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No Culture, No Europe On the Foundation of Politics

Pascal Gielen (ed.)

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Colophon

No Culture, No Europe
On the Foundation of Politics

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Nomadic European Identity

Rosi Braidotti



Over and beyond its legal and economic scaffolding, the project of constructing a 'new' European identity as a multicultural democratic space within the framework of the European Union is an on-going process of cultural and political transformation. Culture is both its intrinsic motor and in some ways its biggest challenge.

Like many democratically-minded academics working in Europe today (Balibar, 2001; Habermas, 2001; Passerini, 1998) I believe in the transformative potential of this project and have defined it in terms of the 'becoming-nomadic' of European transcultural identity (Braidotti, 1994; 2002; 2011b). Let me first explain and later expand this thesis.

The European Union as a progressive project opens up a site of possible re-elaboration of the negative traits of European culture that caused so much turmoil and human suffering in the past. That is to say that Europe is historically condemned to revisit and redeem its own history (Foucault, 1966). Foremost among the bad old habits is nationalism, linked to xenophobia and racism. Like all old habits they are never truly over, but rather seem to recur with distressing regularity. They express a double and doubly misguided assumption: the first is the arrogant assumption that Europe is the centre of the world and the second is the construction of non-Europeans as pejorative 'others'. The European Union as a transformative project constitutes a rupture from this traditional vision of sovereign European identity and as a consequence it also recasts Europe's relationship with its others.

As I see it — and hope for — both historically and politically the project of the European Union involves a process of critique of the former self-appointed role of Europe as the alleged centre of civilization. Following Foucault (1966), Deleuze and Guattari (1972; 1980), Derrida (1991) and Irigaray (1977), this self-aggrandizing view has the further unfortunate implication of appointing the standard European citizen as the prototype of a civilized human being. The distinctive traits of this quintessential European human are supposed to be the self-reflexive and self-correcting universal powers of 'reason', which allegedly find their highest expression in European culture and notably in European humanism. Built into this rational vision are a number of sub-clauses which come with the humanist legacy, notably: secularism, faith in scientific progress and a project of universal human emancipation.

'Europe' in this frame of reference is therefore not a specific geo-political location with a situated political history, but rather a universal and abstract concept. Europe as the symbol of universal self-consciousness posits itself as the site of origin of reason and designates itself as the motor of the world-historical unfolding of rationality, reducing difference to a structural violence engendered by the claim to universalism and by the oppositional view of consciousness, lies at the heart of what Ulrich Beck has lucidly labelled 'methodological nationalism' (1999), which I call conceptual Eurocentrism (Braidotti, 2011b). My critique of this vision and its Eurocentric assumptions is grounded in feminist theory. The grounded nature of this approach also makes it easier to provide ethical accountability for feminist knowledge claims. As the work of feminist philosophers such as Genevieve Lloyd (1985) has pointed out, universalistic claims are actually highly particular and partial. Feminist epistemologists, notably Sandra Harding (1991) and Donna Haraway (1990a), have produced some of the most significant critiques of the false universalism of the European subject of knowledge, which also sets the standards for the model citizen. They also offered alternative accounts of both political and epistemic subjectivity and explored their concrete applications to social as well as scientific practices. This process of epistemological revision affects both new theorizations of the subject and the Eurocentrism implicit in the universalistic posture. The double critical charge forces a revision of the idea of Europe as the 'home' of the rational citizen and the knowing subject, which translates into the notion of science as democracy in the classrooms and democracy as the white European man's burden (Harding, 1993).

A critical reappraisal of this double assertion of European superiority amounts to a re-grounding of Europe, no longer as the centre, but as one of the many peripheries in the world today. This process of consciousness-raising is a sober awakening to the specific historicity of the European situation, in the light of the contemporary globalized context. One of the most strident contradictions of our world is in fact the co-existence of dynamic and productive transnational spaces on the one hand, and on the other the resurgence of hyper-regionalisms. The global city and Fortress Europe stand both face-to-face and as two sides of the same coin (Sassen, 1995). In what follows I will first outline this

rather schizoid phenomenon (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980), and then defend a process of 'becoming-minoritarian' of Europe as a way of both bypassing the binary global-local and of redefining European cultural identity in a culturally hybrid globalized context (Braidotti, 2002).

Global Diasporas

The globalized world is defined by multiple flows of mobility and diasporas of people, information, cultures, commodities and capital. Avtar Brah argues that diasporic space is made of relationality and that it inscribes 'a homing desire while simultaneously critiquing discourses of fixed origins' (Brah, 1996: 193). It is a transnational space of mobility, borders, transitions and flows which expresses 'the overlapping and non-linear contact zones between natures and cultures: border, travel, creolization, transculturation, hybridity and diaspora' (Clifford, 1994: 303).

The diaspora affects a broad range of spaces from the roots of indigenous people to the routes of the itinerant subjects in the postcolonial world order. Jewish in origin, the term 'diaspora' describes the uprooting and dispersion of many populations: the Armenian, Turkish, Palestinian, Cuban, Greek, Chinese, Hungarian Yugoslav and Chitean, to name but a few. Clifford comments: 'In the late twentieth century, all or most communities have diasporic dimensions (moments, tactics, practices, articulations). Some are more diasporic than others' (Clifford, 1994: 310).

The global diaspora has enormous implications for a world economy linked by a thick web of transnational flows of capital and labour. Such a system is marked by internal — as well as external — processes of migration implying mobility, flexibility or precariousness of work conditions, transience and impermanent settlements. Furthermore, globalization is about the deterritorialization of social identity, which challenges the hegemony of nation states and their claim to exclusive citizenship. This proliferation of ethnic and racialized differences within the political economy of global mobility produces the stratification of multiple layers of control in a system known as 'scattered hegemonies' (Grewal and Kaplan, 1994). This is a system of a centre-less and continuous flow of data, information and capital that defies binary oppositions between the centre and the many peripheries and implements a complex multi-directional

circulation, not only between the geo-political blocks but also within them.

As a result, massive concentrations of infrastructures exist alongside complex, worldwide dissemination of goods. The technologically-driven advanced culture that prides itself on being called the 'information society' is in reality a concrete, material infrastructure that is concentrated on the sedentary global city. Sassen defines global economies as: 'the location of transnational spaces within national territories' (Sassen, 1994: xiii). Migration is the inner core of this system of differentiated mobility. The global city and the refugee camps (Agamben, 1998) are not dialectical or moral opposites: they are two sides of the same global coin. They express the schizoid political economy of our times. The methodological but also moral challenge is to neither dismiss nor to glorify the status of marginal, alien others, but to find a more accurate, complex location for a transformation of the terms of their political interaction.

If differentiated mobility and worldwide migrations are the defining features of our times, then rootlessness and constant displacement need to be brought into sharper focus. Precisely because of this, social critics need to be very careful in their approach to any analysis of the new subject positions that have emerged in post-industrial times. The differences in degrees, types, kinds and modes of mobility and — even more significantly — of non-mobility need to be mapped out with precision and sensitivity. I argue that cartographic accuracy is made necessary by the fact that travelling, mobile and hence non-unitary subject positions — such as migrants, hybrids, nomads and cyborgs — are key elements of our historicity, but they are quite different in location and social implication (Braidotti, 1994; 2011a). Subjects situated in one of the many poly-located centres that weave together the global economy experience different degrees of social access and entitlement. We require adequate, politically-invested cartographies to account for them and for their internally contradictory power relations.

James Clifford (1994), for instance, makes careful distinctions between different kinds and metaphors of travel: from the colonial exploration or bourgeois 'tour', to the itineraries of migrant or indentured labourers. Zygmunt Bauman (1993), in his analysis of postmodern ethics, juxtaposes the figuration of the pilgrim to that of the tourist and the nomad, and gives them diametrically opposed ethical codings.

A range of new, alternative subjectivities have indeed emerged in the shifting landscapes of advanced capitalism and its global diasporas. They are contested, multi-layered and internally contradictory subject positions, which however does not make them any less riddled with power-relations. They are hybrid and in between social categories for whom traditional descriptions in terms of sociological categories such as 'marginals', 'migrants', or 'minorities' are inadequate, as Saskia Sassen (1995) astutely suggests. The proliferation of new social subjects on the margins of the global circulation economy, simultaneously expresses the enduring power of classical systems of exploitation, but also the changing powers of the emerging new subjects. As Deleuze taught us (1968), it is important to resist the temptation of casting these new subject positions in a dialectical mould as it would result in the uncritical reproduction of Sameness on a planetary scale. These different subjects must therefore be approached in a complex multi-directional manner that stresses their novelty and their creative potential.

These different locations need to be accounted for in such a way as to make the power differences explicit. The different narratives, however, have to be embedded in specific histories and geographies, thus preventing superficial metaphorizations (Braidotti, 2011a). The work on power, difference and the politics of location offered by postcolonial and anti-racist feminist thinkers who are familiar with the European situation — among them notably Spivak (1987), Hall (1992), Brah (1993) and Gilroy (1987) — can support this project methodologically and strategically.

Feminist cartographic and materialist philosophies of the subject also provide new methods to avoid universalistic generalizations and thus ground critical practice so as to make it accountable. We need more complexities, at both the micro and the macro levels of the constitution of subjectivity, in terms of genders and across ethnicities, class and age. These axes set the parameters for a nomadic cultural agenda that needs to be addressed in the framework of the new European Union.

I therefore propose an alliance between, on the one hand, the deconstruction of the unitary idea of Europe as the 'cradle' of civilization — with its corollary implications of rational citizenship, liberal individualism and cognitive and moral universalism, and on the other, the construction of non-unitary identities, I see the new European Union as a framework for the

transformation of European identity in the sense of multiple, hybrid, diasporic and nomadic vision of the subject-in-process. This is the process of becoming-minoritarian of Europe.

From Eurocentrism to the Becoming-Minoritarian of Europe
I have argued so far that we now live in a world that is organized along multiple axes of mobility, circulation, flows of people and commodities, which amounts to saying that we live in ethnically mixed worlds. Europe is caught in this dynamic, but the phenomenon of a pluri-ethnic or multicultural European social space is controversial to say the least. European culture seems ill-equipped to confront the phenomenon of mass migration. Worldwide migration — a huge movement of populations from periphery to centre — has challenged the claim to an alleged cultural homogeneity of European nation states and of the European Union. This challenge goes quite deep into Europeans' self-representation and it cannot therefore be solved by a mere pluralistic proliferation of minorities and minority rights, to paraphrase Kymlicka's idea of multicultural citizenship (1995). A qualitative shift of perspective in our collective sense of identity is required instead, in the direction of the becoming-nomadic or minoritarian of European citizenship in the sense of a post-nationalist European space.

Politically, as Stuart Hall put it (Hall, 1987; 1990), resistance against the European Union can be seen as a defensive response to overcoming the idea of European nation states. The backlash against this process takes the form of a nationalistic wave of paranoia and xenophobic fears that is simultaneously anti-European and racist or anti-immigrants. Thus, the expansion of European boundaries coincides with the resurgence of micro-nationalist borders at all levels in Europe today. Unification coexists with the closing down of borders; the common European citizenship and the common currency coexist with increasing internal fragmentation and regionalism; a new, allegedly post-nationalist identity coexists with the return of xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism (Benhabib, 1999). The collapse of the Soviet empire simultaneously marks the triumph of the advanced market economy and the return of tribal ethnic wars of the most archaic kind. Globalization means both homogenization and an exacerbation of power differences (Appadurai, 1994; Eisenstein, 1999; Shiva 1997).

My proposal for a nomadic practice of identity argues that it is the case that a socio-cultural mutation is taking place in the direction of a multi-ethnic, multi-media society, then the transformation cannot affect only the pole of 'the others'. It must equally dislocate the position and the prerogative of 'the same', the former centre. In other words, what is changing is not merely the terminology or metaphorical representation of the subjects, but the very structure of subjectivity, the social relations, and the social imaginary that support it. The very syntax of social relations, as well as their symbolic representation, is in upheaval. The traditional standard-bearers of Eurocentric presumptions no longer hold in a civil society that is, among other things, aware of gender differences, is multicultural and not only Christian or secular, but multi-denominational. More than ever, the question of social transformation begs that of representation: what can the traditional vision of the rational, European/white subject do for emerging subjects-in-process? The challenges, as well as the anxieties evoked by these new developments require new forms of expression and representation, that is to say transformative social practices which need to be implemented critically.

To sum up: the European Union as a nomadic project has to do with the sobering experience of relinquishing universalistic claims and taking stock of our specific location, adopting embedded and embodied perspectives. This is the opposite of the grandiose and aggressive universalism of the past: it is a situated and accountable perspective. It's about turning our collective memory to the service of a new political and ethical project, which is forward-looking and not nostalgic. The reactive tendency towards a sovereign sense of the Union is also known as the 'Fortress Europe' syndrome, and has been extensively criticized by feminists and antiracists. They warn us against the danger of replacing the former Eurocentrism with a new 'Europ-ism' (Essed, 1991), i.e. the belief in an ethnically pure, exclusively Christian Europe. The claim to ethnic purity is, of course, the core of fascism.

Next then, the European Union is faced with the issue of cultural hybridity: can one be European and Black or Muslim? Paul Gilroy's work on Black British subjectivity (1987) is indicative of the problem of how European citizenship and racial identity emerge as contested issues. One of the radical implications of the project of the European Union is the possibility of giving

a specific location, and consequently historical embeddedness or memory to anti-racist whites. In order to accomplish this transformative shift, Europeans need to look at themselves through the eyes of others, however painful it may be to discover that white is perceived by non-whites as the colour of death (Morrison, 1992) and of terror (Hooks, 1994).

The biggest drawback of inhabiting a sovereign or dominant identity is in fact the lack of self-awareness about how this looks to others: hence the structured invisibility of whiteness, its non-racialized value and its claim to be a 'colourless multiculturalism' (Dyer, 1993). Michel Foucault argues along similar lines in defining the Panopticon (Foucault, 1975) as the void that lies at the heart of the system and — being itself invisible — defines the contour of both social and symbolic visibility (Young, 1990). Deleuze and Guattari (1972; 1980) also comment on the fact that any dominant notion — such as European-ness or masculinity — is defined by dialectical opposition to its 'others' and thus has no positive self-definition. The prerogative of being a dominant subject consists in this peculiar form of entitlement: to be able and be allowed to cast outwards upon others the burden of structural marginalization, which confirms the dominant subject by spelling out what he is not. Virginia Woolf (1938) had already commented on this aspect of the logic of patriarchal domination when she asserted that what matters is not so much that He, the male, should be superior, as long as She, the Other, is clearly defined as inferior. There is no dominant concept other than that which acts as a term to index and police access and participation to entitlements and powers. Thus, the invisibility of the dominant concepts is also the expression of their insubstantiality: the centre is void. This, however, makes it all the more effective in marginalizing the many others on whose structural exclusion their powers rest.

The immediate consequence of the process of re-grounding European identity is that this hegemonic dialectical mode is undone in favour of multi-situated or 'nomadic' perspectives. The centre has to undergo a process of becoming-other, becoming-minoritarian: being a nomadic European subject means to be in transit between different identity formations, but, at the same time, being sufficiently anchored to a historical position to accept responsibility for it. The 'becoming-minoritarian of Europe' also dispels the privilege of invisibility that was conferred on Europe as the alleged centre of the world. By assuming full responsibility

for the partial perspective of its own location, a minoritarian European space opens up a possible political strategy – and thus attributes a positive role – to those who inhabit this particular centre of power in a globalized world marked by scattered hegemonies, and hence no longer dominated by European power alone.

Flexible Citizenship

In this last section I want to argue that the project of becoming-nomadic of European transcultural identity can be strengthened by and in turn support a new practice of flexible citizenship. In other words, the nomadic and transcultural definition of European identity can be concretely translated into a set of 'flexible' forms of citizenship that would allow for migrants and temporary non-European residents – in fact, all kinds of hybrid citizens – to acquire legal status in what would otherwise deserve the label of 'Fortress Europe'.

The starting point for this part of my argument is that the classical model that linked citizenship to belonging to a territory, an ethnicity and a nation state, and opposed it to a condition of statelessness, is no longer adequate in the light of the multiplicity of global diasporas and states of mobility I highlighted above. The phenomenon globally known as flexible citizenship describes the de-linking of the three basic units that used to compose citizenship: one's ethnic origin or place of birth; the nationality or bond to a nation state and the legal structure of actual citizenship rights and obligations. These three factors are disaggregated and disarticulated from each other and become rearranged in a number of interesting ways. Most of us today have some direct experience of this kind of deterritorialization, including in higher education in Europe, marked by the international students flow and colleagues.

A radical restructuring of European identity as post-nationalistic can be pragmatically implemented in a nomadic variation of flexible citizenship in the framework of the 'new' European Union (Ferreira et al., 1998). A disaggregated idea of citizenship emerges in fact from the current EU situation – as a bundle of rights and benefits that can accommodate both native citizens and migrants. This would entitle even temporary migrant citizens to partake of the rights and duties of active socio-political participation and grant them a legal status. It is an attempt to accommodate cultural diversity without

undermining European liberal democracies and the universal idea of individual human rights.

For instance Habermas has repeatedly defended the calls for a European constitution, that is to say Europe as a political project that would involve the consolidation of a European public sphere. This might strengthen the shared political culture of European democracies and welfare states. Likewise, in her recent work on European citizenship, Benhabib (2002) critically questions the disjunction between the concepts of nation, the state and cultural identity. Solidly grounded in Kantian cosmopolitanism, Benhabib argues forcefully that 'democratic citizenship can be exercised across national boundaries and in transnational contexts' (Benhabib, 2002: 183). She is especially keen to demonstrate that the distinction between a national minority and ethnic group does very little to determine whether an identity/difference-driven movement is 'democratic, liberal, inclusive and universalist' (Benhabib, 2002: 65). Benhabib also examines the extent to which the medieval charts of rights of cities can be activated against the nation state, especially in the case of asylum laws.

The model of nomadic flexible citizenship would involve dismantling the us/them binary in such a way as to account for the undoing of a strong and fixed notion of European citizenship in favour of a functionally-differentiated network of affiliations and loyalties. For the citizens of the Member States of the European Union, the new EU citizenship rests on the disconnection of the three elements discussed above: nationality, citizenship, national identity. According to Ulrich Preuss, such a European notion of citizenship, disengaged from national foundations, lays the ground for a new kind of civil society, beyond the boundaries of any single nation state. Because such a notion of 'alienage' (Preuss, 1996: 551) would become an integral part of citizenship in the European Union, Preuss argues that all European citizens would end up being 'privileged foreigners'. In other words, they would function together without reference to a centralized and homogeneous sphere of political power (Preuss, 1995: 280). Potentially, this notion of citizenship could therefore lead to a new concept of politics that would no longer be bound to the nation-state. This notion of European citizenship is a pragmatic way of developing the progressive potential of the European Union, and also of accounting for the effects of globalization upon us all. These effects boil down to one central idea: the end of pure

and steady identities, and a consequent emphasis on creolization, hybridization, a multicultural Europe, within which 'new' nomadic European subjects can take their place alongside others (Bhavani, 1992).

Collective Imagining

What this project now lacks is a social imaginary that adequately reflects the social realities, which we are already experiencing, of a post-nationalist sense of nomadic European identity. We have collectively failed to develop adequate, positive representations of the new trans-European condition that we inhabit in this Continent. This deficit in the creativity of our social imaginary both feeds upon and supports the political timidity and the resistances that are being mobilized against the European political project. More work is needed on the role of contemporary media and the cultural sector in stimulating the social imaginary of global nomadic cultures (Hall, 1992; Shohat and Stam, 1994; Gilroy, 2000; Braidotti, 2002).

At least some of the difficulty involved is due to the lack of a specifically European – in the sense of European Union – public debate, as Habermas (1992) put it in his critique of the absence of a European public sphere. This is reflected in the rather staggering absence of what I would call a European social imaginary. Thinkers as varied as Passerini (1998), Mény (2000) and Morin (1987) all signal this problem, in different ways. Passerini laments the lack of an emotional attachment to the European dimension on the part of the citizens of the social space that is Europe. Elsewhere she has developed hypotheses on a possible critical innovation of what a 'love for Europe' could mean (Passerini, 2003). For Mény the problem is rather the lack of imagination and of visionary force on the part of those who are in charge of propelling the European Union politically. For Edgar Morin, Europe is ill-loved and somewhat unwanted, 'une pauvre vieille petite chose' (Morin, 1987: 23).

My question therefore becomes: how do you develop such a new European social imaginary? I think that such a notion is a project and not a given, which however does not make it utopian in the sense of being overly idealistic. On the contrary: it is a virtual social reality that can be actualized by a joint endeavour on the part of active, conscious and desiring citizens. It entails the necessary dose of dream-like vision without which no social project can take off and gather support.

Something along these lines is expressed with great passion by Edgar Morin, when he describes his becoming-European as the awakening of his consciousness about the new peripheral role of Europe in the post-World War II era, after his years of indifference to Europe, in the tradition of Marxist cosmopolitanism and international proletarian solidarity. By his own admission, Edgar Morin overcame his mistrust for the European dimension of both thinking and political activity in the late 1970s, when, like most of his generation, he distanced himself from the unfulfilled promises of the Marxist utopia. This sobering experience made him see to which extent the new worldwide binary opposition USSR/USA had dramatically dislocated the sources of planetary power away from Europe (Morin, 1987). The concrete result of this new consciousness-raising was that Morin started taking seriously the scholarly work associated with the research of European roots as both a cultural and political specificity. This is the paradox that lies at the heart of the quest for a new, post-nationalist redefinition of European identity: it becomes thinkable as an entity at the exact historical time when it has ceased to be operational as a social or symbolic reality. This confirms my insight that the process of becoming-Europeans entails the end of fixed Eurocentric identities and it thus parallels the becoming-nomadic of subjectivity.

New images and self-representations of Europe, do not readily appear out of thin air. Producing a new imaginary requires the means of revisiting it, acknowledging it and understanding the complicity between 'difference' and 'exclusion' in the European mind-set. Reiterations are the road to creating positive redefinitions, in a progress of creative deconstruction. Communities are also imaginary institutions made of affects and desires (Anderson, 1983). Homi Bhabha, for instance, (1990; 1994) stresses the fact that common ideas of 'nation' are, to a large extent, imaginary tales that project a re-assuring but nonetheless illusory sense of unity over the disjointed, fragmented and often incoherent range of internal regional and cultural differences that make up a national identity. We have also become painfully aware of the extent to which the legitimating tales of nationhood in the West have been constructed over the bodies of women, as well as in the crucible of imperial and colonial masculinity.

The liberating potential of this process is equally proportional to the imaginary and political efforts it requires of us all. The

recognition of the new multi-layered, transcultural and post-nationalist idea of Europe in this case would only be the premise for the collective development of a new sense of accountability for the specific slice of world periphery that we happen to inhabit. Through the pain of a certain degree of de-familiarization, 'post-Eurocentric Europeans' may be able to find enough creativity and moral stamina to grab this historical chance to become 'just' Europeans in the post-nationalist sense of the term. This becoming-minoritarian would be a gesture towards in-depth transformation.

The project of developing a new kind of post-nationalist identity is related to the process of dis-identification from established, nation-bound identities. There is no denying that the quest for an adequate European social imaginary requires inner dislocations of entrenched habits and as such it involves some sense of loss. No process of consciousness-raising can ever be painless. Migrants know this very well. Home is lived both at the material and at the imaginary level, where it might be a destination, or something which is repeatedly deferred to. 'Home' is not necessarily a place of 'origin', but can indicate multiple belongings. A post-nationalist sense of European identity and of flexible citizenship requires leaving 'home', which entails an extra effort in order to change deeply embedded habits, also in terms of imaginary self-representation.

This sobering experience — the humble and productive recognition of loss, limitations and shortcomings — has to do with self-representations. Established mental habits, images and terminology, railroad us back towards established ways of thinking about ourselves. Traditional modes of representation are reassuring and slightly addictive. To change them is not unlike undertaking a detoxification cure. A great deal of courage and creativity is needed to develop forms of representation that do justice to the complexities of the kind of subjects we have already become. Cultural action for transformation is the key to the fulfilment of this project.

The project of changing the social imaginary requires intense collective and personal cultural investments, which I situate in the direction of becoming-minoritarian. The assemblage formed by a body of individuals devoted to this process is both historically grounded and socially embedded: it is community that decides, in a gesture of affirmation that engenders the constitution of new forms of self-representation for what was till then a

'missing people'. This project mobilizes the collective imaginings as well as other cognitive and rational resources.

Collectively, we can empower alternative patterns of becoming nomadic European post-nationalist subjects. This project needs to explore new cultural formations of hybrid identities at the very centre of Europe. It is a labour-intensive cultural effort on the part of all and it also requires active participation and shared desire. The cultural motor of becoming nomadic Europeans is the desire for what we are capable of becoming. This liberating potential is directly proportional to the collective affects it mobilizes in us all. The recognition of Europe as a post-nationalist entity is the premise to the creation of a sense of accountability for the specific margin of the planet that Europeans occupy. The becoming-minoritarian of Europe enacts this reconfiguration as an active experiment with different ways of inhabiting this social space.

I want to describe the project of a post-nationalist understanding of European identity as a great historical chance for Europeans to become more knowledgeable about our own history and more self-critical in a productive sense. Nietzsche argued in the early twentieth century that many Europeans no longer felt at home in Europe (Nietzsche, 1966). At the start of the third millennium, many would argue that those who do not identify with Europe in the sense of the centre — the dominant and heroic reading of Europe — are ideally suited to the task of reframing Europe, by making it accountable for a history in which fascism, imperialism and domination have played a central role. In nomadic European subjects lie the post-nationalist foundations for a multi-layered and flexible practice of European culture and citizenship in the frame of the new European Union.

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