Abstract:
This paper begins with Claudio Minca’s recent suggestion that critical human geographers need to become much more attentive to their own geographical predispositions and positionalities. The paper focuses on lessons from post-colonial reason for decolonizing (and re-shaping) geographies of Europe and for understanding post-socialist Europe. The paper addresses the ‘provincializing of Europe’, what it would mean in our teaching to decolonize Euro-geographies, and the kinds of new cartographies and new geo-bio-politics of Europe we might write and teach. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications for our research and teaching of taking seriously issues of diversity and otherness.

Key words: Europe, critical human geography, English-language, border.

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New cartographies and the decolonisation of European geographies

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.

Wessely (2000, 1-2)

Introduction

This paper was presented at the first Kings-UNC-NUS joint geography seminar on ‘Euro-geographies’, which focused specifically on the transformations currently underway in what we have for so long, and perhaps again increasingly, called and taught as ‘the Geography of Europe’. The task of the presenters was 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 on 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’ re-shape 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, and new challenges for the social sciences. Europe itself, as ‘a self’, 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, while residents of this space ‘Europe’ are increasingly forging social and cultural ties with each other, common structures of feeling. In response, geographers and
others across Europe are developing new analytics, frameworks, associations, networks of interaction, and languages – new cartographies – to account for these changes.

At the heart of this new ‘European studies’ are difficult questions of geo-history, bio-politics, and disciplinary practice. These questions continue to challenge the many ways in which centralizing and centred notions of Europe shape the cartographies of meaning within which life and learning about Europe are structured. In particular, they pose serious questions about the forms and practices of contemporary area studies, challenging researchers and teachers alike to think seriously about what kind of area studies is appropriate in contexts that are so thoroughly and increasingly trans-national and global in their forms and content. Here are all the elements of a new critical geography of Europe and a questioning -- as Claudio Minca (2000; 2003) has suggested – of (i) the claims to universality of particular traditions, histories, and geographies; (ii) the geographies of knowledge they produce; and (iii) the potential for new marginalisations of languages, traditions, and forms of access and power they sustain.

In raising these questions about knowledge and power, Minca (2000) seeks to complement critical geographies that address themselves to the increasingly hegemonic visions of Europe conditioned through the centralizing tendencies in the institutional practices of the European Union or the universalizing abstractions of market economies. He 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, questioning as Bialasiewicz (2003, 20) suggests the implications of “a single set of ‘critical’ theories and praxes now dominant (and taken for granted) in the Anglophone academies”. 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. Of particular significance to Minca is the way in which critical human geography has been centred on Anglo-American concerns and debates, and has, as a result, exhibited a 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, he 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? At the heart of these geographies and cartographies of Europe are
distinct systems of language and power which, Minca suggests, are in danger of reproducing and
sustaining the very uneven and particular cartographies of knowledge and power that have so long
sustained prior geographies.

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 essentialise 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 post-structuralism and feminisms to Italian Marxisms) (see also Desbiens and Smith 1999;

While Minca’s insistence on the fact that critical human geography today travels rather
clumsily and with much baggage may overlook the these rich cartographies of borrowing, translation,
and dissemination that conditions contemporary human geography, it 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, perhaps we need better geographies of
‘reception’ which interrogate more carefully the ways in which ideas and languages travel in
translation, what alternative criticisms have emerged under different modernities, and what might be other ways that alternative critical human geographies might circulate and articulate with each other.

As Etienne Balibar (1999/2002) 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.

In this short paper, I return briefly to this conversation about ‘Europe’, a ‘Europe’ that Chakrabarty (2000, 27) refers to as “the sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories…”, a Europe that functions as a discursive, centred, and geographically bounded structure of feeling and action, and one that is being re-territorialized in several exciting and important ways. In so doing, I want to pose several questions about the ways in which post-socialist Europe might contribute in specific ways to critical geographies of Europe. That is, I want to return to discussions of what a de-colonized reading and a post-colonial rendering of European geographies might entail, as well as some of the difficulties still posed by such embraces (see Hoerschelmann 2002 and Kuus 2004 for parallel readings).

**Provincializing Europe and European geographies**

Here I want to write about the possibilities of post-colonial reason in decolonizing these cartographies and geographies and ask about the possibilities for an ‘other heading’ (Derrida 1992)? How does such an ‘other’ heading reshape our research, teaching, and the form and content of our interactions? Can we describe new productive and exciting Euro-geographies that do not reproduce a colonial discourse of Europe? What does it mean to think in these terms not only about Europe, but about discipline and identity? How are we to understand the resurgence of Europe as a political category, and how do we respond to the consolidation of scholarly and political discourse around EU-centred notions of integration, accession, and expansion? How, in other words, are we to teach and write geographies of
Europe that deconstruct and ‘disseminate’ mythic stories of a ‘wished-for’ Europe over against those many Europes that are currently being produced?

When Balibar (1999/2002; 2002; 2004) writes from Greece, from what he calls the borders of Europe, he points to just such 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 they certainly include for Balibar the democratic overthrow of fascist parties in Southern Europe, revolutionary post-socialist struggles of Central and Eastern Europe, the violence of war in Europe in the and around the Third Balkan Wars, accession and integration of Central Europe into the European Union, and the social dislocations of post-colonial economic adjustment policies. These issues are important 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 re-visit the Eastern and Southern Questions. As David Morley (1998) 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 1997) 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.

Above all else, these appear as *known* geographical conceptions of Europe: ‘Europe’ as a thoroughly known and stable ‘entity’, a racialized structure of feeling that can be mobilized and called up to do work at any time, a point well illustrated by Jonathan Steele’s recent discussion of the Ukrainian elections: “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* December 3-9 2004, 3) (cf. Sellar and Pickles 2002, and Sidaway on ‘Africa as Europe’ in this volume).
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, geo-bio-politically, 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

Elsewhere re-workings of the mythic structure of European geographies are at work across a wide range of everyday practices and institutions (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/]). In this broader field of a re-imagined 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 (1999/2002) 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

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 and Todorova 1997).
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.**

These new hybridities, transnationalisms, 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. For Chakrabarty, the postcolonial moment was not so much the recognition of Europe’s universal pretensions based on its historical particularisms and particularities. It was this appropriation of the central categories of political modernity and the necessity, to re-invigorate them. It is this appropriation of the central categories of political modernity to which Amin (2003, 18) seems to want to point to as a new space of European mobilities, in which he wants to defend “a certain ethos, one of empathy for the stranger and of becoming different through interaction, supported by a framework of rights that draw upon elements of European political philosophy, including the Enlightenment idea; of universal freedoms and the French Revolution ideal of an equal and solidaristic society… a commitment to political community ‘bound by the ties of common interest and affection’”.

How, then, do we decolonise our understanding in ways that ‘provincialize’ or ‘kidnap’ Europe, but in ways that avoid the drawing of new exclusionary boundaries? Bialasiewicz (2003: 17) similarly asks whether Europe can indeed “transcend its institutionalised/bureaucratised form and become a new locus for critical praxis? Can we imagine other common European political spaces and write and teach other Euro-geographies as well as those that are importantly located around the national state and the project of European Union? Can the European project move beyond the unabashedly neoliberal socioeconomic goals upon with the EU was founded to promote a new ‘transnational ideal of social justice, belonging, and cultural tolerance’ (Amin 2002: 14)?” How do we put in question the universalising 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 democratising, the transitioning?

**New maps of Europe**

Like Balibar, my own thinking about Europe has increasingly been drawn to its periphery, writing from and about eastern and southern Europe. Here, on the edge of the ‘border’, post-socialism 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. Market socialism of the kind currently being constructed in China seemed not to be on the table in post-socialist Europe as a neo-liberal hegemony was rapidly installed (Burawoy 1996; Pickles and Smith 1998).

This politics was illustrated by Vaclav Klaus’ August 23 1994 keynote address to 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. The first priority – he insisted – 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*) neo-liberalism against the progressive (*and conservative*) potential of post-socialist democratisation (and the changing fortunes of his government subsequently reflected this). He certainly 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 program of de-
colonization.

Decolonisation from state socialism – in this view -- was to mean precisely what was offered
under structural adjustment; de-communisation, weakening of the state, privatisation of property
regimes, and the marketisation 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 post-socialist Europe, producing new class
formations and deepening divisions between the winners and losers. As Judit Timár (2003: 29-30) has
suggested, these are the very conditions that have militated against the positive and widespread
reception of critical geographies in post-socialist 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 then, post-socialist 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, again following Minca’s injunction, that we
recognize the concrete specificities and conjunctures of post-socialism as a particular form of post-
colonial 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 n.d.). I think this
experience has, perhaps, not been sufficiently understood within geography. Certainly, many people
throughout Central and Eastern Europe would agree with Klaus that the vast majority of people in
post-socialist 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. How, in these circumstances, Bialasiewicz (2003: 19) asks are we 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”?

In a long evening of eating, drinking, and discussion in Sofia, I recently engaged with three geographers from the University of Sofia, friends of longstanding. 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 in such circumstances of suggesting – and I use my words carefully – 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 rakia and in part by the fact that several of my friends had trained in Moscow and they clearly felt – as they told me – that I had completely misunderstood or misrepresented both Russian and Bulgarian geography. Now, I remain convinced that my perception of a link between traditions of Russian terrain analysis and contemporary Bulgarian fascination with spatial analysis can be sustained. But I also think that something else was at work here. Bulgarian geography was, in the eyes of my friends (and myself), not a residue, not a mere legacy of or responding to a historical tradition of Soviet scholarship, and certainly not displaced ‘out-of-time’. Bulgarian geography was not to be located in a tradition of thought in this way. Spatial logics of the kinds of which we spoke were profoundly new, or at least they were
responding to something that was profoundly new. They challenged the capacities of the scholars involved, they distinguished the new from the past in fundamental and important ways, and they opened up new institutional capacities, 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 neo-liberal markets, a technical necessity in conditions of crisis. Similarly, my Bulgarian colleagues’ articulation of new possibilities of spatial analysis was also an excitement about extending the reach of geographical analysis into public policy debates. 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 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? What if critical geography in Central and Eastern Europe does mean the tactical deployment of new methodologies and decolonization means the tactical deployment of liberalization? What would our geographies have to look like if we were to take seriously the mobilization of neo-liberalism as a political resource for decolonization? How are we to understand a neo-liberalism that is also 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 post-colonial?
Conclusion: practicing Euro-geographies

The apparent dominance of Anglo-American traditions of critical human geography can be thought in terms of these 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 post-modern forms. Minca’s criticisms challenge us to ask what structures and practices are currently emerging from contemporary transformations in a global, transnational, and trans-cultural Europe, and what might be the appropriate new cartographies and pedagogies (e.g., Amin and Thrift 1994; Campbell 1998; Graham 1998; Heffernan 1998; van Hoven 2004; Kuus 2004; Pinder 1998; Sidaway 2001; Smith 2002; and Unwin 1998; also Watts 1997; n.d.)?

Several practical possibilities might help in sustaining these new cartographies and pedagogies. Garcia-Ramon (2003: 3) 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.” 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 trans-national 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. Journal editors and their advisory boards might easily contribute to these broader dialogues by supporting regular short survey essays on debates occurring in other regions of Europe by scholars from the region.²

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² 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).
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 trans-national and trans-cultural 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.

For Balibar (2002), “border zones are not marginal to the constitution of a public sphere but rather are at the center.” It is in these ‘contact’ zones of movement and growing inequalities where new formations of a people (demos) constitute new constellations and powers of citizenship where translations are already taking place. These re-territorializations of the social spaces of European identity are, however, marked by the dual tensions of the achievements of European integration and the Balkan War (which signals the “impasse and impossibility of European unification”). If we can read Minca’s challenge through Balibar’s lens, critical human geography must become more open to understanding the alternative modernities of Europe and how quickly these are emerging.

The interregnum certainly generates monsters (as Gramsci taught us); 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), and leaders of the new neo-liberal Europe strive to block Turkey’s entry into the European Union (see Halliday 2004). Any critical project of contemporary post-socialist Europe will have to better understand the complex articulations of such popular attitudes towards democracy, freedom, nationalism, neo-liberalism, and an identity politics of a return to a never-existing Europe (van Hoven 2004; Pollard and Sidaway 2002; Pickles and Unwin 2004). In the 1930s, under the new directorship of Max Horkheimer and in conditions of deterioriating 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 post-colonial, often working-class Britain. Today, throughout post-socialist 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. In the emerging post-colonial geographies of Europe scholars are already engaging with the new hybrid social formations, the new localized and regional hegemonies, and the strategic politics of post-colonialism in process.3

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. Balibar’s re-positioning of the question of a post-colonial Europe as a productive forging of new identities on the border similarly charts a new cartography of engagement (see also Deleuze 1999 and Pickl;es 2004). His challenge of keeping open the productive possibilities of something that – perhaps at first glance or even after fifteen 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 trans-national disciplinary conversations Minca asks us to consider 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 neo-liberalism’s attractions and the conversations they require:

He declares a complementary otherness which does not imply a superior or inferior quality in itself. 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

3 In a related manner, Habermas (1997) pressed the German Bundestag Investigative Commission to take up its legal responsibility to re-negotiate the Constitution/constitution of the newly re-unified Germany, to work off the past, and to create new public and democratic imaginaries.
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

It is not at all clear what kinds of geographical theory and pedagogy might emerge from the borders of Europe, or what kinds of political economies more generally are in process, but it is clear that in one form or another it will be the actually existing promise of a post-colonial Europe.
References


