

## 11 Epilogue

### A New Vision of Europe: Learning from the South

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A sense of historical and political exhaustion haunts Europe. After five centuries of providing the solutions for the world, Europe seems incapable of solving its own problems. There pervades a feeling that there are no alternatives to the current critical state of affairs, that the fabric of social cohesion and post-WWII social contract that linked gains in productivity to gains in salaries and social protection is forever gone, and that the resulting increase in social inequality, rather than delivering higher economic growth, is indeed plunging Europe into stagnation. European social cohesion is degenerating before our eyes, sliding into European civil war by some *Fatum* (overpowering necessity) from which Leibniz saw modern European reason being liberated.

This is all the more puzzling if we consider that at least some of these seemingly intractable problems are somewhat similar to problems that non-European countries have confronted in recent years with some measure of success. More puzzling yet is that these countries, in addressing their problems, have drawn on European ideas and experiences. But they have reinterpreted them in new ways, by twisting and reconfiguring some of their components and mixing them with other components derived from non-European sources, while engaging in a kind of intellectual and institutional bricolage focused on concrete results rather than on orthodox models and dogmas.

The sense of exhaustion is compounded with a sense of miniaturization. Europe seems to be shrinking, while the non-European world seems to be expanding. New actors emerge on the global scene, such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), while Europe appears less and less relevant. Moreover, in a rather paradoxical way, as the EU expanded and deepened the distinctiveness of Europe's presence and profile in world affairs became diluted. When the western European countries were less dependent on Brussels's directives and were viewed as independent actors, they, however acting in isolation, projected a vision of Europe as a benevolent and peace loving actor in international affairs, a profile clearly contrasting with the one projected by the USA. In contrast, when in our days the president of France, following slavishly on the steps of the USA, enthusiastically embraces the idea of bombing Syria, with this caricatural act he is not only inducing the suicide of the French left but also wrapping up the soul of Europe in the diploma of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the EU in Oslo on 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2012 and setting it on fire.

In addressing this epochal *Geist*, I start from two ideas that are far from being consensual.<sup>1</sup> First, Europe, no matter how extraordinary its accomplishments in the past, has nothing to teach the world anymore. Second, Europe has extreme difficulty in learning from non-European experiences, namely from the global South. Concerning the first premise, Europe's high period as an imperial and global power ended in 1945. Devastated by the war, it benefitted from the helping hand of the USA, then the overwhelming world power. Once the latter started to decline in the 1970's, instead of trying to carve out a new autonomous trajectory, Europe tied its fate to that of the USA by developing a partnership with it which over the years has become more and more unequal.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime, the peripheral countries of the global South, many of which were European colonies at the end of WWII, became independent and, in one way or another, tried to find their own ways of making history in a post-European world. It was all along a bumpy road, since Europe and its superior ally, the USA, would question and challenge any attempt at delinking from the capitalist world system; the Soviet Union, in turn, did not accept any alternative to capitalism other than the one it was itself trying to develop. The movement of the non-aligned (starting with the Bandung Conference in 1955, convened by the presidents Nehru (India), Sukarno (Indonesia), Nasser (Egypt), Nkrumah (Ghana) and Tito (Yugoslavia, now Serbia), was a first manifestation of an historical intent to carve out a path beyond the double and self-contradictory vision Europe offered of itself to the world, now liberal and capitalist, now Marxist and socialist, both of them highly exclusionary and demanding unconditional loyalty. This dichotomization of global affairs, dramatically illustrated by the Cold War (at times very hot indeed, as in the Korean war), posed intractable political dilemmas to the new political elites of the global South, both at the national and regional level and at the level of the United Nations, even if for those most distanced from the western culture capitalism and communism were two twin traps laid out by the same 'white man's' supremacy.

Several attempts at making history with some measure of autonomy followed in the subsequent decades until we reached the end of the twentieth century with the emergence of the BRICS. Such an emergence dramatized the diversity of world experience. Interestingly enough, the political and social innovations that came with it were based for the most part on European ideas, but they were processed in different ways; they were, in a sense, re-appropriated and hybridized, mixed with non-western ideas, in a bricolage of ideas and practices. A lot can be learned from this historical experience.

But here enters the second premise. The extreme difficulty Europe has to take into account such rich historical diversity, to reflect productively upon it and to use it for solving its own problems. The main reason for this difficulty lies in an entrenched colonialist prejudice that has outlived historical colonialism for many decades. For five centuries Europe saw itself as holding the key to the problems of an ever expanding and inherently problematical world. Colonialism, evangelization, neocolonialism, imperialism, development, globalization, foreign aid, human rights, humanitarian assistance have been some of the keys of the Eurocentric solutions for the problems of the world. Being dependent on such

solutions, the non-European world was bound to adopt them, either voluntarily or by force, in this lying its subalternity *vis-à-vis* Europe. The colonialist prejudice writ large is at the source of Europe's difficulty in learning from the experiences of the world. How could Europe possibly benefit from world experiences that relate to problems that Europe had supposedly solved long ago?

There is, however, one window of opportunity which has emerged in the last two decades, and to which the current financial, economic, political, ecological crisis has given it a new visibility. What if Europe, rather than being the solution for the problems of the world, were itself the problem? Is Europe so unique as having to rely solely on its own experience to solve its problems? Or is Europe, on the contrary, part of a much wider world from whose experience it could benefit? The question does not imply that Europe needs to take lessons but rather engage in a new conversation with the world, a process of reciprocal learning based on more horizontal relations and mutual respect for differences. For better or worse, Europe did teach lessons to the world for a long time. One might be tempted to think that now it is time for the non-European world, the global South, to teach lessons to Europe. Then Europe teaching the world; now the world teaching Europe. I think, however, that a wrong metaphor does not get better by being inverted. In my view it is rather the time for a post-colonial, post-imperial conversation between Europe and the vast non-European world. Rather than inverted teaching, we need mutual learning. Since no one has a magical solution for the problems of the world, no absolute knowledge from which such a solution could derive, a new conversation of the world is the only alternative to the continuation of imperial domination and global civil war we seem to be entering.

### **Learning From the South**

In the following I try to answer two questions. Under which conditions would such mutual learning be possible? Which would the main areas of such global learning be? Before I answer these questions it should be noted that the formulation of these questions presupposes that a new vision of Europe is both possible and necessary. Why do we need a new vision? How should it look like? By asking these questions we are assuming, as a hypothesis, at least, that the old vision is not valid anymore or is not working as it should. Of course, we are also assuming that we have a clear and consensual idea of how the old vision looked like. None of these assumptions can be taken for granted. It seems to me that the sense of uneasiness that haunts Europe today derives from this abyssal uncertainty. Europeans are being led to aspire for a new vision of Europe, even if they don't exactly know why, nor how exactly such vision will differ from the old vision whose profile they at best only vaguely grasp.

There are other uncertainties and paradoxes which I am not going to address here except for a brief reference to one of them. It concerns the question of what counts as Europe. How many Europes are there? Is it made of 51 countries or of the 28 European Union countries? What does it mean to be European? We should bear in mind that there is no official definition of what 'European' means, at least for

cultural policies. The break-up of the Soviet Union, the re-unification of Germany, and the large-scale movement of migrants, workers and refugees throughout Europe have added complexity to the very idea of Europe and European identity, as new identities and new borderlands get juxtaposed and multiple layers of 'insider' or 'outsider' status develop. Immigration offices and customs commissions may also develop their own ideas of Europe and European identity. For this reason, some authors (e.g. Cris Shore 1993) claim that the talk of 'the European identity' is premature. Just as there is not 'one Europe' but a plurality of historically specific and competing definitions of Europe (Seton-Watson 1985; Wallace 1990), so there are rival and contrasting 'European identities', depending on where the boundaries of Europe are drawn and how the nature of 'European-ness' is perceived, a problem identified very early on (cf. Kundera 1984; Dahrendorf et al. 1989). In mentioning these complexities and uncertainties, I only want to draw attention to the fact that the idea of a new vision of Europe is intimately linked with the idea of the multiple and often contradictory boundaries of Europe.

### **Under Which Conditions Would Such Mutual Learning be Possible?**

Given Europe's imperial and historical past, the first condition for mutual learning is the readiness to learn from the global South, from the experiences of the immense regions of the world that were once subjected to European rule. Learning from the South invokes geography and cartography. However, in the sense used here, the South is a metaphor for the systematic suffering inflicted upon large bodies of population by Western-centric colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy (Santos 2014: 215). As should be clear, this suffering is not an exclusive doing of Europe. On the other hand, historically, Europeans have also fought against colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy. The metaphor is about measures, scales and weights, about dominant and subaltern, majority and minority movements and trends. They tell us that Europe was for centuries a very strong center that ruled the world by creating subordinate peripheries or margins. Continuing with the metaphor, there is a South because there was and still is a North. Learning from the South means learning from the peripheries, from the margins. It is not easy because, viewed from the center, the South is either too closely dependent on the North to be able to be different in any relevant way or, on the contrary, so far apart that its reality is incommensurable with that of the center. In either case, the periphery has nothing to teach to the center.

1. The first condition of learning from the South is to clarify what kind of South or Souths are to be engaged in the conversation. This clarification presupposes the willingness to consider a new cartography of Europe. We are reminded of famous phrase by Metternich, the Austrian statesman, in the first decades of the nineteenth century – 'Asien beginnt an der Landstrasse' – that is to say, Asia began then in the outskirts of Vienna. In the nineteenth century, the zone around the Landstrasse (the name of the street) was occupied by immigrants

from the Balkans. Then as now, the distinction between the Balkans and Europe was clear, as if the Balkan countries were not part of Europe.

The specification of what the South means is particularly complex in the case of Europe. The South that confronts Europe as the other is both outside and inside Europe. The South outside Europe comprises the countries which are sources of raw materials to be explored by North-based multinational corporations; countries whose natural disasters elicit European humanitarian aid; countries which are unable to sustain their population, giving thus rise to the problem of immigration that 'afflicts' Europe; countries which breed terrorists that must be fought with utmost severity. The South inside Europe bespeaks the immigrants, the Roma people, the children of immigrants, some of whom having lived in Europe for generations and even holding European passports, but not viewed as 'Europeans like the others.' They become particularly visible when rioting and their protests highlight their otherness.

There is, however, another South inside Europe. It is a geographical South, though partaking of the metaphorical South as well. I mean the countries of the south of Europe, Greece, Portugal and Spain in particular. In the present circumstances, it is hard to imagine Europe learning from its southern countries. The more cynical ones will even say that from them only what is not to be done is to be learned. The way this sounds true and justifies how the economic and financial crisis is being managed has deeper historical roots than people may think. In order to understand it, we need to go back a few centuries and observe the historical oscillation between centers and peripheries inside Europe. A Mediterranean center that did not last more than a century and a half (during the sixteenth century and half of the seventeenth century) was superseded by another one that ended up lasting much longer and having far more structural impact. The latter center was a center with roots in the twelfth and thirteenth century Hanseatic League, a center oriented to the North Atlantic, the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, and embracing the cities of northern Italy, France, the Netherlands and, in the nineteenth century, Germany. This center has always been surrounded by peripheries: in the north, the Nordic countries; in the south, the Iberian Peninsula; in the southeast, the Balkans; in the east, feudal territories, the Ottoman Empire and semi-Europeanized Russia since the eighteenth century under Peter the Great. In the course of five centuries, only the northern peripheries had access to the center, the same center that is still the core of the European Union. The truth is that there have always been two Europes<sup>3</sup> and often two Europes inside each country (Catalonia and Castile in Spain, northern and southern Italy, etc). This duality is more entrenched in the European culture than we might think, which may explain some of the difficulties in addressing the current financial crisis. What on the surface seems to be a financial or economic problem is, at a deeper level, also a cultural and socio-psychological problem. I suggest that this deeper layer may be more present in the financial or economic solutions than we might be willing to imagine.

An illustration may clarify what I mean. From the fifteenth century onwards and up to the eighteenth century there are many narratives by travelers and

merchants of northern Europe focusing on the Portuguese, the Spanish, and the living conditions of southern Europe.<sup>4</sup> What is striking about these narratives is that they ascribe to the Portuguese and the Spanish exactly the same features that the Portuguese and Spanish colonizers ascribed to the primitive and savage peoples of their colonies. Such features ranged from precarious living conditions to laziness and lasciviousness, from violence to friendliness, from disregard of cleanliness to ignorance, from superstition to irrationality. A few quotes from the eighteenth century: 'The Portuguese are slothful, not industrious at all, they don't take advantage of the riches of their land, nor do they know how to sell those of their colonies' (Chaves 1983: 20). The Portuguese are 'tall, handsome and sturdy, generally quite dark, which results from the clime and their intermixing with negroes' (Chaves 1983: 24).<sup>5</sup> In other words, the miscegenation which the Portuguese viewed as one of the benevolent aspects of their colonialism is turned against them to substantiate a colonial prejudice. When one reads today some German popular press about the PIIGS<sup>6</sup> one wonders if the underground (and even overground) colonial prejudice is not still at work.

- 2 The second condition of learning from the South is the acceptance that the world of the future will be a post-European world. The future will not be dictated to the world by Europe as it has been in the past. This vision of the future will however not come about before Europe settles accounts with its past. The colonial enterprise meant that the peoples and nations subjected to European rule, however heirs to pasts immensely different from those of the Europeans, were condemned to aspire to a future dictated by Europe, a future linked to the European one as the master's future is linked to the slave's. Thereby, Europe's future became hostage to the bonds imposed on the others. How many ideas and projects were discarded, discredited, abandoned, demonized inside Europe just because they didn't fit the colonial enterprise? To what extent is the colonial past overcome?

Once the cycle of historical colonialism was closed, neocolonialism has proved to be a resilient burden for many countries, reproduced through a wide range of policies, some more benevolent than others, from military intervention to development programs, from special rights of access to natural resources, to humanitarian assistance. The illusion of a post-colonial interruption prevents European governments from scrutinizing more strictly the global operations of European corporations, be they promoting baby formulas in hunger-ridden regions, land grabbing, speculating with food commodities, claiming patent rights over medicines, thereby making them unaffordable to the majorities of people that need them, restricting peasants' access to seeds, causing environmental disasters and massive displacements of people due to mining projects of unprecedented scale, etc.

But the colonial world, far from being just an immense domain of victimhood, was also a multifaceted site of resistance and survival ingenuity. Herein lies the immensely diverse experience of the world which indeed might have been even greater if it were not for the massive destruction of subordinated knowledges and

experiences (epistemicide) once deemed unfit for the service of the colonial enterprise (Santos 2014: 236). Of course, the past cannot be undone, but the ways it conditions our present should be object of deep reflection and of political transformation. Historical colonialism may be (almost) over, but it goes on under new guises in our cities, minds, and textbooks, as racism, sexism, ethnic profiling, xenophobia, intolerance, arrogant multiculturalism, punitive immigration laws, inhuman refugees' camps, etc.

### **The World School of Unlearning and Learning**

Europe has to go back to school, the school of the world and of its infinite diversity, and be willing to unlearn many self-evident ideas that were truthful and useful in the past but are not so anymore, and willing as well to learn about new ideas, some of which are altogether unfamiliar, others which are strange as if reflected in an surprising mirror, European ideas long ago discarded and forgotten as they were excluded, suppressed from a vaster European family of ideas. While going back to school, Europe should also entertain the possibility that some of the old, most vibrant European traditions may today be found outside Europe after being appropriated and creatively transformed by the peoples subjected to European colonialism and neocolonialism. As strong examples, I offer three classes of unlearning followed by learning.

### **Human Rights and Interculturality**

Especially since World War II, Europe has been facing an intercultural challenge to its legal and political cohesion, due not only to migratory processes, but also to the recognition of Europe's subnational diversity. Again, the outside-inside divide is increasingly becoming an inside-inside divide. As cultural difference becomes a dimension of cultural citizenship, human rights issues and citizenship rights issues become more intertwined than ever, even if conservative forces tend to pull them apart. The quest for a broader notion of European citizenship, moving from the traditional national scope of citizenship to a broader, European scale, is inherent to the idea of a cosmopolitan conception of humanity and human rights.

It seems to me that the defence of interculturality and human rights will become more and more one and the same struggle. However, in a post 9/11 world, the call for interculturality has become both more difficult and more necessary. On the one side, there is the danger that a short-sighted conception of security will repress interculturality for fear of seeing control escape; on the other, it is increasingly obvious that the victim of such a conception will be not just interculturality but core human rights as they have been conventionally understood in Europe.<sup>7</sup>

There is no question today about the hegemony of human rights as a discourse of human dignity (Santos 2015: 1–10). To be sure, this must be considered as a European contribution to the struggle of humankind for dignity and emancipation. Nonetheless, such hegemony faces a disturbing reality. A large majority of the world's inhabitants are not the subjects of human rights. They are rather the

objects of human rights discourses. The question is, then, whether human rights are efficacious in helping the struggles of the excluded, the exploited, and the discriminated against, or whether, on the contrary, they make those struggles more difficult. In other words, is the hegemony claimed by human rights today the outcome of a historical victory, or rather of a historical defeat?

We must begin by acknowledging that human rights have a double genealogy in European modernity, an imperial genealogy and a revolutionary genealogy. In their name, lots of atrocities have been committed against defenseless populations for no other reason than their being in the way of European plundering of their riches. But, on the other hand, human rights have been at times a powerful tool in fighting for democracy and decency and against tyranny and oppression caused by state and non-state agents. Europe has always had difficulty realizing that other grammars of human dignity, besides human rights, have always been available to people, and are still today. Suffice it to say that twentieth-century national liberation movements against colonialism did not invoke the human rights grammar to justify their causes and struggles. They fought in the name of national liberation and self-determination. Today, two other grammars of human dignity are calling for an active European engagement. The first one is not as foreign to European roots as many may think, but it is nonetheless viewed today as un-European. I am referring to Islamic conceptions of human dignity and their emphasis on duties, rather than on rights, and on the value of the community (the *umma*) as the ultimate root of dignity and human worthiness. The rampant Islamophobia that plagues Europe is preventing Europe from engaging in a productive conversation with one fifth of the world's population and with an increasing proportion of its citizenry. For how long can this obstinate refusal go on before civil conversation yields to civil war? In this regard, the integration of Turkey in the EU would have been a welcome development. It would build a bridge between Europe and the closest Muslim world, after, of course, the Muslim European world.

In this regard, there is still another platform for a new conversation with the world involving unlearning followed by learning worth underlining. I am referring to the issue of secularism. Secularism is an entrenched paradigm in the European way of life, and rightly so. The tragic experience of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries left Europe with no other positive alternative than the separation of state and church, the idea that freedom of religion can only be accomplished in a society whose public sphere is free from religion. I will not discuss here the complexities of the European solution to the religious question.<sup>8</sup> I just want to emphasize that, for complex reasons, we seem to be entering a post-secular age, as Charles Taylor (2007) calls it. Habermas (2009) has likewise spoken of post-secularity as one of the defining characteristics of our time. In my view, we are heading to difficult times in this regard; European participation in the world conversation would recommend that a distinction between secularism and secularity enter the public debate as soon as possible. Secularity is a philosophical and political stance that defends the separation of state and religion but admits the presence of non-secular stances in the public sphere, whereas secularism is the embodiment of the public sphere itself and the sole authoritative source of public reason, thus leaving no



room for non-secular stances in the public space. In this regard, the European movement is uneven and we should consider, for instance, the United Kingdom more advanced than France.

The other grammar calling for unlearning/learning on the part of Europe are the rights of nature. I am referring to a luminous constitution innovation brought about by the Constitution of Ecuador of 2008. It states in its article 71: 'Nature, or *pachamama*, where life is reproduced and occurs, has the right to integral respect for its existence and for the maintenance and regeneration of its life cycles, structure, functions and evolutionary processes. All persons, communities, peoples and nations can call upon public authorities to enforce the rights of nature. To enforce and interpret these rights, the principles set forth in the Constitution shall be observed, as appropriate. The State shall give incentives to natural persons and legal entities and to communities to protect nature and to promote respect for all the elements comprising an ecosystem.'

In cultural terms, the idea of rights of nature is a hybrid entity. It appropriates the European idea of human rights and mixes it with non-western, indigenous cosmovisions of nature (Orbe 2010). Nature, however, for the dominant European cosmovision, at least since Descartes, is a *res extensa* (an extended thing, a corporeal substance without a soul) and, as such, deprived of the dignity granted to human living creatures. Given the deep ecological crisis we are entering, I suggest we learn from such conceptions of nature and rights through what I call intercultural translation<sup>9</sup> in order to address the problems caused by the crisis (Santos 2014: 212–235). If this could be achieved, we would be witnessing a fascinating instance of a cultural boomerang: human rights would have left Europe setting humans against nature, fly over the world, and return to Europe to bring humans and nature together again.

In light of this diversity concerning conceptions of dignity both inside and outside Europe, I propose, against traditional conceptions of universalism, intercultural dialogues on isomorphic concerns, for instance, between Western human rights, Hindu *dharma*, Islamic *umma*, Latin American indigenous peoples' *pachamama* or *buen vivir* or African sage wisdom and *ubuntu*. As a result, a new hypothetical new human rights may become widely accepted in Europe: we have the right to be equal when difference makes us inferior; we have the right to be different when equality de-characterizes us.<sup>10</sup>

### **Alternatives to Development or the Other Economies**

In this regard, the first unlearning/learning exercise involves revisiting the world as a field of very unequal exchanges. Europe's prosperity was achieved through huge transfers of wealth from the global south, from its colonies first and then through neocolonial conditions and restrictions. In light of recent commercial controversies setting apart Europe and the global South, a good focal point for unlearning/learning in this regard would be the consideration that what is good for European corporations is not necessarily good for Europe. Given the disturbingly massive investment in lobbying by European and non-European corporations in

Brussels and Strasbourg, this will be a difficult lesson to learn. Short of it, the proclamations by European leaders of the need for more inclusive horizontal relationships based on cooperation and mutual respect will be viewed by their non-European partners as mystifying window dressing.

The second unlearning/learning exercise concerns alternatives to development and the role of non-capitalist economic relations inside capitalist societies. The financial and economic crisis has underscored current impasses confronting global decisions on climate change and sustainable development and the disheartening marginalization of Europe in this field in spite of its leadership in environment-friendly energy policies. On the other hand, many initiatives are taking place in other parts of the world to which Europe, in general, pays little attention, if it knows them at all. Peasants' claims to land that seemed historically condemned have re-emerged with great strength and political clout throughout Latin America, Africa, and India. Non-capitalistic economic organizations – often called social solidaristic economy, economy of care or 'the other economy' – are mushrooming in countries as diverse as Brazil, South Africa, Mozambique, and India. Recent political changes in some countries have declared a moratorium on the conventional concept of economic development and framed the economic policies by resorting to non-Western conceptions, such as *Sumak Kawsay* or *Sumak Qamaña* (*buen vivir*/good life, in Quechua and Aymara respectively) (Santos 2010). However involved in heated internal and international controversies, these initiatives point to post-capitalistic and post-developmental futures and paradigms in non-utopian terms, that is, to the extent that they translate these visions into concrete political agendas. Until very recently, Ecuador has provided a most remarkable example by advancing the most innovative proposal in a post-Kyoto world: to leave unexplored in the subsoil the immense oil reserves in the National Park Yasuni-ITT – considered by UNESCO as the world's richest biodiversity region – on the condition that the developed countries compensate it for its losses with half of the revenue it will fail to obtain by renouncing oil exploration.<sup>11</sup>

A new social and economic common sense seems to be emerging to which the current financial, economic, energetic and environmental crises could lend a new credibility. In spite of significant progress in energy policy, Europe has not been able to affirm leadership in the global debate on sustainable development and on alternative development. Well-organized economic interests and their political leverage do their best to block these movements and the paradigmatic changes they point to. However, the trend seems irreversible and only needs a broader scope and international outlook and the political opportunity for social experimentation in order to become a central factor in the political agenda at the European level.

## Healing

This is probably the most surprising domain of unlearning/learning to be undertaken by Europe in the world school. Throughout European history there abound conflicts, wars, rivalries, competitions, among nations that were eventually

solved or overcome only after much suffering. Only in the WWII between 60 and 80 million people died; it was the deadliest conflict in human history. In spite of this, rarely were there attempts to heal the wounds of the past by other means than political arrangements that left untouched the underlying resentments, hurt feelings, painful emotions. No sustained attempts have ever been made at non-economic reparation and reconciliation. Reparation and reconciliation at the level of the soul. European inter-politics has always been the focus, not European inter-subjectivity. The immediate period after WWII is particularly illustrative in this respect. Shortly after the war, the European priority tirelessly pursued by Churchill was organizing a defense against the new enemy, Stalin, an artificial European Union built upon ruins, a 'cold war' zealot, delivering its security to the US global interests. It was all about politics and economics; the culture and the soul were left to each country to deal with.

The current crisis, no matter how it will be solved, and even assuming that it will be solved in the most auspicious way, will leave behind a cultural trauma of great magnitude, the trauma caused by a sudden transformation: the friendly neighborhood that the EU once seem to be turned, in a matter of months, into a prison house filled with ghosts of the past, a fast transition from a political model based on equal partners to a model of master states and client states, from commonly agreed rules to imposed conditionalities and double standards, from the glorification of European values to an exclusionary rhetoric at times with racist undertones. This trauma is not just economic or political. It is cultural and will last for generations to come. In order to minimize its repercussions, Europe should engage in another instance of unlearning/learning with the world, in this case, by taking seriously the experience of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions that in South Africa and in several Latin American countries sought to heal the wounds caused by an authoritarian recent past. The European situation is different but not completely unrelated. It will be incumbent on a new European wide pedagogy to convince the youth of southern Europe, half of it unemployed and unemployable in the near future, that they are not a lost generation and that they are as European as the other youth of the rest of Europe. Economic solidarity is, of course, crucial to overcome the current crisis, but even more crucial and far-reaching is non-economic solidarity. If, once the crisis is over, European politics will be reduced to budgetary policing and monitoring, it may well succeed in preserving the European Union, but the soul of Europe will be lost for a very long time.

## **Conclusion**

I argue in this chapter that Europe either engages in a vast process of unlearning/learning with the global South or is condemned to fall back into its highly problematical internal dissension and rivalry which, in the not so distant past, led to the most tragic consequences. It will be a difficult endeavor, given the centuries-old inclination of Europe to look at the outside world as an object of domination rather than as a partner for mutually enriching cooperation. While this is difficult, it is not totally impossible, if the conditions put forward in this chapter are taken

into consideration. I do not defend a Eurocentric institutional reconstruction of Europe along the lines proposed by Habermas (2012). As magnificent as he is as a scholar, Habermas cannot conceive of the possibility of learning from the global South. As for me, on the contrary, I submit that it is in such learning, in the intercultural possibilities it opens for a vast process of democratizing democracy in Europe, that the key for the only new vision of Europe worth fighting for lies.

## Notes

- 1 I develop these ideas in *Epistemologies of the South. Justice against Epistemicide* (Santos 2014) and most recently in a research project titled, 'ALICE—Strange Mirrors, Unsuspected Lessons: Leading Europe to a new way of sharing world experiences,' funded by the European Research Council. This project aims to develop a new theoretical paradigm for contemporary Europe based on two key ideas: the understanding of the world by far exceeds the European understanding of the world; the much needed social, political, and institutional reform in Europe may benefit from innovations taking place in regions and countries that European colonialism viewed as mere recipients of the civilizing mission. The project can be consulted at [www.alice.ces.uc.pt](http://www.alice.ces.uc.pt).
- 2 The most recent manifestation of this unequal partnership is the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) being negotiated between the USA and the EU.
- 3 See, on this, Hobsbawm 1997.
- 4 See, on this, Santos 2006: 211–256.
- 5 I have dealt with this topic in Santos 2002: 9–43 and 2011: 399–443.
- 6 PIIGS is a jargonistic, and offensive, acronym used in economics and finance. The derogatory term refers to the economies of: Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain, five EU member states that were unable to refinance their government debt or to bail out over-indebted banks on their own during the debt crisis.
- 7 See, on this, Santos 2007: 3–40.
- 8 I deal with this topic in Santos 2015.
- 9 Intercultural translation consists of searching for isomorphic concerns and underlying assumptions among cultures, of identifying differences and similarities, and of developing, whenever appropriate, new hybrid forms of cultural understanding and intercommunication that may be useful in favoring interactions and strengthening alliances among social movements fighting, in different cultural contexts, against capitalism, colonialism, and sexism, and for social justice, human dignity or human decency. Intercultural translation questions both the reified dichotomies among alternative knowledges (e.g., indigenous knowledge versus scientific knowledge) and the unequal abstract status of different knowledges (e.g., indigenous knowledge as a valid claim of identity, versus scientific knowledge as a valid claim of truth).
- 10 See, on this, Santos 2007: 3–40 and Santos 2014: 63.
- 11 See, on this, Santos 2010 and 2014: 30–32.

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