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### **Old and New Europe: Representations, Imaginations, Stagings**

At present Europe is (again) proving itself to be an extraordinarily varied and dramatically embattled political field. The current symptoms for this state of affairs can be seen in almost any random selection of details: the debates regarding EU membership as a strategic discourse for national position and international resources, the jockeying for the position of opinion leader after the Iraq war, the formation of a European “right-wing” even in the Eastern European societies, the conflicts surrounding the practices of fundamentalist religions within and outside of Europe, or the extraordinary problematic border regimes on the Mediterranean and in Eastern Europe in light of human rights concerns.

All these themes are situated on thoroughly different levels of politics and discourse. Nonetheless, they all belong to a passionately and fundamentally “European”-led debate over national legitimation and the ethic principles of politics. Moreover, they are all of one cloth in so far as the mode and subject of the negotiations in these political fields are presented primarily as “cultural.” This is the impression one necessarily gains upon closer examination of the individual areas. Decisive questions regarding the interrelationship between the individual interests of nations and European visions of community are negotiated expressly in the context of national and European identity discourses. Furthermore, cultural self-presentations and symbolic semantics play a decisive role in these discourses: for example, as references to history and ancestry, to language and religion, and to aspects of civilization and mentality.

The debates of the last few years concerning the eastern expansion of the EU and Euro-Islam are two exemplary demonstrations of how intensive and how ideologically entrenched the discussion of identity politics is. This is not without reason, since precisely those cultural representations are being fought over that will ultimately define “Project Europe” and then literally embody it. On the one hand – and from a historical perspective – this concerns the coining of a new European “collective memory.” Yet at

the same time, in this act of self-Europeanization, the particular, “local” historical traits of Europe are once more to be distinctly inscribed into the increasingly globalized and thus anonymous horizons of economics, society and culture. However, it is still under contentious debate which traits are to be emphasized, how many different traditions and references are to be included, and how many of the eastern and the western traits are to be integrated. On the other hand, the current European spaces and borders play an essential role in this, as it is in relation to these spatial markings that symbolic accentuations are placed and new affiliations and demarcations are possible. However, affiliations and demarcations always generate altered pictures of “us” and “them,” and thus produce new social and cultural differences both within and to the outside.

Of course, this concept of cultural difference has been utilized in the past as a tried and tested means for national as well as European identity politics and it will undoubtedly continue to be used in the future. Yet here the talk of “old” and “new” Europe takes on its special significance, since a strategic position of difference can be derived from it that operates within Europe and probably carries far-reaching consequences; since the concern will be with a Europe whose form is determined not only from the center outwards, but also decisively from its edges inwards. And it is these open, European edges which are located – from a historical, cultural and geopolitical viewpoint – in an East in many ways not yet identified with Europe which is still seeking its affiliations and loyalties in the interstitial space between Europe and Asia. – The following deals with several historical and current facets of European identity politics.

### *Historical self-conceptions*

Even a cursory glance back into history will confirm: Europe never stood solely for a geographical or political space. Rather it always and primarily described a symbolic figure, an idea, an invention, that had lasting consequences. The Renaissance at the latest had already “thought” this Europe as a myth and a topos, that is, as a grand “narrative” and as the central “site” of history, society, and culture – as the *Gesamtkunstwerk* of a

civilization. Europe thus ultimately framed itself as a vision of a bourgeois civilization of travel and reading, of curiosity and knowledge, of discussion and comparison, of transfer and transgression of frontiers. And it was these ideas and ideals of the first European educated elite that conjoined trade, science, and art across the borders of regimes and whose multifarious traces we still encounter in libraries today in the legions of volumes of European travel literature. This travel literature furthermore comprises a unique historical document of European neighbor-relations. For it was here that the “European” view observed, noted, and compared whatever seemed noteworthy at home as well as abroad: from agriculture to architecture, from medicine to geography, from piety to festivals.

This gesture of observation and its empirical consequences set in motion an extraordinary dissemination and fluidity of knowledge concerning the self as well as the others. The question that continually arose as a central concern was that of the cultural self-conceptions of each and their reciprocal relations: Who are we? Who and how are the others? What do they think of us? – This led to the construction of reciprocal and thoroughly dense pictures of social identities: stereotypical prejudices as well as positive knowledge of people and landscapes, of mentalities and nationalities. Yet in each case, imaginations of a European diversity emerged from this – usually lightly romanticized and (too) often in abstraction from the so thoroughly “European” reality of religiously motivated struggles and continental wars.

From this centuries-long cultural “contact work” of migrating craftsmen and bourgeois authors a specific feature of European worldview developed all the way into modernity: a characteristic and remarkably dense form of the perception of self and others. Thus a strategic project of “identity” arose, in which constant intellectual exchange, by means of literature and images as well as through dialogue and the discourse of difference, played an essential role. This exchange was then once more programmatically entrenched during the European Enlightenment, when Rousseau reflected on nature and civilization, when Herder developed his ideas of peoples and cultures, or when neo-humanist thoughts came into circulation on the relation between freedom and compulsion, between individuality and society.

It was here at the very latest that the arts and sciences intervened actively and

insistently in the process of creating social meaning and identity, a position they have never retreated from since. The concern was on the one hand with “inner”, national conceptions of identity; on the other hand, with the framing of a European civilization that from that point on saw itself as the center of the world – with all the familiar consequences of European imperial and colonial politics. Yet it is significant here that no other civilization has developed this intensive form and this dense and above all popular tradition of constant observation of self and others – also in the sense of an increasingly reflexive and often critical gesture towards “one’s own” and a specific form of acquiring knowledge about the “others.” This “European” knowledge that we still have at our disposal today is built upon the historical formats and media of the bourgeois travel and educational culture. Thus, within the history of Europe, cultural diversity, social contact, and intellectual reflexivity reciprocally pre-suppose and fertilize each other.

Of course this concept of identity also brought a burden with it from the very beginning. The European nationalism of the 18th century and the European colonialism of the 19th soon one-sidedly declared difference to be the most important source of identity. Now cultural differences were a greater concern than European commonalities – except perhaps in the common colonial gesture of dominance of the “white man”; and the differences were “genetic”, national-cultural ones. What was sought for was the internal cohesion of the nation on the one hand and, on the other hand, whatever marked this off externally from neighbors and enemies. This lastingly changed the ideological semantics of the concept of Europe, reducing it to a concept of the construction of differences in which each nation tried to identify itself as an independent “people” and thus distinguish itself as an “community of common descent” from the others. This ethnic and national affiliation was in turn supposed to offer the citizen a putatively secure anchor through the torrent of European upheavals up to the nation state and industrial capitalism. For this, one needed an external difference, and conceptions of an enemy that could be mobilized. Thus, in the future, the German wanted to be the non-Frenchman, the Norwegian the non-Swede, the Pole the non-German.

Thus identity no longer implied a bridge but a trench, and Europe came to describe a space in which many nations played the role of center and main actor and tended to assign merely supporting roles to others. Every country re-invented its

“national” Europe: in extreme cases in war, but in every case within culture. For culture delivered an abundance of motifs in the form of history and literature, art and popular humor, upon which a state could measure itself at the cost of the others.

These constructions of difference led to the national conceptions and semantics in our collective memories that have lastingly molded our common “cultural memory.” At the same time, they supplanted many other conceptions of the European tradition describing Europe as a society of exchange, transfer, communication, and commingling. Thus it was already then that an “iconic turn” in the European identity discourse took place, which we are only today able to fully reconstruct in our academic disciplines. This is why the cultural motifs of this memory are so familiar and prevalent to this day: they arose in a specific bourgeois public sphere that thought in national terms and yet constituted itself as a truly “European” public sphere transcending institutions, media and audience. Thus, across all national boundaries, we recognize our own historical pre-judgments in these received conceptions and images, which for that reason still seem so thoroughly plausible to us after generations.

This thinking of difference is today in many respects still very close to us and uninterrupted, precisely in Europe of all places. Just how close was demonstrated quite plainly by the fall of Yugoslavia after 1990, where at the end of the socialist era social and political tensions were rapidly carried over into aggressive discourses about ethnic descent and cultural difference; in the end the murderous “ethnic cleansings”, which had begun above all with Milosevic’s murderous dream of a Greater Serbia, took their justification from these discourses. Such mobilizations of the “healthy common sense of the people” were possible and clearly still are even after the German National Socialism as long as it is possible to shut the eyes of a nation and ethnocentrically veil the horizons of the societies, whereby the collective memory is so immersed in monolithic nationalist or racist colors that the putatively threatened “us” of the culture can be contrasted with a dangerous “other.”

Admittedly, Europe has certainly learned something about dealing with military and international conflicts from the conflict in Yugoslavia. Nonetheless, it still sees itself confronted once again with problematic situations with opposed fronts of “us” and “them”. This time fundamentalist Islam and, thereby, sectors of European migration act

as both catalysts and targets of a new discourse of the Other, in which both aggressive, old stereotypes and new constructions of difference get articulated alongside substantiated concerns.

On the other hand, it is precisely the post-WWII European history which has demonstrated that this continual preoccupation with “the others” was also capable of a sustained dismantling of traumatic war experiences and conceptions of the enemy. Otherness and diversity are thus experienced not only as a threat, but also as an opportunity. An example of this in more recent history is seen in the new and truly neighborly relationship between Germany and France. Another present and future example may be the changing mutual perceptions of the Germans and Poles, who seem to be gradually losing their national “formatting”. Furthermore this can be seen conversely in the discourse about contrasting conceptions of society and social politics being carried out in contemporary Europe, which in many aspects involves a demarcation over and against the USA. For the rejection of the socially disintegrative and politico-economically neo-liberal social politics over there is bound up here with an avowal of a European “social charter” that refers explicitly to common European traditions and values spanning national differences. These traditions also play an essential role in answering the question of where “old” and “new” Europe would like to agree on certain commonalities.

### *Old and New: the West against the East?*

The perceptions and conceptions of Europe are changing markedly both within and outside of the continent. They are moving away from the classical geo-political conception of a European landscape made up of separate nation states and national characters toward a conception of a largely common European cultural identity – an identity conceived in both the singular and the plural, ranging from religion to art and bound up with visions and myths. In this question of turning “European” into a “community,” those political, structural, and statistical models of planning and control, ranging from economic statues to construction ordinances and producing in their sum an

extraordinarily normative and thus “Europeanizing” effect, play a not inessential role. They simultaneously produce both European formats of knowledge, administration, and politics, and European viewpoints of observation, perception, and exchange. These formats and views, in return, increasingly organize essential components of our world and everyday life into a "European" mosaic, in our own eyes as well.

Thus even more interesting than the superficial question of the geographical space of Europe and its political order seems to me to be the question of this imaginary space of a European identity and of a progressive factual and symbolic “Europeanization” of the societies within it. This concerns, on the one hand, a transfer of common forms of knowledge and practice, which impregnate our everyday life in terms of a European lifestyle; and, on the other hand, the conceptions and symbols that are supposed to outwardly convey the corresponding forms of European life on its way towards becoming a society and a community. In both cases, these efforts result in active representations of “European-ness,” that is, in integrative elements of being European that combine what is new with what is already familiar to us.

In spite of these clear trends, such representations do not in any way produce a standard European culture or even a unified culture. Rather, a look at history shows that the historical contact and the social exchange between European societies has in no way led to cultural uniformity, be it in music or cuisine, lifestyles or value-systems. And this holds equally for the prospect of the future. Even the contemporary Europeanization of constitution, law, and politics will not supplant the diversity of their application in local, regional, and national variations. The cultural traditions in European societies are obviously much too resilient and the contexts of their living environments too differently composed. Europeanization, in deepening knowledge about others and contact to others, necessitates creating new openings in the societies, for it creates new supranational connections and alignments. At the same time, however, it enables new distances and differences, because these processes of alignment and understanding are then more consciously perceived and more critically reflected upon.

This reflexivity in turn results in individual paths of development – be they regional, national, or supranational – that produce unofficial “Euro-regions” independently of any planning from Brussels. At least this is what one could call these

cultural spaces, which – in contrast to the official Euro-regions – are simultaneously generated “from below.” This has occurred above all since 1990, motivated by new regional constellations in economics and transport, in tourism and ecology. More than a few of these regions simply overstep the old borders and territories, in some cases already overstepping the old “Iron Curtain.” As a result, Europe without a doubt becomes larger and more diverse as a cultural landscape – not only in spite of, but also precisely because of such Europeanization processes.

In addition, there is of course an external view from which Europeanness as a common political label as well as a common attribution of cultural identity is perceived with increasing clarity. The European Union and the constitution as well as the European lifestyle and cuisine, European pop music and European soccer are increasingly registered in the USA or in Japan as phenomena in which one purports to recognize a growing European collective identity – even in the wake of the differences of opinion within Europe regarding the Iraq war or the failed constitutional referendums.

Conversely, there is also an extraordinarily skeptical viewpoint according to which Europeanness appears as a threatening horizon toward which all local worlds have to orient themselves – at the cost of their “original” cultural substance and their particular form of life. The incursions of legal and political regulations are increasingly perceived by many to be so intrusive and dominant at the level of everyday life that they see Europeanization as a kind of “miniature” globalization; that is, as an economically and legally coercive path towards the “Brussels” living conditions. From this standpoint, the EU and its bureaucratic center in Brussels embody more of an undesired generator of norms and institutions.

However there is also currently an interesting faultline seen running through all these discussions in and about Europe, which cuts perpendicular to the directions of argument discussed above. This line is visible as soon as the talk turns to “old” and “new” Europe and as soon as one attempts to take stock of societies under these headings. Of course the conceptions of “old” and “new” are to some extent based on the old borders between East and West. Yet by no means do they simply take up the map of post-war Europe; rather they incorporate the individual dynamic that arose out of the changed opportunities for development following the collapse of the Soviet Union, above all for



the societies and states in the East of Europe. And these development opportunities seem to have a thoroughly ambivalent nature.

On the one hand, there the "new" represents a Europe with greater flexibility and newer social forms, far from the norms of Brussels. Immediately after 1989, new national and ethnic identities were confidently developed in East Europe, which to some certain extent released the built-up potential for conflicts, and to some extent created new such potential. It is thus not only during the Iraq war and in reaction to Rumsfeld's speeches that some East European states have, in the meantime, built up new international roles as middle-men and in coalitions – roles that were unavailable to their Western neighbors for historical or geo-political reasons. At the same time, right after 1990, in view of the internal opportunities for restructuring in economic and in social politics, there was talked quite openly to the effect that after the socialist state and economy everything spoke in favor of a development in the direction of neo-liberal economic and social relations – going even further than in the West. Late-industrial capitalism wanted to open a new field for maneuvering and provide East Europe with a proper “spring forwards” and, conversely, to place pressure on Western Europe. This calculation seems partially to be coming true, even if at the same time some aspects of East European economies recall visions of early rather than late capitalism.

On the other hand, at a second glance it becomes clear that the political and cultural power relations in Europe have in no sense fundamentally changed as a result. Rather, in the course of European unification it becomes clear, time and again, how much all essential forms of the representation of Europeanness – now as then – can be attributed to the core of "old" Europe. All large European projects – from the conceptions of history, constitution, and civil society to the arenas of high culture and pop culture all the way to the social spaces of lifestyle and consumption practices – carry the unmistakable stamp of the West. In contrast, the East – the putatively "new" Europe – is clearly ascribed almost no political competence, social substance, or cultural resources – or at least not any that ultimately have to be preserved and integrated in the European center. In this regard, the historically negative connotation of the European "East" has not changed at all. Even now the discussion seems exclusively to be one of its suitability to "connect," that is, whether the East European societies as well as East European

biographies can be fit into the canon of the West European model culture. The recent debates on the draft of the constitution have shown this quite clearly.

And it is here, in turn – with the question of the admissibility of the "others" – that Brussels' norms and formats are apparently very much desired. For here there is no demand for any more European diversity or for any social and cultural experiment, and least of all for mediation of "postsocialist" experience. For socialism and its consequences embody precisely that European "Other" in the eyes of the old Europeans, that is, the abandonment of the central, cultural roots of Europe in its traditions of Christianity and the Enlightenment. And here Europe's capacity for integration is simple overtaxed – so the prevalent argument goes.

### *"Europe's Orient"?*

This argument of cultural "overstress" resounds louder, the further East one looks – that is, the further we pass beyond the imaginary cultural border at which the "occident" and its putative religious-civilizational unity seems finally left behind: at the latest, beyond the Ural River and the Dardanelles. Up to now, for those who argue on behalf of the "occidental" concept of Europe, the Caucasus and Asia Minor lay unequivocally beyond the conceivable borders of their "cultural" continent. In the meantime this has changed very little ideologically, as the old fear of a "dissolution" of Europe by the East, as well as a "displacement" of Europe towards the East, remains. Nonetheless, even hardliners are gradually awakening to the fact that "European" world politics can no longer be carried out solely by referring back to their traditional world view. Thus, the borders of Europe appear to be gradually shifting due to the compulsion to remove the restrictive borders of thought.

For it is only natural that the contemporary discussion regarding "old and new Europe" offers, in contrast, sufficient basis and reason to discuss European ideas in terms of a new, reflexive relationship between Western and Eastern Europe. On the one hand, this includes coming to terms historically with that symbolic geography of Europe that has, over the previous three centuries, increasingly positioned the West as the center and

pushed the East to the sidelines. In light of the protracted construction process of a "European" world view, the individual historical preconditions and motives for this tendency are extremely informative and also instructive for the present. On the other hand, this symbolic construction of the East – naturally reinforced by the effects of the division of Europe after 1945 – led to the fact that the social spaces and horizons in the East and the West have developed differently. The division created, in each case, new proximities and new distances – and not only within Europe, but also in relation to the "rest of the world," as was expressed in the divergent experiences and world views. This holds not only for the period after the division, but also for today: whereby these differences are in no sense restricted to political visions and coalitions, but are above all to be found in the everyday lives of the citizens, who in many cases still live in a cultural style colored by the East or the West. Societies often tend to change in their conditions and habits rather slowly in dealing with travel or literature, with foreign languages or fashion. Thus, picking the people up where they initially are, in "their" particular worlds, while at the same time overcoming this old cultural division, is certainly one of the most pressing tasks in old as well as new Europe.

This need is emphatically underscored by the example of the young East Europeans now unreservedly clamoring for positions in the West European labor markets and universities. For these people, this Europe still appears largely as a blank slate where the old marks are no longer valid. Thus in planning and conceiving their lives they develop their own map of Europe, with signs that point in many aspects unequivocally toward the "old," that is, to the West. The historical circumstances and experiences of their parents are apparently already quite distant to them. For them the postsocialist space seems not so much to present an opportunity for something "new" as to embody the burdens of the "old." Thus they make their way towards "their" Europe, which they themselves, as East-West migrants, help to shape in its symbolic geography. Often it is only from this position, from the vantage point of the migration country, that they in turn perceive their native country as a part of Eastern Europe, as "their" East Europe. Along with their new language they also learn a new concept and a new perspective. In this way they literally re-construct their native identity, and thus themselves, anew: as a former "East European," which, at home, they never were.

Then as now the catch-all term "East Europe" embodies a thoroughly West European concept that never served the East as a geo-political conception or was used as a point of reference. Not without reason is it said that as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe's West, with its increasingly alienating perspective on the East, ultimately created its own "Orient" – a view which is naturally close to Edward Said's criticism of orientalism and all the images this includes.

However, these semantics seem to be changing at present, as the concept has since come to play a new role in European politics. Alongside the derogatory symbolic connotation of "East Europe" a bureaucratic meaning has also emerged marking an official European area for accession and development. Thus it has become not only politically but also financially relevant, and many countries find it very convenient to gradually come to embrace this undesirable catch-all term. After all, it can be used to signal willingness for European integration and ultimately perhaps to attain access to the EU or at least to European funds.

Thus the concept of East Europe marks both an old and at the same time a new ideological project, that once again excludes a real symmetry in European politics and culture. Again, the "new" East Europe appears as the weaker, inauthentic counterpart to the "old" European core, which represents the whole. Ultimately "new" has a chimerical meaning. It is a synonym for the not truly authentic, for a precarious, instable, "second-class" Europe. Thus the path still seems long to the European project aimed at conceiving itself anew, no longer only from its old center outwards, but also from its new borders inwards.

In fact the scales are still too unbalanced for this, especially in the cultural arena and also with regard to the internal structure of the societies. For in the majority of the East European countries and, furthermore, in almost all the former member states of the Soviet Union, questions of a new, often clearly nationally – and ethnically – based politics of history and identity play a particular role. Often these regions have to attempt to transfer the most varied experiences with the old government and the most varied desires for a new independence onto common conceptions of an "us". These conceptions are meant to moderate the new social reconfiguration and to mark it as a symbolic transition into the postsocialist times. Often rediscoveries and new discoveries of national

history and ethnic culture are the central vehicles of an identity politics, often the only ones, which frequently become an "invention of tradition": that is, an almost artificial staging of cultural descent and heritage. Furthermore, many of the restored and newly founded nation-states of the East prove in addition to be socially quite heterogeneous in their ethnic as well as linguistic make-up and in their political dispositions. This diversity, often in combination with the inability to find their way out of the "ghettos of memory" of either ethnic victim-mentalities or the Soviet victor-mentality quickly enough, makes it tremendously difficult to develop real "shared identities" in such heterogeneous societies.

Thus it is no wonder that in this precarious situation of transition, there is particularly often recourse to symbolic politics and dramatic self-staging as the most effective stylistic means for forming identity. In this way, the "society" is supposed to be sworn-in in a sweeping emotional and aesthetic manner as a "community." In symbolism and in drama, ideas of heritage, fate, community, and authenticity seem to present themselves as the most efficacious means for generating identification and movement: that is, as an intensive form of representation. This explains the strong affinity of such "transitional" societies to representative acts and dramatic self-presentations: to national celebrations, days of remembrance, and anniversaries, which create an aura of national feeling and are meant to convey a conception of a national public.

### *European Biographies?*

If the images and conceptions of Europeanness prove themselves to be truly so changeable and malleable, in history and in the present, as outlined here, then European ethnology needs to deal with them intensively in its research and in particular with the question of how these conceptions gain an immediate influence – in the form of "soft" media and discourses as well as of "hard" institutions and laws – on societal living environments and local everyday lives. And it must further ask how collective memories and individual life conceptions are formed by this. Europe, as an idea, an imagination, an experience, has also always indicated a specific biographical space – a space of a life

story, in which the individual shaping of one's life has long included both dimensions: on the one hand, the social and cultural framing conditions, influenced by the European norms, patterns, politicians, and lifestyles, and, on the other hand, the course of one's life, connected through medial, touristic, professional, and social interactions with a European world beyond the smaller regional or national horizon. Thus every utterance of "we Europeans", beyond its lofty and dramatic effusiveness and its propagandistic implication of times now gone, often has today a truly inconspicuous and thus all the more effective quotidian meaning. It describes the desirable and undesirable traits of a European "we" composed of individuals, in no sense imaginary. In conclusion I would like to discuss a few examples of this biographical "Europeanization."

Most conspicuous is the incursion of European law and European politics in our individual as well as collective mobility in the last decade. This concerns holiday and studies abroad, traffic and passport questions, and the circumstances of immigration and emigration. It must be said that most internal borders have since fallen, at least within Western and Southwestern Europe. And although the new external borders are subject to a common regime of borders, the practice varies highly from place to place and is unreliably configured.

At any rate, the consequences of this kind of politics have a correspondingly deep impact on European societies: migration and the presence of "foreigners" has long become normal everywhere. Yet this normalcy proves to be fragile, at the latest when fears of foreign infiltration arise and aggressive reflections on "our own" ensue. This is taking place at present in more than a few European societies.

In many cases such fears resonate with those false conceptions of homogeneity which the national societies, in the terms of the 19th century, understood as "pure" communities of descent and common culture. The newer conception, in contrast – that nationality and ethnicity are not genetic facts but rather a cultural construction – has apparently found little footing in Europe and in Germany in particular. Thus, the opening of borders within Europe and to Europe, especially in the 1980s and 90s, seemed to many not to be a path toward greater permissiveness and freedom, but rather as the gateway for foreigners and foreignness.

Of course the altered forms of migration in and to Europe plays a central role in

these fears. For, in contrast to the decades following WWII, it was not just Polish and Turkish immigrants who moved to Germany or Algerians to France – that is, groups who for the most part moved along the established, historically familiar lines of European migration. Rather the European societies are confronted with global migration routes and with globally active migrant groups from Africa and Asia – that is, with people of whom they are historically ignorant and about whom they know very little culturally. Furthermore, the European countries are often no longer the destinations, but now just the stopping-off points in a migration that proceeds in stages and indeed often across continents. A European space that ends up being this open seems to further fuel this "foreign infiltration."

This is especially true when these "other" migrants also have a "foreign" religious background – when there is talk about only one "true" religion in a fundamentalist sense and about the struggle against the Islamization of Europe. European societies are hardly used to such fundamental discourses about religious identity anymore, and thus they respond helplessly to them – at least the Westerners. For this reason the increased presence of Islamicist tendencies must seem to them an especially grave threat to their own culture; as a threat, namely, to their own Christian and enlightened nature, which now – in the face of its endangerment – appears all the more valuable.

There is no question that this fundamentalist project is in fact being discussed and promoted in migrant groups. The terrorist bombings in European cities speak for themselves in this regard. It is equally beyond doubt that the groups who sympathize with this position represent a miniscule portion of European Muslims. And it also seems undeniable that, upon rational reflection and in the long run, there is no reason to fear an Islamization of Europe, and that a Europeanization of Islam is much more to be expected. For the lifestyles of the migrants in European societies will alone ensure in the medium-term future that the notions of Sharia as a binding canon of values can't even become a common guiding theme in the Muslim migrant milieus themselves. They themselves are far too heterogeneous and have long been too deeply involved in their own developments of "European" culture. Informed observers of both Islamic and non-Islamic background have long since agreed upon this.

Against this, more awareness needs to be raised of the fact that, historically seen,

migration is nothing new, and that Europe is not threatened by such long-distance immigration, rather that it itself only came about historically through internal and external migration. The relatively new and static picture of a Europe of nations must be more strongly contrasted with both historical and contemporary images of the older Europe of mobility and cultural diversity: a Europe of interaction and blending, whose result we ourselves are today. For we are all cultural products of historical European migrations – genetic and cultural "hybrids." Even affiliation with the Muslim religion has long been a normal case in European biography.

Such a level of self-awareness can naturally only be achieved when we consistently refuse to chime the tone of "guiding national values" in the collective memory – not only in politics, but in culture as well. For even Goethe was, in his time, known as more of a Hessian and a European than as a German. And the beloved question as to whether the Islamic religion and the Turkish society could "somehow" be part of a new Europe should be discussed neither with warped geographical arguments nor with Old Frankish, occidental ones. For both geopolitics and history could allow for an almost endless number of arguments both for and against. In the social reality, in contrast, faithful Moslems and Turkish people are already Europeans by the millions and quite self-evidently – be they simple migrants, Turkish participants in the Eurovision Song Contest, soccer players in the European Champions League, or even religious zealots.

But whatever they are, most of them became so here, in Europe. Thus the decision as to what is "European" (insofar as it needs to be answered) can only be a political one, and it has to be founded in a cultural perspective.

This demonstrates our own, in many ways truly "European" biography. It is built upon literature and music, travel and television, migration networks and Internet contacts, films and sports – constantly, daily, anew. It will be a biography with ever more European know-how: one knows where Porto and Bruges are through tourist visits, feature articles, or from the topography of the Champions League. Whoever visits a European city instinctively seeks a market place or a similar historical center – usually with success and rightfully so, for here, in contrast to American and Asian cities, the historical model of the "European city" is of one with a fixed center. And the educational coming-of-age as well as the lifestyles, above all of the younger generations, take on an



increasingly European form.

Characteristic European landscapes of vacations, history, lifestyles, and cuisine have long since been a component of biographical experience and memory. And the Euro-landscape of the common currency is perhaps boring, but also reassuring. To this extent, we already possess various European "world views", which often merely need to be more strongly raised into consciousness from the unconscious. For the irony is that these similarities often take precisely the form of differences, seemingly grave differences at first. Thus, on the one hand the political history of Europe in the last 60 years has meant in many respects a history of "divided" biographies in the West and, above all, in East Europe: divided at first by the political division and the ensuing divergence in world views and conceptions an individual's life; then divided once more by the devaluation of the "socialist years" after 1990, which for many have become empty in retrospect. Just as many East European societies attempted to erase the socialist period from their history, so did many people with their own life stories. In order to preserve an employment position, the family, or even the social esteem of others, the "socialist" components of biographies were often faded out. It is only gradually today that we are learning that this chapter of (East) European history should by no means be erased from our collective memory as a putative "aberration" – and furthermore, that this biographical "schizophrenia" is a collective one, having arisen out of mutual confusions, that, in turn, also bind us together.

Finally, Europeanization also means, above all, cultural exchange and social encounter. It means adopting the models and fashions of others, such that at the end we can no longer recognize the starting point and can no longer seriously ask what is "ours" and what "foreign." Cultural traits are often completely unconsciously adopted, and the ensuing connections and mixtures of a linguistic, intellectual, aesthetic, legal, and political nature have long been a part "of us." This naturally also holds for the connections between people. As co-workers, friends, partners, or family, one rarely asks to see a passport.

But such connections and mixtures don't occur by accident and without preconditions. Instead, they build upon the foundation of historical knowledge gathered in the "old village of Europe": that is, in the first "global village" of the traveling

bourgeoisie of the 17th and 18th centuries. This village and its surroundings have since then been continually extended and broadened. How far – that has been and is debatable!