

## MEDIATING TEXTS FOR CHILDREN

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### RESUMO

O presente artigo versa sobre os jovens e a utilização que dão às novas tecnologias de informação e comunicação; os novos média em confronto com os média mais tradicionais baseados na palavra impressa, tais como livros; e sobre as utilizações pelos jovens dos novos espaços cibernautas que se caracterizam por um confronto de culturas, nomeadamente sob a forma de páginas web educativas, produzidas na Europa, ao abrigo de acções financiadas pela União Europeia, dirigidas a jovens e crianças que focam a necessidade que eles têm de narrativas para a formação das suas identidades.

O contexto da análise de páginas web multiculturais decorre em ambiente de globalização económica e tecnológica, de proliferação de tecnologias de informação e comunicação e de envolvimento tímido e receoso da educação com os vastos recursos com que os jovens se encontram diariamente.

### ABSTRACT

This paper is about young people and new media in confrontation with so-called old media i.e. traditional print-based media such as books; and about the provision of new spaces for young people characterised by the clash of cultures, i.e. intercultural education websites for children and young people that concentrate on their need of stories for the formation of identity produced by EU funded actions.

The context for this analysis is that of technological and economic globalisation, the proliferation of media technologies and the reticent involvement of education in the immense information resources young people are used to navigate in.

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### Introduction

The internet as part of cyber culture is part of a net of technological, economical and cultural globalising influences associated with youth culture. As such, it is sometimes represented for its utopian potential to transform the future. Multiple fragmented virtual and cyborg identities offer novel modes of apprehension of the global and the universal that youths excel in and seem to offer adequate responses to the cultural revolution we are witnessing, despite also congregating the anxieties and fears of the future. As Giroux so well recognises and argues in "Slacking Off: Border Youth and Postmodern Education", it is teachers

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who have to keep up with young people's relocations and changed meanings in what regards schooling and pedagogy.

The arguments I wish to put forward are: first, that print - based (also called static, old, and traditional media) and electronic media (by which I wish to refer to interactive media and mainly to Internet) interpenetrate (Harris 2004: 1). There is great anxiety surrounding the book and its role in the future, and enveloping 'the reading of young people' that are being addressed by educators and cultural agents through the Internet with the aim of reaching out to children and bridging the gap between traditional and new media in education. Rather than an abrupt cut with the past, there are interesting continuities that deserve mention in terms of narrative techniques and the virtual presence of books on the Internet.

The second argument is that from the point of view of situated cognition (Brown et al 1989), the use of new tools (such as the computer) entails a change of view of the world and the adoption of the culture of that world in which the tool is used. Thus new media such as the Internet not only reconfigure narrative language, texts and storytelling, but also children's identities and their culture. The internet is affecting the way we tell stories to children and wish them to engage with the world especially when we consider the industry and the commerce that is channelled through it, but also the rise of visual over print media and interactivity. The Internet is also occupying the place of printed stories / books in that it leaves young people little time for anything else. It does so while being called upon to introduce stories to children and using print-based metaphoric language and conceptualizations (Harris 2004). The Internet promotes 'a new textual ecology(...) instantiated by the computer" (Harris 2004: 2), it creates new meanings about identity and new types of interaction with text, it eventually positions young people in the midst of several different cultures, invites hybridisation and localisation. But it also evades traditional cultural systems of classification, thus revealing great potential for intercultural education in the sense of how to live in a world that will be vastly more globalized, high tech, and racially diverse than at any other time in history (giroux).

The third argument of this paper concerns the **glocalisation** of culture. As local, national, European and global cultural educative resources, the two websites we focus on reveal that the internet as global medium is always appropriated in terms of local needs; While inviting cultural homogenisation, it may also be used to invite children to create hybrid identities and reinforce regional differentiation; The two websites are living proof that the formats of the 'children and young people culture' are radically changing and that education has to reckon with local and global articulations, such as 'glocal curricula and books - books that are transcultural and transnational while emphasising on the one hand commonness of scope and regional/ national differentiations - in the creation of that very elusive concept of a 'European culture'.

### Stories, the Internet and Intercultural Education in Europe

It is () useful for educators to comprehend the changing conditions of identity formation within electronically mediated cultures and how they are producing a new generation of youths who exist between the borders of a modernist world of certainty and order, informed by the culture of the West and its technology of print, and a postmodern world of hybridized identities, electronic technologies, local cultural practices and pluralized public spaces. (Giroux, 3)

In each country the engagement of formal education with the new electronic media and with the so-called educational leisure time of young people occurs in the context of local and national cultures that contend against (or seek to emulate) the rise of a virtual technical globalisation shaped by the economical and political global sectors. The new electronic media-oriented teachers or the teachers who take advantage of the new media, such as the Internet, generally capitalize on the Internet's powers of seduction over young people to create a privileged narrative space and regulate, or impact on, how young people think, act, and feel.

As a consequence, new interactive media, such as the internet, are now widely used as formal, informal or non-formal educational places for children that explore interaction possibilities through dialogue, collaborative learning, or the setting of virtual learning communities, besides combining a print-based with visual materials.

Several projects have been developed, within the European framework and sponsored by the European Union, to promote school collaboration in Internet projects, digital media resources, virtual schools, chat rooms for children with the view to promoting the concept of a 'European culture and identity'. These projects are expected to play an essential role in the promotion of European co-operation and innovation in schools in specific thematic areas such as those of intercultural education /the European dimension/ and education for citizenship.

Among the materials available on the Internet for intercultural education in Europe there are sites on narratives, fictional stories and books, for children, because these continue to be accepted as powerful forces that shape mentalities and build identities. They therefore offer an excellent opportunity to reflect on how children and adolescents (pupils and students) are invited to use the sites in the contexts of formal, informal and non-formal education and how materials (such as printed and electronic stories) are being offered them, either as new things on their own or substitutes / alternatives to more traditional cultural artifacts such as books. But they also raise the question how educators are dealing with local, national and transnational cultures in Europe and with the glocalisation of culture, i.e. the impact of the local and the global and vice-versa.

It is known that people tend to look at the global environment - in this case the European and global - from the national and local perspective and tend to prefer the local cultures and stories because they are closer to daily experiences and history (Ib Bondebjerg p. 3) though being constantly under the influence of American products and American global culture - also humoristically put as the 'coca-colonisation' of people. Thus, particularly when we want to deal with a concept such as 'European culture' we end up with a paradox, as Bondebjerg recognises:

We live in a local and national culture with global dimensions and we inhabit an American global culture as a natural part of our national and local culture. But a European culture is at best a fragmented reality, but in reality a non-existing live culture - at least outside European Football Championships and European Song Contests (...) a modern European culture has no clear mental structure or existence for the average European citizen. (p. 3)

The notion of a European cultural identity, as stated, is non-existent and difficult to conceive in mental terms, though politically guaranteed and circulated: there are European passports, license plates and a flag).

Thus, education is called upon through EU funded programmes to develop projects that attempt to embed the European experience in the lives of the people that live in the European political space. One of the ways to do this is through stories, i.e. through imagination and the imaginary.

### **The scope of the study**

This brings us to scope of this paper.

Within the context of old (static) media confronting new (interactive) media and being replaced (or not) by them, this paper explores some relevant websites for children within the field of intercultural education, as selected for BARFIE, a Comenius funded three year program on Books and Reading for Intercultural Education that has not only produced a European catalogue of books appropriate for intercultural education aimed at children 6-16 years old, but also a catalogue of Internet-based projects on stories, books and intercultural education.

The selected projects are:

The Reader's Corner, European Style Fairy Tales  
[www.autopen.com/euro.fairy.shtml](http://www.autopen.com/euro.fairy.shtml)

Children's Polar Library  
[www.barnenspolarbibliotek.com/](http://www.barnenspolarbibliotek.com/)

Communicating tradition and culture across the internet: Traditional Tales  
[www.eurotales.eril.net](http://www.eurotales.eril.net)

Europe of Tales  
[www.europeoftales.net](http://www.europeoftales.net)

Netlibris  
[www.netlibris.net](http://www.netlibris.net)

The European Picture Book Collection  
[www.ncrcl.ac.uk/epbc/](http://www.ncrcl.ac.uk/epbc/)

These sites were further contrasted with others outside the European scope, namely:

Internet Resources for reading Promotion  
[www.iasl-slo.org/readprom.html](http://www.iasl-slo.org/readprom.html)

Webpages/sites for Children and Young People:

Bookhive: Your Guide to Children's Literature  
[www.bookhive.org](http://www.bookhive.org)

Candlelight Stories  
<http://tln.lib.mi.us>

Reading Rants! Out of the Ordinary Teen Booklists:

Teen Hoopla (publishes teen's own book reviews for other teens)  
[www.ala.org/teenhoopla/submbook.html](http://www.ala.org/teenhoopla/submbook.html)

Mary Cavanaugh's Childrenstory.com  
[www.childrenstory.com](http://www.childrenstory.com)

Stories from the Web  
[www.storiesfromtheweb.org/sfwhomepage.htm](http://www.storiesfromtheweb.org/sfwhomepage.htm)

Stories to Grow By  
<http://hazel.forest.net/whootie/default.html>

All of these sites were analysed from three perspectives:

» The social construction of young people

These websites use fictional stories and allude to books, which don't have a physical reality as their means of communicating with and educating children informally, thus aiming at constructing (global or local or glocal) identity projects for children. The pedagogical use of these sites for youth legitimates them as objects of social knowledge that offer representations in which youth can identify their desires and hopes. The websites are also pedagogical texts that play a formative role in shaping the social identities of youth, be 'youth' a localised or globalised concept. Because this is done in the context of intercultural education, it also represents for them what culture and knowledge are or mean to be.

» The interpenetration of old and new media

The ontological characterization of the learning environment, namely: interactivity, interplay, cultural creativity. Narrative techniques: animation, visual properties (shape, size, colour), use of print, etc., to elucidate narrative techniques that are shaping the ways young people are supposed to interact with the websites and investigate how they are shaping the identities of young people in conceptual terms (not in reception terms). Anthony Giddens (*Runaway world. How Globalisation is Reshaping our World* 1999) notes that the process of compressing time and space that presides to globalisation brings with it a loosening of ties between the individual and the traditions and institutions that offered a certain predictability to the individual development. Ours is a more individualized society, as described by Bauman (*The Individualized Society*), which is more demanding on institutions and traditions as well as one established knowledge, because they come under attack from outside the national culture, from the global and also from the fundamentalism of the local and regional.

» Their approach to culture in terms of: intercultural education and the local, national and global dimensions, in particular the confrontation of a global instrumentalism with historically rooted particular identities

(Castells, 2000: 3 quoted in Bondebjerg, 13). Questions of homogenisation and hybridisation. The educational impact in the local and global contexts of intercultural informal education including a reflection on whether these websites are pointing to major restructurations of education in terms of new skills, competencies, literacy, curricula, practices, goals. The ways in which these websites intend to give students an awareness of belonging to a wider and complex multicultural system (that expands beyond schools to the European and the global) and the reactions they might create: either of glad acceptance of cultural bricolage - the ready integration of these stories in creative ways into people's lives - or of melancholy for a past political economy and a lamentation for the all-pervasive reach of multinationals over local and national cultural industries (Sreberny-Mohamaddi quoted in Bondebjerg, 14). All this is part of an analysis of print and images used at a local and national scale to create a representational politics that not only reorients time and space, but also a notion of Europe and of intercultural relations of young people.

Results are not shown or discussed in full in the present paper, but elsewhere.

For the purpose of the arguments presented here, this paper will only focus on two websites, coordinated by Finnish institutions, called *Europe of Tales*, a website that is supposed to be European in scope and funded by the EU, and *The Children's Polar Library*, funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers, the EU Ariadne project and Norbotten County Council in Finland, which focuses on the needs of a local community.

### **A privileged narrative space for which social groups ?**

When European educationalists create a narrative space through the Internet they do so because they sense that school is 'beset by a crisis of vision, purpose, motivation" (Giroux). They may do also in contrast to the joyless and working atmosphere of schools; or as opposed to leisure in approximation to the world of new technologies, consumerism and commodified goods that young people seem to have adhered to.

Educators and industries create websites for a specific imagined audience and social group at the expense of others, to teach specific roles, values and ideals and most of the times also for commercial reasons.

**Europe of Tales** was created, as quoted on its main webpage, as a **CULTURE 2000** programme of the EU, thus with no obvious commercial interest. It produced an Internet-based programme featuring five series of tales, myths and legends from different parts of Europe as a body of educational materials and as collective memory of mankind.

Myths and legends are part of the irreplaceable intellectual and spiritual heritage of mankind and it is the duty of each generation to pass them on to posterity - verbally, in writing, in the form of art, or via digitized media". (<http://www.gallen-kallela.fi/europeoftales/index.html>, accessed 15 September 2004).

The actual means to disseminate the myths and legends of Europe, i.e. a website on the Internet, is not important *per se*, but only as one further media that helps create and circulate stories.

The project wrestles, however, with a fundamental issue: that of a European tradition, that can only be presented not as a unified identity block, but as the sum total of many local cultures and multicultural stories and traditions in order to raise an European awareness and integrate different national/regional cultures of storytelling into the European sphere of young people. This is one concept of *globalisation*, that of the interconnectedness of many local cultures (Venter, 3). The cultural diversity is accepted but integrated into an integrated whole called 'european'. There is also a regional-culture rhetoric that wishes to authenticate itself aesthetically and is largely simulatory

On another level, not much of the internet's power for distributing power, openness and decentralisation is used. It concentrates the authority to define what is european culture and reproduces hierarchy rather than distributing power with users. As we shall see, however, internet's attributes of no centre, no hierarchy, speed, interconnectivity and simultaneity are maintained.

The **Children's Polar Library** has a different orientation and scope as well as concept of globalisation. It aims at reaching and making available the local cultures of the Nordic lands.

Where 'The Europe of tales', coordinated by the Finnish Gallen-Kallela Museum, takes an active part in art pedagogy, contemporary multimedia, the combination of art and science, and the mixing of "mythical tales of history and modern means of presentation", it is the aim of **The Children's Polar Library** to bring together artists, writers and children throughout the year and in summer camps and it quotes in several places that it departs from the children's interests and own questions, thus constructing the young people as active participants in the whole enterprise to be involved, informed, consulted, heard (Christensen & Prout 2004: 481) and not as recipients of the intellectual and spiritual heritage of mankind as in **Europe of Tales**.

The social group defined by **Europe of Tales** includes children aged 10-15 and young people, though also individual users, who are invited to become changed and more knowledgeable by the cultural repertoire of stories offered. The audience is wide and heterogeneous, theoretically defined by inclusion of all, but it presupposes an audience of young and older people skilled in visual literacy, i.e. capable of understanding the artistic and aesthetic contributions to the site; it is doubly addressed to pupils & teachers for it also includes as audience educators who are addressed directly in the section of 'tasks'; the audience must be autonomous for the website is centered on the readers' autonomy to choose from stories, choose language options and select what to view; its intended universalism in the European space, however, is in part contradicted by the site's multilinguism which excludes children who do not know one of these languages: Finnish, Swedish, English, Gaelic, French, Breton, Icelandic and Italian. And also by the fact it expects from users the capacity to make meaningful connections between dispersed traditions in different locations, i.e. to move artistic and narrative information through space and time to get at the 'Europeanness' of the project. Cultural hybridity and a transcultural formation are encouraged.

The **Children's Polar Library** refers to Nordic " children and young

people" of the Barents region who cooperate, communicate (in the Nordic languages or English) and meet "professional authors and artists". It further stresses the communication powers through IT for children in those scarcely populated areas to contact with the rest of the world, but again languages for interaction demonstrate that though using a global medium, the site does not really intend a global scope. In fact, this website never loses sight of the local conditions and cultures while operating in the global medium. The main focus is that of the closeness of a familiar world while the global world remains a presence in the distance.

It is interesting for the debate on intercultural education that both sites should explore the tensions between the local and the global and locate cultural activity within CLEARLY DEFINED geographical BOUNDARIES: the Nordic countries and Europe, and do so through a global medium such as the Internet, which supposedly has no frontiers. Among the complexities of the global cultural economy, whereby books written in Portuguese may be printed in Malaysia, and internet contents on Europe fed from any place in the globe, it is remarkable that these sites should concentrate on the geographical locations of the cultural practice of storytelling as a key to define what they are and what they do (see a discussion by Appadurai 1997: 28). The communities of readers imagined by the creators of these websites and their imaginary of the Internet in a time of globalization of culture, mass migration, and diasporas as a medium with precise geographical boundaries and clearly defined young readers, though here and there attempting to include the global is if not surprising then an aspect that requires analysis in terms of the glocalisation of culture, i.e. interactions between the local and the global - the universalisation of the particular and the particularisation of the universal and also the interpenetration of the particular and the universal (Venter 3).

Both sites work from hermetically sealed cultural entities, whose borders are clearly defined (myths and legends from specific regions in Europe or excerpts from Nordic books or books that can be found in translation in Nordic countries) while resorting to a medium that is by definition interactive with the wide world and meant to arise global

awareness, explore cultural differences, engage with difference.

However, one might argue that it is not what the media offer per se that is important, but how they are used: "The fact of the matter is that the mass media plays a decisive role in the lives of young people, and the issue is not whether such media perpetuate dominant power relations but how youth and others experience the culture of the media differently" (Tomlinson 40 quoted in Giroux 4).

Though the uses by young people may be absolutely crucial to give the whole picture, nonetheless there are limits according to which that reception is played and when used in an educational context the uses by youths are further limited. It is the broader political and educational project that I am aiming to focus on, that involves how power works, how identities are conceived of and how economic and technological changed conditions are being used to address youth.

### **Mediascapes of text, image and sound**

"The proliferation of bit-generated spaces and places opens new sites for cultural contestation and economic exploitation, which are transforming radically the everyday politics of human agency and social structure." (Luke 1999, 27)

there has been a proliferation of non-commercial uses and users. Civil society, whether it be individuals or NGOs, is a very energetic presence in cyberspace. From struggles to support human rights to genuinely trivial pursuits, the Net has emerged as a powerful medium for non-elites to communicate, support each other's struggles and create the equivalent of insider groups at scales going from the local to the global (Sassen 1999, 53)

Similar contents to that of the **Children's Polar Library** can be found on many websites: there are excerpts of texts (in several languages, original and in translation), there is writing by young people and there are

reviews of books. The website is to be used together with books and other activities that are being promoted and advertised on the website. There is sometimes the possibility of "spin-offs" or advertisements for commodities or services, but not in this case.

When looked at closely we discover new complexities: books on the Internet cross media borders not just because of being included in an on-line collection and inhabiting different media simultaneously, but also because it represents thematically the moving boundaries of "what used to be clear cut divisions between the real and the symbolic, the material and the virtual" (Luke 1997), the children's book and the story for children on the Internet. In today's mediascapes of interactive media and book industries interpenetrate and have produced a trans-media intertextuality that raises critical awareness to the pervasiveness of media in contemporary societies and in young people's lives.

Besides, sites that involve books and stories for children, as both sites under analysis, show the tendency to create a readership of older, even adult, readers simultaneously with the young, besides requiring from young readers that they be skilled in multimedia literacies, i.e. able to extend linguistic methods to other forms of communication (Buckingham 2003: 35) and to understand different modalities of literacy.

Young people nowadays consume texts in multiple formats (see the example of *Harry Potter* or *The Lord of the Rings*, with books, cds, films, websites, animation cartoons, video games, merchandise), they are becoming highly competent in visual and electronic media despite what is being taught at school. Though schools may continue attached to paper and books, pupils are living (at least in the Western world) in a highly complex transmedia reality.

In the area of transmedia reality on the Internet, **Europe of Tales** stands on its own as an electronic significant informal site of learning with stories, animation information on places, words or concepts through photo galleries and dictionaries, navigation maps and a section of 'tasks', of pedagogical suggestions for educators to use with children.

The interaction with stories in front of a computer is necessarily

different from holding a book. The archetypes and narrative structures are still in place, but there are other changes. As noted by several studies, the hypertext (a text in which different segments of text are linked - hyperlinks) enables the reader to jump from one segment to another segment of the story and determines a non-linear sequence that is partially determined by the reader. The site becomes a body of information and not a collection of stories in the traditional sense, i.e. with a beginning, a middle and end, or a plot determined by the author. The stories are organized by screens (on which the visual information is very rich; the printed text is shortened and animated in cartoon form and descriptions are supplemented by images), which confirms a critique by Henry Giroux (in *Animating Youth*) that the Internet and the new media "prioritize the pleasures of the image over the intellectual demands of critical inquirement".

Manipulation in this website is also important, because the reader can choose the language, the story, the sequence, etc. Carmen Luke (1977) in fact explains in *Technological Literacy*, that "we don't read electronic texts on screen in the exclusively bookish direction from left to right but we scroll text vertically with increasing speed and visual acuity in order to identify the gist of a message and locate keywords on which to click". That is quite true in the case of **Europe of Tales**, because the underlined words of the printed text invite readers to explore other links (such as those of the photo gallery or the dictionary). Since there are animation, icons, print text, three dimensional graphics, the reader does a multimodal reading of resources rather than linear or unimodal reading. S/he has to make meaning from the multiple signifying practices: linguistic, audio and visual and understand several genre conventions and how they are being blended, i.e. The young reader is expected to possess an intertextual understanding across media and across disciplines (for the artistic conventions at play are extremely complex) and he/she are expected to use it practically, while 'exploring' rather than 'reading' the stories.

At the level of narrative structure, each story keeps that which we are familiar with in printed texts with the exception that the narrator

has acquired a specific visual form. His function in the story is the conventional one. There is a rhythm of beginning, middle and end of the plot as if we were invited to share an old structure of storytelling through a new electronic and predominantly visual context. Despite all the talk about the end of print and a new electronic age, both sites provide evidence not of the opposition between print and electronic media but of the uses of stories and fiction by both in an interrelated way.

However, what is more important is the way young people are invited to read through 'decentered cultural landscapes, no longer caught in the grip of a technology of print, closed narrative structures' (Giroux 13). There are no narrative requirements, there are no character complexities; there is only design complexity and story is giving way to a sensory environment.

### Culture and Education

"The linkages between culture and identity have become more problematic as the sources of cultural production and dissemination increase, and the possibilities of inhabiting a shared cultural world in which cultural meanings function in a common sense taken for granted manner recedes." (Featherstone and Lash 1999, 1)

Are then, perhaps, the concepts of interculturality and multiculturalism more able to provide an appropriate concept of today's culture? They apparently try to overcome some flaws of the traditional concept (of culture restricted and close to their environment) of today's cultures? They apparently try to overcome some of the flaws of the traditional concept by advocating a mutual understanding of different cultures. Yet they are (...) almost as inappropriate as the traditional concept itself, because they still conceptually presuppose it. (Welsch 1999, 196)

Cultures *de facto* no longer have the insinuated form of homogeneity

and separateness. They have instead assumed a new form, which is to be called *transcultural* in so far as it *passes through* classical cultural boundaries. Cultural conditions today are largely characterised by mixes and permeations. The concept of transculturality (...) seeks to articulate this altered cultural constitution. (Welsch, *ibid* 197)

The intercultural aims of both projects highlight mythic, ethnic-related or regional cultures of the past and the present as important knowledge for future generations. The international and intercultural cooperation of researchers and pedagogues in the case of the **Europe of Tales**, and of young people also, in **The Children's Polar Library** are stated. Both sites want to make available multiple 'realities' through stories.

A further analysis of the sites reveals that the theoretical energies of these sites are largely focused on intercultural issues, such as myth and folklore as a basis of national and cultural identity, storytelling as cultural knowledge that may either be imparted or shared, while simultaneously linking the local with the global, and young people with professional artists, authors and pedagogues, as well as the old media with the new.

So how do these websites facilitate communication among pupils from different countries and help to overcome ethnic and cultural prejudices, including racism and xenophobia, the mistrust of other cultures or the exotic look on 'the other'? Is it enough to put resources that originated in diverse cultures together to generate a multicultural site and promote (intercultural) education?

In pedagogical terms, the difficulties the Internet presents in the field of intercultural education include how to manage cultural difference, i.e. how to understand and integrate the dynamics of difference; but also

understanding whether it enhances cultural awareness just because of the diversity and multiculturalism available; and foremost - when we talk about young people - its safety and security in terms of content and personal interaction, as well as potential for re-presenting the world as it has become: 'vastly globalized, high tech, racially (and ethnically) more diverse than at any other time in history' (Giroux).

**The Polar Library** explicitly claims to be promoting the social integration for pupils from disadvantaged areas by linking them to others through the global electronic medium. However, though the emergence of different and effective modes of electronic communication is rapidly expanding our possibilities for dialogue, collaboration and learning, offering the chance to break down barriers of time, space and circumstance, we have to admit from the analysis of these websites that we are living a transitory period to a new more interactive and innovative theory of teaching & learning both for teachers and students. We are not there yet, we are at a stage of integrating the old with the new media, book people are becoming multimedia people, literacy is giving place to multiliteracy, teaching is becoming more bottom-up client-led (in this case young people), while remaining structurally and emotionally attached to past forms and pedagogy that place at their heart the need to impart 'valuable knowledge' (a highly contested concept), be it that of myths cultures used to live by or the own experiences, wishes and desires of young people.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, this has been an analysis of how pedagogy works non-formally to produce, circulate and legitimise particular forms of knowledge and desires for young people in the public sphere in what concerns their identity projects and their Europeanness or European citizenship. Sounds, image, print and electronic culture produce accepted and traditional meanings and invite schools to count them as knowledge.

Both websites are part of the cultural debate that mobilises adult

fears and anxieties about new modes of contemporary living and storytelling and channels them to children's texts, children's education and children's use of new electronic and digital media. They are also part of how we construct young people nowadays and they offer important points of reflection for educators, one of which is that intercultural education has to be also about linking the old with the new media and understanding how to make the best use of the new narrative spaces that are being screened through the Internet. But they are also about understanding European culture and its transnational and transcultural (in the sense proposed by Welsch , 1999) character, the interconnectedness and intermingling of cultures today. Globalization tendencies mingle with localisation, specificity and particularity. This, as we have shown, is a decentering practice that may help educators and young people negotiate their identities, but it does so with little self-reflection on the representations used or the power structures involved

- » Exploring the educational potential of the net to the transnational formation of a european identity at a time when most social and political and all economic issues transcend the bounds of nation states seems appropriate and significant, also as a means for resisting the homogenising influences of the global world.
- » Intersection of the digital and the non-digital
- » Need to understand the development of globalization and technological culture.

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