

# On Being European: The Contribution of Intercultural Communication Theory and Pedagogy

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Europe can become 'united in diversity' only by helping its citizens internalise experientially their composite cultural identity as Europeans. Merely conceptual 'understanding' of the other cultures is insufficient to promote genuine mutual respect and real opportunities for synergy across frontiers. An example is given of how experiential internalisation can be facilitated by teaching languages as culture.

Europa può diventare 'unita nella diversità' solo se promuove tra i suoi cittadini l'internalizzazione esperienziale delle loro identità culturali composite. Non basta una 'comprensione' puramente cognitiva delle altre culture per favorire, superando le frontiere, la creazione di intese e di sinergie. Viene illustrato un metodo per facilitare l'internalizzazione esperienziale attraverso l'insegnamento delle lingue come forma mentis culturali.

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## Identifying Identity

'The [European] Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States while . . . at the same time bringing the **common cultural heritage** to the fore' declares Article 151 of the EC Treaty [emphasis added]. But it does not specify that 'common cultural heritage'; nor does the text define elsewhere what European cultural identity consists of. When the European Parliament recently looked for 'indicators' to define the 'cultural identities' (French, American, Canadian, etc.) of the films and TV programs shown throughout Europe, it managed to find only two – the 'original language of production' and the 'nationality of the characters, location and production company' (Directorate-General for Research, 2001). Hardly conclusive, to say the least. Let us begin, therefore, by attempting to clarify the notion of 'cultural identity'.

Anthropologists (Geertz, 1973) have argued convincingly that culture is not a set of material manifestations (behaviour, literature, kinship relations etc.) but rather the mindset, shared within some community, that produces these manifestations and weaves them into a recognisable whole.<sup>1</sup> That mindset derives from the existential stance (or 'will to be') that one acquires by interacting with a community – one's national community, of course, as well as one's other communities: ethnic, religious, professional, political, age group, gender, and so on, each a culture or a sub-culture of its own. One may,

of course, decide to resist the acculturating pressures of one's various communities; nonetheless, resisting ends up shaping one's existential stance just as much as opting in. Thus, in the final analysis, one's cultural identity is constituted by where and how one positions oneself in some ever-expanding relational network (Hall, 1992).

Two conclusions follow from this definition of cultures as intersections (*not* discrete entities). First, since the communities we interact with are multiple, we are all multicultural, whether we realise it or not. This means that no one's culture can be defined with a single label. Second, since the demands of the communities we belong to often conflict with each other, we are inevitably torn between loyalties and, therefore, prone to identity crises.

Let us now consider what identity is. Social psychologists of a constructivist orientation (Del Guerra *et al.*, 1999: 121) define it as 'what holds us together', rather than 'what is held together'.<sup>2</sup> In other words, our cultural identity is not the inter-related sets of beliefs and values we have acquired through interacting with various communities, but rather the will we exert to resolve the 'contradictions and ambiguities' (id.) that those sets inevitably contain. We normally exert that will in one of two ways, or in a combination of both:

- we opt to accept the contradictions and ambiguities of our multiple selves, consolidating them into a consistent yet 'nameless and indefinite' whole (p. 122), or
- we opt to deny or reject our multiple selves and construct a monolithic self – one neatly circumscribed and seemingly easy to label – with which to identify totally. This is obviously the case of religious zealots and political fanatics and is often the case of teenagers, soldiers in war, people in isolated communities and so on.

Having defined 'culture' and 'identity', we may now turn to defining the concept of 'cultural identity'. It is a volitional act ('that which holds us together', not any set of values, whether accepted or negated) that creates and maintains a communally-shared 'will to be'. Note that opting to *be* in a certain way does not imply an analytical appreciation and a rational acceptance of the values proclaimed by one's various communities; children, for example, adopt existential stances that express their culture's instances *implicitly*.

Let us now consider the implications of this definition of 'cultural identity'.

Given that hybridity and multiple identities (whether affirmed or negated) are part of the human condition, we should begin considering them 'normal'. Like it or not, we are all cultural misfits, although usually on a lesser scale than most post-colonial writers today. What is more, we should begin considering our hybridity, like theirs, as an asset: 'C'est pour moi une richesse d'avoir plusieurs appartenances. J'ai pu prendre conscience que je n'avais pas à choisir, mais que j'avais la possibilité de créer des ponts entre les...cultures' (Maalouf, 2001: 189).

The capacity to accept the indeterminateness of one's cultural identity can characterise entire populations. Belgians, for example, are famous for their ability to support the fundamental ambiguity of their nationality. Long before post-modernism, they saw through the myth of the Nation State ('Sire – wrote

a Walloon jurist to the King of Belgium in 1912 – you reign over the Walloons and the Flemish, not over the Belgians, because there are none’ – Walravens, 2004) and three generations later, a Walloon sociologist, while loyal to the crown, wrote that ‘being Belgian is like being from nowhere’ («*C’est cela la belgitude: être de nulle part!*») – Lefebvre, 1987).

To conclude, cultural identity – whether in an individual or in a nation state – is no more than a *social practice*, founded on a will to ‘opt into’ a particular way of being, one that best mediates between the contradictory demands from within and without. Those who accept the ambiguity of their composite identities, live that social practice subjectively as a lifelong struggle for hegemony among competing instances. Those who do not, live it as perpetual guard duty.

## Europeanness

If such is the nature of cultural identity, then clearly European leaders have been making the right choices in laying the foundations for their new political entity. They have implicitly defined Europeanness, not as any set of distinctive values, behaviours or emblems, but rather as the will to hold together their 25 (and soon more) fellow members’ disparate, but historically-related, sets of values, behaviours and emblems. **We may therefore define European cultural identity as the ‘nameless and indefinite’ stance that results from that precise act of will.**

But what are the ‘right choices’ I just mentioned? And what existential and political stance do they express? Let me cite three examples.

In wording the Constitution approved last year, the EU leadership steadfastly rejected the pleas to evoke ‘the Christian roots’ of Europe. For to do so would have been to put a single religious label on a multitude of contrasting aspirations to transcendency, including those of pre-Christian Greece and Rome; in other words, it would have been a dangerous negation of hybridity, so vital to dynamic growth.

Equally wise has been the decision to support multilingualism, instead of opting for a single lingua franca or a triumvirate of official languages, as had been advocated. This makes constant translation necessary but, as Yves (2004: 10) has pointed out, it is through translation that cultural diversity in the EU becomes a *shared* richness. Indeed, the adoption of a single lingua franca would actually impoverish communication within the EU: it would indeed permit people of different cultures to communicate without translation, but at the cost of trivialising or conventionalising what they say. This is because most people are unable to express nuances in a language they learned only at school – indeed, many tend to use it as they would their native language, thinking they are expressing nuances which in reality go unperceived (or misunderstood) by their interlocutors of different cultures.

Wise, too, has been the decision to avoid creating *ex-novo* ‘European’ cultural artefacts – anthems and songs, flags and crests, clothing and dress codes, etc. coherently packaged as in a typical Disney merchandising campaign. Instead, European leaders have preferred to build on existing artefacts, each with its own tradition, however incoherent with the others. This

political stance is not mere post-modern eclecticism; it is the recognition that genuine cultural identity is a dynamic tension holding together existentially disparate but historically related items – which, in fact, is how we defined the term ‘cultural identity’ earlier.

Most ordinary Europeans, however, seem not to share this vision. They want labels, like consumer information on supermarket items, telling them who they are as nationality X, and how they differ from brand Y or brand Z within the EU. This demand has given rise to two kinds of sociometric definitions of European cultural identity, one similar to market surveys and found in periodicals, and the other based on sociological research and published in scientific journals.

An example of the first is the UK Readers’ Digest (July 2004) survey of 4000 Europeans in 19 countries, reported by David Moller. Typical questions are: ‘From what you know of your fellow Europeans . . . who are the most efficient? (Answers: Germans 45%, Swiss 11%, British 9%); . . . who are the rudest? (Answers: Germans 27%, French 14%, British 12%); . . . who have the best sense of humour? (British 30%, Italians 15%, Spaniards 7%)’. Unsurprisingly, this kind of survey simply confirms national stereotypes. Not only does it fail to promote intercultural understanding within the EU, it actually hinders it by reinforcing the prejudices and psychological barriers.

An example of the second kind of sociometric study is the *Atlas of European Values* (Halman *et al.*, 2005), a survey of 40,000 Europeans in 33 countries. The survey inquires into the interviewee’s attitudes toward family life (*Should mothers work or stay at home with their children?*), employment (*Is job security more important than high salaries?*) and political issues, such as the environment: *Indicate if, to combat environmental pollution, you would be willing to (A) donate money; (B) pay more taxes; (C) do neither: the Government should intervene without extra taxation.* From the answers to the last question, readers learn that the percentages of French and Hungarian citizens who voted for (C) were *double* the EU average (of 35%), the percentages of Greeks and Croatians who voted for (A) were *twice* the EU average (of 14%), and that the percentages of Swedes and Danes who voted for (B) were almost *three times* the EU average (of 9%).

So what does data like this tell us about Europeans? A lot about their professed opinions, not much about their identity. To begin with, the information gathered is largely self-referential: the questionnaire asks what are considered ‘important’ questions in Europe today, especially in North-western Europe (Afghans, Indonesians or Bulgarians might have chosen different themes). Thus, it does not help us understand European culture in relation to others.

As for the responses given, the questionnaire offers mainly behavioural information, the kind that political parties and advertising agencies seek. Thus, from the question on the environment, one learns that one should avoid proposing taxes in France, but not necessarily in Denmark, and that one should propose voluntary contributions in Croatia. This kind of information helps one deal with the French, the Danes and the Croatians, but does not really clarify what it means to be French, Danish or Croatian – or European. Behavioural inquiries, like those of the *Atlas*, are therefore like Don Juan’s attempts to seduce a woman: his questions were framed to find out *not* what

she is really like (he couldn't care less) but only which of her attitudes and feelings to play on.

Indeed, it is impossible for sociometric inquiries, such as those of the *Atlas*, to uncover what lies underneath the attitudes they describe – the 'nameless and indefinite' volitional state that we have called a person's 'will to be' – because that state is not cognitive, except as an after-effect, and, therefore, cannot be adequately accessed by purely cognitive methods. It is volitive and, as such, must be accessed experientially, by entering into an empathetic rapport through hermeneutic dialogue (Gadamer, 1975 [1960]). Only experiential understanding of this kind enables people to work together in real synergy, to come up with joint solutions to unforeseen problems, and to build relationships that last. And *this* is the kind of reciprocal understanding that Europeans need, in order to become united in their diversity.

### Culture as an Open, Negotiated, Evolving Matrix

By defining culture as a volitional state, a constant '*will to be in a certain manner*', we have distinguished it from attitudes (specific dispositions), lifestyles (behavior largely dependent on contingencies), and *professed* values (what people think they think) – the things that sociometric surveys measure. But how can we measure 'volitional states'?

Hall, Hofstede, Trompenaars and many others have popularised the notion of 'cultural dimensions' – fixed sets of polar attributes (such as *monochronic versus polychronic* or *universalism versus particularism*) – between which all the cultures of the world can be collocated, thus revealing their relative differences – or so goes the claim. Let us build on this notion, in the light of our definition of 'cultural identity', by creating a research tool which we will call 'The Cultural Matrix Game'.

The game consists of creating a matrix of culture-specific values, through negotiation between members of the target culture and other cultures, who discuss critical incidents. Players start with an initial list of dimensions, which they modify as the game progresses. Since identity is an 'opting in', a target culture player is always right, whatever she asserts about her culture, provided her team-mates do not ostracise her; but to win points, she must get the opposing team to share her views. A third party (the researcher) acts as judge.

Since culture is a felt stance, the dimensions used are not Hofstede's (universal?) values, but rather specific existential states. For example, a game with Italian target culture players might start with polar attributes like:

- *a sense of both history (feeling the weight of the past) and evanescence versus a sense of the future as containing real prospects worth working for today;*
- *appreciation of natural physicality (of people, garments, foodstuffs . . .) versus appreciation of transformed physicality (deodorants, artificial fabrics, artificial flavours);*
- *clan spirit (trust in horizontal and distrust of vertical relations) versus team spirit (task-not-person oriented; authority respected).*

Details of the cultural matrix game will appear in a future publication. But the reader can already get an idea of what such a game is like by playing one of the Engle 'Matrix Games' distributed by Hamster Press (Ellettsville, IN, USA).<sup>3</sup>

The kind of research just described, conducted not by questioning entire populations, but by observing a few dozen individuals playing games, is common practice in experimental microeconomics and psychology. The data generated are statistically significant and provide holistic intuitions impossible to obtain from questionnaires.

While the matrices produced by the various groups, unlike Hofstede's fixed lists of dimensions, differ markedly from each other, they somehow provide a consistent view of any given culture – a view of the kind Wittgenstein calls family resemblance: 'a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing' (*Philosophical Investigations No. 66*). In other words, the matrix for any particular culture, elaborated by a given group of players, will somehow resemble the matrices produced by other groups from that culture, even though these groups played against completely different adversaries and modified the starting dimensions in completely different ways.

Moreover, when considered all together, the matrices from the various European countries will somehow bear a family resemblance as well. For example, the Italian sense of history will constantly reappear in the matrices of most other European countries, although the sense of evanescence much less; the Italian appreciation of natural physicality will surface regularly in conjunction with non-genetically-modified foods, but infrequently with respect to touching other people; the Italian sense of clan solidarity will be a constant at the macro level (social welfare), but not always at the micro level (close-knit families). **We may therefore describe European cultural identity as the matrix of the matrices of the various member cultures.**

All this may seem vague and less satisfactory than the immediately comprehensible data that the two sociometric surveys give us about European-ness. But such is the nature of real understanding: you can label a colleague or an acquaintance with a single word, but not a loved one, or anyone you know profoundly. For them, there may be no words. As Fernando Pessoa (n.d.) reminds us: *Não há normas; todos os homens são exceções a uma regra que não existe* – There are no norms; all men are exceptions to a rule that does not exist.

## Teaching Europeans to Live their Cultures as Open, Negotiated, Evolving Matrices

The single most effective way to get Europeans to understand each other's cultures – not as lists of curious behaviours, but as existential stances, 'nameless and indefinite' yet describable as matrices – is to teach languages *experientially* in EU schools and universities. Lectures about cultures do not suffice for, as we have said, cultural identity is volitive, not cognitive. Experiential learning, on the other hand, enables students to plunge into real or simulated contact with L2 speakers, in which the behavioural rules – and often the linguistic rules – are experienced as negotiated, evolving matrices.

This kind of teaching complements the experiential kind of research just described. It also helps solve the problem of communicating in a *lingua franca*, as mentioned previously. Indeed, if Europeans learn, at school, to internalise not only the grammar but also the culture of the languages they study, they will be able to use them as a *lingua franca* in which to communicate rich nuances, without the need for a translation.

One example of experiential communicative-cultural language teaching is the PICTURE project (<http://www.worldenough.net/picture/>), funded by SOCRATES, now under development. It will introduce into L2 classrooms throughout the EU, teaching materials aimed at promoting intercultural understanding (specifically, of fellow Europeans, given the L2s most widely taught) through experiential activities.

Each module is divided into six steps:

- (1) How to talk about culture (introduction of the concept of 'cultural dimensions');
- (2) Investigating one's home culture to define it and its sub-cultures (ethnic-, gender-, age-, class- or geographical origin-related). Students record interviews with relatives, neighbours and teachers to discover if their way of speaking proclaims sub-culture membership. This initial experiential study makes the concept of 'dimensions' and the relationship between language and culture more concrete. In addition, by revealing to the students the cultural complexity of their home community, it helps them relativise the notion of diversity ('we are all multicultural'). The class may alter the dimensions discussed in Step 1 to better capture their home cultures – just as in *The Cultural Matrix Game*;
- (3) Investigation of one of the cultures associated with the L2 that the class is studying; the CD will offer 'talking head' interviews with native speakers attempting to refute (or qualify) the stereotypes associated with their culture; the teacher can use the materials on the CD prepared for the other languages/cultures to make cross-cultural comparisons;
- (4) Interview of L2 speakers (tourists) in the home community, to test the cultural dimensions hypothesised in Steps 1, 2 and 3. In this experiential activity, students form groups of three or four: interviewer, audio or video recorder technician, observer(s). An accompanying CD offers sample questionnaires. Students may find L2 speakers at the airport, in hostels, at tourist sites, etc. While the questionnaire furnishes quantitative data, the actual questioning provides for qualitative understanding. In getting the L2 tourists to open up, students use 'culturally appropriate strategies' which are then put holistically to the test in a real interaction;
- (5) Class discussion on pictures contrasting cultures (photos of far-away cultures and of similar scenes in some European culture). The pictures are intended to overturn stereotypes and with them the 'cultural dimensions' elaborated in the previous Steps: as in *The Cultural Matrix Game*, this leads to refining and qualifying the polar attributes even more;
- (6) Playacting a critical incident with an L2 speaker in the L2 country. In this simulation (which may be considered a quasi experiential activity),

students enact a real-life critical incident that occurred to a member of their culture in the L2 community (the CD offers a collection of such incidents). In taking turns enacting the L2 protagonist(s), students must first hypothesise a mentality that justifies the protagonist's behavior, and then seek to enter into that mentality. The dimensions created in the previous Steps are useful aids.

These activities have been tested over the years by the author of this paper (Boylan, 2003), although never all together as an organic whole, as in the PICTURE textbook. On a personal note, the author can testify that, while Step 4 attracts the most enthusiasm, Step 2 is didactically even more effective in promoting intercultural understanding. As Beneke (2000: 107) has written: 'Intercultural competence is to a large extent the ability to cope with one's own cultural background in interaction with others'. During Step 2, students come to grips with their own world view, usually taken for granted – a first and giant step forward.<sup>4</sup>

By getting students to accept the ambiguity of their native identity, and to feel the complexity – beyond stereotypes – of the identities of their fellow Europeans, the experiential teaching just described aims at forging a genuine consciousness of European cultural identity, one founded on the internalised 'experience of others' (Stein, 1964 [1917]).

## Conclusion

Geertz's definition of culture, extended to include the phenomenological concept of intentionality as its foundation and combined with a social-constructivist view of identity formation, enables us to *define* Europeanness as a social practice: a communally-shared 'will to be' that 'holds together', within a single personality, a multiplicity of seemingly disparate but historically related ways of seeing things and saying things. This apparently complex feat is, we have noted, no more than what we do in our everyday life, made up of intersecting and often conflicting sub-cultures. Somehow we manage to 'hold it all together' and are all the richer for it.

This definition of culture has enabled us to elaborate a research tool – the Cultural Matrix Game – which will enable us to *describe* each culture within Europe in terms of an open matrix of evolving values – and therefore European cultural identity as an open, evolving matrix of the matrices.

This description, in turn, has enabled us to offer a methodology for the teaching of languages as culture. Instead of learning about the cultural peculiarities of the L2 speakers, students learn to internalise an L2 speaker's consciousness by playing the role of one in simulated 'critical incidents'. Students do this after first having used real-life interviews of neighbours to distance themselves from their native culture, and interviews of foreign tourists to test their hypotheses about the target culture. However vague it may appear to be, the concept of 'evolving cultural matrices' (which gradually replaces the Hofstedian concept of fixed cultural dimensions, taught at the beginning of the course to keep things simple) does not, in the experience of the author, seem to trouble even young L2 learners.



They readily accept that, like a piece of music, Europeaness – or any culture – must be felt and internalised before attempting to explain it. For it is, above all, an experience: the sedimentation of centuries of interaction among *wills to be* that have clashed, merged, vanished or atrophied – the wills of the peoples of the territory called Europe, whatever extension it may have one day. Thus, to grasp Europeaness as a volitional state, it is not enough to know the history of those interactions; one needs to have lived them all.

And one can – for they are embodied in the societal structures and ways of being of the peoples living in the Europe of today (and tomorrow). Through experiencing these different societal structures – and corresponding ways of expressing oneself – as meaningful and desirable, Europeans can undergo a ‘transformation of consciousness’ (Tomic, 2001: 3), acquiring, alongside their other heritages, a fully comprehensive, composite European mindset and identity – nameless, indefinite, but real.

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### Notes

1. This paper adopts the Geertzian view of the study culture (culture as a socially woven web of meanings and values, fully accountable only through ‘thick descriptions’) instead of, say, the currently fashionable cognitive approach, according to which culture exists tangibly only in the mind as interconnected scenarios or ‘schemas’, assumed to be shared by others in one’s community and definable by such techniques as the elicitation of responses to questionnaires (D’Andrade & Strauss, 1992).

While appreciating the effort of cognitive anthropology to introduce empirically verifiable methods for the description of culture, what has so far been produced by the discipline have been mostly piecemeal accounts of partial behavioural matrices, not integral accounts of the cultural universe (shared value system) of given individuals as members of a community. This, however, is precisely what Geertz’s method can and does offer.

Nor do current cognitive studies offer truly exhaustive analyses of a given individual’s cultural subjectivity – the kind that phenomenology offers. Strauss and Quinn (1997), for example, stop at Freud, i.e. at a purely empirical (psycho-analytical) account of cultural subjectivity. They choose to ignore the essence of that subjectivity, currently investigated by ‘a growing number of phenomenologically informed anthropological studies’ (Throop & Murphy, 2002).

Cognitive anthropology may therefore be considered a half-way point between the -etic and the -emic, and not quite satisfactory on either score. As Chris Knight (2000) writes in his review of Strauss and Quinn’s *Culture, Cognition and Conflict: A Cognitive Theory of Cultural Meaning*, their ‘cultural models [seem to be] taken for granted. The book therefore gets nowhere in explaining their existence, distribution or significance: ... [Schemas simply] have, for some reason, got inside individuals’ skulls.’ And as for the methodology of cognitive anthropology (Strauss and Quinn conducted formal interviews of selected members of a given culture), Knight criticises this ‘exclusively verbal interview data’... Since, even at the best of times, language inevitably abstracts away from the emotions, it is scarcely surprising that an artificially elicited, fragmentary interview declaration will be calamitously inadequate to express what the speaker may really have in mind. In Strauss and Quinn’s treatment, the utterances even lack obvious scientific meaning.

They are not related to findings or research which might explain how or why such utterances might compare with others culled from elsewhere in the world.' Compare this with Geertzian 'thick descriptions' elaborated on the basis of prolonged participant observation, *in situ*, of the members of a various cultures. These criticisms do not mean that culture as a manifestation of human subjectivity cannot or should not be studied as such. On the contrary, the present paper suggests that Geertz's 'web' (something akin to the notion of *habitus* in Bourdieu, 1977) produces and is a product of a subjectivity which this paper calls one's 'will to be' – the collectively shared existential stance that each member of a community acquires through interaction with the others and the environment (something akin to Bourdieu's *body hexis* but which, as a sedimentation of instances of a *single* individual's intentionality, is both shared and subjectively unique).

Accounting for unique and unrepeatable manifestations of intentionality is the object of hermeneutics. Thus, the Geertzian definition of culture adopted in the present paper is, in the end, founded on Gadamer's (1975 [1960]) hermeneutic reworking of Husserl's phenomenology. (It should be noted that the ontological primacy of hermeneutic/phenomenological analysis in any cultural account is also recognised by Bourdieu (2002), however much he may seem to have distanced himself from Husserl.) In the perspective of the present paper, the object of any cultural phenomenological analysis is an agent's a-structural (or pre-structural) state of intentionality, a purely volitional and, therefore, cognitively formless entity in which culture takes root and to which culture gradually gives a shape ('cultural identity').

A final note. An infant's 'will to be', i.e. the particular configuration of intentionality that subsumes what s/he is existentially in a given moment, is what permits her/him to seize, however crudely at first, the cultural messages continually relayed by the entourage and the environment. A child has to *want* to know, in order to know, or otherwise remains autistic. But then those messages take root and crowd out the formless initial state of intentionality (except during tantrums). Thus, as an infant grows up, what was initially unbridled intentionality becomes increasingly constrained. So, in any given moment, from infancy to adulthood, all of us are both free and determined – we are (more or less) free from the moment of the onset of each instance of intentionality we feel, to the moment it begins to take shape; and we are (more or less) determined from that point on – unless we have a moment of rebellion, too. However, as acculturation sets in, the distance between the onset and the transition point gradually diminishes. We have less and less time and space in which to rebel before we commit to what we have learned to see as the natural and 'given' way to act.

This perspective resolves the apparent contradiction between the relative determinism of Geertz's view of culture (again, akin to Bourdieu's) and this paper's claim that subjective culture is founded in an act of the will. Eric Fromm's famous metaphor of the chess game illustrates such a dialectic admirably. At the beginning of a chess game, players do not feel the weight of the rules (which constitute the 'culture' of their encounter), since an almost infinite series of moves is possible for each of them. But as the game progresses, that initial unlimited freedom becomes more and more constrained by the choices effectively made so far. Towards the end of the game – with few pieces left, perhaps not ideally placed – the weight of the rules becomes almost completely determinant.

2. The role of volition in creating identity is treated from a (psycho-) sociological standpoint by Howard (2000) and Joerchel (2006). For the reasons given in note 1, this paper does not take into consideration piecemeal cognitive studies – for example, the well-known elicitation study of Sussman (2000). This kind of study is useful for addressing specific behavioural problems, but cannot give an overall view of identity formation.
3. When completed, the Cultural Matrix Game will be placed on-line as an open-source collaborative research project at <http://www.boylan.it> (click on PUBLICATIONS).

4. The Picture project will be distributed free of charge to schools and universities in the EU through the Socrates/Lingua2 Directorate.

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