

INCLUDE

The INCLUDE project: applying CLIL at schools
2021

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‘The Europeanity aspect of INCLUDE’

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Europeanness/Europeanité: an introduction

- Speaking with regards to Europeanness/Europeanité, it looks similar to Paul Valéry's thinking of a "nebula": "the more closely it is looked at, the more its contours dissolve and its form melts or shifts away".
- Europeanness/Europeanité is not a teleological concept (because, if it was such a concept, it would lose its critical and historical edge => useless for the current project).
- Rather, it is a descriptive, interpretative, and in some respects normative concept concerning an open-ended project which aspires to capture part of the dynamics of European modernity
- It focuses on experiences-interpretations, procedures, and contradictions which tended (and tend) to form what we conceived of as "Europe" (mainly, but not only, as a plural civilization) : "Unity in diversity"

An interpretative approach on European modernity

- Modernity is a way in which human beings conceive of their lives. As such, it needs to address the questions of how to govern life in common; how to satisfy human needs; and how to establish valid knowledge.
- Modernity's specificity is the commitment to autonomy: to giving oneself one's own law.
- Thus, the modern answers to those questions cannot be derived from any external source of authority: any answer proposed is open to critique and contestation.
- Persistent tensions, struggles between different forms of justifications, unstable nature of various compromises, the different and plural responses to modern questions and the plurality and tentative character of modernity itself.
- Interpretative actions of the historical agents concerning the experiences of their common history => self-understanding
- In this sense, European Union and the project of European unification could be seen as a new interpretation of political and especially European modernity in the context of the so-called "globalization" and its experience.

Ways of narrating European modernity

- **The liberal story:** the story of the gradual extension of civic rights
- the Magna Charta (1215) and then the Habeas Corpus Act (1679)
- the Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen in revolutionary France in 1789
- the European Charter of Fundamental Rights of European Union (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>)
- This last document constitutes an interpretation of the experience of the violation of the human rights during the course of European history.
- It is a major source for criticism/self-criticism as well as for normative claims, and the very interesting element in it is that it puts on at the same level dignity, freedoms, equality, solidarity and justice.

Ways of narrating European modernity

- **the story of the development of the modern state system:** the elaboration of the concept of sovereignty, first in Bodin, then in Hobbes; in political history, it starts with the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) that marks the end of the Thirty Years' War.
- The critical emphasis on the various aspects of statehood story –and its deficits– could be proved fruitful in various directions.
- Various scenarios could be centered on the need for strong government and its limits, on sovereignty and its restrictions, on the engagement of European Union to the global peace, on how the slogan “Never again!” emerged etc.
- This has nothing to do with a self-celebrating Europeanism. Instead, it stems from the interpretation of the bloody experiences of European history either of the distance past (Thirty Years' War) or the recent past (19th and 20th centuries).
- For this purpose, well historically informed scenarios could take advantage of historical works such as Mark Mazower's Dark Continent (1999) and Tony Judt's Postwar (2005).

Ways of narrating European modernity

- **the rise of democracy:** It has the longest roots, but also the largest gaps.
 - It starts in the Greek polis, with the moment of the simultaneous invention of politics and philosophy.
 - Then undergoes significant transformations in the Roman Republic and, much later, the Florentine and Venetian republics, without, though, entirely subsiding.
 - Its full reassertion, however, is an event of the 18th century: the transformation of the concept of state sovereignty into one of popular sovereignty; and in political history, with the American and the French revolutions, marking the age of the 'democratic revolution'.
 - All these have nothing to do with an abstract and unhistorical concept of ever-present 'democratic Europe'.
 - The vulnerability of democracy, but also their failures which led to totalitarianism, and that a commitment to democracy should be connected with its deepening in the European context.
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Ways of narrating European modernity

- The narrative of politics as revolution: the use of conscious collective action to create a normatively superior state of the polity than the existing one.
- The idea of revolution resonates with some core features of modernity, as they have been discussed over the past two centuries, such as reflexivity, historicity and agentiality.
- Reflexivity: the human ability –by means of imagination– to step out of the immediate present and to imagine other possible worlds, or partial worlds.
- Historicity: the translation of such imagination into time, by means of which the present can be distinguished from a past that was different and from a future that may be different.
- Agentiality: the belief that human action may contribute to bringing a particular different future about.
- Scenarios that: underline the “other world” that various European revolutions dreamt of; stressed the radical imaginary, in Cornelius Castoriades terms’, of human being which is capable of imagining a different world from the one she/he lives in, and to struggle for it; give to the students and future European citizens the chance to freely express their vision concerning Europe.

Connecting the familiar narratives, their tensions and interconnections

- Tensions between these narratives as well as in their interior.
- Various and conflicting interpretations emerged from the experience of the above-mentioned significant moments (and from others such as the Industrial Revolutions, the World Wars and so on):
- The liberal-individualist justification; the democratic-republican justification; the cultural-linguistic definition of the nation; the Christian tradition; the socio-economic justification and the quest for organized solidarity etc.
- Whenever a compromise, even if temporary and despite its deficits, between these different justifications was achieved, a rather viable solution was established. Otherwise, a missed chance.
- This is related with the European project itself: “Post-national, welfare-state, cooperative, pacific Europe was not born of the optimistic, ambitious, forward-looking project imagined in fond retrospect by today’s Euro-idealists. It was the insecure child of anxiety. Shadowed by history, its leaders implemented social reforms and built new institutions as a prophylactic, to keep the past at bay” (Tony Judt)

A European self-reflexive “identity”

- the European commitment to civic and political liberties
- the commitment to organized social solidarity
- of a hermeneutic relation – a form of engagement with others and with the world, that is a common European value and that, as such, is a value that goes beyond an instrumental relation to others and the world, as it is promoted globally from other positions today.
- the emergence of a ‘self-critical relation to national memory’ in Europe that may be her strongest and normatively most convincing resource in building a polity that lives up to the global constellation of our time.

Axes for scenarios

- Centering on European values, institutions, and European way of life: the separation of church from state, the equality between men and women, between hetero- and homosexuals, liberty, democracy, equality, solidarity and tolerance – EU institutions and policies which are connected with or promote such policies.
- Self-criticism, a true Enlightenment value: the Holocaust, the concentration, extermination, and forced-labor camps, the experience of totalitarianism, the colonialism, racism etc.
- The strong connection between national traditions, identities, and histories and further European developments with pan-European significance-interest.
- Selection of national monuments and of tourist attractions and journeys: the main question which should be the axis of analysis/scenario –with emphasis on entertainment certainly, but also, by going beyond that– is “why should Europeans visit such a place?”.

Technology and Science Issues

- Science: a distinctive European feature Europeans are proud of:
 - a) emphasis on achievements and on their further social significance and influences,
 - b) calling for further consideration. For example: is Science connected with human emancipation, the Enlightenment and the improvement of human life in all of its dimensions? Does, in certain context and circumstances, Science function as, for example, a justification for colonialism, absolutism and radical “evil”?,
 - c) studying its people and values in different historical contexts and social settings (Middle Ages University, translation movement and the encounter of Islam, Christianity and Aristotleism),
 - d) knowledge, ideas and skills; networks, institutions and governance; citizen initiatives and user practices,
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Technology and Science Issues

- e) studying how the scientific processes connected and divided Europe,
- f) studying the connection between 'science' and 'Europe' as human-made, i.e. imagined, situated, contested, and open-ended historical processes, in which new educational “objects” and courses, such as STEM, and new projects, just like INCLUDE emerged.
- Centering on technological developments, i.e. Technology in European History, or looking at Europe through the lens of Technology: see for example the digital museum Inventing Europe as possible source.

Technology and Science Issues

- Technology and European Societal Challenges and Problems:
 - Centering on current debates on 'grand challenges' haunting our present-day world, such as climate change and other environmental crises; global inequality; the threatened breakdown of unsustainable cities and energy, mobility, financial, and health systems; migration and security challenges; the call for a transition to a more just and sustainable society.
 - Possible issues and questions:
 - Technology plays a pivotal, yet ambiguous role in these debates--as a cause as well as a solution to past and present crises;
 - Technology has played this role for centuries (and certainly throughout the modern era);
 - How was (and is) technology involved in the (un)making of past and present crises, challenges, and societal transitions?
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Conclusions

- Peter Wagner asks: is there any conclusion to be drawn from this representation of European history, in particular any conclusion about the unity and diversity of Europe?
- Europe is not rooted in its history in such a way that its destiny could be derived from it. However, Europeans have had significant experiences in their history, and they have time and again attempted to elaborate common interpretations of these experiences.
- From such interpretations an 'identity' may emerge that can guide action in the present and, possibly, make a difference in the contemporary world.
- If the so-called globalization can also be understood as a cultural dispute over the shape of the world of tomorrow, then Europe may possibly be a space from which a proposal for world-making emerges that links critically to one's own experiences and their interpretations and builds on them.

Conclusions

- The European project has wider horizons than the earlier national ones with their particular restrictions , exclusions, and achievements.
- It is broadly inspired by a critical reassessment of the European experience of liberty and of its violations => the creation of an institutional setting for the realization of a fuller understanding of freedom
- In this perspective, INCLUDE project, as far as Europeanness/Europeanity is concerned, can take on this hermeneutic and critical attempt, constructing didactic scenarios.
- These scenarios can emphasize the persistent tensions between the different interpretations of the major historical experiences as well as between different normative justifications in order for a plural, self-critical and self-reflexive Europeanness/Europeanity to be achieved.