
39. This happened, for instance, when Delors took his leave from the Commission in late 1994, on the one hand emphatically arguing for the need to pursue the federalist objective as a safeguard against neo-liberalist tendencies, on the other publicly deploring that the national leadership of the respective member states were unable fully to comprehend the necessity of his vision. Also, Delors's decision not to run for the Presidency of France could be seen as an indication of his pessimistic assessment of the European climate for integration. See also note 36 above.
40. I have explored the issues of this section in another context in Hedetoft, 1995, Part I, Chapter III.
41. *The European*, 21-23 June, 1991.

42. For an interesting case study (the picture-perfect behaviour of Finland and Sweden in the run-up to EU membership), see Mouritzen, 1993.

43. Cf. note 40.

44. An indication of this was provided by a small-scale experiment I recently carried out in a number of study groups and seminars at my own university (students comprising a total of ca. 50). I asked them to respond to their self-assessments of their 'national identity' (NI) and 'European identity' (EI), respectively, for each giving them four options: 'strong', 'moderate', 'weak', 'non-existent'. They could only tick one box within each question. The second category - 'moderate' - drew by far the largest support on both questions: on the NI question: 27; on the EI question: 22. Superficially a relatively similar response. However, the fact that 'moderate' most likely conceals almost qualitatively different realities and emotions in the areas of the two questions is indicated by the fact that there were simultaneously 20 students who ticked off 'strong' in response to the NI question, whereas only 3 responded in this way to the EI one - here, conversely, 22 ticked off 'weak' (compare with 2 on NI), and 3 'non-existent' (compare with 1 on NI).

In other words, the overall response configuration shows that, on the EI question, 'moderate' veers towards 'weak' and should be interpreted as non-committal, whereas 'moderate' in response to NI pulls towards 'strong' and invites more affective interpretation. The specifics of such differences, and the respective meanings of NI and EI for these respondents, can only, however, be teased out as a result of quite another type of (qualitative) investigation.

45. The following draws extensively on results gleaned from a recently completed study of the condition of nationalism and European orientations in the three countries indicated (Hedetoft, 1995 - here especially selected sections of Part II, Chapter V). The sample groups were relatively small (50 altogether), but reasonably representative of traditional variables such as age (though mainly the 30-60 age bracket), gender (even distribution), occupation (though preponderance of relatively well-educated and 'employed' respondents), and region (even distribution, though in FRG mainly 'West' Germany and in UK mainly England) - whereas the resultant data was extensive, facilitating in-depth scrutiny of national identity structures and 'European' orientations, and thus providing a glimpse into what can reasonably be posited as more wide-ranging structural and emotive features of 'belonging' in the New Europe. The denotational system employed (e.g. DK-5, FRG-4, UK-31) refers to individual respondents in Denmark, Germany, and Britain, respectively, by means of the codenames they were given in the survey in order to preserve their anonymity. In the following, original German quotes have been retained in the text, and the translation given in a note - whereas Danish quotes as a rule are rendered in their English translation.

See also my article 'National Identity and European Integration 'From Below': Bringing People Back In', *Journal of European Integration*, 1/94 (first published in the Working Paper Series from the Center for European Studies, Harvard University - no. 54, 1994) - Hedetoft, 1994b.

46. I distinguish between three such levels: 1. immediate impressions, opinions, and commonsense pragmatism; 2. attitudinal, cognitive, and teleological orientations; 3. value-based, affective, and existential normativity.

47. 'For the time being, what I have in common with other Europeans is a history replete with suffering, and apart from that great cultural affinity, a life-style'.

48. Thus, the Danish text, as a whole, supports e.g. the following statement by DK-33: 'It can't be denied, I suppose, that we, here in Denmark, still regard the French with some scepticism...'. DK-24, when trying to list the European nations she associates with most credibility, would place France - as she says - 'far down'. DK-28 states that she *knows* Holland, Germany, England, and France best, but deliberately excludes France from the list of trustworthy nations. DK-34 observes that she knows France best, but 'that does not inspire any trust in France nevertheless'. And DK-44, during the interview, announced quite some moral consternation at the behaviour at some French firms while making tenders for business contracts ('we [!] would never act like that').

49. 'I don't as yet feel European, since I haven't so far been in a corresponding situation'.

This respondent, like one other who denies having a European identity (FRG-17), hails from the

former GDR. On balance, all four ex-GDR citizens do hedge on this question, but so do a large number of the former West Germans, amongst whom at least three (FRG-18, -21, -25), but probably two more as well (FRG-5 and -9), have no European sentiments worth mentioning, and, just as important in the German case, feel no obligation to legitimise this defensively.

50. This does not imply that the existence and strength of German identity are not the factor actually underlying some of these responses, but the fact that none of the Germans has the self-confidence to articulate this represents an important difference from the Danish text. Only FRG-25 comes close to a pattern found in Denmark by curtly answering 'Nein'!
51. 'I feel as a human. As such, I try to be human and to think in a human way'.
52. 'On contemplating the question more precisely, I feel neither German nor European, but as an individual, enmeshed in closer or more distant life circles and influenced by this. I do not feel European, but (...) we [do come] from a common space of comprehension and understanding. If you wish [!], I feel European in that sense. (Perhaps also in my helpless way of relating to some distant natives)'.
53. It should further be borne in mind that three of the remaining twelve (FRG-5, -9, -13) are highly doubtful cases. Two of them skip the part of the question dealing with European identity, and suffice to mention a few cultural components that they believe they have in common with other Europeans (FRG-9 and -13). And FRG-5, very cautiously, states that '(g)ewisse europäische Identität würde ich nicht ganz verneinen wollen' ('I wouldn't totally reject a certain European identity')! If these three are included in the group of 'negatives', the pattern becomes even more distinct, leaving only one (FRG-11) claiming to feel European without using the negative 'Ausland' argument. However, this respondent - a functionary working at the German employers' association - states that '(i)ch fühle mich als Deutscher und Europäer zugleich' ('I feel German and European at the same time'), an argument also forwarded by FRG-2, referring to the fact that, for him, Europeanness and Germanness are not mutually exclusive, but elements that determine each other.
 

In view of the fact that such a large portion of the German group are sceptical of a European identity or rebut it outright, and of the fact that the group consists of a fair number of well-educated and well-informed people, it is not unreasonable to assume that feelings of Europeanness in the German population at large cannot run very deep. This is confirmed by e.g. *Eurobarometer* 36 (1991), which, in Figure 1.10, quotes 51% of their German respondents as 'never feeling European' and less than 10% as feeling European 'often'.
54. 'Basically always. Particularly outside Europe'; 'Yes. I would like to illustrate that by means of an example: On account of my behaviour and appearance people in every country have already regarded me as a native'; 'I feel most European when I am away from Europe, e.g. in the USA. In those cases, from my perspective, the many small [!] states grow together into one small [!] Europe'; 'Yes, when I come across extra-European cultural manifestations that are uncommon or unpleasant for me, be it only through the information media, e.g. the position of women in Islamic countries'; 'Always. For 30 years I have predominantly lived abroad, now and then also in extra-European countries, and I feel increasingly European, especially in contrast to the Third World'.
55. 'I imagine I would feel consciously European if I were in America or Asia'.
56. Forestalling the discussion of the British specifics below, it is worth noticing, already here, that the parallel modulation in the British text is somewhat more emphatically occupied with the negation of 'not being American'.
57. Hedetoft, 1995, Part I, Chapters II and III; Herzfeld, 1992; Todorov, 1989.
58. 'Primarily European'.
59. This has not, so far, progressed to the point of presenting itself as 'nature', as is often the case with national identity.

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