

CHAPTER 4

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SPECTRES OF EUROPE:
EUROPE'S PAST, PRESENT
AND FUTURE

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'Europe has always been a term that designates what Europe *will be*, or would like to be, or should be. The figure of Europe has historically always been *a task*.'

Massimo Cacciari¹

'European: he who is nostalgic for Europe.'

Milan Kundera²

The relationship between past, present, and future has always been essential in defining European identity: what Europe was, where it 'began', and where it 'ended'. Presumed temporal divides have often served, indeed, as surrogates for spatial and political distinction. Ever since the late eighteenth century, the division of Europe into 'East' and 'West' bespoke not only a particular geography but also a particular temporal divide.³ As Maria Todorova argued in her *Imagining the Balkans*, the 'East' came to be identified 'with industrial backwardness, lack of advanced social relations and institutions typical for the developed capitalist West, irrational and superstitious cultures unmarked by Western Enlightenment'. This, she suggested, 'added an additional vector in the relationship between East and West: time, where the movement from past to future was not

¹ Massimo Cacciari, 'Europa o filosofia', in Luigi Alici and Francesco Totaro (eds), *Filosofi per l'Europa* (Macerata: Edizioni Università di Macerata, 2006), 21–33.

² Milan Kundera, *Lart du roman* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986).

³ See Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) and Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilisation on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).

merely motion but evolution from simple to complex, backward to developed, primitive to cultivated.⁴

Although such explicitly colonial metaphors have (largely) disappeared, the habit of defining Europe and Europeans within a particular spatio-temporal matrix has tended to re-emerge in moments of geopolitical flux. For instance the transitions of the early 1990s were inscribed within a distinct understanding of the eastern and central Europe states as somehow 'delayed', 'not-yet-European',⁵ having to 'learn' European mores and behaviours (social, political, economic).⁶ Post 9/11 attempts at drawing lines in Europe, such as Donald Rumsfeld's evocation of 'New' and 'Old' Europes (on the eve of the invasion of Iraq) also rehearsed not only a geopolitical but also a spatio-temporal divide.⁷

In this chapter, I discuss changing understandings of Europe in (and through) time, stressing *how different understandings of Europe's relation to its past, present, and future have been reflected in radically different geopolitical visions for Europe*. This becomes particularly important as Europe begins to project itself as a global actor, invoking a distinctly European geopolitical imagination and vision of world order. As with all geopolitical imaginations, Europe's self- and other- understandings invoke particular constellations of past, present, and future. I will argue that contemporary visions of Europe's role in the world (in particular, the geographical imaginations of Europe's presumed 'spaces of responsibility') are inescapably bound up with certain historical shadows, but also rely in great part on distinct 'spectres' of a future to come.⁸

Over the past two decades (more or less since the demise of the cold war order), a number of leading European thinkers have attempted to trace the 'geo-philosophy' of the European idea focusing on the idea(l) of Europe as a *civitas futura*, as Italian philosopher and political theorist (and long-term Mayor of Venice) Massimo Cacciari defined it in his seminal *Geofilosofia dell'Europa*.⁹ Cacciari is not the only contemporary European thinker to have described Europe in the future tense: Reinhart Koselleck has

⁴ Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 12. See also Slovenian anthropologist Bozidar Jezernik's *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers* (London: Saqi, 2003).

⁵ For a discussion, see Michael Burawoy and Katherine Verdery (eds), *Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Post-Socialist World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999) and Iver Neumann, *Uses of the Other: 'The East' in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

⁶ Narratives of this presumed temporal–evolutionary divide re-emerged full force in the early 2000s, in the lead-up to the Eastern and Central European states' accession to the EU. See Merje Kuus, *Geopolitics Reframed: Security and Identity in Europe's Eastern Enlargement* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006).

⁷ Luiza Bialasiewicz and Claudio Minca, 'Old Europe, New Europe: For a Geopolitics of Translation', *Area* 37:4 (2005), 365–72.

⁸ In the Derridean sense of 'spectrality' as 'the non-contemporaneity with itself of the living present'. See Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (London: Routledge, 1994), xix.

⁹ Massimo Cacciari, *Geofilosofia dell'Europa* (Milan: Adelphi, 1994).

also suggested that Europe is and always has been a *comunitas in itinere* that holds in the future tense the ‘true’ solution to its problems and contradictions.¹⁰ For Koselleck, Europe is a concept that has always been bound to both ‘experience’ (*Erfahrung*) as well as ‘expectation’ (*Erwartung*). In Europe’s (self-)imagination, Koselleck has argued, the two categories are not exclusive, but rather co-constitutive. While ‘experience’ is ‘present past, the events of which have been incorporated and can be remembered,’ ‘expectation’ ‘occurs in the present, while aiming at the future, at what is not yet. It is . . . future made present—“presented” future.’¹¹

The work of French sociologist and philosopher Edgar Morin offers a similar conception of Europe. In his *Penser l’Europe*, Morin suggests that Europe ‘makes itself one,’ not in opposition to some external enemy, ‘but rather in [permanent] struggle against itself’;¹² in particular, against its past and its ‘future to come.’ Citing Czech philosopher Jan Patočka, Morin argues that what ‘makes Europe uniquely Europe,’ is the awareness that ‘the problem of History cannot be resolved. It must remain.’¹³ Zygmunt Bauman’s characterization of Europe as *An Unfinished Adventure* (the title of his 2004 book) also engages with the notion of a ‘never-accomplished’ Europe. He argues that the ‘essence of Europe’ has always tended 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.’ Europe, he suggests:

is the sole social entity that in addition to *being* a civilisation also *called itself* ‘civilisation’ and looked at itself as civilisation, 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, ‘civilisation’ (or ‘culture’) . . . is a continuous process—forever imperfect yet obstinately struggling for perfection—of *remaking the world*.¹⁴

It is important to recognize the genealogy of such understandings of Europe as an ideal to come. Interwar appeals to Europe as a space–time of ‘un-actualised possibility’ (a continent forever in tension between its ‘reality’ and its ‘ideality,’ as Paul Valéry

¹⁰ See Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985) and his *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

¹¹ Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1979), 355. See also the discussion in Anders Schinkel, ‘Imagination as a Category of History: an Essay Concerning Koselleck’s Concepts of *Erfahrungsraum* and *Erwartungshorizont*’, *History and Theory* 44:1 (2005), 42–54.

¹² Edgar Morin, *Penser l’Europe*, 2nd edn (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 56.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 155. See also the analysis in Luiza Bialasiewicz, ‘Europe as/at the Border: Trieste and the Meaning of Europe’, *Social and Cultural Geography* 10:3 (2009), 325–42.

¹⁴ Zygmunt Bauman, *Europe, An Unfinished Adventure* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 7–8, emphasis in the original.

imagined it¹⁵), as too ideas of Europe as a unique laboratory of/for peace are being replayed today, not only in philosophical reflection but also within Europe's own institutional attempts at political and geopolitical self-definition. Over the past decade, Europe has been variously characterized as a 'civilian' (or 'civil') power, a 'normative' power, a 'transformative power'¹⁶—*ideal* geopolitical imaginations that, nonetheless, increasingly exert *real* geopolitical effects. As Bachmann and Sidaway have argued, it is important to understand how such imaginations 'simultaneously internalise and occlude prior visions of Europe and European world roles';¹⁷ precisely, I will suggest, by playing with distinct constellations of pasts, presents, and futures. In the next sections, I present three moments in the evolution of understandings of Europe as an ideal space-time: dreams of Europe in late-imperial Austria (and their contemporary hauntings); the Europe 'past its past' discourse in post-World War II European geopolitics; and, finally, post-cold war (and post-9/11) imaginations of Europe as a 'force for good'.

EUROPE, PAST: FROM HABSBURG MYTH TO EUROPEAN MYTH

This continent to which so many owe so much carries a great debt itself and its needs time to make up for its sins. We passionately wish to give it this time; a time in which one blessing after the other can spread itself over the earth; a time so victorious that no one in the whole world would ever have reason to curse the name of Europe again. Four men that I can't detach myself from have in my time belonged to this delayed, this real Europe.

Elias Canetti¹⁸

¹⁵ See Paul Valéry, 'La crise de l'esprit' (1919) and 'Note, ou l'Européen' (1924), in *Variété. Essais quasi politiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957). Reprinted in Yves Hersant and Fabienne Durand-Bogaert (eds), *Europes. De l'Antiquité au XXe Siècle. Anthologie Critique e Commentée* (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 2000). For a discussion, see Paul Lutzeler, *Der Schriftsteller als Politiker* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1997) and his *Kontinentalisierung. Das Europa der Schriftsteller* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2007). Valéry's work has been an important source of inspiration for a number of contemporary European philosophers, including Jacques Derrida in *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992).

¹⁶ See, among others, Veit Bachmann and James Sidaway, 'Zivilmacht Europa: a Critical Geopolitics of the European Union as a Global Power', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 34:1 (2009), 94–109; Thomas Diez, 'Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering "Normative Power Europe"', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 33:3 (2005), 613–36; Zaki Laidi, *La Norme Sans la Force* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 2005).

¹⁷ Bachmann and Sidaway, 'Zivilmacht Europa', 106.

¹⁸ Elias Canetti, in Sture Allen, *Nobel Lectures, Literature 1981–1990* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 1994).

When Elias Canetti received the 1981 Nobel Prize for Literature, he cited ‘Europe’ as the most important source of his authorship. As Jeppe Ilkjaer notes, this may appear ‘a surprising reference, [if] only because Canetti was born in a Jewish ghetto in the outskirts of the Ottoman Empire and carried a Turkish passport most of his life’. The ‘Europe’ Canetti alludes to, moreover, is a particular creature: as Ilkjaer points out, ‘something [which is] behind schedule or not in time . . . something that falls behind without Canetti ever stating exactly what it is trying to reach’.¹⁹

Canetti’s work has been the subject of countless critical studies highlighting his contribution in warning of the perils of modern totalitarian ideologies; of all attempts at enforced unity.²⁰ In his memoir *The Tongue Set Free: Remembrance of a European Childhood*, Canetti writes about his precocious awareness of the national passions that begin to pull apart the Ottoman Empire, an almost atavistic fear of the Empire’s dismantling and the partitioning of people and territories that would necessarily follow. Europe figures powerfully in his work as both something that *precedes* the age of nationalisms—and as a future *to come*. Canetti’s ideal imagination of Europe is detached, however, from any assumption of the existence—or superiority—of a singular ‘European culture’. Europe, above all, is a *space–time of possibility*.

In great part, Canetti’s understanding of Europe draws directly on the imaginations of the ‘four men’ that he cites as his most important influences in the Nobel acceptance speech: the writers Hermann Broch, Franz Kafka, Karl Kraus, and Robert Musil.²¹ As some of the most perceptive analysts of the declining Habsburg Empire, the work of these authors focused on what they described in varying ways as the moment of twilight of European culture: to use Broch’s terms, ‘the dusk before the night’. Nonetheless, they also imagined its future transcendence. Indeed, in many of these works, ‘Europe’ and ‘European culture’ manifest themselves as stand-ins for the disintegrating Habsburg Empire or, more accurately, its myth.

As Claudio Magris has argued, the Habsburg myth always served a double, potent function, *both geopolitical and ideal*. The late-Habsburg literature to which Canetti appeals engages precisely this double dimension: on the one hand, these are narratives of disintegration, decline, dissolution, loss (of a centre, of particular values, of certainties, of the ‘world of Security’ described by Stefan Zweig,²² and even of territory). On the

¹⁹ Jeppe Ilkjaer, ‘The Late Europe: Elias Canetti and the Ordering of Time and Space in *Auto Da Fe*’, in Nele Bemong, Mirjam Truwant and Pieter Vermeulen (eds), *Re-Thinking Europe. Literature and (Trans)National Identity* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 223.

²⁰ In particular, his *Crowds and Power (Masse und Macht, 1960)* and *Auto Da Fe (Die Blendung, 1936)*. For a critical reassessment, see William Collins Donahue, *The End of Modernism: Elias Canetti’s Auto Da Fe* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). See also Canetti’s autobiographical trilogy: *The Tongue Set Free; The Torch in My Ear* and *The Play of the Eyes* (London: Picador, 1989).

²¹ The works that Canetti appeals to in particular are Hermann Broch’s (1931) trilogy *The Sleepwalkers*; Franz Kafka’s (1926) *The Castle*; Karl Kraus’s (1926) *The Last Days of Mankind* and Robert Musil’s (1932) *The Man without Qualities*.

²² Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern: The World of Yesterday* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1964).

other, however, the works of these writers are, as Magris notes, ‘morality plays’: describing a world that *was and should again be*, masterfully blending the literary and extra-literary, description and prescription, past, present, and future.²³ As Ilkjaer points out, neither Canetti nor the authors to whom he alludes speak directly ‘of the creation of a European Utopia or a certain type of state; rather, the idea of Europe is a way to reflect, observe, and write in the absence of such a social and national order.’²⁴ *Europe, then, is evoked as an ideal space–time against which to set current failings; Europe becomes a foil to the absence of a certain ideal order.* In this sense, it becomes a direct descendant of the Habsburg myth.

As its foremost scholars have suggested, the Habsburg myth was not so much an alteration or deformation of reality or an attempt to extract some supposed metahistorical ‘truth’, but rather ‘the sublimation of an entire society into a picturesque, safe and orderly fairy-tale world.’²⁵ The Habsburg myth was not only one which *derived* from an ideal space–time, but also one upon which that space–time was *actively built* in practice. Imperial Austria was a place and a time indelibly marked by what Franz Werfel would term its ‘superior ideal’: the attempt to reinstate ‘God’s reign upon the Earth, in the unity of all peoples’; the antithesis of ‘the nation-state which is, in its very essence, demonic and, as such, idolatrous and menacing.’²⁶ The Austro–Hungarian Empire, Robert Musil’s ‘Kakania’, presented itself as the rightful heir of the spirit of the Holy Roman Empire, embodying both the universalism of European culture and playing the role of mediator between East and West. Its paternalistic myth of ‘the peoples’ ran, moreover, counter to the very ideals upon which nationality and nationhood were founded. Emperor Franz Josef’s invocation of *Meine Völker* thus served not merely as the symbol but also as the fundamental ideological basis of the imperial project—both its spiritual support and its propaganda tool in the struggle against the emergent ideal of the modern territorial nation-state.

Above all, the Habsburg vision provided an alternative vision of governance and community, opposing a dynastic ideal (a ‘historical unity’ representing an organic pluricultural, pluri-ethnic, and multinational totality, cemented by the legitimacy of the ruling house and a web of geopolitical alliances), to the emergent Prussian statist ideal, with its particularism, its romanticization of the one and only (German) *Volk*, its idealization of the ties of blood, soil, and belonging. As Franz Grillparzer (whose literary works were ordained by the Habsburg authorities as emblematic of the essence of the Austrian spirit—required reading in all imperial schools and adorning the shelves of every respectable bourgeois home) admonished in his 1848 drama *Libussa*, ‘the itinerary of modern culture goes from humanity to bestiality passing through nationality’. As Magris has argued, the

²³ Claudio Magris, *Il mito asburgico nella letteratura austriaca moderna* (Turin: Einaudi, 1963).

²⁴ Ilkjaer, ‘The Late Europe’, 225.

²⁵ See Magris, *Il mito asburgico*; see also Jacques Le Rider, *Modernité viennoise et crises de l’identité* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990) and his *Mitteleuropa: storia di un mito* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995).

²⁶ Franz Werfel, *Aus der Dämmerung einer Welt* (1936), 14.

Habsburg Empire asked of its subjects ‘that they not only be Germans, Ruthenians, or Poles, but something more, something above’; it required ‘a true *sacrificium nationis*’. It was a supranational ethico-cultural *oikumene* that strove to transcend the nation both as an exclusive territorial ideal and as the exclusive claimant of identity; it was the empire of many crowns and many languages which intoned together the *Gotterhalte*; the land where ‘everyone was born *zwölfstimmig*—with 12 tongues, and 12 souls.’²⁷

The disintegration of the Imperial project in 1918 is thus seen by many as the end of a world: Iain Bamforth recounts Joseph Roth’s comment that the 1914–18 war was called a ‘world’ war ‘not because the entire world had conducted it but because, owing to it, we all lost a world, our world.’²⁸ Nonetheless, in the realm of literature, this lost world is inscribed both as absence, but also as a space–time of expectation (in Koselleck’s terms); a spectre of future possibility, as Derrida would have it.²⁹ The Habsburg author whose writings perhaps best express this tension is Robert Musil and it is not accidental that his work has received renewed prominence since the early 1990s, a time of profound European soul-searching with the demise of the Cold War order.³⁰ What is particularly interesting is that the renewed attention to Musil’s work over the past two decades has come not only from literary critics but also from philosophers and social scientists, probing the political potential of Musil’s writings and their lessons for the present day. The most important figure in this regard has undoubtedly been French philosopher Jacques Bouveresse, whose 1993 book *L’homme probable: Robert Musil, le hasard, la moyenne et l’escargot de l’histoire* (republished to great acclaim in 2004) engages with Musil not simply as a writer of fiction but, rather, as a philosopher of modernity. In particular, Bouveresse has stressed the author’s contribution in imagining alternative futures—a task also taken up by a 2001 book by Jean-Pierre Cometti, *Musil philosophe*, that engages with the writer’s notions of utopia, possibility,—and Europe.³¹

In his *Subject Without Nation: Robert Musil and the History of Modern Identity*, Stefan Jonsson attempts to distil the utopian ideal at the heart of Musil’s oeuvre. The disintegrating (if not already lost) Danubian Empire described by Musil, he argues, is a space–time of

²⁷ Magris, *Il mito asburgico*, 70.

²⁸ See Iain Bamforth, *The Good European: Essays and Arguments* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2006), 40.

²⁹ Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*.

³⁰ The interest in Musil’s work persists: in a recent survey among German critics, Musil’s *The Man Without Qualities* (1930–1932) was voted as the most important work of German literature of the 20th century, and Karl Corino’s biography of the writer has attracted great fanfare: *Robert Musil: Eine Biographie* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 2003).

³¹ Bouveresse has long insisted on the philosophical and ‘cognitive’ function of literature. Novels, according to Bouveresse, furnish unique ways of knowing; they are able to contribute in unique ways to the development of a ‘moral imagination’, much more than political theory. See Jacques Bouveresse, *L’homme probable: Robert Musil, le hasard, la moyenne et l’escargot de l’histoire* (Paris: Seuil, 1993) and his *La Voix de l’âme et les chemins de l’esprit* (Paris: Seuil, 2002); in English, his ‘Robert Musil and the Destiny of Europe’, *European Journal of Philosophy* 1:2 (1993), 200–23. Also, Jean-Pierre Cometti, *Musil philosophe: L’utopie de l’essayisme* (Paris: Seuil, 2001).

forfeited possibility. If Kakania is an empire without name or qualities, it is also a land of possibilities, a country where one speaks in a subjunctive mood, colouring every statement with a wish, and where one regards the nation as a fantasy rather than a reality.³²

Citing Musil:

Naturally, that would have been the moment when a good Kakanian also could have answered the question of what he was by enthusiastically saying: ‘Nothing!’, meaning that Something, which is again set free to make of Kakania everything that was not yet there.³³

As Jonsson argues,

Kakania’s lack of national identity is affirmed as a negativity which, in its turn, is converted into possibilities. The Kakanian is Nothing, a site of lack which does not even have a name, but this nothingness really means a Something which can become Everything.³⁴

He suggests, then, that we should transcend the imagination of Austria–Hungary in *The Man without Qualities* as simply a product of the author’s nostalgia for a ‘lost world’: ‘the images of Kakania are not descriptions of the Austro–Hungarian Empire as it once was but were produced by an intellect operating in an experimental mode’³⁵—and as such *deeply political/geopolitical*. The role of interwar (mainly German-language) literature in imagining—and thus rendering possible/plausible—alternative political futures for Europe has been analysed in depth by Paul Michael Lutzeler in his *Der Schriftsteller als Politiker* as well as his more recent *Kontinentalisierung. Das Europa der Schriftsteller*. Lutzeler’s argument (much like Bouveresse’s) is that the discourse on/of Europe (*Europadiskurs*) that emerges from such writings is ‘an ontological deep structure’, a ‘cultural sediment’, a ‘foundational tradition’ that can be mobilized in times of crisis; that can serve as a very useful political grammar to ‘weave Europe back together’ in moments of disintegration or loss of purpose/meaning.³⁶

In Lutzeler’s interpretation, writers such as Musil, Hermann Broch, Karl Kraus, and Thomas Mann should thus be read *also* as ‘geopolitical scribes’,³⁷ whose imaginations of alternative worlds help make such worlds possible; whose (past) imaginations of geopolitical reality can have real political effects (in the present/future). It is interesting to note

³² Stefan Jonsson, *Subject without Nation: Robert Musil and the History of Modern Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 269.

³³ Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, trans. Sophie Wilkins and Burton Pike (New York: Knopf, 1995), 577.

³⁴ Jonsson, *Subject without Nation*, 269.

³⁵ Musil himself described literature as a ‘vast experimental station for trying out the best ways of being human’ (cited in Jonsson, *Subject without Nation*, 135).

³⁶ Lutzeler, *Der Schriftsteller als Politiker; Kontinentalisierung*.

³⁷ The term comes from Gearoid O’Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

that in Musil's case, it was not only his fictional writings that contributed to imagining other possible worlds, other possible Europes. Karl Corino's biography of the writer highlights Musil's various institutional roles as an active 'intellectual of statecraft':³⁸ from his post as the editor of military magazines intended to boost the patriotic spirit of the Imperial troops during the First World War, to his job in the post-1918 Austrian Republic's Foreign Ministry's press department, to his subsequent posting at the Ministry of Defence, where he was in charge of the 'intellectual training' of the Officer Corps. Musil also penned numerous essays specifically on the European question, imagining an 'ideal Europe able to transcend State and Nation'; a Europe whose past was also the way to its future.³⁹

The reappearance of the myth of Imperial Austria in the 1990s as 'a world experiment which humanity failed to realize'⁴⁰ is worthy of note; in particular, the reasons for which in that moment of geopolitical flux this mythical space-time became 'so strangely attractive to Europeans who have seen their continent being dismembered by nationalism, fascism, Stalin's Iron Curtain, and Milosevic's ethnic cleansings'.⁴¹ All through the 1990s, the Habsburg legacy enjoyed a buoyant revival across post-communist Eastern and Central Europe. In cities such as Budapest, Cracow, Ljubljana, and Prague, a revalorization of what passed as 'Imperial heritage' was the focus of numerous interventions into these cities' urban landscapes, and savvy tourism entrepreneurs promptly cashed in on the fashion for Empire.⁴² The Habsburg model also enjoyed a revival, moreover, as a viable alternative for cross-national political organization following the collapse of the old walls. Indeed, a great number of the collaborative geopolitical initiatives born in Eastern and Central Europe soon after 1989 (such as the Visegrad Group or the Central European Initiative) drew their inspiration precisely within its memory.⁴³ As Predrag Matvejevic noted, for many Eastern and Central Europeans, 'the Habsburg legacy, especially in the early years of the transition, came to represent all that was true, good, beautiful and, above all, European'.⁴⁴ It was both an ideal past, a lost Arcadia, as well as a secret passage to an ideal (European) future, a 'hidden exit out of the intolerable present' (borrowing Jonsson's expression).

³⁸ Again, the term comes from O'Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics*. See Corino, *Robert Musil: Eine Biographie*.

³⁹ See Robert Musil, 'Helpless Europe: A Digressive Journey' (original 'Das hilflose Europa oder Reise vom Hundertsten ins Tausendste', 1922), in Burton Pike and David Luft (eds) *Precision and Soul: Essays and Addresses* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

⁴⁰ Jonsson, *Subject without Nation*, 270.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁴² See Luiza Bialasiewicz, 'Another Europe: Remembering Habsburg Galicja', *Cultural Geographies* 10:1 (2003), 21–44. François Fejtő's evocation of the Imperial past in his *Requiem pour un empire défunt* is illustrative in this regard: Fejtő paints 'an atmosphere of nonchalant cosmopolitanism' in which one would take the train to Vienna, Budapest, or Krakow, spend the weekend in Trieste or Fiume, check in at a hotel in Karlsbad to get a share of Western Europe, or go hiking in the Carpathian mountains to look for Dracula's dwelling, without even leaving the country. François Fejtő, *Requiem pour un empire défunt: Histoire de la destruction de l'Autriche-Hongrie* (Paris: Seuil, 1993).

⁴³ As Lee and Bideleux argue in their contribution to this volume.

⁴⁴ Predrag Matvejevic, *Mondo 'Ex'* (Milan: Garzanti, 1996).

This idealized return to a ‘Europe past’—one that could serve as a paragon/parable for a (new) European future—marked nonetheless *a very important axiological and geopolitical shift in Europe’s post-World War II self-understanding*, for this latter was presaged upon a very different relation to its (both real and ideal) past.

EUROPE, PAST ITS PAST: POSTWAR EUROPEAN GEOPOLITICAL IMAGINATIONS

Writing on Europe’s security identity in the mid-1990s, Ole Wæver, one of the founders of the influential Copenhagen School of International Relations, argued that the geopolitical Other of Cold War Europe was its own past.⁴⁵ The dominant security discourse in Western Europe since the 1950s had been premised, he suggested, on a conception of danger bound to the ‘threat of Europe’s future becoming like Europe’s past’. It was Europe itself that was Europe’s fundamental Other—not ‘the Turk, Russians, Moslems or the East’. *Unlike the articulations of difference found in most nationalist discourse, Europe’s Other was differentiated in time rather than in space.* The geopolitical Other of contemporary Europe was, in other words, the threat of a return to its ‘normal’ pattern of political–territorial relations, based with a mosaic of (inherently belligerent and competitive) nation states, bound within an always tenuous balance of power. The idea that the European balance of power constituted a threat was a novel one: up to the twentieth century, the concept of the balance of power was seen, rather, as a uniquely European political virtue that assured stability and secured pluralism.⁴⁶

Such a geopolitical framing had important implications for the constitution of European identity: as Wæver argued, the ‘quintessentially European’ was, in fact, a negation, with Europe defined by its breaking away from what was (presumably) typical of itself. The European project was thus less defined by a future realization of something ‘typically European’ than by a dialectical negation of what used to be ‘all-too European’. In this sense, the ways in which Europe was being articulated against its past/present/future were quite distinct from the constellations inscribing most narratives of national identity (premised upon, as Slavoj Žižek had surmised some time ago in his characteristically caustic fashion, a Glorious Past and a Promising Future, whose actualization in the Problematic Present was only prevented from coming into being by Them).⁴⁷ In the

⁴⁵ See Ole Wæver, ‘European Security Identities’, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 34 (1996), 103–32; Ole Wæver, ‘Security, Insecurity, and Asecurity in the West European Non-war Community’, in Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds), *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 69–118.

⁴⁶ For a discussion, see Pim den Boer, ‘Europe to 1914: The Making of an Idea’, in Jan van der Dussen and Kevin Wilson (eds), *The History of the Idea of Europe: What is Europe?* (London: Routledge, 1995), 1–56.

⁴⁷ See Slavoj Žižek, ‘Eastern Europe’s Republics of Gilead’, in Chantal Mouffe (ed.), *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community* (London: Verso, 1992); also, Gertjan Dijink, *National Identity and Geopolitical Visions: Maps of Pride and Pain* (London: Routledge, 1996).

case of postwar European geopolitical identity, *it was the break from the past that was being presented as Europe's central, most valuable characteristic*. Certain parts of Europe were, of course, seen as 'leaders' in this respect: in Wæver's words, places and events 'to be hero-ised and positivised as Europe's unique accomplishment'—and, moreover, to be presented as a model to the rest of the world.⁴⁸ I will say more on the transposition of the 'European model' to the rest of the world in the final section, but one more thing needs to be said about *the geopolitical effects* of such an understanding on the European project itself.

If preventing Europe's past from becoming Europe's future was the major threat facing post-World War II Europe, then European integration took on 'a security quality'—and had to be defended at almost any cost;⁴⁹ a highly compelling geopolitical imagination indeed. It is an imagination that maintained its potency long after the generation of politicians that grew up in the shadow of World War II had, for the most part, passed on. Looking at the rhetorical framing of European identity at the turn of the millennium, Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver noted the continuing resonance of Robert Schumann's vision of a 'European federation for the preservation of peace', with German Foreign Affairs Minister Joschka Fisher in 2000 pronouncing that:

The core of the concept of Europe after 1945 was and still is a rejection of the European balance-of-power principle and the hegemonic ambitions of individual states that had emerged following the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, a rejection which took the form of closer meshing of vital interests and the transfer of nation-state sovereign rights to supranational European institutions... A step backwards, even just standstill or contentment with what has been achieved, would demand a fatal price of all EU member states and of all those who want to become members; it would demand a fatal price above all of our people. This is particularly true for Germany and the Germans.⁵⁰

Nonetheless, since the end of the Cold War, the focus of such Euro-organizing efforts has shifted geographical location, with the European transcendence of its past being rewritten into a *new* geopolitical narrative of/for Europe. As Wæver has argued, in such formulations, 'the war/peace = past/future formula' still remains the foundation of Europe's self-definition—only now 'the battleground [has] shifted to

⁴⁸ Certain other places/times of course took on the opposite function: for a discussion of the distinct place of Germany in the 'Europe past its past' discourse, see Thomas Risse and Daniela Englemann-Martin Risse, 'Identity Politics and European Integration: The Case of Germany', in Anthony Pagden (ed.), *The Idea of Europe. From Antiquity to the European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 287–316; Thomas Risse, *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010); also, Maja Zehfuss, 'Remembering to Forget/ Forgetting to Remember', in Duncan Bell (ed.), *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship between Past and Present* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006), 213–30; Maja Zehfuss, *Wounds of Memory: The Politics of War in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁴⁹ Wæver, 'Security, Insecurity, and Asecurity'. See also Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁵⁰ Cited in Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 361.

the outside.⁵¹ This is a key shift, for *it now allows the past to serve as a moral high ground for 'teaching peace'*. It is this rhetorical shift, Wæver argues, that has, for instance, allowed Great Britain to enter into the new geopolitical imaginary of/for Europe. The discursive weight of European integration as an antidote to Europe's past has always been of a different calibre in Britain from other European states, for a number of historical and political reasons. It is interesting to note, then, how British political leaders have begun to adopt a similar language in recent years, albeit applied to Europe's *external* role. Wæver cites the words of then Foreign Secretary Robin Cook during the Kosovo war:

There are now two Europes competing for the soul of our continent. One still follows the race ideology that blighted our continent under the fascists. The other emerged fifty years ago out from behind the shadow of the Second World War. The conflict between the international community and Yugoslavia is the struggle between these two Europes. Which side prevails will determine what sort of continent we live in. That is why we must win.⁵²

Europe now becomes the paladin that will save *others* from their past and that will show them the way to the future:

The other Europe is the Modern Europe. It was founded fifty years ago, in the rubble that was left after the Second World War. We surveyed what was left of our continent. We saw the extermination camps, the piled bodies of the victims and the pathetic masses of survivors. And we made a promise. We vowed Never Again. It was on that pledge that we built the Modern Europe.⁵³

Tony Blair's addresses the following year in Warsaw (October) and Zagreb (November) traced a very similar temporal geography:

The 15 member states of the EU—countries that in the lifetime of my father were at war with one another—are now working in union, with 50 years of peace and prosperity behind us. And now, holding out the prospect of bringing the same peace and prosperity to the Eastern and Central European nations and even to the Balkan countries.⁵⁴

The place of 'the Balkans' in this argument—as a place (in Europe?) where wars still do happen—is a crucial one. As Žižek, Todorova, and Jezernik have argued, the Balkan wars, though often inscribed as an example of the failures of the European project, have actually served to strengthen the 'security argument' underpinning European integration.⁵⁵ In this sense, the Balkans have continued to serve as 'Europe's ghosts' (see Robert

⁵¹ Ole Wæver, 'The Temporal Structure of European Security Identity', paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Honolulu, March, 2005.

⁵² Cited in Wæver, 'Temporal Structure'.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ See also Alex Jeffrey, 'Contesting Europe: The Politics of Bosnian Integration into European Structures', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26:3 (2008), 428–43.

Kaplan's well known characterization), reminding Europeans that war in Europe is still possible; reminding Europe of the risks of abandoning its 'pacific and pacifying' ideology.⁵⁶

The Balkans are not the only site, however, where the role of the past in defining Europe's geopolitical present is being renegotiated in the post-Cold War era. As Eastern and Central European states have become fully fledged members of the European community, they too have complicated the 'Europe's past as its Other' discourse. The resistance of the 'New Europeans' to the mnemonic-political authority of the West in delineating the contents—and (geo)political role—of postwar 'European history' has been seen by many observers as an important attempt at what Bell, Mälksoo, and others have termed an 'ideological decolonization'.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the memorial militancy of states such as Poland has not only challenged Western Europe's rhetorical construction as a model for the whole of Europe (with Western Europe setting the rules of remembrance to the 'New Europeans', even after their formal acceptance into the EU). It has also forcibly re-exhumed many of the pasts that were supposed to have been forgotten or transcended. As Mälksoo has argued, recent Eastern European memory politics

has not always struck a resonant chord among their Western counterparts who have attempted to form a common European identity by 'drawing a line' under World War II. Baltic and Polish memory politics have brought up the controversial and intensely debated comparison between Nazi and Stalinist regimes and their respective crimes, thus contesting the uniqueness of Nazi crimes and questioning the singularity of the Holocaust as *the* crime against humanity of the 20th century.⁵⁸

This exhumation has been seen by many as, in many ways, challenging the progress of the European project,⁵⁹ despite calls in various quarters for a broader European historical consciousness as a precondition for solidarity within the enlarged European polity,⁶⁰ also because the unfreezing of memories in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe has brought forth some very unpleasant ghosts of Europe's past, as Stone compellingly argues in the final chapter of this volume.

⁵⁶ Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts* (New York: Vintage, 1994).

⁵⁷ Duncan Bell, 'Introduction: Memory, Trauma and World Politics', in Bell (ed.), *Memory, Trauma and World Politics*, 1–29; Maria Mälksoo, 'The Memory Politics of Becoming European: The East European Subalterns and the Memory of Europe', *European Journal of International Relations* 15:4 (2009), 653–80.

⁵⁸ Mälksoo, 'Memory Politics', 656.

⁵⁹ See Bell (ed.), *Memory, Trauma and World Politics*; also Richard Ned Lebow, 'The Memory of Politics in Postwar Europe', in Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner and Claudio Fogu (eds), *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 1–39.

⁶⁰ Such as the 2008 declaration of a number of Eastern and Central European MEPs: see Wojciech Roszkowski, György Schöpflin, Tunne Väldo Kelam, Ģirts Valdis Kristovskis, and Vytautas Landsbergis, 'United Europe—United History: A Mission to Consolidate a Common Memory', Declaration by the Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian MEPs at the European Parliament Conference 'United Europe, United History', Tallinn, 22 January 2008.

Europe's post-World War II representation as a (geo)political community that had dispensed with the need for the Other to define its own self has, nonetheless, begun to mutate. In the next section, I discuss the evolution of European geopolitical imaginations in the post-Cold War era, noting in particular the role of the Iraq war in transforming Europe's visions of (and for) itself.

EUROPES, FUTURE I: EUROPE AFTER THE IRAQ WAR

Commenting in a 2008 collection of essays on the 'Geopolitics of Europe's Identity', Russian political theorist Sergei Prozorov argued that 'the profound philosophico-political implications' of the 'Europe past its past' discourse were only now being fully grasped and invoked as a new geopolitical discourse for (what he saw as) an emergent 'European Empire'. To proclaim that the Other is history, he argued,

is to pronounce history itself as the Other. In this way, contemporary Europe becomes a profoundly a-historical, or even an anti-historical project, more eschatological than teleological. According to this logic, all history is recast as a primitive period of error, madness and violence, whose transcendence ushers in a new order of freedom, security and justice that marks a veritable end of history.⁶¹

For 'what is this history that is presently "othered"?' he asked.

It is nothing other than a history of spatial othering of the division of Europe into a plurality of sovereign states separated by territorial boundaries, which also have served as the boundaries of identity, containing particularistic political communities whose sovereign equality precluded the possibility of the existence of any overarching political identity above them.⁶²

The contemporary European project was simply constituted by a division of a different sort, Prozorov suggested:

A strict boundary is drawn between the past age, in which boundaries of various kinds were constitutive of the necessarily particularistic identities, and the present moment, in which boundaries must be effaced in the project of the unbounded expansion of the universalist liberal-democratic identity. Moreover, this universalist identity apparently exists outside both space and time, since it no longer

⁶¹ Sergei Prozorov, 'De-Limitation: The Denigration of Boundaries in the Political Thought of Late Modernity', in Noel Parker (ed.), *The Geopolitics of Europe's Identity: Centres, Boundaries, Margins* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 27. See also Sergei Prozorov, *The Ethics of Post-Communism: History and Social Praxis in Russia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009).

⁶² Prozorov, 'De-Limitation', 27.

practices spatial ‘othering’ and has dispensed with history in a temporal ‘othering.’⁶³

Crucially, such understandings of the European project carry with them concrete geopolitical implications that extend also beyond Europe, as Europe projects itself as a ‘universal model’ for the rest of the world still struggling with its pasts. The key moment marking this shift, Prozorov suggested, came with the Iraq war, *signalling a fundamental break in the postwar constitution of Europe’s geopolitical identity—and its relation to its past.*

Prozorov was not the only one to make these points, of course, for a number of prominent European commentators had already advanced similar arguments on the eve of the war in 2003, from Etienne Balibar and Tzvetan Todorov, to Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Habermas. The invasion of Iraq was singled out by these commentators as a particularly important Euro-organizing moment for two key reasons. First, they argued, what the mass protests against the war made evident (beyond the sheer strength of feeling) was the crystallization, for the first time, of a European public opinion: the emergence, in practice, of a common ‘European public sphere’ (to cite Jürgen Habermas’s assessment of the events).⁶⁴ The early European reaction against the war was also seen, however, as a strong stand against the American vision for the Middle East and the US’s role in that part of the world and thus the emergence—here, too, for the first time—of *an alternative vision and geopolitical positioning for Europe.* Europe and the United States had long been geopolitical mirrors to each other, in a play of codependence and co-constitution ongoing since the end of the Second World War. What is more, the American role in liberating Europe had always been an important part of the ‘Europe past its past’ discourse.⁶⁵ The invasion of Iraq marked an important break in that relationship: *it was now Europeans that had to ‘come to the aid of their American cousins’; that had to offer lessons in democracy.*⁶⁶

But the war also revealed some breaks *within* the European whole. The most important was the divide that made itself apparent between a significant part of the public opinion in the countries of the EU15, and popular feelings within the ‘New European’ states in Eastern and Central Europe (to use Donald Rumsfeld’s infamous characterization),

⁶³ Ibid., 28.

⁶⁴ Whose absence had long been bemoaned by theorists of the European project and political leaders alike: see Luiza Bialasiewicz, Stuart Elden and Joe Painter, ‘The Constitution of EU Territory’, *Comparative European Politics* 3:3 (2005), 333–63.

⁶⁵ As Michael Smith has argued, the United States has long been involved in shaping the geographies—and geopolitical imaginaries—of European integration, with the ‘Atlantic Europe’ of postwar years very much an American creature. See Michal H. Smith ‘European Integration and American Power: Reflex, Resistance and Reconfiguration’, in David Slater and Peter J. Taylor (eds), *The American Century: Consensus and Coercion in the Projection of American Power* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 136–48.

⁶⁶ The expression comes from Timothy Garton Ash, ‘American Blues’, *The Guardian* (18 November 2004); 11; see also Daniel Levy, Max Pensky and John Torpey (eds), *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe. Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War* (London: Verso, 2005).

where an important majority proclaimed themselves much closer to the American position than the ‘Old European’ one, with what was described by some commentators as a ‘mixture of pragmatism and opportunism.’⁶⁷ Three Eastern and Central European states—the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland—were among the signatories of the famous ‘United We Stand’ Letter of Eight, pledging to support the American war effort. The characterization of the divide by then US Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld as that between a ‘New Europe’ (largely corresponding to the Eastern and Central European states, together with Britain, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, and Spain), willing to share the American burden and ‘rise to the challenge’ of the war, and an ‘Old Europe’ (most markedly, France and Germany), cowardly and weak in its convictions, may have been overly simplistic, but it did capture a fundamental break in the European family, and a very different set of attitudes towards the War on Terror. It is a divide that has persisted in the years that followed, marking not only divergent geopolitical understandings (and behaviours) on the part of some of the new EU member states, but also highlighting divergent national understandings of what Europe was—and what it was *for*. The ideal vision of Europe as a ‘special area of human hope’ evoked by the Constitutional Convention—a space where certain rights and values were assured to one and all—apparently did not mean the same thing across the now 25-member strong EU.⁶⁸

One example is particularly revealing. In late November 2006, the European Parliament threatened to impose sanctions on Poland (including a possible suspension of Polish voting rights in the EU) if it continued to refuse to collaborate with an EU Parliamentary inquiry into the alleged web of secret CIA rendition flights and ghost prisons across Europe. Poland, along with Romania, was targeted in particular by the inquiry for supposedly having not only facilitated air transfers of imprisoned terrorists (something that a number of the ‘Old European’ states had done as well) but also for having provided interrogation and detention facilities for the CIA.⁶⁹ The EU Parliamentary inquiry took Poland to task especially for its failure to cooperate in the investigation: Warsaw declined to field any senior government ministers or MPs to answer the commission’s questions and the Polish parliament explicitly decided not to hold an inquiry into the affair.⁷⁰ Continued EU pressure evoked public declarations from

⁶⁷ See the comments of former Polish dissident writer/journalist Adam Michnik, ‘Noi, traditori dell’Europa’, *La Repubblica* (8 April 2003), 17.

⁶⁸ See Bialasiewicz, Elden and Painter, ‘The Constitution of EU Territory’. The extensive Eurobarometer surveys carried out in the years following accession (2006 in particular) highlighted in fact a wide divergence in attitudes on a series of moral and political issues between the ‘New’ and ‘Old’ EU states.

⁶⁹ As reported by Poland’s largest daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*. See Marcin Gadziński, ‘Polska na szlaku tortur CIA’, *Gazeta Wyborcza* (27 November 2006); also, Stephen Grey, *Ghost Plane: The Untold Story of the CIA’s Secret Rendition Programme* (London: Hurst & Co., 2006).

⁷⁰ When questioned by *Gazeta Wyborcza* in the days preceding the release of the results of the investigation, Minister and Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary Defence Committee Przemysław Gosiewski declared the matter to be the exclusive domain of ‘the appropriate national security bodies’ (see the interview in Jarosław Gugała, ‘Gosiewski: W Polsce nie było wiezienia CIA’, *Gazeta Wyborcza* (28 November 2006).

representatives of the Polish right accusing ‘totalitarian Europe’ of ‘bully tactics’ (and counter-responses from other European MEPs branding Poland ‘an American Trojan Horse in Europe’).

We could say that, in this sense, broader geopolitical shifts simply allowed to come to the surface existing differences within Europe. At the same time, however, the ‘geopolitical vertigo’⁷¹ opened up by the War on Terror made *all* Europeans crucially aware of the need to define Europe’s geopolitical identity and its world role in much clearer terms. Debates in the post-2001 period have focused, accordingly, on the question of how Europe’s ‘geopolitical difference’ should be conceived; in the final section, I highlight some key voices in these debates.

EUROPES, FUTURE II: A NEW EUROPEAN PROMISE?

‘Europe... is a projection towards a world always on the horizon, always unattainable. The landscape of Europe is pure(ly) horizon... its history is pure(ly) horizon.’

Maria Zambrano⁷²

‘We are younger than ever, we Europeans, since a certain Europe does not yet exist.’

Jacques Derrida⁷³

In their widely diffused intervention on the eve of the invasion of Iraq, Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida argued that Europe could only define itself by defining a ‘European model’ that transcended the boundaries of Europe: ‘a cosmopolitical order based on the recognition and protection of certain basic rights and the principles of international law... being European should also mean rejecting certain practices, certain violations *wherever* they occur.’⁷⁴

Habermas’s and Derrida’s vision (and its later re-elaboration by the authors themselves as well as others) hinted at a radically new conception of Europe’s geopolitical identity, one that was ‘future oriented... defined by setting off towards the new, rather

⁷¹ The term comes from O’Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics*.

⁷² Maria Zambrano, *La agonía de Europa* (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 2000, orig. 1942).

⁷³ Derrida, *The Other Heading*, 7.

⁷⁴ Habermas and Derrida’s original contribution appeared jointly in the German *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and the French *Liberation* on 31 May 2003 and was subsequently translated and re-printed in a number of other major European newspaper. This piece was followed by a series of editorials written by other leading European commentators, including Umberto Eco, Fernando Savater and Gianni Vattimo, again translated and published across Europe.

than pointing towards a perfect past.⁷⁵ According to Wæver, in the Habermasian/Derridean understanding, the key distinctive feature that Europe could bring to international affairs was not:

some inner quality given by [its] history, but exactly an experience related to this negative identity: the experience of struggling over sovereignty's complexities, and thus being better prepared for the necessary conceptual innovations in international law and world order politics, compared especially to the US that pursues an unsustainable vision of sovereignty.⁷⁶

The (successful) transcendence of its national past had made Europe, in other words, a unique geopolitical subject, a unique 'polity of the future', as Habermas and Derrida termed it.

Another important voice in the 2003 debates on rethinking the European geopolitical subject was French political philosopher Etienne Balibar. In his book *L'Europe, L'Amerique, La Guerre*, Balibar suggested that Europe must reject the essentialized geopolitical identities and civilizational divides inscribed by the War on Terror and reclaim, rather, its role as what he termed an 'evanescent mediator'. It was the role already ascribed to it by many outside of Europe, Balibar argued; those who saw in Europe the only possible alternative to American hegemony and the discourse of a 'clash of civilisations'. Europe could only be a mediator, Balibar suggested, because there is no—and there cannot be—a European identity that can be delimited, distinguished in essential fashion from other identities. This is because there are no absolute borders between a historically and culturally constituted European space and the spaces that surround it. Just as there are no absolute confines to those values, beliefs, and traditions that make up the 'European' inheritance: these, he argued, are present to various degrees, and in various 'reflections', throughout the world. The question then should not be one of tracing the contours of a European identity, but rather that of 'recognising Europe wherever it occurs'.⁷⁷

Such an understanding of Europe has important consequences: it necessarily privileges, Balibar argued, practice over a singular identity; the deployment of 'European ideas', 'European ways of doing', rather than a 'European identity'. Balibar's ideas found close resonance in the work of a number of other authors. Tzvetan Todorov's notion of Europe as a *puissance tranquille* similarly invoked the European geopolitical subject as an 'evolving, becoming order', not 'prescribable but existing in practice'.⁷⁸ As Bertrand Ogilvie has noted, such theorizations challenged in a fundamental way the taken-for-granted ideas about sovereignty, politics, and power—and the spaces within which these are exercised. In Balibar's vision of the 'evanescent mediator', absence (or, better yet, a fading presence) becomes power of a different sort. Europe, in this reading, does not simply constitute itself as just another partner in a series of geopolitical strategies, but

⁷⁵ Wæver, 'The Temporal Structure of European Security Identity'.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Etienne Balibar, *L'Europe, l'Amerique, la guerre* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 2003).

⁷⁸ Tzvetan Todorov, *Le nouveau désordre mondial* (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 2003), 42.

rather as a *realm of possibilities within which conflicts can be transformed*,⁷⁹ Europe seen, then, as a *mediator of (also others') pasts; as a laboratory for the resolution of conflict*.⁸⁰

The idea of Europe as an 'exemplary' model for the world has, nonetheless, been most clearly elaborated in the work of the late Jacques Derrida, and it is with a brief consideration of his writings—and their influence—that I would like to close. In one of his final public addresses, in May 2004, Derrida made an impassioned plea for:

a Europe that can show that another politics is possible, that can imagine a political and ethical reflection that is heir to the Enlightenment tradition, but that can also be the portent of a new Enlightenment, able to challenge binary distinctions and high moral pronouncements.⁸¹

In the address (entitled 'A Europe of Hope') Derrida summoned his audience to 'imagine a different Europe':

I believe that it is without Eurocentric illusions or pretensions, without a trace of European nationalism, indeed without even an excess of confidence in Europe as it now is (or appears in the process of becoming), that we must fight for what this name represents today, with the memory of the Enlightenment, to be sure, but also with the full awareness—and full admission—of the totalitarian, genocidal and colonialist crimes of the past. We must fight for what is irreplaceable within Europe in the world to come so that it might become more than just a single market or single currency, more than a neo-nationalist conglomerate, more than a new military power.⁸²

What was 'irreplaceable' within Europe, in Derrida's words, was precisely its ability to transform itself—and the world; here lay Europe's 'exemplarity' (the 'European Spirit' evoked by Paul Valéry). In *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe* published in 1992, Derrida wrote of the 'paradox' of this exemplarity that, to his mind, brought with it also a host of ethico-political responsibilities: responsibilities to that 'which has been promised under the name Europe' but also the duty to open up this legacy to 'what never was, and never will be Europe'.⁸³ The temporal dimension is of vital importance here. Elaborating his ideas further in 1994 in *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the*

⁷⁹ Bertrand Ogilvie, 'Sans domicile fixe. Entretien avec Etienne Balibar' *Le passant ordinaire* 43 (February/March 2003), 59.

⁸⁰ The ideal of Europe as mediator continues to resonate within the recent work of other theorists of the European project. In their best-selling book *Das kosmopolitische Europa* (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2004; translated into English as *Cosmopolitan Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007); and, interestingly enough, into French as *Pour un Empire Européen*, marking evidently different national understandings of what Europe is for... Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande suggested that Europe can serve as a unique model for the world; can offer a 'unique historical lesson... namely, how enemies can become neighbours' (264). It can offer 'a global alternative to the American way, namely, a European way that accords priority to the rule of law, political equality, social justice, cosmopolitan integration and solidarity' (ibid.)

⁸¹ Jacques Derrida, 'Une Europe de l'espoir', *Le Monde Diplomatique* (3 November 2004), 3.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Derrida, *The Other Heading*, 76–80.

Work of Mourning and the New International, Derrida suggested that a ‘politics of responsibility’ (here, Europe’s) must extend also to the past and future. Justice is due not just to today’s living, he claimed, but also to the dead—the victims of war, violence, extermination, oppression, imperialism, totalitarianism—and to the not-yet-born.

Derrida’s reflections on responsibility and justice were articulated through the figure of the ‘spectre’ (upon which the title of this chapter draws). In Derrida’s understanding, spectres are both those he termed *revenants* (those who return), and *arrivants* (those still to come). The present, he suggested, is unsettled as much by the return of the past as by the imminence of the future. Both temporal dimensions are an integral part of what Derrida terms ‘spectrality’, encompassing at once that which is no longer and that which is not-yet-present: as he put it, ‘the non-contemporaneity with itself of the living present.’⁸⁴ In Derrida’s formulation, the present ‘is never free of vestiges of the past and stirrings of the future but rather constantly filtered through the structures of memory and anticipation.’⁸⁵

According to Derrida, belief in the impermeable solidity (and contemporaneity) of the present has always been key to totalitarian ideologies: every regime would like to eternalize its present in order to rule out the possibility of its future disintegration and to erase the barbarity from which it sprang. Such regimes, he argued, fear spectres. In his attempt to sketch an alternative, ‘exemplary’, politics for Europe, Derrida thus invoked an ethico-political engagement with both past and future; with both ‘memory’ and ‘anticipation’. His call for ‘what is irreplaceable in Europe in the world to come’⁸⁶ thus appealed both to notions of Europe’s unique ‘inheritance’—and its ‘promise’. For Derrida, what can be inherited from a European ‘legacy’ is only its promise: that which it defers, that which it postpones—and thus bequeaths to the future.⁸⁷ Indeed, the ‘Europe to come’ that Derrida calls upon is what he considers a ‘paleonym’: ‘for what we remember—and for what we promise’. This, he argues, in no way weakens Europe’s political/ethical potential: quite the contrary. It is only in its ‘promise’, in that which he terms the realm of ‘im-possibility’, that Europe’s ‘responsibility’ can be exercised. For the exercise of (European) ‘responsibility’ in the realm of the possible becomes simply the execution of an (already given) programme; it is mere political technology, not politics itself.⁸⁸

It is interesting that Derrida’s call has been taken up by European political theorists in sketching out the ‘real’ spaces of Europe’s responsibility (ethical, political, geopolitical).

⁸⁴ Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, xix.

⁸⁵ See the discussion in Ross Benjamin and Heesok Chang, ‘Jacques Derrida, The Last European’, in Andrew Davidson and Himadeep Muppidi (eds), *Europe and Its Boundaries: Words and Worlds, within and beyond* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 61; also, Silvano Petrosino, ‘Scrivere “Europa” con una mano sola. Derrida e l’anticipazione’, in Luigi Alici and Francesco Totaro (eds), *Filosofi per l’Europa* (Macerata: Edizioni Università di Macerata, 2006), 206–17.

⁸⁶ Derrida, ‘Une Europe de l’espoir’.

⁸⁷ Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, 54.

⁸⁸ See the discussion in Silvano Petrosino, *Jacques Derrida e la legge del possibile* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1997).

In recent years (and in particular since the trans-Atlantic break following the invasion of Iraq), in their attempt to define the emergent European geopolitical subject, various political and legal scholars have emphasized the unique malleability of the European space of rights—and the political and geopolitical effects this carries. Scholars of international law such as Emmanuel Decaux have noted, indeed, that the ‘exemplarity’ of the contemporary EU space of rights comes from the fact that it allows (at least potentially) for claims to its law to come from and extend also to ‘non-European’ spaces, subjects, and events. The safeguarding of certain rights and values is opened up *also* to those not currently residing in the present territory of the Union; it is available (*in potentia*) to *all those who call upon ‘Europe’s promise’*; it extends also to the not-yet, ‘im-possibly’, European (to use Derrida’s words).⁸⁹

Writing in early 2010, sixty years on from the adoption of the European Convention on Human Rights, Decaux commented on the evolution of the Convention from its early days to its present incarnation within the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights.⁹⁰ Beyond the new legal mechanisms now available for the enforcement of the Charter’s provisions, what Decaux noted above all was the changing nature of the cases brought before the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) over the past decade: cases that now not only increasingly extended beyond the territorial confines of the current EU-27, but that also stretched beyond the present day, with the Court being called upon to deliberate on events that occurred ten, twenty, even fifty years back.⁹¹ I will cite just one example here, that I believe illustrates well the ways in which Europe is being asked to engage with its spectres—and make the seemingly im-possible possible.

In the spring of 2006, the families of Polish soldiers and intellectuals executed by Stalin’s secret police in Katyń, in one of the Second World War’s most infamous massacres, announced that they would take Russia to the ECHR in order to force a full disclosure of information about the killings. The massacre, perpetrated in April 1940, had been personally ordered by Stalin and took the lives of over 21,000 Polish officers, prominent intellectuals, writers, journalists, teachers, and civil servants. The victims were buried in mass graves, and the USSR authorities blamed the killings on the Nazi occupiers, going as far as reburying the bodies and bulldozing the evidence in order to deflect the blame

⁸⁹ Emmanuel Decaux, ‘Valeurs démocratiques communes et divergences culturelles’, *Questions internationales* 9 (September/October 2004), 32–5.

⁹⁰ Signed into law in Rome on 4 November 1950. See Emmanuel Decaux, ‘La Convention Européenne des Droits de l’Homme’, European Court of Human Rights/Cour Européenne des Droits de l’Homme, CEDH Working Paper, February 2010.

⁹¹ Over the past fifteen years, the European Court of Human Rights has seen a dramatic increase in cases, in particular from Eastern and Central European states, leading some commentators to note that it had become a *de facto* ‘adjudicator of the transition’: see Robert Harmsen, ‘The European Convention on Human Rights after Enlargement’, *International Journal of Human Rights* 5:4 (2001), 18–43. The most recent trend, however, has been a rise in claimants from countries in Europe’s extended ‘Neighbourhood’: from states on the southern shores of the Mediterranean such as Morocco and Tunisia, to former Soviet republics such as Ukraine and Georgia (following the 2008 war, the ECHR received over 2000 claims filed by South Ossetian individuals against Georgia, and an analogous number of claims filed by Georgians against Russia).

from the NKVD. Katyń had long been a prominent marker of Polish suffering during the Second World War, but also of the humiliation of national memory in the forty years of communism when this, as too many other crimes perpetrated by the Soviets before, during and after the war, was simply unspeakable. The European Court was being asked to extend its juridical reach into time and space, to bring justice to events that took place seventy years ago; to bring the ‘promise’ of the Europe-to-come also to those who are no more.

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