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When Princess Europa was kidnapped by Zeus in bull's disguise, her father, Agenor, King of Tyre, sent his sons in search of his lost daughter. One of them, Cadmon, sailed to Rhodes, landed in Thrace, and set out to explore the lands destined to assume later the name of his hapless sister. In Delphi he asked the Oracle about his sister's whereabouts. On that specific point Pythia, true to her habit, was evasive – but she obliged Cadmon with practical advice: 'You won't find her. Better get yourself a cow, follow it and push it forward, don't allow it to rest; at the spot where it falls from exhaustion, build a town.' This is, so the story goes, how Thebes was founded (and so – let us, wise after the fact, observe – a chain of events was started that served Euripides and Sophocles as the yarn out of which they wove the European idea of law, enabling Oedipus to practise what was to become the common frame for the character, torments and life dramas of the Europeans). 'To seek Europe', comments Denis de Rougemont on Cadmon's lesson, 'is to make it!' 'Europe exists through its search for the infinite – and this is what I call *adventure*.'[1]

Adventure? According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in Middle English that word meant anything that happened without design – a chance, hap, luck. It also

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meant a happening pregnant with danger or a threat of loss: risk, jeopardy; a hazardous enterprise or hapless performance. Later, closer to our own modern times, 'adventure' came to mean putting one's chances to the test: a venture, or experiment – a novel or exciting endeavour as yet untried. At the same time, a derivative was born: the *adventurer* – a highly ambivalent noun, whispering in one breath of blind fate and cunning, of craftiness and prudence, of aimlessness and determination. We may surmise that the shifts of meaning followed the maturation of the European spirit: its coming to terms with its own 'essence'.

The saga of Cadmon's travels, let us note, was not the only ancient story that sent such a message; far from it. In another tale, Phoenicians set sail to find the mythical continent and took possession of a geographic reality that was to become Europe. According to yet another story, after the deluge, when he divided the world between his three sons, Noah sent Japheth ('beauty' in Hebrew, by the way) to Europe, to follow there God's promise/command to be 'fruitful, and multiply: to bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein' (Genesis 9: 7). He equipped him with arms and emboldened him with a promise of infinite expansion: 'God shall enlarge Japheth' (Genesis 9: 27), 'dilatatio' according to the Vulgate and Fathers of the Church. The commentators of the biblical message point out that when instructing his sons Noah must have counted solely on Japheth's prowess and industry, since he equipped him with no other tool of success.

There is a common thread running through all the stories: Europe is not something you discover; Europe is a mission – something to be made, created, built. And it takes a lot of ingenuity, sense of purpose and hard labour to accomplish that mission. Perhaps a labour that never ends, a challenge always still to be met in full, a prospect forever outstanding.

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Tales differed, but in all such tales Europe was invariably a site of adventure. Adventures like the interminable travels undertaken to discover it, invent it or conjure it up; travels like those which filled the life of Odysseus, who was reluctant to return to the dull safety of his native Ithaca since he was drawn by the excitement of untasted hazards more than by the comforts of familiar routine, and who was acclaimed (perhaps for that reason) as the precursor, or the forefather, or the prototype, of the European. Europeans were the adventurers among the lovers of peace and quiet: compulsive and indefatigable wanderers among the shy and sedentary, ramblers and roamers among those who would rather live their lives in a world ending at the outermost village fence.

There is an old debate, as yet unresolved: was H. G. Wells, inquisitive and insightful observer as he was, right when he averred that 'in the country of the blind the one-eyed man is king'? Or is it rather the case that in a country of the blind a one-eyed man can only be a monster, a sinister creature feared by all 'normal' countrymen?

In all probability, the debate will stay unresolved, since the arguments on both sides are weighty and each is in its own way persuasive. It needs to be pointed out, however, that both antagonists in the debate assume an 'either-or' where there is none. One possibility lost in their verbal duel is an 'and-and' situation: the one-eyed man being a king *as well as* an ogre (not a rare occurrence in past and present history, to be sure). Loved *and* hated. Desired *and* resented. Respected *and* reviled. An idol to be revered *and* a fiend to be fought to the last ditch – on some occasions simultaneously, at other times in quick succession. There are situations in which the self-confident one-eyed king may ignore or dismiss, unperturbed, the few monster-baiting and busy detractors and prophets of doom crying from wilderness. There are other times, however, when the

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one-eyed monster would gladly abdicate his royal preten-
sions together with royal perks and duties, run for shelter
and shut the door behind him. But it may not be in the
one-eyed man's power, and surely not in his power only, to
choose between royalty and monstrosity – as the European
adventurer has learned, and is still learning to his baffle-
ment or despair, from his own stormy adventures.

More than two millennia have passed since Europe's
tales of origin, the Europe-originating tales, were com-
posed. The journey that started and went on as an adven-
ture has left a thick and heavy deposit of pride and shame,
achievement and guilt; and it has lasted long enough for
the dreams and ambitions to gel into stereotypes, for the
stereotypes to freeze into 'essences', and for the essences to
ossify into 'facts of the matter' as hard as all facts of all
matters are assumed to be. Like all facts of the matter,
Europe is expected, in defiance of everything that made it
what it has become, to be a reality that could (should?) be
located, taken stock of and filed. In an age of territoriality
and territorial sovereignty, all realities are presumed to be
spatially defined and territorially fixed – and Europe is no
exception. Neither is the 'European character', nor the
'Europeans' themselves.

Alexander Wat, a notable avant-garde Polish poet who
was shuffled between the revolutionary barricades and the
gulags that spattered the continent of Europe in his life-
time and had ample opportunity to taste in full the sweet
dreams and the bitter awakenings of the past century –
notorious for its abundance of hopes and wretchedness of
frustrations – scanned the treasure boxes and rubbish bins
of his memory to crack the mystery of the 'European
character'. What would a 'typical European' be like? And
he answered: 'Delicate, sensitive, educated, one who won't
break his word, won't steal the last piece of bread from the
hungry and won't report on his inmates to the prison

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guard . . . ' And then added, on reflection, 'I met one such
man. He was an Armenian.'

You can quarrel with Wat's definition of 'the European'
(after all, it is in the character of Europeans to be unsure of
their true character, to disagree and endlessly quarrel
about it), but you would hardly dispute, I suppose and
hope, the two propositions implied by Wat's moral tale.
First, the 'essence of Europe' tends to run ahead of
the 'really existing Europe': it is the essence of 'being a
European' to have an essence that always stays ahead of
reality, and it is the essence of European realities to always
lag behind the essence of Europe. Second, while the 'really
existing Europe', that Europe of politicians, cartographers
and all its appointed or self-appointed spokespeople, may
be a geographical notion and a spatially confined entity,
the 'essence' of Europe is neither the first nor the second.
You are not necessarily a European just because you
happen to be born or to live in a city marked on the
political map of Europe. But you may be European even
if you've never been to any of those cities.

Jorge Luis Borges, one of the most eminent among the
great Europeans in any except the geographical sense,
wrote of the 'perplexity' that cannot but arise whenever
the 'absurd accidentality' of an identity tied down to a
particular space and time is pondered, and so its closeness
to a fiction rather than to anything we think of as 'reality' is
inevitably revealed.[2] This may well be a universal feature
of all identities traced down to the fact of heredity and
belonging, but in the case of 'European identity' that
feature, that 'absurd accidentality', is perhaps more bla-
tant and perplexing than in most. Summing up the pre-
sent-day confusion that haunts all attempts to pin down
European identity, Alex Warleigh observed recently that
the Europeans (in the sense of 'EU member-state nation-
als') 'tend to emphasize their diversity rather than what

they have in common', whereas 'when talking of a ''European'' identity it is no longer possible to restrain its scope to EU member states in any analytically sound way.'[3] And as Norman Davies, a formidable historian, insists, it has been difficult at all times to decide where Europe begins and where it ends – geographically, culturally or ethnically. Nothing has changed in this respect now. The sole novelty is the fast rising number of standing and ad hoc committees, academic congresses and other public gatherings dedicated exclusively or almost to the squaring of this particular circle.

Whenever we hear the word 'Europe' spoken, it is not immediately clear to us whether it refers to the confined territorial reality, tied to the ground, within the borders fixed and meticulously drawn by as yet unrevoked political treaties and legal documents, or to the free-floating essence that knows no bounds and defies all spatial bonds and limits. And it is this difficulty, nay impossibility of speaking of Europe while separating clearly and neatly the issue of the essence and the facts of reality that sets the talk of Europe apart from most ordinary talk about entities with geographic references.

The vexing ethereality and stubborn extraterritoriality of the 'essence' saps and erodes the solid territoriality of European realities. Geographical Europe never had fixed borders, and is unlikely ever to acquire them as long as the 'essence' goes on being, as it has been thus far 'free-floating' and only loosely, if at all, tied to any particular plot in space. And whenever the states of Europe try to put their common 'continental' borders in place and hire heavily armed border guards and immigration and customs officers to keep them there, they can never manage to seal them, make them tight and impermeable. Any line circumscribing Europe will remain a challenge for the rest of the planet and a standing invitation to transgression.

Europe as an ideal (let us call it 'Europeanism') defies monopolistic ownership. It cannot be denied to the 'other', since it incorporates the phenomenon of 'otherness': in the practice of Europeanism, the perpetual effort to separate, expel and externalize is constantly thwarted by the drawing in, admission, accommodation and assimilation of the 'external'. Hans-Georg Gadamer considered it the 'particular advantage' of Europe: its ability 'to live with the others, to live as the other of the other', the capacity and necessity of 'learning to live with others even if the others were not like that'. 'We are all others, and we are all ourselves.' The European life is conducted in the constant presence and in the company of the others and the different, and the European way of life is a continuous negotiation that goes on despite the otherness and the difference dividing those engaged in, and by, the negotiation.[4]

It is perhaps because of such internalization of difference that marks Europe's condition that (as Krzysztof Pomian memorably put it) Europe came to be the birthplace of a *transgressive* civilization – a civilization of transgression (and vice versa!)[5] We may say that if it is measured by its horizons and ambitions (though not always by its deeds), this civilization, or this culture, was and remains a mode of life that is *allergic to borders* – indeed to all *fixity* and *finitude*. It suffers limits badly; it is as if it drew borders solely to target its intractable urge to trespass. It is an intrinsically expansive culture – a feature closely intertwined with the fact that Europe was a site of the sole social entity that in addition to *being* a civilization also *called itself* 'civilization' and looked at itself as civilization, that is as a product of choice, design and management – thereby recasting the totality of things, including itself, as an in-principle-unfinished object, an object of scrutiny, critique, and possibly remedial action. In its European rendition, 'civilization' (or 'culture', a concept

difficult to separate from that of 'civilization' despite the philosophers' subtle arguments and the less subtle efforts of nationalist politicians) is a continuous process – forever imperfect yet obstinately struggling for perfection – of *remaking the world*. Even when the process is performed in the name of conservation, the hopeless inability of things to stay as they are, and their habit of successfully defying all undue tinkering unless they are duly tinkered with, is the common assumption of all conservation. It is viewed, including the conservatives, as a *job to be done*, and indeed that assumption is the prime reason to view that job as a job that needs doing.

Paraphrasing Hector Hugh Munro's (Saki's) witticism, we could say that the people of Europe made more history than they could consume locally. As far as history was concerned, Europe was definitely an exporting country, with (until quite recently) a consistently positive foreign trade balance . . .

To say that each human group has 'a culture' is banal, but it would not be banal to say it if it were not for Europe's discovery of culture as an activity performed by humans on the human world. It was that discovery which (to deploy Martin Heidegger's memorable terms) pulled the totality of the human world out of the dark expanses of *zuhanden* (that is 'given to hand' and given to hand matter-of-factly, routinely, and therefore 'unproblematically'), and transplanted it on to the brightly lit stage of *vorhanden* (that is, the realm of things that, in order to fit the hand, need to be watched, handled, tackled, kneaded, moulded, made different than they are). Unlike the universe of *zuhanden*, the world as *vorhanden* forbids standing still; it is a standing invitation, even a command, to act.

Once that discovery of the world-as-culture was made, it did not take long for it to become common knowledge. It

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was, we may say, a kind of knowledge singularly unfit for private ownership, let alone a monopoly, however hard the advocates and guardians of 'intellectual property rights' might try. The idea of culture stood after all for the discovery that *all things human are human-made* and that they would not be human things otherwise. This shared knowledge notwithstanding, the relations between European culture, the sole culture of self-discovery, and all the other cultures of the planet have been anything but symmetrical.

As Denis de Rougemont crisply put it,[6] Europe discovered all the lands of the earth, but no one ever discovered Europe. It dominated every continent in succession, but was never dominated by any. And it invented a civilization which the rest of the world tried to imitate or was forcefully compelled to replicate, but a reverse process never (thus far, at any rate) happened. These are all 'hard facts' of a history that has brought us, and the rest of the planet with us, to the place we all now share. One can define Europe, de Rougemont suggests, by its 'globalizing function'. Europe might have been, consistently and for a long time, an uncharacteristically adventurous corner of the globe – but the adventures on which it embarked in more than two millennia of its history 'proved to be decisive for the whole of humanity'. Indeed, just try to imagine the world with Europe absent from its history.

Goethe described the European culture as *Promethean*. Prometheus stole the fire of the gods and so betrayed the gods' secret to humans. Once wrenched from the hands of gods, fire was to be avidly sought by all and any human household and triumphantly kindled and kept aflame by those whose search was successful. Would it, however, have happened if not for Prometheus' cunning, arrogance and daring?

These crucial facts of history tend to be shamefacedly concealed nowadays, and recalling them is often attacked point blank in the name of the current version of 'political correctness'. What motivates the attackers?

Sometimes, undoubtedly, it is a sense of uneasiness caused by the facility with which any talk of Europe's unique qualities and historical role can be charged with the sin of 'Europocentrism'. This is a serious charge indeed, but it ought to be directed against the past European tendency to soliloquy when dialogue was in order; its preference for the teacher's authority and resentment of the learner's role; the notorious misuses of European military and economic superiority that marked its conspicuous, centuries-long presence in the world's history; against the high-handed treatment Europe accorded other forms of human life and its obliviousness to the wishes and voices of those who practised them; or against the atrocities committed under the cover of the civilizing mission – but not to a sober assessment of Europe's function as a yeast and moving spirit in the long, tortuous and still far from finished unification of planet-wide humanity.

There are reasons to suspect that on some other occasions the motive behind the denial of Europe's uniqueness is somewhat less noble – prompted by urges other than belated yet salutary modesty or repentance of guilt. One may surmise rather a conscious or more likely a *sub*conscious urge to wash our European hands of some unprepossessing consequences of Europe's endowment – of such qualities as were bound to make Europe into a factor in a 'planetary ferment' and an intrinsically expansive and expansible form of life (see for instance a recent intervention by Gøran Therborn[7]); a rather unflattering desire to avoid the onerous engagement with its duty towards the rest of humanity – a still outstanding duty, and a moral imperative more acute and compelling than ever in the past?

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The shame of the adventurous past, or the ignominy of the explicit or implicit desire to draw a line under European adventure?

It was not just culture that happened to be Europe's discovery/invention. Europe also invented the need and the task of *culturing culture*.

Culture, let me repeat, is an incessant activity of drawing the world, fragment by fragment, out of the serene yet somnolent inertia of *zuhanden* and transplanting it into a uniquely human realm of *vorhanden* – making of the world an object of critical inquiry and creative action. This feat is accomplished ever anew, daily, everywhere where humans live; the perpetual rebirth and reincarnation of the world is what all and any human mode of being-in-the-world consists in.

Europe, though, went a step further than was common for the rest of humanity to go – and made that step before anyone else; though when taking that step it paved the way for all the others to follow. It committed the same *zuhanden–vorhanden* transfer on two tiers: it made culture itself the object of culture . . . First it was the 'world out there' which was transferred from the penumbra of *zuhanden* into the searchlight and spotlights of *vorhanden* – but thereafter the act of transfer itself was subjected to the same operation (as Hegel would say, that primary transfer was lifted from the modality of *an sich* to that of *für sich*). It was the human mode of being-in-the-world itself that was recast as a *vorhanden* object, as a problem to be tackled. Culture – the very process of the production of the human world – was made into an object of human theoretical and practical critique and of subsequent *cultivation*.

Europe was the first to proclaim that the 'world is made by culture' – but by the same token it was also the first to discover/decide that since culture is done by humans,

doing culture is – may be, ought to be – a human *job/destiny/vocation/task*. It was in Europe that humans first set themselves at a distance from their own mode of being-in-the-world and thereby gained autonomy from their own form of humanity. As Eduardo Lourenço, the Portuguese writer and resident, in succession, of Germany, Brazil and France, observed, European culture is perhaps for that reason a 'culture of uncertainty' – a 'culture of restlessness, of anguish and doubt',[8] a culture of radical defiance against all and any figures of certainty; and it could hardly be otherwise, since we *know* that culture is a kind of intellectual and spiritual practice that has *no foundation* except, as pointed out long ago by Plato, the dialogue that thought conducts with itself. But the outcome is that we, the Europeans, are perhaps the sole people who (as historical subjects and actors of culture) have *no identity* – fixed identity, or an identity deemed and believed to be fixed: 'we do not know who we are', and even less do we know what we can yet become and what we can yet learn that we are. The urge to *know* and/or to *become* what we are never subsides, and neither is the suspicion ever dispelled about what we may yet become following that urge. Europe's culture is one that knows no rest; it is a culture that feeds on questioning the order of things – and on questioning the fashion of questioning it.

   Another kind of culture, a silent culture, a culture unaware of being a culture, a culture that keeps the knowledge of being a culture a secret, a culture working anonymously or under an assumed name, a culture stoutly denying its human origins and hiding behind the majestic edifice of a divine decree and heavenly tribunal, or signing an unconditional surrender to intractable and inscrutable laws of history – such a culture might be a handmaiden, a fuel station and a repair workshop servicing the current web of human interaction called 'society'. European culture is, however,

anything but silent and self-denying – and for that reason it cannot but be a thorn in society's flesh, a spur to society's body, a pang of society's conscience. Day and night, it calls society to account and most of the time it keeps society on the defendants' bench. It will not take the 'is' as the answer to the 'ought' – let alone a clinching answer.

Europe trained itself in that role of a bespoke tailor to the human universe – practising the task on itself. But once having called the bluff of irrevocable verdicts of gods or nature and so having rendered the silence and self-denial of culture – any culture – no longer plausible, it also laid bare and made vulnerable every other part of the human universe, every other form of human togetherness and every other pattern of human interaction. As Paul Valéry observed at the start of the last century (at the time when Europe, at the zenith of its planetary rule, spotted or intuited the first contours of a downward slope on the other side of the mountain pass), the 'Europeanization' of the world reflected Europe's urge to *remake* the rest of the world, with no guilty conscience, according to European ends.

Remaking the world after the European pattern promised freedom of self-assertion to all, but at a price higher than most objects of the overhaul were willing to pay. From everyone they met on their worldwide travels, Europe's messengers demanded the ultimate sacrifice: surrender of the security that rested on monotonous self-reproduction. Brandishing Michel de Montaigne's injunction that 'we have no other criterion of truth or right-reason than the example and form of the opinions and customs of our own country',[9] Europe opened the way to tolerance of otherness, while declaring a war of attrition against every kind of other-ness or sameness that failed or refused to try to rise to the standards it set. For Europe, the rest of the planet was not a source of *threats*, but a treasure house of *challenges*.

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For many centuries, Europe was a keen exporter of its own surplus of history, inciting/forcing the rest of the planet to partake in its consumption. Those long centuries of one-sided, inequitable trade now rebound on Europe, facing it with the daunting task of consuming *locally* the surplus of *planetary* history.

From the start of the European adventure, but particularly during the most recent and vividly remembered, or at least most often recalled, centuries of its long history, the planet was, or at least seemed to be for Europe's restless, intrepid and adventurous spirits, Europe's playground. Those centuries were recorded in European history books as the 'age of geographic discoveries'. *European* discoveries, of course: by European envoys and emissaries, and for Europe's benefit.

Vast lands lay prostrated, waiting to be discovered. 'To discover' did not just mean to find and put on the sailors' maps. It meant to lay bare the treasures until then left idle, underused or misused, or put to all sorts of wrong, fanciful, unreasonable uses; treasures wasted on the natives ignorant of their value, lodes of riches clamouring to be mined – and then to harvest them and transfer them to other places where they could be turned to a better, sensible use. It also meant the opening up of immense yet deserted or sorely neglected spaces to human habitation and productive employment.

Europe needed/wanted both – the riches to replenish the depleted royal coffers, and the lands to accommodate men and women for whose physical survival or social ambitions there was not enough room at home. The earth was that vacuum which nature in its crowning, uppermost European incarnation abhorred and struggled to fill with bold, imaginative, businesslike, dogged and steadfast men who knew what was what and how to squeeze precious metals

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out of the base ore. And there were right people ready to fill the vacuum – huge, fast-growing masses of them.

Indeed, the more daring and exhilarating Europe's adventures grew at home, the more numerous were its collateral casualties. There were people who failed the ever more demanding tests of quality, adequacy and relevance, there were people declared ineligible for the test due to their inherent flaws, and people who refused to take the test because they did not care for the prizes promised to the successful, or feared to be disqualified whatever the results. Fortunately for the 'rejects' and those worrying how to dispose of them, there was an empty planet, or a planet that could be *made* empty, or could be viewed, treated and used *as if* it were empty. A planet with enough empty spaces on which Europe's problems (and most importantly, the 'problem people') could be dumped.

Now, at the end of the long day, it may well appear that the continuous need to dump them was one of the prime, perhaps even the principal moving force of Europe's planet-wide expansion – Europe's 'globalizing mission'.

For centuries, Europe felt itself to be the king of the planet and acted as such. Amidst the splendours of the royal court, the discomfort of being denounced as a monster and held up to reprobation could be played down as a minor and transient irritant and blamed on the obtuseness of the about-to-be beneficiaries of royal graces: their inability to appreciate the benefits which European rule was bound to lavish on the ruled in the fullness of time. Europe offered the superior way of life – better equipped, safer, richer, less hazardous and more dignified. It offered a vision of legal order that by comparison rendered all other (dis)orders akin to a jungle. European conquest was an ennobling act, elevating the conquered to the heights of true knowledge and higher morality. Or so, at least, Europe believed.

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Except for a few niches difficult to penetrate, the whole of the planet has been remade after the European pattern; it either willingly accepted or reluctantly surrendered to the transgressive mode of existence which Europe embraced first and then spread to the furthest reaches of the globe. Towards the end of the twentieth century, Europe's mission had been accomplished – though not necessarily in the form and with the results that were dreamed of by the prophets and advocates of the 'civilized', human-friendly, peaceful, homely and hospitable world of Immanuel Kant's *allgemeine Vereinigung der Menschheit*, or the French *philosophes'* bright world of *Lumières*, of justice and equity, rule of law, reason and human solidarity. More than anything else, 'the really fulfilled mission' proved to be the global spread of a compulsive, obsessive and addictive urge for ordering and reordering (codename: modernization), and an irresistible pressure to downgrade and demote the past and current modes of living and of gaining a living by stripping them of their survival value and life-enhancing capacity (codename: economic progress): the two *spécialités de la maison européenne* responsible for the most prolific supply of 'human waste'.

Today the choice between the role of royalty and the plight of the monster seems to have fallen (or has it been torn?) out of the hands of the adventurer named Europe, and none of the stratagems it tested in its long career seems to be fit to get it back. On his visit to Poznań in 1997 Wolf Lepenies recited a lengthy list of reasons for Europe, that 'old continent in a young world' (as Goethe predicted it would inevitably become at the far end of its exciting and useful, yet timebound adventure), still so self-assured a short while ago, now to feel abashed, confused and ever more apprehensive.[10] Europe is getting grey-haired in a world that gets younger by the year: the demographers tell us that in the current decade the number of

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Europeans under twenty years of age will fall by 11 per cent, while the number of those over sixty will grow by half. There will be, it seems, a smaller loaf to divide among a larger number of eaters.

The overall trend leaves little to the imagination: Germany, Great Britain and France, not so long ago the economic giants among dwarfs, are about to descend to respectively the tenth, nineteenth and twentieth places in the world ranking. They may well become NDCs (new *declining* countries) mark two, casualties of the exuberant growth and unstoppable rise of the NDCs mark one (new *developing* countries), and pushed by them, with ever more vigour, further down the ladder and further back to the tail of the pecking order. According to the prognosis of the International Monetary Fund, by 2010 three European countries among the richest Group of seven (Italy, Great Britain and France) will need to be replaced by other, younger economic powers if the changes in economic strength are to be reflected in the allotment of political honours.

And 'as the productive superiority of Europe deteriorates', concludes Lepenies, 'European ideas pale among other leading intellectual systems.' Little consolation can be found in the thought that the wondrous and spectacular transformation of the addressees and passive objects of the 'European mission' – until recently viewed as little more than supernumeraries in the play scripted and produced by Europe on the planetary stage – into brave, hard working and above all surprisingly talented and creative actors of the first rank may be the outcome of Europe's mission accomplished. Even if that transformation was, at least in part, a feat done *by* Europe, it did not turn out in the end to be done *for* Europe, and its beneficiaries neither admit to nor are recognized as being *of* Europe.

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To its great distress and no less dismay, Europe discovers a possibility, indeed the likelihood, of 'modernization without Westernization' (read: without 'Europeanization'); a prospect of the self-appointed teachers being outrun and outperformed by their erstwhile pupils without their teachings having been gratefully acknowledged. In current literature, that mixture of perplexity and frustration has been dubbed the 'crisis of European identity'. 'We have lost', complains Lepenies, 'the will and the ability of long-distance orientation.' And 'having lost the capacity of long term thinking . . . European elites have ceased to offer an attractive example to follow.'

Another unanticipated, though retrospectively hardly unpredictable, consequence of the worldwide success of the European mission: the most recently 'Europeanized' parts of globe are confronted today with a phenomenon previously unknown to them – 'surplus population' and the problems of its disposal, and at a time when the planet is already full and no 'empty lands' are left to serve as waste-disposal sites. Neither neighbouring nor faraway lands are these days about to invite their surplus, nor will they be easily forced to accept it and accommodate it, as they themselves were in the past. The 'latecomers to (Europe-born) modernity' are left to stew in their own juice and to seek, desperately yet in vain, local solutions to globally caused problems.

Tribal wars and massacres, the proliferation of 'guerrilla armies' (often little more than bandit gangs in thin disguise) busy decimating each other's ranks yet in the process absorbing and annihilating the 'population surplus' (mostly prospectless youth, unemployable at home) are one of such 'local solutions to global problems' which the 'latecomers to modernity' tend to deploy. Hundreds of thousands of people are chased away from their homes,

murdered, or forced to run for their lives away from their ravaged and devastated countries. Perhaps the most thriving industry in the lands of the latecomers (deviously and deceitfully dubbed 'developing countries') is the mass production of refugees. It is the ever more prolific product of that industry which the British prime minister, antici-pating or echoing the sentiments prevailing in the rest of a startled and alarmed Europe, proposed recently to unload 'near their home countries', in permanently temporary camps (deviously and deceitfully dubbed 'safe havens'), in order to keep 'local problems' of local peoples local and so nip in the bud any attempts by latecomers to follow the example of the pioneers of modernity in seeking global (and the sole effective) solutions for locally manufactured problems.

However earnest, the efforts of European governments to stem and tightly control the tide of 'economic immigra-tion' are not and probably cannot be made a hundred per cent successful. Protracted misery makes millions desper-ate, and in an era of globalized crime one can hardly expect there to be a shortage of criminal services eager to make a few or a few billion bucks through capitalizing on that desperation. Hence the millions of migrants wandering the routes once trodden by the 'surplus population' dis-charged by the European greenhouses of modernity – only in the reverse direction, and (at any rate thus far) un-assisted by the armies of *conquistadores*, tradesmen and missionaries. The full dimensions of that consequence and its many repercussions are yet to unravel, to be absorbed, noticed and assessed.

For the time being, Europe and its overseas offspring/ outposts (like the United States or Australia) seem to look for an answer to their unfamiliar problems in similarly unfamiliar policies hardly ever practised in European history; policies inward- rather than outward-looking,

centripetal rather than centrifugal, implosive rather than explosive – like retrenchment, falling back upon themselves, building fences equipped with a network of X-ray machines and closed circuit television cameras, putting more officials inside immigration booths and more border guards outside, tightening the nets of immigration and naturalization law, keeping refugees in closely guarded and isolated camps and stopping the others before they have a chance to claim refugee or asylum-seeker status – in short, sealing their own domains against the crowds knocking at the doors while doing pretty little, if anything at all, to relieve such pressure by removing its causes.

Naomi Klein noted an ever stronger and more widespread tendency (pioneered by the European Union but quickly followed by the US) towards a 'multi-tiered regional stronghold'.

> A fortress continent is a bloc of nations that joins forces to extract favourable trade terms from other countries, while patrolling their shared external borders to keep people from those countries out. But if a continent is serious about being a fortress, it also has to invite one or two poor countries within its walls, because somebody has to do the dirty work and heavy lifting.[11]

NAFTA, the US internal market extended to incorporate Canada and Mexico ('after oil,' Naomi Klein points out, 'immigrant labour is the fuel driving the southwest economy' of the US), was supplemented in July 2001 by 'Plan Sur', according to which the Mexican government took responsibility for the massive policing of its southern boundary to effectively stop the tide of impoverished human waste flowing to the US from Latin American countries. Since then, hundreds of thousands of migrants

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have been stopped, incarcerated and deported by Mexican police before reaching the US border. As for Fortress Europe, Naomi Klein suggests, 'Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and the Czech Republic are the postmodern serfs, providing low-wage labour for the factories where clothes, electronics and cars are produced for 20–25 per cent of the cost of making them in Western Europe.' Inside fortress continents, 'a new social hierarchy' has been put in place in an attempt to strike a balance of sorts between blatantly contradictory, yet equally vital postulates: of airtight borders and of an easy access to cheap, undemanding, docile labour ready to accept and do whatever is on offer; or of free trade and of the need to pander to popular anti-immigrant sentiments – that straw clutched by governments in charge of the sinking sovereignty of nation-states. 'How do you stay open to business and closed to people?' asks Klein. And answers: 'Easy. First you expand the perimeter. Then you lock down.'

The funds which European Union transferred most willingly and with no haggling whatsoever to the East European and Central European countries applying for accession were those earmarked for the fortification of their eastern borders.

Somehow, the world 'out there' has stopped feeling to Europeans like a site of exciting adventure and invigorating challenge. No longer does the globe feel inviting and hospitable; neither does it look like an empty stage for countless heroic exploits and glorious unheard-of feats. It seems hostile and threatening now – bristling with all sorts of traps, ambushes and other unspeakable dangers for the unwary; full of lands seething with hatred, crowded with plotting and conspiring rogues – treacherous and villainous rascals, ready for any imaginable or unimaginable evildoing. 'We' won't go *there* (unless for a holiday – best of all to the beach hotels off-limits to all natives except

barmen, waiters and maids). As to 'them' – they should be stopped from coming *here*.

'Created to assure free circulation inside the European Union, the ''Schengen area'' has become a formidable tool for controlling and recording the movements of its citizens', Jelle van Buuren discovers.[12] Among more than a million persons registered in the Schengen computers by 2001, 90 per cent consisted of 'undesirables'. Since then, things have progressed fast, boosted by the new conditions of security alert and semi-martial law. It is now planned to register a host of personal data about every man or woman entering the Schengen realm with a visa (the US, as usual, were the first here, deciding to fingerprint and photograph all visa-holding foreigners); if no exit is recorded in the allowed timespan, the culprit will be declared 'illegal', liable to be arrested and banished from Europe indefinitely. In a radical shift of purpose, never publicly discussed, the Council of Europe published a document on 6 November 2001 which pronounced that the 'Schengen system' was to serve 'to improve the internal security' of Europe's residents through a strict control of all comers. Coupled with the new stringent restrictions imposed on applications for asylum, the immediate result was (in the words of Amnesty International) 'an insult to those who have fled persecution, torture and possible death'.[13]

As soon became clear, while outsiders (refugees, bread-and-water or asylum seekers) might be denied some of their human rights, the burden of the new security regime would not spare the citizens of the European Union and its constituent states. In the name of security threatened by the hostility of the planet, measures unheard of almost since the times of Habeas Corpus have been introduced in one country after another to allow 'preventive' incarceration at secret police discretion and without trial, routine violation of privacy, access of secret services to the most

intimate information related to any suspect – however tenuous or downright mistaken might be the reasons for suspicion.

It may (and should) be argued that on a planet viewed as hostile, insidious and guileful (barring a few enclaves currently seen as 'friendly'), defending democracy and personal freedom in one country taken on its own, or even in a federation of several countries enclosed behind the walls of a 'regional fortress', must be a daunting, perhaps impossible, task. *Defence of freedom has now become a global task* – and in its case, as in all other cases once dealt with locally but now entangled in anything but a local web of dependencies, solutions to globally gestated problems can only be global.

Time to return to our question: is the centuries-long European adventure running out of steam and grinding to a halt?

Wolf Lepenies seems to think so. At any rate, in the lecture already quoted he alerted his listeners to the fact that Europe has to a great extent lost its long-term orientation, complete with the will to resurrect and repossess it. He also warned that once deprived of the qualities that used to be its trademark, Europe ceased to be an attractive example for other inhabitants of the shared planet.

We may go a step further and note that the governments of Europe have lost vision, especially long-term vision, as distinct from the 'problem resolution' and 'crisis management' policies calculated for stretches of time that hardly ever reach beyond the next parliamentary election. Worse than that, Europe as a whole has lost its urge and will for adventure – for the excitement of risk-taking, for chasing new and unexplored horizons and blazing new and untried trails. This is, at least, the impression one gets when listening to the people whom the nations of Europe have

elected to speak and act in their name. Reading through the text of the Maastricht Treaty – the document sketching the future of Europe and the target towards which half a billion Europeans are called to work – one would hardly be overwhelmed by 'constitutional patriotism' of the kind in which Jürgen Habermas discerns an emergent, detoxified version of national and community sentiments; or by any other strong feeling, for that matter, except tedium and ennui. If the Maastricht Treaty, or the Accession Treaty that followed it, is the contemporary equivalent of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the American Declaration of Independence or the Communist Manifesto, then there seems little hope left for the next instalment of the European adventure. More specifically, for Europe retaining its fate/vocation of being the global yeast of shared global history . . .

Promoting the 'Western way of life' as the superior pattern for everyone else to follow is no longer, as Couze Venn aptly observed, 'legitimated in terms of the humanist grand narratives of the Enlightenment'.[14] Indeed, 'the forces of new disciplinary power' try to sell the new 'world order' over which they preside in the name of efficiency, flexibility and marketization – terms which, we may add, acquire sinister meanings of insecurity, loss of livelihood, precariousness of existence, denial of dignity and cancellation of life prospects once they are translated into the native vernaculars away from the metropolis. 'The end of the Cold War/Third World War', Venn suggests, 'has released capitalism from needing to respond to calls for responsibility . . . It has lost the ability to respond to suffering.'

What does the West, as represented in the eyes of the planet by its self-appointed American leaders, offer the suffering part of the globe? A few examples drawn from the policies conducted in postwar Iraq (under the

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code-name of 'reconstruction') and collated most recently
by Antonia Juhasz of the International Forum on Global-
ization[15] unravel the latent – yet palpably obvious to those
on the receiving end – meaning of the current worldwide
free-trade crusade. Let's leave aside – because they have
been widely publicized and dismissed as the (unavoidable
and arguably transient) side-effects of war – such direct
consequences of the Western military intervention as 50–
70 per cent unemployment, a sharp increase in maternal
mortality as well as in the incidence of water-borne and
vaccine-preventable diseases, and a doubling in the level of
acute malnutrition, and focus instead on the way in which
the postwar *reconstruction* of Iraq is intended to proceed
under the auspices of 'Western efficiency-boosting market-
ization'. The rebuilding of the water supply was commis-
sioned from the Bechtel Corporation, even though water
charges were tripled after a similar job done not long ago in
Cochabamba, Bolivia, and families earning 60 dollars a
month were treated to 20 dollar water bills once the local
water supplies had been 'modernized' (popular riots
followed, which forced the Bolivian government to cancel
the contract – to which Bechtel responded with a 25
million dollar lawsuit). Another company, MCI, which
was recently charged and found guilty of cheating when
trading under its former name WorldCom, has been paid
to construct the Iraqi wireless telephone network. Yet
another company was commissioned to build, at a cost of
15 million dollars, a cement factory which was eventually
constructed by an Iraqi businessman for 80,000 dollars.
But Order 39 issued by the coalition-appointed Iraq gov-
ernor Paul Bremer forbids the future native rulers of Iraq
to 'restrict access by foreign owners to any sector of the
economy', while it simultaneously authorizes foreign in-
vestors to 'transfer abroad without delay all funds associ-
ated with investment, including shares or profits and

dividends'. One could excuse the natives for translating 'triumph of freedom and democracy' as syndicated robbery of resources and the promotion of an organized as well as officially endorsed corruption.

Alongside the Americans and the Japanese, Europeans are today the most zealous and indefatigable travellers: the count of miles per person per annum of Europeans probably dwarfs the scores that the natives of other continents can boast. But Europe is inward-looking. For most European globe-trotters, the rest of the world is no longer a mission; it is now a tourist haunt. Provided, of course, the service is swift and the servants are smiling, the en-suite facilities and bar supplies are in working order, the catering is of good quality, armed guards and closed-circuit TV cameras stand sentry – and the price is right.

Tourists seldom engage in lengthy exchanges with the natives. If they quarrel, it is mostly a bout of haggling about the price of market goods. The tourist–native relations are strictly on a service-for-money basis. The tourists meet the natives as buyers and sellers – smiling, yes, but nothing personal, you know . . . Transaction accomplished, we go, each of us, our own way. Trade is what brings us together, for as long as it takes to swap commodities for money, and let's leave the rest where it belongs, and where it should stay: in silence. What you and I have to offer each other has its market price. Once the market has spoken, there is nothing more to be said – and who are you and who am I to dispute the verdicts of the market?

Not all Europeans (like the Americans) travel the world as tourists. Some come to the distant places to sell products. In the case of a few of them, those in the diplomatic service or on another official mission, the 'product' they 'sell' is their own country or continent, and what they are after is their right, and the right of those for whom they act

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as spokespersons, to go on viewing and treating the rest of the planet as a collection of tourist haunts and trading outposts. Naomi Klein describes the experience of one of such travelling salespeople, Charlotte Beers, the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (so not a first generation European, yet not that distant from European ways either), charged by the US administration with the task of 'overhauling the US image abroad':

> when Beers went on a mission to Egypt in January [2002] to improve the image of the US among Arab 'opinion makers', it didn't go well. Muhammad Abdel Hadi, an editor of the newspaper *Al Ahram*, left his meeting with Beers frustrated that she seems more interested in talking about vague American values than about specific US policies. 'No matter how hard you try to make them understand,' he said, 'they don't.'[16]

Klein refers to US unilateralism in the face of international laws, to its initiation or promotion of the widening wealth disparities, to the crackdown on immigrants, and to human rights violations – to conclude that 'America's problem is not with its brand . . . but with its product.' 'If they [the natives bearing the brunt of such policies] are angry, as millions clearly are, it's because they have seen the promises betrayed by US policy.' What 'they' see and take note of are not only the comfortable Nike sneakers and seductive Barbie dolls that it is hoped will play roving ambassadors for American (Western) values and the joys that freedom and democracy may bring you. 'They' know, from their own experience, that the 'travels of Nike sneakers' can be 'traced back to the abusive sweatshops of Vietnam, Barbie's little outfits to the child labour of Sumatra' – and that some multinationals, confident of the support and protection of the smart missiles ready to

promote American (and Western) values where they are not welcome, 'far from levelling the global field with jobs and technology for all, are in the process of mining the planet's poorest . . . for unimaginable profits'.[17]

Few people on earth could possibly have failed to hear the message of freedom or democracy, repeated on every occasion and without occasion. If, however, those many who heard the message try to unpack its contents by watching the conduct of its senders, they may be excused for reading selfishness, cupidity, greed and the precept of each man for himself and the devil take the hindmost into 'freedom', and 'might is right' into 'democracy'. They can be forgiven for looking askance at the messages or their senders whom they suspect of bearing responsibility for the deception.

With a modicum of good will, one can understand why such people insist on a translation that refutes the manifest contents of the message. What they know all too well from their daily experience is that the surrender to the rule of planetary markets which has been proclaimed to be the condition of freedom and democracy, to the cut-throat competition which that rule puts in the place of neigh-bourly cooperation and assistance, and to the massive privatization and deregulation that follow will deprive them of workplaces, farms, homes and communities, while giving little in exchange: not nearly enough schools or hospitals, no electricity or drinking water, and above all no human dignity and no prospects of a better life in their lifetime. Thus far the markets' bids for global domination, to quote Naomi Klein one last time,

> have bred armies of locked-out people, whose services are no longer needed, whose lifestyles are written off as 'back-ward', whose basic needs go unmet. [The] fences of social exclusion can discard an entire industry, and they can also

write off an entire country, as happened to Argentina. In the case of Africa, essentially an entire continent can find itself exiled to the global shadow world, off the map and off the news, appearing only during wartime when its citizens are looked on with suspicion as potential militia members, would-be terrorists or anti-American fanatics.[18]

There is, as one would expect, a reaction to this action and to its planned or inadvertent, ostensible or hushed-up consequences. Ryszard Kapuściński notes a profound change in the mood of the planet, surreptitious, subterranean and hardly ever or never noticed by travelling business people, itinerant craftworkers of knowledge or tourists comfortably enclosed in the cosy cocoons of customized nowherevilles – but a departure that would nevertheless appear seminal and full of foreboding once it was noted and scrutinized, particularly through European eyes.[19]

In the course of the last five centuries the well-nigh universal mentality of the globe developed in the shadow of the patterns, values and criteria identified with European culture. The military and economic domination of Europe was topped by the unchallenged position of Europe as the reference point for the evaluation, praise or condemnation of any other form of human life, past and present, and as the supreme court of law where such an assessment was authoritatively pronounced with no right of appeal. It was enough just to be a European, says Kapuściński, to feel like a boss and a ruler everywhere else. Even a mediocre person of humble standing and held in low esteem in his own small and insignificant (but European!) country rose to the highest social positions once he had landed in Malaysia or Zambia . . . This is no longer a case, though, as Kapuściñski has recently found. The present time is marked by an ever more blatant and outspoken self-awareness among the peoples who still

half a century ago genuflected to a Europe perched on the altar of cargo cults. Now they show a fast-growing sense of their own value and an ever more evident ambition to gain and retain an independent and weighty place of their own in the new, increasingly egalitarian and multicultural world. Once upon a time, remembers Kapuściński, everyone in distant lands asked him about Europe, but these days no one does: today the 'natives' have their own tasks and problems clamouring for (and receiving) their, and all their, attention. 'The European presence' is ever less visible: physically as much as spiritually.

Casting the victims of the rampant globalization of the financial and commodity markets as first and foremost a security threat, rather than as people needing aid and entitled to compensation for the damage to their lives, has its obvious uses. It calms the scruples, and puts paid to ethical compunctions. One is, after all, dealing here with enemies who 'hate our values' and cannot bear the sight of us, ordinary folk like us, for our determination to live in freedom and democracy. It helps to divert the funds that could be used to narrow the disparities and defuse the animosities they spawn so to beef up the weapons industry, arms sales and stockholders profits, and so improve the statistics of home employment and raise the feel-good gradient of the home constituency. Last but not least, it whips up the flagging consumerist economy by condensing diffuse security fears and then retargeting and channelling them away from trouble and into the urge to buy little private fortresses on wheels (like the gas-guzzling yet pricey 'Hummers' or 'Sport Utility Vehicles', notoriously dangerous for the drivers and pedestrians alike); or by allowing the forceful promotion of lucrative 'brand rights' or 'intellectual rights' under the pretext of preventing the profits drawn from their violation from being shifted to terrorist cells.

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Casting the victims of aggrandizement as first and fore-most a security threat also allows the shedding of the irritating constraints of democratic control imposed or threatening to be imposed on business pursuits – by recast-ing political (and in the last account eminently economic) choices as military necessities. Here as elsewhere America takes the lead, though its moves are closely watched and eagerly followed by a large number of European govern-ments. As William J. Bennett recently stated in a book aptly titled *Why We Fight: Moral Clarity and the War on Terrorism*,

> the threats we face today are both external and internal: external in that there are groups and states that want to attack United States: internal in that there are those who are attempting to use this opportunity to promulgate the agenda of 'blame America first'. Both threats stem from either a hatred for the American ideals of freedom and equality or a misunderstanding of those ideals and their practice.[20]

Bennett's credo can best be understood as an ideological gloss over a practice already in full swing – like the recently introduced 'USA Patriot Act', aimed explicitly at people engaged in the kind of political action heretofore protected by the American constitution – and legalizing heretofore prohibited clandestine surveillance, searches without war-rants and other invasions of privacy, as well as incarcer-ation without charge and trials of civilians before military courts.

Security services, like any other bureaucracy, are subject to the inexorable logic of the Parkinson's Law, or a self-fulfilling prophecy. Once set in place, they develop their own momentum, creating ever new targets on which to practise the arts they are best at practising, while recasting the rest of their field of action as a vast matrix of future

targets. No wonder 'the West' – Europe and its globally scattered offspring – is increasingly inward-looking. The world looks and feels ever less inviting. It appears to be a hostile world, a treacherous, vengeance-breathing world, a world that still needs to be made safe for the Westerners-turned-tourists-and-trades people. It looks uncannily and eerily like a battlefield getting ready for an imminent 'war of civilizations'. It is a world in which all steps are fraught with danger, and so those daring enough to risk them must look out, stay constantly on the alert, and most crucially ought to stick to the places reserved for their sole and secure use and to the marked and protected tracks that connect them: tracks barbed-wired off from that wilderness spattered with ambushes for the unwary. Whoever forgets those precepts does it at her or his own risk and must be ready to bear the consequences.

In an insecure world, security is the name of the game, the game's main purpose and its paramount stake.

Security is a value that, in practice if not in theory, dwarfs and elbows out all other values, including those values proclaimed to be 'the dearest to us', being for that reason the prime targets of 'their' hatred, and the prime cause of 'their' wish, the wish of 'those out there', to harm us – the urge which makes the whole world, as well as this part 'in here' that we call our home, insecure. In a world as insecure as ours, all those things we used to associate with democracy, like personal freedom of speech and action, the right to privacy, access to truth, may clash with the supreme need for security and must therefore be trimmed or suspended. At least this is what the official version of the fight-for-security insists on and what official government practice implies.

The truth which fell as the first casualty of the form taken by the post-11 September security concerns is that

we cannot effectively defend our freedoms here at home while fencing ourselves off from the rest of the world and attending solely to our own affairs.

There are valid reasons to suppose that on a globalized planet, where the plight of everyone everywhere determines and is determined by the plights of all others, one can no longer have freedom and democracy in one country, or only in a few selected countries. The fate of freedom and democracy in each land is decided and settled on the global stage – and only on that stage can it be defended with a realistic chance of lasting success. It is no longer in the power of any state, however heavily armed, resolute and uncompromising, to defend chosen values at home while turning its back on the dreams and yearnings of those outside its borders.

But turning our backs is precisely what we, Europeans and European descendants settled in Europe's erstwhile overseas colonies, do. Attuned to the rules of democracy locked (at its peril) in the borders of a nation-state or a combination of nation-states, we keep our riches and multiply them at the expense of the poor outside. As Joseph Stiglitz recently reminded the trade ministers preparing for their Cancún meeting, the average European subsidy per cow 'matches the 2 dollars per day poverty level on which billions of people barely subsist' – whereas America's 4 billion dollars worth of cotton subsidies paid to 25,000 well-off farmers 'bring misery to 10 million African farmers and more than offset the US's miserly aid to some of the affected countries'.[21] One occasionally hears Europe and America publicly accusing each other of 'unfair agricultural practices'. But, Stiglitz observes, 'neither side seems to be willing to make major concessions', whereas nothing short of major, radical concessions would convince others to stop looking at the unashamed display of 'brute economic power by the US and Europe' as

anything but an effort to defend the privileges of the priv-
ileged, to protect the wealth of the wealthy, and to serve
their own interests that boil down to more wealth and yet
more wealth. At the Cancún conference, which was meant
to create a joint platform on which the rich and the poor
could meet and exchange their products with mutual
benefit, the Senegalese trade minister Alchaton Agne
Poyue concluded, after the lengthy yet barren debate,
that the other, affluent side at the negotiation table did
not wish to nor did pay attention to 'our survival interest,
not to mention our ''development'' '. Meanwhile the en-
semble of sub-Saharan representatives, the part of the
world most affected by huge subsidies poured into Ameri-
can cotton farming, had just one name for the final declar-
ation that promised future consultations about the thorny
issue of subsidies, while in the meantime advising the poor
countries 'to diversify their economies' (that is, to keep
away from cotton farming): an insult.[22]

And so, for the third time, let me ask the question: has its
historic time run out for the European adventure? For
Europe *as* adventure?

   One can argue – forcefully and convincingly – that never
before has Europe needed to be as adventurous as it needs
to be now. And that never before has this planet, which the
millions of privileged and well-off Europeans share with
the poor and disadvantaged billions, needed an adventur-
ous Europe as much as it needs it now: a Europe looking
beyond its frontiers, a Europe critical of its own narrow-
mindedness and self-referentiality, a Europe struggling to
reach out of its territorial confinement, with an urge to
transcend its own and by the same token the rest of the
world's condition; a Europe *with a planetary mission to
perform*. And perhaps differently from the past, when the
harvest of the European addiction to transgression was

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anything but an unalloyed blessing for Europe's close and remote neighbours, and when the direct and collateral casualties of the European urge to transgress were thick on the planetary ground – this time the interests of Europe and of the peoples outside its borders will *not just coincide, but overlap*. It is enough for eyes to be raised a few inches higher than the level of momentary interests and crisis-management emergencies to see that for all practical intents and purposes these interests are closely inter-twined, if not identical.

In a speech to the European Parliament on 8 March 1994 Vaclav Havel, then President of the Czech Republic, suggested that Europe needs a Charter which would spell out what it means to be Europe, or to be European: a 'Charter of European identity' for the coming era of a planet struggling to take charge of its own imminent and inescapable unification. A manifesto, we may say, of Europe's raison d'être in the era of globalization.

One of the groups that followed Havel's call was the Europa-Union Deutschland, and the result was 'A Charter of European Identity' approved on 28 October 1995 at the Union's 41st Congress held in Lübeck.[23] Right after a predictable preamble dedicated to 'Europe as a community of destiny', two sections follow that deserve special attention. One speaks of 'Europe as a community of values' and names tolerance, humanity and fraternity as the foremost values which Europe 'spread throughout the world', becoming thereby 'the mother of revolutions in the modern world'. The authors of the Charter admit that in its long history Europe 'has repeatedly called these values into question and offended against them', but believe that now, at long last, after an age of 'unrestrained nationalism, imperialism and totalitarianism', those values rooted in classical antiquity and Christianity have helped Europe to establish 'freedom, justice and democracy

as the principles for international relations'. Another chapter presents Europe as 'a community of responsibility'. It points out that 'in today's world, in which we have all become interdependent, the European Union carries a particular responsibility' towards the rest of the world and that 'only through cooperation, solidarity and unity can Europe effectively help to solve world problems'. The European Union 'should set an example, in particular in relation to upholding human rights and the protection of minorities'. (One is tempted to add, though: also in relation to the protection of the huge majority of humankind against the consequences of the privileges enjoyed by a small minority of the planet's population, Europe included . . .)

Reading the Charter, one muses: easier said than done. The 'Charter of European Identity' is, blatantly, a utopian blueprint!

Such a verdict may well be correct – but then 'European identity' was a utopia at all moments in its history. Perhaps the sole steady element that made of European history a consistent and in the end cohesive story was the utopian spirit endemic to its identity, a forever not-yet-attained identity, vexingly elusive and always at odds with the realities of the day. Europe's place was at all times somewhere between the 'ought' and the 'is', and that is why it had to be, and indeed was, a site of continuous experimentation and adventure. Its present place is no different: it oscillates between the 'ought' of a hospitable, user-friendly planet determined to attain and secure a sustainable life for all its residents, and a planet of deepening disparities, tribal animosities and intertribal fences, a planet ever less fit for human habitation.

The ongoing institutional unification of Europe may be seen as (and prove to be) a defensive move prompted by the impulse to defend Europe's 'is' (its relatively peaceful

niche amidst deepening planetary turmoil, its privileged life standards amidst worldwide deprivation) against the 'ought' of its challenging, uncomfortable yet imperative planetary responsibilities. But it may also prove to be a preliminary step towards taking up those responsibilities: a sensible attempt to gather resources, force and will, all necessary to tackle the tasks of supracontinental, planetary dimensions.

As Jürgen Habermas observed in one of his recent analyses,

> A nation state is not going to regain its old strength by retreating into its shell . . . A politics of self-liquidation – letting the state simply merge into postnational networks – is just as unconvincing. And postmodern neoliberalism cannot explain how the deficits in steering competences and legitimation that emerge at the national level can be compensated at the supranational level without new forms of political regulation . . . The artificial conditions in which national consciousness arose argue against the defeatist assumption that a form of civic solidarity among strangers can only be generated within the confines of the nation. If this form of collective identity was due to a highly abstractive leap from the local and dynastic to national and then to democratic consciousness, why shouldn't this learning process be able to continue?[24]

Another leap, similar to that accomplished by Europe at the threshold of modern times, in another turbulent era, is the imperative of the present generations. It points this time towards the space in which survival struggles are nowadays waged and in which the fate of all parts of the globe is decided: the politically empty and ethically confused planetary space lacking in 'steering competences' and legitimate legal and political authorities, and plagued by an awesome 'democratic deficit'.

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Then, two to three hundred years ago, when negotiating that other 'mountain pass' (to use Reinhard Kosseleck's apt term), Europe invented *nations*. Now the point is to invent *humanity*. And there are no other actors in sight able and willing to attempt that last, ultimate act of transcendence in the long, tormented road of humanity towards itself – towards that *allgemeine Vereinigung der Menschheit* that two centuries ago was prophesied by Kant as its final destination not just by choice, but by 'Nature's verdict and design'.

Paradoxically, the chance to extend the European adventure into realms never visited before and perhaps even off-limits to Europe in its past king/monster phase arises at a time when Europe's specific gravity in the world affairs has fallen and seems to go on falling.

Paradoxically? Perhaps not paradoxically after all. Karl Deutsch famously defined power as 'the ability to afford not to learn'. Well, by this definition Europe has lost much of its power, as it has been denied the luxury of not-learning. Nowadays, Europe must learn – and it does. And while learning, it accumulates a constantly growing capital of life-saving knowledge that it may share with others: those who need such knowledge to afford what can still be afforded by Europe; and also, perhaps more importantly, those who can still afford what Europe definitely can no longer afford.

Its convoluted history led Europe to the point when it can hardly stop learning and memorizing the lesson. Its present, after all, is nothing if not the life of its memory. Europe's history shaped its adventurous character, while the forms the European adventure assumed in the past, by foreclosing certain options if not by opening new and obvious ones, supply the programme for its future avatars.

As two prominent Russian politologists, Vladislav Ino-
zemtsev and Ekaterina Kuznetsova, point out, Europe
'could not adopt American rules without betraying its
own postwar achievements'.[25] The salutary alternative
which Europe – and only Europe – can offer, is based on
the European – and only European – tradition. At a time
when America, which relegated Europe to the second
division of power games, has (in Will Hutton's words)
'disqualified itself from the fight for security, prosperity,
and justice',[26] Europe, as Inozemtsev and Kuznetsova
point out, having learned the truth the hard way, stoutly
refuses 'to regard force as a source of justice', and even
more so to confuse the two, and it is well placed to 'oppose
the United States as *justice* opposes *force* rather than as
weakness opposes *power*'.

Europe's pyromaniac past may be a sound reason for a
lot of soul-searching and feelings of guilt, but singed
fingers may yet prove an asset. They would be reluctant
to play with fire – and averse to piling up powder kegs.
'The ''old'' Europe that has become wise should not
become tired of showing this insight to its American
friends', suggests Ulrich K. Preuss, referring to the Euro-
pean discovery that 'law creates trust, predictability, secur-
ity; law enables', and to the bitter lesson that the
'overextension of their rule', that is 'rejecting law as a
source for validity in order to rely on violence alone' and
an inability to understand 'the world around them' as a
result of resorting to the 'non-communicative violence of
the military' as their sole guide, was the principal cause of
the decline 'of virtually all empires in world history'.[27]

And so, to quote the trenchant Robert Kagan's state-
ment, 'it is time to stop pretending that Europeans and
Americans share a common view of the world, or even that
they occupy the same world.'[28] The United States, Kagan
suggests, 'remains mired in history, exercising power in the

anarchic Hobbesian world', while Europe is already moving (though, let us observe, half-heartedly and not without many a hiccup, much back-pedalling and many second thoughts) towards the Kantian world of perpetual peace, in which law, negotiation and cooperation gain the upper hand where violence and raw force once ruled.

Europe is well prepared if not to *lead*, then most certainly to *show* the way from the Hobbesian planet to the Kantian 'universal unification of the human species'. It has traversed that road itself, at least the initial part of it, up to the station of 'peaceful neighbourly cohabitation', and knows only too well the human costs of deviations and delays. And for the last half-century it has put in practice, even if with only mixed success, the measures that need to be taken if any further advance on that road is to be achieved.

Étienne Balibar writes of 'the lesson of tragedy' that Europe finally learned.[29] Indeed, after hundreds of years of massive blood-lettings, whether talked of in religious, ethnic, tribal, racist or class terms – of the holy and unholy crusades that in retrospect look uncannily like fratricides every bit as iniquitous, unlofty and unheroic as they were cruel and ferocious and that could be dismissed as the mere teething troubles of immature, inchoate and still irrational humanity were not the devastation they left behind so enormous and so appalling in its inhumanity – came the moment of awakening and sobering up, ushering Europe into an as yet unfinished era of experimentation with what Balibar (after Monique Chemillier-Gendreau) names 'transnational public order': a kind of setting in which Clausewitz's rule no longer binds and wars are neither natural, nor permissible extensions of political action.

What endows Europe's apparently internal concerns and *domestic* exertions with particular significance for the

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emergent *planetary* order is however the dawning recognition of the truth brought home by the ever more blatant globality of human interdependence: that resistance to violence is bound to remain ineffective and simply won't do if it is limited to the 'metropolitan' framework. Two learning processes mentioned by Balibar converged on that truth.

First, the 'growing consciousness of the realities of colonial history'. Europe used to divide the world into the realms of 'civilization' and 'barbarism', little aware and/or reluctant to admit what it begins to accept now – that 'the greatest barbarity certainly was not on the side we imagined', even if resorting to violence and inhumanity was not only the conquerors' idiosyncratic predilection.

Second, Europe's long involvement with the rest of the human planet, the ubiquitous and obtrusive European presence in virtually every corner of the globe, however distant, has reverberated in 'a powerful, irreversible process of hybridization and multiculturalism now transforming Europe' that 'leads Europe to recognize, albeit with considerable hesitations and setbacks, that the other is a necessary component of its ''identity'' '.

The two learning processes have brought (or at least are bringing) Europe to a point where 'combining the different resources for institutionalizing conflicts' and 'progressively introducing new basic rights' (or, to use Amartya Sen's terminology, new 'capabilities') are likely to become a widely accepted imperative – a new way of living together and living with each other's differences, set to replace the violent trials of force and put paid to the war option. This prospect has been portrayed by Eugen Weber as the task 'to meld the scores of local fatherlands and cultures into one large, abstract entity'[30] – a feat already performed once in/by Europe in the era of nation-state building, but now looming large again on the immediate agenda,

though this time with the added challenge of the much more formidable, planetary scale. The prospect is anything but a foregone conclusion. The fact of the matter is that when 'inflated to universal proportions, compassion falters. Solidarity on a national scale had been a hard row to hoe; it took time to inculcate. World solidarity proves a slacker bond still.'

The redoubtable counter-odds notwithstanding, trying hard to make that prospect real is still a must. Forging a frame able to accommodate the variety of human forms of life and induce those forms to engage in peaceful inter-action, cooperative in spirit and mutually beneficial, is a matter of life and death for everyone involved – for the presently deprived and the presently privileged alike. And it so happens that thanks to its unique history Europe is better placed than any other sector of humanity to rise to such a challenge and to insist, convincingly and effectively, that when it comes to a mode of living together on a planet transformed into a dense network of mutual dependency there is indeed *no viable nor plausible alternative*, since the security and well-being of one part of the globe can no longer be achieved, let alone guaranteed, unless the right to a secure and dignified life is extended to all, both in letter and in deed.

Robert Fine has recently discussed that prospect in reference to the emergent frame of mind (not unexpect-edly, spreading most buoyantly in Europe) that he chose to call 'the new or actually existing cosmopolitanism'.

It is a way of thinking that declares its opposition to all forms of ethnic nationalism and religious fundamentalism as well as to the economic imperatives of global capitalism. It perceives the integrity of contemporary political life as threatened both by globalization of markets and by regres-sive forms of revolt against globalization, and aims to

reconstruct political life on the basis of an enlightened
vision of peaceful relations between nation states, human
rights shared by all world citizens, and a global legal order
buttressed by a global civil society.[31]

The above description, Fine hastens to add, refers in
equal measure to a 'theoretical approach toward under-
standing the world', 'a diagnosis of the age in which we
live', and 'a normative stance in favour of universalistic
standards of moral judgments, international law and polit-
ical action'. All three, let us observe, have their roots
deeply sunk in the European experience and the also
European interpretation and exposition of its meaning.

As the great liberal thinker Richard Rorty suggests, 'the
Marxists were right about at least one thing: the central
political questions are those about the relations between
rich and poor.'[32] And yet 'we now have a global overclass
which makes all the major economic decisions, and makes
them in entire independence of the legislatures, and *a
fortiori* of the will of the voters, of any given country.'
'The absence of a global polity means that the super-rich
can operate without any thought of any interests save their
own.' But also, let me add, that absence means that the
'super-rich' operate with little or no chance of effective
opposition that would allow them to avoid defining their
'own interests' so narrowly as to make their actions sui-
cidal in addition to being insensitive, cruel, and occasion-
ally murderous.
    This is not only the question of the unsustainable polar-
ization of current and prospective living conditions, with
its incalculable yet potentially disastrous effects on the
security and dignity of human lives. Given the flat refusal
of the privileged part of humankind to mitigate the un-
scrupulous looting and burning out of the planet's energy

resources, it is the bare *survival of human species* that is now at stake. In the words of George Monbiot, summing up the consensual wisdom of expert climatologists,

> we are not contemplating the end of holidays in Seville. We are contemplating the end of the circumstances which permit most human beings to remain on Earth . . . In other words, if we leave the market to govern our politics, we are finished. Only if we take control of our economic lives, and demand and create the means by which we may cut our energy use to 10% or 20% of current levels will we prevent the catastrophe that our rational selves can comprehend.[33]

Wolf Lepenies summed up his Poznań lecture by calling 'for another Marx', who instead of *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* would write a book called *Financial Markets: A Critique of Depoliticized Economy.* On the repoliticization of the economy, Lepenies insisted, depends the survival of democracy. In all probability, we may add, it is not only the survival of democracy, but also the continuing existence of the species that created it and found it good, that depends on that leap – on the 'Great Transformation Mark Two' that needs to follow the original Great Transformation initiated by Europe several centuries ago.[34]

The end of history is a myth – or an avoidable catastrophe. And so is the end of the European adventure – of Europe as adventure.