

Normative Power Europe Reconsidered

Beyond the Crossroads

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The European Union as a Normative Power: A Response to Thomas Diez

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In his recent article in *Millennium* 33, no. 3 (2005), Thomas Diez's reconsideration of the Normative Power (NP) thesis raises a number of important questions about the European Union (EU) as a normative power in world politics. His article critically problematises NP and calls for 'a greater degree of self-reflexivity' in discussions and representations of the EU as a NP. This response to Diez's article will develop the thesis of the EU as an NP by primarily addressing his main argument that: 'the EU is not the first normative power, and self/other practices ... can be observed in other historical instances, notably the United States' and his two minor arguments: that 'the concept of 'normative power', rather than being distinct from 'civilian power', is already embedded in the latter'; and 'the discourse on 'normative power Europe' is an important practice of European identity construction'. It will be argued that the EU as an NP is *different* from great powers and *distinctive* from civilian power. But Diez's reconsideration does raise a number of interesting questions of the EU *selves* in both 'othering' practices and reflexivity.

[T]he effort to construct the European Union ... is a global civilising effort. This is so because the coordination of European differences (taking all domains together) – or its failure – will prefigure the constitution of still larger groupings, in which more marked economic, cultural, and religious differences will have to be reconciled in order to take part in the dynamics of globalisation of ways of life that follows from the dynamics of production, commerce, and the media in which the greater part of humanity is now engaged.²

1. I am very grateful to Giovanna Bono, David Chandler, Thomas Diez, Geoffrey Edwards, Simon Lightfoot, two anonymous referees, and the editors of *Millennium* for their helpful comments.

2. Julia Kristeva, 'Europe Divided: Politics, Ethics, Religion', in *Crisis of the European Subject* (New York: Other Press, 2000), 114–15.

In many respects, the Normative Power (NP) thesis was written in a different era to the one in which we now live. Imagined in the 1990s and first written during the years 1999–2000, *Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?* reflected the crystallisation of the European Union (EU) at the end of the twentieth century.³ It was, and is, a statement of what is believed to be good about the EU; a statement which needed to be made in order to stimulate and reflect on what the EU *should* be (doing) in world politics.⁴ As Julia Kristeva also argued in 2000, the construction of the EU is not just a European project – it is part of a global effort to coordinate and reconcile human differences under conditions of globalisation. This effort has become all the more important to humanity since the events of 11 September 2001.

Based on research into symbolic and normative discourses and practices within the EC/EU during the 1990s, the phrase ‘normative power’ was used as a response to the relative absence of normative theorising and to promote normative approaches to the EU.⁵ As Thomas Diez has recently suggested, ‘normative power is a power that is able “to shape conceptions of the ‘normal’”. We can therefore identify such a normative power by the impact it has on what is considered appropriate behaviour by other actors.’⁶ Just to contextualise this concept, it had become increasingly clear during the 1990s that the changed global conditions and the European integration process were constructing the EU’s ‘international identity’ in world politics.⁷ Although only part of its international identity, the ‘normative’ power of the EU was seen as being distinct from the pre-existing European ideal types of ‘civilian’ vs ‘military’ power.⁸ In contrast to previously empirical accounts of the EC/EU in world politics, from the late 1990s onwards the study of EU

3. Ian Manners, *Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?* (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, Working Paper 38-2000). [http://www.diiis.dk/graphics/COPRI_publications/COPRI_publications/publications/38-2000.doc].

4. Ian Manners, ‘Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?’, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (2002): 235–58.

5. Manners (2000) *Normative Power Europe*; and Ian Manners, *Substance and Symbolism: An Anatomy of Cooperation in the New Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

6. Thomas Diez, ‘Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering ‘Normative Power Europe’’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 3 (2005): 613–36, 615.

7. Richard Whitman, *From Civilian Power to Superpower? The International Identity of the European Union* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998); Ian Manners and Richard Whitman, ‘Towards Identifying the International Identity of the European Union: A Framework for Analysis of the EU’s Network of Relations’, *Journal of European Integration* 21, no. 2 (1998): 231–49; Ian Manners and Richard Whitman, ‘The “Difference Engine”: Constructing and Representing the International Identity of the European Union’, *Journal of European Public Policy* 10, no. 3 (2003): 380–404.

8. Manners (2002) ‘Normative Power Europe’, 236–8; Manners and Whitman, ‘The “Difference Engine”’, 387–91.

foreign policy became more informed by social constructivist theory, accommodating ideas about the EU's international identity.⁹

As Diez's reconsideration of the NP thesis illustrates, the development of constructivist theory-informed EU external/foreign policy studies has led to a wider engagement with the NP approach. These include book-length volumes using the NP approach to study EU foreign policy¹⁰; EU actorness¹¹; the Euro-Mediterranean partnership¹²; EU values and principles¹³. In addition to these volumes, work on international political theory¹⁴; global governance¹⁵; environmental studies research¹⁶; the transatlantic relationship¹⁷; and Turkish security studies have also used the NP approach.¹⁸

9. Knud Erik Jørgensen, ed., *Reflective Approaches to European Governance* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997); Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler, *The European Union as Global Actor* (London: Routledge, 1999); Ian Manners and Richard Whitman, eds., *The Foreign Policies of European Union Member States* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Karen Smith, *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003); Michael E. Smith, *Europe's Foreign and Security Policy: The Institutionalization of Cooperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Walter Carlsnaes, Helene Sjursen, and Brian White, eds., *Contemporary European Foreign Policy* (London: Sage, 2004); Ole Elgström and Michael Smith (eds.) *The European Union's Roles in International Politics* (London: Routledge, 2006).

10. Zaki Laïdi, *La norme sans la force: L'énigme de la puissance européenne* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2005); Helene Sjursen, ed., Special Issue: 'What Kind of Power? European Foreign Policy in Perspective', *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (2006).

11. Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2006).

12. Emanuel Adler, Beverly Crawford, Federica Bicci, and Raffaella Del Sarto, eds., *The Convergence of Civilizations? Constructing a Mediterranean Region* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

13. Sonia Lucarelli and Ian Manners, eds., *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge, 2006).

14. Andrew Linklater, 'A European Civilising Process?', in *International Relations and the European Union*, eds. Christopher Hill and Michael Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 367–87.

15. Pascal Lamy and Zaki Laïdi (2002) 'A European Approach to Global Governance', *Progressive Politics* 1, no. 1 (2002): 56–63; Sibylle Scheipers and Daniela Sicurelli, 'Normative Power Europe: A Credible Utopia', *Journal of Common Market Studies* (2006) forthcoming.

16. Simon Lightfoot and Jon Burchell, 'The European Union and the World Summit on Sustainable Development: Normative Power Europe in Action?', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 43, no. 1 (2005): 75–95.

17. Kalypso Nicolaidis, 'The Power of the Superpowerless', in *Beyond Paradise and Power: Europeans, Americans and the Future of a Troubled Partnership*, ed. Tod Lindberg (London: Routledge, 2004), 93–120.

18. Tarik Oguzlu, 'An Analysis of Turkey's Prospective Membership in the European Union from a "Security" Perspective', *Security Dialogue* 34, no. 3 (2003): 285–99.

Diez's *Millennium* article critically problematises NP and calls for 'a greater degree of self-reflexivity' in discussions and representations of the EU as a NP. This response to Diez's article will develop the thesis of the EU as an NP in world politics by addressing his main claim that 'the EU is not the first normative power, and 'self'/'other' practices ... can be observed in other historical instances, notably in the practices of the United States.'¹⁹ In addition the response will address two of Diez's other claims: that 'the concept of 'normative power', rather than being distinct from 'civilian power', is already embedded in the latter'; and 'the discourse on 'normative power Europe' is an important practice of European identity construction.'²⁰ It will be argued that the EU as an NP is *different* from great powers and *distinctive* from civilian power. But Diez's reconsideration does raise a number of interesting questions of the EU *selves* in both 'othering' practices and reflexivity.

The Difference between the EU and 'Other' Powers

Diez's main substantive claim is that 'the notion of normative power is hardly novel and unique to the EU', and in particular compares the EU to the USA.²¹ As stated in the NP thesis, '[f]rom a relativist viewpoint it might be suggested that the EU is simply promoting its own norms in a similar manner to historical empires and contemporary global powers.'²² However, instead of engaging in such relativist reasoning, it was argued that the 'EU has gone further towards making its external relations informed by, and conditional on, a catalogue of norms which come closer to those of the European convention on human rights and fundamental freedoms and the universal declaration of human rights than most other actors in world politics.'²³ Diez raises an important question of how to judge whether a normative power is both normative and powerful. He usefully suggests that this can be judged on the basis of two factors: the role of universal norms 'as an aim as well as the means for the projection of power'; and 'how far military power dominates other forms of power.'²⁴ Factor one relates to the distinction between EU normative power where the reference points for universal norms are external to the power, and more particular normative power where reference points are internal.²⁵ This distinction is related, but not identical, to the difference between cosmopolitan and communitarian normative theory. Two further factors help judge normative power – whether the exercise

19. Diez, 'Constructing the Self', 635.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Diez, 'Constructing the Self', 620–3.

22. Manners (2002) 'Normative Power Europe', 240.

23. *Ibid.*, 241.

24. Diez, 'Constructing the Self', 620.

25. Clearly, the idea of 'universal' is problematic, but is understood here as particular/culture transcending norms such as human rights, justice, and human dignity that are found in generally agreed statements of principle such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. See Gillian Triggs, 'Remembering the

of normative power transcends or reinforces the status quo of iniquitous and historically determined power and justice in world politics. And thus, by implication, whether the exercise of normative power transcends the source of that power – i.e. does exercising normative power based on the universal claims of external reference points lead to the strengthening of the external at the expense of the power? These four factors will be used to judge whether the EU is similar to other historical empires and contemporary global powers, or whether it is more normative than most other actors in world politics.

The claim that the EU represents a normative power in world politics was made with reference to the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), in the case of human rights.²⁶ Clearly, human rights is just one case (out of nine), so a fuller picture needs to reflect on the extent to which the reference points for these other norms are also external to the EU. In the case of ‘peace’ the primary reference point is the 1945 United Nations Charter, together with references to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the objectives of the 1990 Paris Charter.²⁷ In the cases of the norms of ‘liberty/freedom’, ‘democracy’, ‘human rights’, and ‘rule of law’ the primary external reference point is the Council of Europe’s (CoE) 1950 ECHR, together with the CoE’s 1997 Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.²⁸ Interestingly, there is also an internal reference point in the shape of ‘the constitutional conditions common to the member states.’²⁹ In the case of ‘equality’ the two primary external reference points are the ECHR and the CoE’s European Social Charter (revised 1996). These draw on secondary reference points found in articles 1 and 7 of the UDHR, and article 26 of the UN’s 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Internal reference points for equality include Articles 2, 3, and 141 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC), the EC’s 1989 Community Charter on the Fundamental Rights of Workers, and European Court of Justice case law.³⁰ In the case of ‘social solidarity’ the primary external reference points are the UN’s 1966 International

Life of Edward Said: A Tribute’, *Ejournalist* 3 (2003), [www.ejournalism.au.com/ejournalist/triggs.pdf]; and Sharin Ebadi, ‘Human Rights Embody the Fundamental Values of Human Civilizations’, *UN Human Development Report 2004* (New York: UNDP, 2004), 23.

26. Manners (2002) ‘Normative Power Europe’, 241.

27. See Article 11, Treaty on European Union (TEU); Articles I-3, I-41, and III-292, Constitution for Europe (CfE).

28. See Article 6, TEU; Article I-9, CfE; EU Council of Ministers, *The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* (Brussels: Council of Ministers, 2000); European Parliament, ‘Human Rights – Fundamental Rights’, Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (Brussels: European Parliament, 2000) [www.europarl.eu.int/comparl/human_rights/default_en.htm].

29. See Article 6, TEU; and Article I-9, CfE.

30. Council of Ministers, *Charter of Fundamental Rights*; and European Parliament, ‘Human Rights – Fundamental Rights’.

Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the CoE's 1961 European Social Charter, together with the EC's 1989 Community Charter on the Fundamental Rights of Workers (internal reference point). In the case of 'sustainable development' the reference points include principle 1 of the 1992 UNTAD Rio Declaration, the 1992 UN Framework Convention of Climate Change (FCCC), and the 1997 Kyoto Protocol to the FCCC. Finally, in the case of 'good governance' the external reference points are 'the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law' in order to 'promote an international system based on stronger multilateral cooperation and good global governance.'³¹ The details of

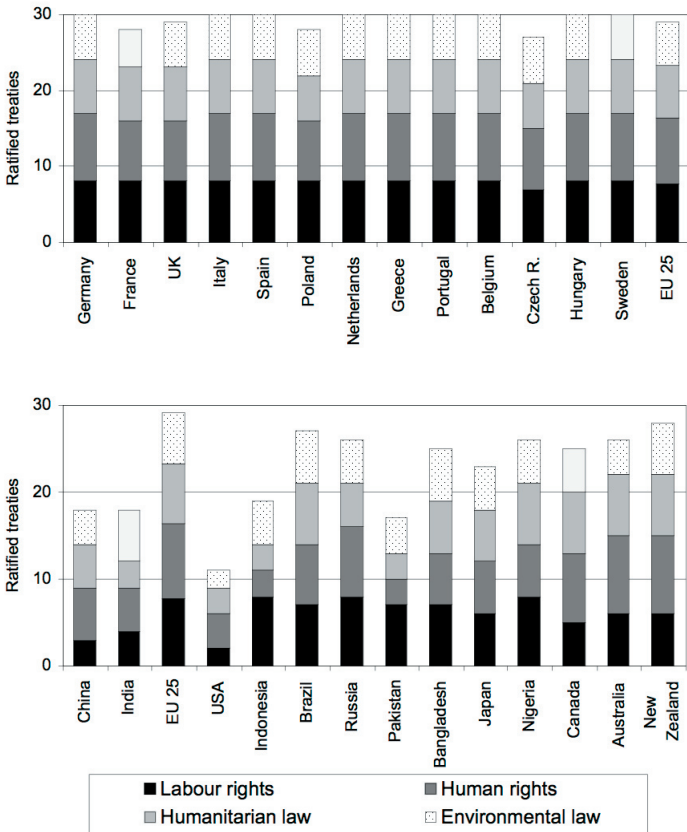


Figure 1 Cosmopolitan international law treaties, 2005³²

31. See Article III-292, CfE.

32. Ratification of cosmopolitan international law treaties includes eight ILO treaties; nine human rights treaties; seven humanitarian laws; and six environmental laws. The maximum number of treaties is 30. Based on *UN Human Development Report 2005* (New York: UNDP, 2005), 289–92; 320–7; and

what constitutes good governance (i.e. the participation of civil society in order to encourage openness and transparency, as well as to facilitate democratic participation) refers to internal reference points (including Art. I-50, CfE). To get a sense of the extent to which the reference point for the NP thesis relies on external claims, in particular through international law (Diez's 'self-binding'), it is worth comparing the EU's member states with the largest states in the world.

As this comparative chart illustrates, the member states of the EU lead the world in ratifying cosmopolitan international treaties. In comparison, the USA has trailed the rest of the world badly in terms of ratifying such international law treaties. Clearly, ratification of international treaties says very little about standards and implementation (Cambodia ratified the Convention on Genocide in 1950), but they are important symbolic and public demonstrations of international commitment which may prove more important than was originally intended. What the chart suggests is that the pooling of sovereignty has made EU member states more accepting of external cosmopolitan international law treaties.³³

The second factor is that of military power, which has been covered extensively elsewhere in debates between armies of academics, set off by exchanges between Cooper, Kagan, Patten, Powell, Rumsfeld, Solana, *et al.*³⁴ Based on external reference points to the NP thesis, it is manifestly *not* the case that 'most of the US's international engagement has had strong normative under-, if not over-tones.'³⁵ Undoubtedly, the impact of Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt between 1941 ('The Four Freedoms') and 1948 (UDHR) led to the USA having a strong normative international presence. But the series of international institutions that were created tended to reinforce, not transform, international relations, in particular by sustaining the hegemony of the imperial powers in the UN Security Council, and ensuring other UN organs reflected US power (for example the IMF, IBRD, and GATT). Despite a gradual involvement in military power (WEU actions, Bosnia, Macedonia, and Congo), the EU's normative power has, so far, predetermined its exercise of physical force. This is clearly not the case for the USA, where the technologies of its complex, industrialised military have regularly pre-determined both the objectives and strategies of US power – 'shock and awe' democratisation included. This leads me to a third factor in judging normative power – the concept of 'exceptionalism'.

Mary Kaldor, *et al.*, eds., *Global Civil Society 2005/6* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 358–65.

33. Jeremy Rabkin, 'Is EU Policy Eroding the Sovereignty of Non-Member States?', *Chicago Journal of International Law* 1, no. 2 (2000): 273–90; and Ian Ward, 'The End of Sovereignty and the New Humanism', *Stanford Law Review* 55 (2003): 2091–112.

34. See also Ian Manners, 'The Value of Peace', in *Values in the Constitution of Europe*, ed. Miriam Aziz and Susan Millns (London: Dartmouth, 2006); and Manners, 'Normative Power Europe Reconsidered'.

35. Diez, 'Constructing the Self', 621.

The concept of American 'exceptionalism' is helpful in assessing its normative power. The concept of exceptionalism encourages us to judge whether a claim to normative power is based on cosmopolitan normative theory ('we are all equal') or not. Thus, a claim of exceptionalism located in communitarian self-understanding would seem to be one which cannot be shared with the rest of the world on an equal and just basis. But what if universal norms are being propagated in a normative project based not on exceptionalism, but on ordinariness as in the case of the EU? Undoubtedly, there are claims of 'normative power Europe' that have been used by EU politicians in a communitarian attempt to legitimise the EU project to member states and citizens. Similarly references to certain constitutive norms, such as social solidarity, sustainable development and good governance, may be desirable for the many, but not for those who profit from inequality, pollution and corruption. From a relativist perspective it could be argued that all 'particularist' claims to normative power are relatively similar – from the American and French revolutions to those of the Russian revolution. It is the lack of exceptionalism, rather than the claim to being special, which characterises most of the normative claims in the EU – particularly those located in past European failures and crimes (such as colonialism, nationalism, world wars, the holocaust and inequality). Generally implicit in any EU claims to being *sui generis* are built on humility for historical failures such as injustice, intolerance, and inhumanity.³⁶ As we discuss in the next section, this historical context of reflexive humility and attempts to build non-hierarchical relationships contribute to normative power. The stark contrast between the EU and US claims to exceptionalism could not be clearer in discussions of the 'god-given duty' of the American dream, where the USA is 'the land of the free and the home of the brave'.³⁷

The fourth factor used in judging a claim to normative power is based on Etienne Balibar's notion of Europe as a 'vanishing mediator'. Balibar takes Fredric Jameson's 'vanishing mediator' a step further by giving it the meaning of an EUtopia or myth where the EU becomes the anti-systemic mediator – 'a transitory institution, force, community ... that creates the conditions for a new society by rearranging the elements inherited from the very institution that has to be overcome.'³⁸ In contrast to the concept of exceptionalism, the extent to which the EU becomes a 'vanishing mediator' helps to judge the claim to normative power. If the successful exercise of normative power with reference to external points of international reference (such as the UN) leads to a more universal acceptance of those norms, then the expectation would be that the EU

36. John Erik Fossum, 'Conceptualizing the European Union Through Four Strategies of Comparison', *Comparative European Politics* 4, no 1 (2006): 94-123.

37. Diez, 'Constructing the Self', 621. See also Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 1996).

38. Etienne Balibar, 'Europe: Vanishing Mediator', *Constellations* 10, no. 3 (2003): 312-38.

would become less, not more powerful. It would, in effect, increasingly vanish through its mediation. This is not to say that the EU, nor its member states, regions, and localities, would vanish as institutions, but that they would become less powerful as forces of change as they would become, quite simply, normal in the multi-layered processes of post-national politics. As Kálypso Nicoláidis puts it, the EU 'would preferably not refer to itself in terms of power at all, but as an intervener, a global partner, a 'vanishing mediator'.³⁹ Diez's two examples of US 'particular' normative power, Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and post-Second World War international institutions, tended to amplify rather than reduce the USA's impact in international relations, at least during the Cold War.⁴⁰

The Difference between Normative Power and Civilian Power

In arguing that the concepts of normative power and civilian power are 'very close' to each other, Diez suggests a 'reductionist reading' of civilian power.⁴¹ Given the manifold and moving interpretations of civilian power, the NP thesis engaged with what are considered to be the core nodal points of these discussions – 'diplomatic cooperation to solve international problems' (multilateralism); 'centrality of economic power' (non-military); and 'legally-binding supranational institutions' (international law).⁴² The writings of François Duchêne, Kenneth Twitchett, Gunnar Sjöstadt, and Hans Maull suggest that these core points have been constitutive of civilian power resources, objectives, and strategies. In response to Diez's concerns, it will be argued that there are at least six distinctions to be made between civilian power and normative power in a consideration of the EU.⁴³

First, there is the obvious post-colonial concern that civilian power Europe is read as a neocolonial attempt to 'civilise' the world (again). As Diez's article illustrates, many still endorse the role of civilian power in acting 'in the name of a civilisation of international relations' through 'the EU's biggest project of all, its mission *civilisatrice*.'⁴⁴ The NP thesis is an attempt to escape civilising missions by countering the neocolonial discourses of claims implicit (or explicit) in civilian power. Secondly, most civilian power formulations place an emphasis on the importance of being 'long on economic power' or 'the concentration on nonmilitary, primarily economic, means'.⁴⁵ Civilian power writings tend to place

39. Nicoláidis, 'The Power of the Superpowerless', 117.

40. Diez, 'Constructing the Self', 621.

41. *Ibid.*, 617.

42. Manners (2000) *Normative Power Europe*, 26; Manners (2002) 'Normative Power Europe', 236–7.

43. See Manners (2002) 'Normative Power Europe', 238; Manners and Whitman, 'The "Difference Engine"', 390.

44. Diez, 'Constructing the Self', 617 and 629.

much importance on non-military or economic resources, objectives, and strategies. It is clearly no accident that most civilian power writing has been about some of the wealthiest places in the world (1970s Western Europe, 1990s Japan and Germany). The emphasis on material assets and physical power in civilian power approaches contrasts with the emphasis on the normative power of non-material exemplification found in the contagion of norms through imitation (*mimēzisme*) and attraction.

Thirdly, civilian power writings emphasise the communitarian nature of civilian resources, objectives, and strategies – that civilian power is exercised primarily for the benefit of those exercising it. The communitarian aspect of civilian power is compounded by the turn taken by Maull and others to apply civilian power to Germany and Japan (let alone the USA), with references to ‘national goals’, ‘national interest’, and ‘national values’. This has led to civilian power becoming far too related to the ontology of states, rather than to a ‘style of action’ or ‘domestication’. In contrast, the NP approach emphasises the cosmopolitan nature of EU normative power, in particular through ‘a commitment to placing universal norms and principles at the centre of its relations with its member states and the world.’⁴⁶ Fourthly, civilian power writings have come to accept Westphalian cultural emphasis on international society as the form and means of world politics. Even Duchêne (in contrast to Shonfield), while talking about the transformation of world politics, was actually reinforcing the status quo of international relations with references to ‘international twentieth-century society’, ‘a powerful co-operative’, and ‘international open society’.⁴⁷ This acceptance of Westphalian cultururation, including the status quo of an international society between states, contrasts strongly with the NP approach of transcending the ‘normal’ of world politics through an emphasis on world society.

Fifthly, civilian power writings reduce the notion of power to that of relations between agents, even if multilateral, non-military, legal relations. As Diez discusses in his article, normative power identifies the ambiguity of the EU as an actor/structure, to which is added relational/structural power.⁴⁸ This is not to say that the EU does not act relationally, but that EU normative power reflects the structural elements of international relations that are powerfully changed by the EU’s mere existence – i.e.

45. François Duchêne, ‘The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence’, in *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign-Policy Problems before the Community*, eds Max Kohnstamm and Wolfgang Hager (London: Macmillan, 1973), 19; and Hanns Maull, ‘Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers’, *Foreign Affairs* 69, no. 5 (1990), 92.

46. Manners (2002) ‘Normative Power Europe’, 241.

47. François Duchêne, ‘A New European Defense Community’, *Foreign Affairs* 50, no. 1 (1971), 82; François Duchêne, ‘Europe’s Role in World Peace’, in *Europe Tomorrow: Sixteen Europeans Look Ahead*, ed. Richard Mayne (London: Fontana/Collins, 1972), 47; and Duchêne, ‘The European Community’, 20.

48. Diez, ‘Constructing the Self’, 616.

by exemplification rather than presumed 'goal-driven instrumentalism'. Finally, if we take normative to mean should, ought, or good, this raises the question of what is normative about civilian power? Obviously within a Cold War nuclear-military superpower context, the aspiration to civilianise relations between member states through multilateral, non-military, legal means was seen as a good thing. But beyond this context, after the Cold War, what is good for humanity about an EU civilian power that seeks to civilise, using materialist strategies, for self-interest, within a Westphalian culture? Developed as a response to the relative absence of normative theorising of, and to promote normative approaches to, the EU, the NP approach was part of an argument for moving away from Cold War (and neocolonial) approaches to the EU.

The Self as Other and the International Identity of the EU

Diez also argues that the discourse on normative power Europe involves practices of 'othering' as part of constructing the international identity of the EU. In his discussion of 'the power of the "normative power Europe" discourse', Diez argues that the NP approach is a practice of discursive representation rather than an objective category, and that this entails a second-order analysis of the power of this representation – an analysis of the 'power acting upon power' (Foucault).⁴⁹ Diez's argument regarding the need to study the power of normative power representations is clearly very important. However, three observations should be made regarding the way in which Diez constructs the 'self' of the EU – in particular with reference to Kristeva's 'self as other', previous discussions of the 'international identity' of the EU, as well as Habermas and Derrida's 'practices of othering'.

Abject. It is something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object ... The abjection of Nazi crime reaches its apex when death, which, in any case, kills me, interferes with what, in my living universe, is supposed to save me from death: childhood, science, among other things.⁵⁰

The foreigner is within us. And when we flee from or struggle against the foreigner, we are fighting our unconsciousness – that 'improper' facet of our impossible 'own and proper' ... To discover our disturbing otherness, for that indeed is what bursts in to confront that 'demon', that threat, that apprehension generated by the projective apparition of the other at the heart of what we persist in maintaining as a proper, solid 'us'.⁵¹

49. Ibid., 626.

50. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay in Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4.

51. Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 191–2.

Diez argues that there are four strategies of constructing self and other found in 'different forms of othering'.⁵² What is crucial for the understanding of the 'self' in the NP approach is that there is at least one more different form of othering – the *self as other*. As Julia Kristeva's Lacanian psychoanalytically based work has illustrated over the past three decades, the other is always part of the self – an abject-foreigner which is part of our conscious and unconscious selves.⁵³ To understand the way in which European selves are othered in abject-foreigners, it is worth briefly reflecting on recent EU-wide discourses surrounding far-right coalition partners in government in Austria and Italy (together with election successes of the Front National in France and the Folkeparti in Denmark) and the rise of radical christian fundamentalism in the US. The reactions to Jörg Haider, Pia Kjaersgaard, Rocco Buttiglione, George W. Bush, and the hatred they attract are interesting exactly because of the ambiguity between abject-foreignness in questions of immigration, European integration, Christian fundamentalism, homophobia, and imperialism. The projection of otherness onto individuals and the social groups they represent is so strong precisely because they are also an abjected and disturbing part of ourselves.

Thus, from the viewpoint of conventional work on identity, the notion of a difference engine reflects the attempts within the EU to engineer a single, essential, categorical identity which acts as a multiplier of differences between the EU and the world. However, critical social theory encourages us to analyse the International Identity of the EU as far more fluid, consisting of ongoing contestations of complex, multiple, relational identities. From this critical viewpoint the notion of a 'difference engine' is a means to analyse these ongoing contestations as part of the International Identity of the EU which does not add up to a single, integrating whole.⁵⁴

A second observation concerns the way in which assumptions of an EU 'self' are structured – Diez sometimes writes of the EU as if it was a self which was capable of a strategy. As the quote from work on the 'international identity' of the EU illustrates, there is no *one* EU identity – the EU cannot be considered a 'difference engine' in the multiplication of a separate, single, essential, categorical, supranational EU self. Diez's observations regarding German, French and British aspects of EU identity reflect the ambiguity of the multiple identities which contest EU 'selves'.⁵⁵ It is the fluid, complex, multiple and relational aspects of the self–other contestations which define the EU as a normative power, rather than the other way round. This self-pluralism makes it very difficult to crystallise either self or other consistently. Indeed, the fragmented nature of the nine constitutive norms identified in the NP approach make it absolutely clear

52. Diez, 'Constructing the Self', 628–9.

53. Catarina Kinnvall, 'Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Self', *Political Psychology* 25, No. 5 (2004), 741–67.

54. Manners and Whitman, 'The "Difference Engine"', 397.

55. Diez, 'Constructing the Self', 631–2.

that contradictory multiplicity rather than ideology characterises the normative power of the EU.

Thirdly, Diez's argument on the practice of discursive representation in the NP thesis assumes that world politics and the EU might otherwise be innocent arenas. As stated from the outset of this response, it is argued that the EU represents a normative power, more so than most other actors in world politics. This is a normative claim with a normative aim, made in the relative absence of normative approaches to the EU. In his discussion of self-othering practices, Diez does not reflect on the way in which these practices are *always* present as part of human social existence. These practices are always for someone and for some purpose – our task, as political scientists, is to ensure we are critical (in the sense of challenging the prevailing order of the world) of othering practices based on essentialisms. If we accept that self-othering practices are always present, then we need to reflect on how these may best escape essentialist interpretations and lead to human emancipation. This aspect is left unstated in Diez's discussions, potentially leading some to assume that had there not been an NP intervention, the EU could have gone on being the EU, innocent of all discursive practices. Were this the case, we might still be discussing the empirical capabilities–expectations gap, or perhaps the multi-level governance of external-foreign policies, rather than engaging in normative discussions of what the EU is and should be doing in world politics.

Conclusion: Reflexive Reconsiderations of Normative Power Europe

There is no essence of Europe, no fixed list of European values. There is no 'finality' to the process of European integration. Europe is a project of the future. With every decision, not only its zone of peace, its institutions, its political, economic and social order, but also its very identity and self-determination are opened for questioning and debate.⁵⁶

Thomas Diez's reconsideration of the 'normative power Europe' approach is a welcome reflection on the extent to which it is good to argue the EU as a normative power in world politics. As argued above, Diez should perhaps reflect the means of judging the *difference* between the EU and other powers. In addition Diez might reconsider *what* is being reduced when distinguishing between civilian and normative power, as well as the self-othering in the international identity of the EU. The unfreezing of both the international order and the intellectual order in the post Cold-War era has encouraged fundamentally different ways of conceiving and

56. Kurt Biedenkopf, Bronislaw Geremek, and Krzysztof Michalski, *The Spiritual and Cultural Dimension of Europe: Concluding Remarks*, Reflection Group initiated by the President of the European Commission and Coordinated by the Institute for Human Services, Vienna/Brussels, 2004, 12.

understanding the EU in world politics. In this freer climate it is important to argue what is good, and reflect on what is bad, about the EU in world politics. One nihilist response to Diez's (and others) criticisms might be simply *not* to pursue a normative approach. In this manner, it might be best to accept the EU and the world as we find them, and to focus on problem solving theory such as making the EU institutions work smoothly by dealing effectively with particular sources of trouble.⁵⁷ But that would not be political science. Any political theory should not take EU institutions and relations with the world for granted, but should question what the EU is, what it does, and how we analyse these processes, and that is what the normative power approach seeks to do.

In this respect, we should reflect on who and what the 'self' *are* in Diez's discussions of self-othering and self-reflexivity. As the above extract from the concluding report of Romano Prodi's Reflection Group on *The Spiritual and Cultural Dimension of Europe* illustrates, there is no fixed, essential, final self in the processes of European integration. We are part of the questioning and debating, part of the selves in a project of the future. Without us, there will be no EU selves, no reflection, no reflexivity. Any and all of the norms discussed in the NP approach are not uniquely European, and neither is Europe itself. Claims made about relative EU attachment to a particular combination of normative principles largely reflect fairly recent (post-World War, post-Cold War) practices and constructions that can be undone as quickly as they have been achieved, unless there is constant, critical reflection.

Reflexivity has a dual meaning in social science, involving both an understanding of the monitored character of social life, and the need for reflexive research characterised by interpretation and reflection.⁵⁸ This dual reading of reflexivity is taken seriously when it is argued that the NP thesis has 'a normative quality to it – that the EU should act to extent its norms into the international system.'⁵⁹ Understanding that our social life has a monitored character to it involves social reflection and readjustment. In this respect anyone arguing that the EU does 'good' in the world should cause us to engage in socially contextual consideration and contestation of this argument. Such engagement and reflexive reconsiderations are crucial to ensure that any global effort to coordinate and reconcile human differences is sustainable.

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57. Robert Cox, 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 10, no. 2 (1981): 126–55.

58. Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 3. Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldböck, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 2000), 5.

59. Manners (2002) 'Normative Power Europe', 252.