

'New cartographies' and the decolonization of European geographies

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This paper begins with Jacques Derrida's 'Europe' on an-Other heading and Claudio Minca's (2003 Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 21 160–8) suggestion that critical human geographers need to become more attentive to their own geographical predispositions and positionalities. The paper focuses on some lessons from postcolonial writing and asks to what extent we have been successful in decolonizing (and reshaping) geographies of Europe in the ways in which we respond to transformations at the borders of Europe. The paper concludes with a discussion of efforts to 'provincialize' and decolonize Euro-geographies, and the kinds of 'new cartographies' of Europe we might write and teach.

Key words: Europe, translation, postcolonial, borders, postsocialism, 'new heading'

Something unique is afoot in Europe, in what is still called Europe even if we no longer know very well *what* or *who* goes by this name. Indeed, to what concept, to what real individual, to what singular entity should this name be assigned today? Who will draw up its borders? (Jacques Derrida 1992, 5)

Introduction

In *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe* Jacques Derrida challenged us all to think about what is 'afoot' in Europe. His answer is that 'afoot' is a 'new heading'; a new 'chapter heading, a headline, even a letterhead' (1992, 13) for what it is to be Europe (union, unified, integrated); a Europe that is 'heading' in a certain direction and may now be 'heading off' in a new direction, with all that implies in terms of changing goals:

To change direction can mean to change goals, to decide on another heading or else to change captains, or even – why not? – the age or sex of the captain. (1992, 13)

To take another heading also refers to a heading that is not ours, but the *heading of the other*. Writing

in the early 1990s, Derrida saw the possibility of new 'spiritual geographies' emerging from the anti-communist revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe, creating new headings and new projects for a post-colonial Europe. In this 'new Europe' the cartographies and geographies of 'Europe' were being decolonized, not only to the East but throughout the reunified peninsula. The result was an 'other heading' whose tendencies were thorough-going, open and ambiguous (Derrida 1992).

What then are the transformations currently underway in what we have for so long called and taught as *'the geography of Europe'*? How are we to think about the scope and form of geographies of Europe, European geographies, and the possibilities and constraints of emerging Euro-geographies, particularly in the light of the expansion of European projects of political, economic and social integration and the parallel reworking of nationalism and citizenship attendant upon the emergence of a post-colonial Europe? These reconfigurations in the scale and scope of geographical teaching are underway across the geographical curriculum as 'globalization' and 'regionalization' reshape the patterns of social

life in many regions. Material transformations in the institutional structures and actors, demographic flows and mixes, juridical rights and sovereignty, regional economic relations, and new cultural politics of identity are producing new claims on the state and society, new demands on projects of economic and cultural integration and cohesion, and new challenges for the social sciences as they attempt to understand and account for these changes. Europe itself, as 'a self' in the form of a 'unity', is beginning to think about common markets, currency, military endeavours and – after 9/11 and the more recent 3/11 Madrid bombings – integrated policing and population registration systems. At the same time, residents of this space 'Europe' increasingly identify with each other across regional and national distances, while for others the emergence of stronger social and cultural ties and corresponding new structures of feeling have given rise to uncertainties and concerns about national sovereignty, cultural rights and autonomy. These tensions and trajectories have generated rich fodder for new geographies of Europe.

In recognizing that European geographers have become increasingly attentive to these processes and patterns of regional and social differentiation, and at the same time that they have also been engaged by increasingly hegemonic visions of a Europe conditioned by the institutional practices of the European Union or the universalizing abstractions of market economies, Minca (2000a 2000b 2003) has recently challenged Anglo-American geographers to think even more deeply about the ways in which certain forms of knowledge and power continue to circulate in their own writing and practices. Minca (2000a) asks us to consider some of the ways in which a parallel hegemony might be emerging in the interstices of the critical projects of human geography itself. As Bialasiewicz has asked more recently, what are the implications of 'a single set of "critical" theories and praxes now dominant (and taken for granted) in the Anglophone academies' (2003, 20)?

In this reading, Anglo-American geography in particular is registered (admittedly provocatively) as a locus of homogenizing and centralizing power because of its own unexamined commitments and practices, its focus on Anglo-American concerns and debates, and its closure around 'English-language' texts and ideas (see also Gutierrez and Lopez-Nieva 2001; Olds 2001; Garcia-Ramon 2003; Rodriguez-Pose 2004). What does it mean to be critical, Minca asks,

when critical human geography speaks in such a focused manner to concerns located within the realms of the United Kingdom and the United States?

Samers and Sidaway (2000) have responded to the danger in Minca's call for an opening of critical human geography to the diversity of impulses and ideas registered in distinctly different national and regional contexts. In accepting such a call, they suggest, it is vital that we not simultaneously essentialize something called 'national tradition' or an 'Anglo-American' geographical canon. 'Anglo-American', 'contemporary critical' and 'English language' geographies, they argue, might better be understood as contested, hybrid and multiple knowledge formations, shot through with borrowings and associations that span much wider intellectual geographies than their 'labels' would suggest. To render any one of these, or similar categories, in singular or monolithic terms would be to flatten out the diversity of content within each. More importantly, it would be to accept the hegemonic construction of a dominant tradition within any one of them. In this process at least two aspects of contemporary critical human geography would be lost: first, the rich diversity and highly contested nature of contemporary critical human geography, and second, the already rich and hybrid international traditions that flow through it (for example, from German critical theory to French poststructuralism and feminisms to Italian Marxisms) (see also Berezin and Schain 2003; Desbiens and Smith 1999; Katz 1998; Johnston and Sidaway 2004).

While in his insistence that critical human geography today travels rather clumsily, with much baggage, Minca may overlook these rich cartographies of borrowing, translation and dissemination that characterize contemporary human geography, he does remind us to ask how contemporary ideas travel from place to place, through which institutions and knowledge production networks they flow, and how they are received. That is, Minca asks us to consider whether we may need better geographies of 'reception' that interrogate more carefully the ways in which ideas and languages travel in translation, how critical and alternative tropes are deployed in different places, and how alternative geographic imaginaries are already in process.

In this short paper, I return briefly to this conversation about a 'Europe' that both continues to hold attractions to a variety of universalizing desires and impulses and a 'Europe of Europes' that is increasingly diverse and differentiated in regional, socio-economic

and racial terms. For Chakrabarty this first 'Europe' is that 'sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories . . .' (2000, 27), a Europe that continues to function as a discursive, centred and geographically bounded structure of feeling and action, and one that is being reterritorialized in several exciting and important ways. But for Chakrabarty the political modernity of this 'universal' Europe is one that must also be provincialized; Europe's claims to universality rest not on its location but on its promise. A new 'European studies' will be one in which there is a growing recognition of a 'Europe of Europes', a social and political project whose logics are no longer located in a particular space, no longer a hearth captured by the binaries of colonial thought (here and there, inside and outside, Europe–non-Europe), but by a new disseminated logic of multiplicities and a new epistemology, what – in referring to the work of Michel Foucault – Gilles Deleuze (1988) called 'the new cartography'. This 'new cartography' was engaged not with the tracing of reality (representationalism), but with the productive possibilities of knowledge and its practices, with questions of diverse geo-histories, bio-politics and disciplinary practices. In this sense, the 'new cartography' links the geopolitical transformation and decolonization of Europe to a parallel transformation and decolonization of European science; to a thorough-going critical geography of 'Europe'.

In the brief reflections that follow, I am particularly interested in the extent to which Minca's cautionary tale of critical human geography helps us to think a little more about some of the ways in which mythic stories of a 'wished-for' Europe remain to be exorcized from the projects of critical human geography. In particular, I am interested in asking how Derrida's call for 'an-other' heading might reshape some part of our geographical imaginations and, as a result, our research, teaching, and the form and content of our interactions: what does it mean to be self-reflective about our disciplinary practices, what are the possibilities for new pedagogies, how are these reshaping our understanding of European studies, and how are we to respond to Minca's (and others) suggestion that a new imperialism is at work in contemporary Anglo-American geography? That is, I want to read Minca's challenges in terms of a discussion of what a postcolonial and decolonized rendering of European geographies might entail, as well as some of the difficulties still posed by such embraces (for parallel readings see Horschelmann 2002; Gregson *et al.* 2003; Kuus 2004).

In one sense, these are questions about the forms and practices of contemporary area studies; questions that challenge researchers and teachers alike to think seriously about what kind of area studies is appropriate in contexts that are so thoroughly and increasingly transnational and global in their forms and content (e.g. Amin and Thrift 1994; Campbell 1998; Graham 1998; Heffernan 1998; van Hoven 2004; Kuus 2004; Pinder 1998; Sidaway 2001; Smith 2002; Unwin 1998; also Watts *nd* 1997). In another sense, these are more fundamental questions of location and dislocation; questions about the kinds of fixed borders that continue to shape our own thinking about 'Europe'. Here are all the elements of a new critical geography of Europe and a questioning – as Claudio Minca (2000a 2003) has suggested – of

- 1 the claims to universality of particular traditions, histories and geographies;
- 2 the geographies of knowledge they produce; and
- 3 the potential for new marginalization of languages, traditions, and forms of access and power they sustain.

Decolonizing Europe and the Eastern question

In *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, Etienne Balibar (2004) examines the ambiguities of European citizenship. Balibar sees this building of a common Europe occurring alongside the production of new patterns of 'European apartheid', reworking and in some cases reduplicating former distinctions and spatial hierarchies, erecting internal borders organized and policed through resurgent national and racial identities. Thus, when Balibar (2004) writes from what he calls the borders of Europe (Greece), he seeks to exemplify the social and political necessity of a displacement – a geopolitical and conceptual repositioning *that has already taken place*:

We must privilege the issue of the border when discussing the questions of the European people and of the state in Europe because it crystallizes the stakes of politico-economic power and the symbolic stakes at work in the collective imagination: relations of force and material interest on one side, representations of identity on the other.

This displacement has many causes, but for Balibar they include the democratic overthrow of fascist parties in Southern Europe, revolutionary postsocialist

struggles of Central and Eastern Europe, the violence of war in Europe in and around the Third Balkan Wars, accession and integration of Central Europe into the European Union, and the social dislocations of postcolonial economic adjustment policies. These issues are important (especially for my present purposes) not only because of the magnitude of the current projects of European integration, but also because of the ways in which they force us to revisit the Eastern and Southern questions. As David Morley suggests:

Once again 'the Eastern Question' is opened up, and with it 'the Southern question.' Indeed, with the dramatic return of 'the Balkan question' to the headlines of the European media, we seem to confront less the 'end of history' (Fukuyama 1992) than the 'return of history'. . . . This is not simply a question of economic, or even political, criteria for inclusion. What is happening along these eastern and southern edges is also about suturing the cultural identity of Europe. This desire for clarity, the need to know precisely where Europe ends, is also about the construction of a symbolic geography that will separate the insiders from the outsiders. (1998)

At the very time that scholars are producing rich geographical imaginaries of postcolonial European spaces, a postsocialist and postcolonial Europe seems to be reinscribing *known* geographical conceptions with direct political and social consequences: 'Europe' as a known, bounded and stable 'entity'; a hearth, an origin, a home; a racialized structure of feeling that can be mobilized and called up to do work at any time. Such geographical tropes circulate all too readily, shaping the spatial imaginaries and cultural politics of a 'Europe' to come. For example, in writing about the Ukrainian elections in December 2004, Jonathan Steele was in no doubt about Europe's borders:

Sceptics wonder where the EU's enlargement will end, but Ukraine is undoubtedly a European nation in a way that the states of the Caucasus, of central Asia and of north Africa are not. (*Guardian Weekly* 3–9 December 2004, 3) (cf. Sellar and Pickles 2002)

These are conceptions bounded by specific geometries and cartographies of Enlightenment thought, private property regimes, democracy, individual rights and the national state. This is a Europe further bounded economically, geobiopolitically and linguistically by institutions, categories and practices that fix specific

and concrete geographies of the South (Iberia, the Mediterranean World, the Euro-Mediterranean basin, Africa-as-Other) and of the East (Slavic, Orthodox, second serfdom), producing complex geographies of core, periphery, identity, citizenship, rights, and sense of belonging and exclusion. These hardenings of place-based identities are shot through with racialized concerns about the future of a 'Europe' that is changing quickly in geopolitical, demographic, economic and generational terms. They evoke discourses of 'return' (in differing degrees to Europe, whiteness, Christianity, democracy and nation). And they generate academic retrievals of colonial metaphors of tribalism and ethnic nationalisms predicated on logics of disorder, chaos and threat on the one hand and order, exclusion and purification on the other hand.¹

As Balibar has suggested more generally:

In reality, what is at stake here is the definition of the modes of inclusion and exclusion in the European sphere, as a 'public sphere' of bureaucracy and of relations of force but also of communication and cooperation between peoples. Consequently, in the strongest sense of the term, it is the possibility or the impossibility of European unification. (2002, 72)

At the same time, 'Europe' is already on an-other heading. Within geography as a discipline and across a wide range of everyday practices and institutions, reworkings of the mythic structure of European geographies are in process (see the 2003 Recyclart Installation, 'Kidnapping Europe', a project of artists and musicians aimed at 'writing' geographies of Europe in terms of the alternative hopes and visions of migrant identities [<http://kidnappingeurope.kraak.net/>; accessed 1 October 2005]). In this broader field of a reimagined Europe, Balibar attempts to retrieve the goals of open citizenship by suggesting the possibility – and in some ways the reality – of a Europe without borders and an open form of citizenship. In posing the question of citizenship and rights in an open Europe, and in doing so by writing from Greece, Balibar reflects on the periphery as the heart of the New European constitution:

But, on the other hand, if it is true that the Balkan War manifests the impasse and the impossibility of European unification, it is necessary to have the courage (or the madness) to ask in today's conditions: under what conditions might it become possible again? Where are the potentialities for a different future? How can they be released by assigning responsibility for the past but avoiding the fruitless

exercise of repeating it? An effort of this kind alone can give meaning to a project of active European citizenship, disengaged from all myths of identity, from all illusions about the necessary course of history, and a fortiori from all belief in the infallibility of governments. *It is this effort that I would like to call on and contribute to.* (2002, 73)

These new transnational, transborder and transcultural geographies are both the engine that drives a xenophobia of closure and reaction *and* stimulate the need for new exciting geographies to be written and enacted. But how do we decolonize our understanding in ways that 'provincialize' or 'kidnap' Europe in ways that avoid the drawing of new exclusionary boundaries? Bialasiewicz similarly asks whether Europe can indeed

transcend its institutionalised/bureaucratized form and become a new locus for critical praxis? Can we imagine other common European political spaces and write and teach about other Euro-geographies besides those that are importantly located around the national state and the project of European Union? Can the European project move beyond the unabashedly neo-liberal socio-economic goals upon which the EU was founded to promote a new 'trans-national ideal of social justice, belonging, and cultural tolerance' (Amin 2002: 14)? (2003, 17)

How do we put in question the universalizing claims that locate Europe at an end of History as a limit point of actual and desirable development, and how do we do so without locating Europe's 'Other' in what Chakrabarty calls the waiting room of history; the 'not-yet' of political modernity; the developing, the emerging, the democratizing, the transitioning?

New maps of Europe

Like Balibar, my own thinking about Europe has increasingly been drawn to its periphery, writing from and about postsocialist Eastern and Southern Europe.² Here, on the edge of the 'border', postsocialism as a political and cultural movement has – from the first days of de-Stalinization – been politically mobilized in terms of a return to Europe, liberal democratic states, market capitalism, Christian nationalism, and a regime of civil society in which the sovereign individual and private property were to form the basis for political and economic relations. The desire to reform the social economy seemed to have few such ideological and cultural resources available to it to sustain effective political mobilization;

market socialism of the kind being constructed in China seemed not to be on the table in postsocialist Europe as a neoliberal hegemony was rapidly installed (Burawoy 1996; Pickles and Smith 1998).

This politics was illustrated by Vaclav Klaus' 23 August 1994 keynote address to the International Geographical Union Regional Conference 'Environment and Quality of Life in Central Europe: Problems of Transition' in Prague. Klaus told the mainly West European and American geographers and environmentalists in attendance that environmental science and geography were largely irrelevant to the concerns of his government. His priority was the economy. The economy must first be 'righted' and only in this way can environmental issues be resolved. In his view, it was a liberalized market economy integrated into international circuits of capital alone that provided the legitimate mechanisms for environmental remediation. Efforts to encourage the state to act in any manner other than as an enabler of markets were communist inspired and politically regressive.

In one sense, Klaus represented the forces of reactionary (*and radical*) neoliberalism against the progressive (*and conservative*) potential of postsocialist democratization (and the changing fortunes of his government subsequently reflected this). He chose his words carefully and spoke them directly, addressing what he clearly perceived as the idealism and utopianism of Western scholars coming to Prague to 'right' the ills of socialist environmental planning. For Klaus, such idealism made sense only if suffused with radical Thatcherite economic policies; policies to which Klaus was strategically (as well as philosophically) committed as part of a programme of decolonization.

Decolonization from state socialism – in this view – was to mean precisely what was offered under structural adjustment; de-communication, weakening of the state, privatization of property regimes, and the marketization of economic interactions. The euphoria wrought by democracy movements thus arrived with intense commitments to market reform, liberalization and internationalization of the economy, as well as to fast capitalism and primitive accumulation. These transformations reworked existing geographies within postsocialist Europe, producing new class formations and deepening divisions between the winners and losers. As Judit Timár (2004, 29–30) has suggested, these are the very conditions that have militated against the positive and widespread reception of critical geographies in postsocialist Europe: the negative reception of

'Leftism'; the chaotic and tangled ideologies of post-socialist party politics; poverty, weakened social solidarities, and the very limited development of effective organs of civil society. They have also fostered the growing links between state and corporate interests and the growth of applied geography in universities and research institutes; and the further deepening of technicist and positivist approaches to regional planning stimulated by the demands and opportunities of adjustment to the EU *acquis*.

At one level, such postsocialist transformations are readily amenable to a straightforward political economic analysis of uneven development, and there is certainly much interesting work being done in this regard. But it is also important that we recognize the concrete specificities and conjunctures of postsocialism as a particular form of postcolonial movement mediated in its own complex ways with classical concerns for social equality, the role of the state and social dialogue (see Pavlinek and Pickles 2000; Burawoy nd).

Many people throughout Central and Eastern Europe would probably agree with Klaus that the vast majority of people in postsocialist countries are struggling with very basic economic challenges and difficult personal circumstances wrought by transformation. Many might also agree that they will have to attend to these conditions before turning to broader engagements with political questions of inclusion, economic fairness and environmental sustainability. In these circumstances, Bialasiewicz asks how we are to pay attention to

the very varied contexts – national, political, and institutional – that shape us as critical academics, contexts that determine not only our 'realms of possibilities', our realms of action as critical thinkers, but also the languages and strategies within which such critiques are articulated, as well as the 'targets' of our critical praxis. (2003, 19)

And how are we to guard against the indirect consequences of our practices that reinscribe the very cartographies of Europe we have worked so long to decentre and destabilize. As Wessely has argued so sharply:

Following upon the euphoric moments of 1989, intellectuals and professional in the former peoples' republics of Europe set themselves two objectives. Firstly, exploiting the booming interest in post-communist societies, they wished to present their work projects to 'the world' in order to demonstrate that these measured up to international standards; secondly,

they wanted to explore the ways of 'catching up' with the development of Western scholarship. Since the metaphors of 'lagging behind' and 'catching up' have flooded political discourse on all levels in these countries, it is time to crack their worn surfaces and see what they actually imply. If they merely carry the call to adopt thoughtlessly whatever has become part of the staple diet of American sociological journals feed their readers on, then these metaphors invite us to elaborate and proudly conserve our peripheral position in international professional discourse. (2000, 1–2)

This issue was recently made clear to me in a series of discussions with three geographers, friends of longstanding, from the University of Sofia. As usual, the discussion ranged far and wide, but at the heart of the discussion that evening was the question of the possibilities created in contemporary Bulgarian geography by the recent turn to spatial logics and analysis, at the heart of which was a successful new GIS laboratory in the Department of Geography. During the course of the conversation, I was asked what I thought about contemporary Bulgarian geography and the possibilities of this spatial analytical turn. I made the fatal mistake of suggesting that the '*current*' fascination with spatial analysis might be a consequence of the '*legacy*' of the descriptive land-mapping traditions of Russian geography. The heated exchange that followed was fuelled in part by the fact that several of my friends had trained in Moscow and they clearly felt that I had completely misunderstood or misrepresented both Russian, as well as Bulgarian, geography. It was clear that, in the eyes of my friends, Bulgarian geography was not to be seen as a *residue*, not as a *mere legacy* of or responding to a historical tradition of Soviet domination, and certainly not displaced or '*out-of-time*'. Bulgarian geography was not to be located in an ante-room of history and should not be thought of in this way.

Instead, my friends insisted (although not in these words) that Bulgarian geography was deeply engaged in a critical postsocialist project – a project of institutional, disciplinary and psychological decolonization. Spatial analysis and GIS profoundly excited and challenged the scholars who engaged with the discipline each required, they distinguished a kind of new critical geography from the past in fundamental and important ways, opening new institutional spaces, alignments and opportunities in the academy, business and the state. At one level their defence of spatial analysis and applied geography

was something akin to Klaus's defence of neoliberal markets, offered as a technical necessity in conditions of crisis. It was also a recognition that these tools were providing for them institutional reach into public policy debates about which they cared deeply. But above all, in their eyes, spatial analysis and GIS held out a promise of the possibility of radical rupture in the practices of the academy and the state, a new way of 'doing' geography in a context of embedded traditions of thought and politics.

I have thought long and hard about the implications of that evening's conversation in Sofia and of the many other 'small' ways in which I and my critical human geography colleagues insert these moments of comparative geo-history into our speech and writing. Samers and Sidaway are correct to point to the conflicted and hybrid nature of something called 'Anglo-American geography'. But this does not – by itself – resolve the issue of whether, and if so to what extent, critical human geography has its own commitments and forms of embeddedness, its own legacies and truth effects, and to what extent these are just as contextual as the commitments and claims to truth of my geography friends in Sofia or the new Europeans who are mobilizing the heritage of 'Europe' in very different circumstances and, in some ways, to different ends.

I remain unsure about the extent to which we have written the kinds of geographies that attempt to understand why particular forms of critical geography might mean the tactical deployment of new analytical methodologies and decolonization might mean the tactical deployment of liberalization. It would be an interesting thought experiment to ask what our geographies might look like if we were to take seriously the mobilization of neoliberalism as a political resource for decolonization, or spatial analysis as a scholarly resource for institutional reform. And whether or not these questions open up a new heading for our thinking about the broader political economy of decolonization underway in Europe – a decolonization focused on privatization, withdrawal of state institutions from the economy and the society, and a marketizing and monetarizing of the social economy in both Eastern and Western Europe.

This decolonization may not yet be a postcolonialism, indeed it seems clear that it is not, but is also instantiating a new colonial regime tied to international capital markets, liberal trade policies and foreign ownership. It is, however, complexly mediated by historical commitments to the allocation of social surplus, complex household and alternative economic

practices, and a symbolic politics that is both post-socialist and postcolonial.

Conclusion: practising Euro-geographies

Minca's criticisms challenge us to ask what structures and practices are currently emerging from contemporary transformations in a global, transnational and transcultural Europe, and what might be the appropriate new cartographies and pedagogies? The apparent dominance of Anglo-American traditions of critical human geography can be thought in terms of this wider geopolitics of knowledge production, and – I think – can be usefully extended to our reflections on the kinds of geographies appropriate to the 'new' Europe in its social, territorial and postmodern forms.

Several practical possibilities might help in sustaining these new cartographies and pedagogies. Garcia-Ramon has suggested that geographers consider revisiting the question of language facility, not to 'globalize the faculties of the geography departments (for which read to make them all fluent in English)', but to create a broader commitment among all academic geographers to at least being able to *read in languages* other than English: 'We should' she argues '*ban monolingualism* in geography. Academic geographers should be able to read in more than one language' (2003, 3). International journals of geography also need to reflect these commitments by opening up the *reviewing* pool, broadening the range of languages published, and reviewing materials and books from non-English traditions (see Rodriguez-Pose (2004) on the value of English language writings in opening national traditions and sustaining diversity). Some journals already have special sections aimed at supporting such transnational perspectives; for example, *European Urban and Regional Studies* contains a regular section called 'Eurocommentaries' and *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* has attempted to incorporate survey essays from other countries. Many journals have now 'internationalized' their editorial advisory boards, and several have commissioned survey essays on developments and debates occurring in other regions of Europe by scholars from the region.³ Funding agencies might support joint writing of collaborative review papers from two or more language traditions. Garcia-Ramon also suggests that geographers might take more seriously their commitments to transnational and transcultural identities by focusing on the practical tasks of bringing more works into *translation*, and to this we might

add the parallel commitment to theorizing the critical geographies of translation.

These issues of translation are, in many ways, even more fundamental. For Balibar (2002), border zones are not marginal to the constitution of a public sphere but rather are at the centre. It is in these 'contact' zones of movement where new formations of a people (*demos*) constitute new constellations and powers of citizenship where translations are already *taking place*. The interregnum certainly generates its own monsters; the Polish government strives to insert into the Constitution of the European Union that the EU is an organization of Christian states, European heads of state articulate astonishing defences of Europe's *Leitkultur* (leading culture) as incompatible with the cultures of Islam (and by implication with the emerging new immigrant citizens in their own countries), leaders of the new neoliberal Europe strive to block Turkey's entry into the European Union (see Halliday 2004), and the cultural politics of autonomy and identity are refashioned in the neonationalisms of the 'No' movement in France and the Netherlands.

Any critical project of contemporary postsocialist Europe will have to better understand the complex articulations of such popular attitudes towards democracy, freedom, nationalism, neoliberalism and an identity politics of a return to a never-existing Europe (Pollard and Sidaway 2002; van Hoven 2004; Pickles and Unwin 2004). In the 1930s, under the new directorship of Max Horkheimer and in conditions of deteriorating political conditions in Germany, the Institute for Social Research (the Frankfurt School) began a massive project aimed at better understanding family and worker attitudes to violence and totalitarianism, and in the 1970s in Britain (in part as a reaction to the negative rendering of popular culture in the work of the Frankfurt School) the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies emerged as an explicit attempt to study and theorize the cultural politics of postcolonial, often working-class Britain. Today, throughout postsocialist Europe, on the Schengen border and in the new immigrant quarters of Western and Southern Europe, similar projects that engage directly with contemporary struggles, a politics of memory and memorialization and diverse economic practices are underway.

Minca was correct to suggest that critical human geography sustains certain commitments at the expense of a richer engagement with the diverse geographies of Europe. But contemporary critical geographies are increasingly attentive to the new hybrid social formations, the new localized and

regional hegemonies, and the strategic politics of postcolonialism in process – producing exciting postcolonial geographies of Europe.⁴ Balibar's *repositioning* of the question of a postcolonial Europe as a productive forging of new identities on the border similarly charts a new cartography of engagement (see also Deleuze 1998; Pickles 2004). His challenge of keeping open the productive possibilities of something that – perhaps at first glance or even after 15 years – seems 'out-of-time', transitioning, becoming 'European' is a serious challenge to our concepts and our methods.

In these conditions of complex, historically refracted cultural and political mediations, the kinds of translations and transnational disciplinary conversations Minca asks us to consider may become even more crucial. For Tibor Kuczi, unless such practices are developed and sustained, we are simply not ready to carry out the critical ethnographies, genealogies and disciplinary histories of neoliberalism's attractions and the conversations they require:

Of course, if Csepeli *et al.* are right in claiming that western sociologists are only interested in acquiring raw material in our region which they wish to elaborate with their own scientific technology, then our situation is hopeless. Hopeless because we would search in vain for a way out in the direction of post-modernism as Csepeli *et al.* recommend, if better-trained western sociologists, hence also more up-to-date in postmodernism, continued to see us in the East as backward in terms of the old, time-tested mentality of modernity, and hence as inferior, mere deliverer of raw materials. We could hardly go on promoting our different, problem-oriented science under the aegis of otherness, if the post-modern powers were interpreting it as backwardness. (<http://www.c3.hu/scripta/scripta0/replika/honlap/english/01/05pkucz.htm>) Accessed 1 October 2005

It is not at all clear what kinds of geographical theory and pedagogy might emerge from the borders of Europe or from a Europe without borders. It is clear that in one form or another it will be either a renewed modernist project that resolves contradictions and tendencies into a narrative of 'Europe' with all its diverse political possibilities or it could be a new cartographic project that assists in the drawing of the new borders of a Europe on 'an-other' heading.

Notes

- 1 Typical of this genre of racialized return is Huntington (1993). In *Society Must Be Defended* Michel Foucault

- (2003) suggested an even broader reading of the politics of modernity as one that emerges as precisely this kind of racialized politics of the social (see also Wolff 1994; Todorova 1997).
- 2 By postsocialism I refer first to the revolutionary transformations in Central and Eastern Europe that followed the upheavals of 1989, what Guy Standing (2002, 51) has called the first revolution to be led by international finance capital and international financial institutions. Second, I take postsocialism to refer to a movement of decolonization driven by a struggle over a desire for a liberal polity and a neoliberal economy on the one hand and a desire for the reformation of aspects of the social economy on the other. Third, I take postsocialism to be a process that is as much about decolonizing the Cold War legacies of Western Europe as it is about decolonizing the Stalinist legacies of Central and Eastern Europe. Postsocialism is a process of decolonizing and disclosing the Cold War European mind and its spaces, and the ways in which that thinking and those geographies provide resources for renewal of our critical project.
 - 3 *Social Geography* explicitly encourages submission from 'outside European and Anglo-American discourse' in English, German or possibly other languages (<http://www.copernicus.org/site/COPERNICUS/sg/sg.html>; accessed 1 October 2005).
 - 4 In a related manner, Habermas (1997) pressed the German Bundestag Investigative Commission to take up its legal responsibility to renegotiate the Constitution/constitution of the newly reunified Germany, to work off the past, and to create new public and democratic imaginaries.

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