

Europe and a Geopolitics of Hope

Luiza Bialasiewicz

1 Hoping for Europe

Hopes and aspirations for Europe have always exceeded actually-existing Europe, both geographically, but also in the latter's capacity (and willingness) to fulfill them. As Maria Zambrano wrote in her 1942 *La agonía de Europa*, Europe is 'a projection towards a world always on the horizon, always unattainable. The landscape of Europe is pure horizon [...] its history is pure horizon' (Zambrano 2000). Over the past three 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 precisely on the idea(l) of Europe as an aspirational *civitas futura*, as Italian political philosopher (and two-term Mayor of Venice) Massimo Cacciari defined it in his seminal *Geofilosofia dell'Europa*.¹

The characterization of Europe as hope or aspirational horizon has not only marked the work of cultural historians and philosophers of the European idea, however. The failed attempt at creating a 'Constitution' for Europe in 2004–2005 also appealed to just such an imaginary in order to frame the European project. The draft document of the Constitutional Convention opened its Preamble by appealing to Europe as a 'special area of human hope': a lofty pronouncement but one that drew upon a much longer series of political imaginaries of the European project as a distinct 'value space' – as Jurgen Habermas (1998, 2001) termed it – or a distinct 'structure of feeling' (as described by Jacques Derrida, 1991, 2010) – that did not and, indeed could not, have set territorial or temporal limits.

As I have argued elsewhere (Bialasiewicz, Elder & Painter 2005), the challenge facing the Constitutional Convention, was a unique one. It was not simply one of finding the right institutional shape, the right territorial 'fix' for today's Europe and, especially, for the Europe to come. It was not simply a question of finding the right borders for the 'special area of human hope'

¹ Cacciari 1994. As Cacciari argued also subsequently, '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' (Cacciari 2006).

that was to be the new Europe. It was, rather, to (at least aspire) to transcend 'hard' territorial understandings of political community altogether. In fact, the reluctance of the Constitutional Convention to trace hard borders for the European project (or to trace these only in part) was remarked upon by many observers: the borders of the 'Europe' to be were, in fact, not defined anywhere in the draft text. The 'bounding' of the European project was defined, rather, in aspirational terms, stating that 'the Union shall be open to all European States which respect its values and are committed to promoting them together' (I-1.2). Rather than specifying the EU's limits territorially, then, the Convention defined a set of basic conditions, known as the Copenhagen Criteria, that any applicant country has to meet: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union (SN 180/1/93).

Since any territorial definition would exclude 'potential' Europeans, the choice of using the Copenhagen Criteria allowed the Convention to define Europe's territorial limits 'aspirationally': open to all those who might become European in the future. Such an open (that is, non-territorial) approach to defining the borders of political community was not to be, however. The failure to adopt the Constitutional Convention's document (that fell hostage to two national referenda, in France and in the Netherlands) certainly reflected, among other things, the persistent discomfort of Member States to cede both institutional but also symbolic capital to the Union in key fields. Apart from the failure of the Constitutional attempt, however, faith in a revived European project as a 'special area of human hope' has also perished over the past decade on Europe's shores, as Europe's borders have become more and more deadly – and European border 'management' more and more inhumane. It has also perished in many Europeans' daily lives, as they have faced the profoundly geographically-unequal effects of the financial crisis.

And yet, Europe continues to inspire hope. To those willing to board smugglers' vessels across the Mediterranean or to entrust their fate to passeurs along the 'Balkan Route'; to protesters on the streets of Kiev, Skopje and Istanbul, Europe remains an aspiration. This dreamt-of 'Europe' is only partially accordant with the boundaries, territorial, as well as formal-institutional, of the current European Union. The 'Europe' hoped for is a set of legal rights and political and economic opportunities (Habermas' hoped-for European 'value space'), but also a set of ideas and aspirations for what 'Europe' could, in potential, be (Derrida's European 'structure of feeling').

2 Practiced 'Europeanism'

In thinking about Europe in aspirational terms, what are today being popularly defined as 'voyages of hope' of those fleeing to Europe, need to be understood as just the most recent episode in a much longer history and a much wider geography of longing 'for Europe': from those who tried to re-make Europe in new worlds, to Europeans expelled from Europe (by history, not geography), to those for whom Europe represents hope today (whether within or beyond the EU).² As the late Zygmunt Bauman has argued, to understand the essence of Europe, we should not consider the current-thing-called-Europe, but rather 'the practice of Europeanism'.³ Indeed, what Bauman warns against, is the presumption of a total and complete correspondence of a specific geographical representation (i.e. what we conceive of as 'Europe' today) to all that is 'European'. As Bauman argues, 'the 'essence of Europe' tends to run ahead of the 'really existing Europe': it is the essence of 'being a European' to have an essence that always stays ahead of reality, and it is the essence of European realities to always lag behind the essence of Europe' (5). What is more, while the 'really existing Europe' – most visibly, the European Union, but more broadly 'that Europe of politicians, cartographers and all its appointed or self-appointed spokespeople' may be conceived as 'a geographical notion and a spatially confined entity, the 'essence of Europe' has never been either the first, or the second. You are not necessarily a European just because you happen to be born or to live in a city marked on the political map of Europe. But you may be European even if you've never been to any of those cities' (5).

He suggests, indeed, that it is in the conscious participation in what he terms 'the practice of Europeanism' (7), as an always evolving project of making and re-making something called 'Europe', that we can locate 'Europe' – wherever such practice (and its practitioners) may be located. To underline his point, Bauman cites Jorge Luis Borges, as 'one of the most eminent among the great Europeans in every except the geographical sense', who 'wrote of the 'perplexity' that cannot but arise whenever the 'absurd accidentality' of an identity tied down to a particular space and time is pondered, and so its closeness to a fiction rather than to anything we think of as 'reality' is inevitably revealed. This may well be a universal feature of all identities [...] but in the case of 'European identity' that feature, that 'absurd accidentality', is perhaps more blatant and perplexing than most' (5).

² For a fuller discussion, see Bialasiewicz 2012.

³ Baumann 2004, 7. Further page references in the text.

The example of Borges may highlight, as Bauman suggests, the ‘absurd accidentality’ of European identity and its extensions across the world. But we need to also consider such extensions as part of a wider (again, both geographically and historically) project not just of making Europe and Europeans, but of also re-making the world ‘as Europe’. Citing Polish philosopher and historian Krzysztof Pomian Bauman reminds us that Europe was

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. (7–8)

Bauman is not the first to have remarked on this aspect of ‘European identity’ or ‘culture’. His argument draws heavily on Heidegger’s distinction between the (taken-for-granted) realm of the *zuhanden* and that of the ‘brightly lit stage of the *vorhanden* (that is, the realm of things that [...] need to be watched, handled [...] moulded, made different than they are)’. It is here that we can locate ‘Europe’s discovery of culture’ – a culture that is self-aware, and that demands action: ‘the world as *zuhanden* forbids standing still; it is a standing invitation, even a command, to act’. It is, Bauman suggests (9), precisely this ‘discovery of culture as an activity performed by humans on the human world’ that makes Europe unique: ‘the discovery [awareness] that all things human are human-made’ (emphasis in original); ‘an incessant activity of [...] making of the world an object of critical inquiry and creative action’ (11). But ‘it was not just culture that happened to be Europe’s discovery/invention. Europe also invented the need and the task of culturing culture. [Europe] made culture itself the object of culture ... the human mode of being-in-the world itself was recast [...] as a problem to be tackled. Culture – the very process of the production of the human world – was [thus itself] made into an object of human theoretical and practical critique and of subsequent cultivation’ (11).⁴

What does this mean? Bauman suggests that ‘the outcome is that we, the Europeans, are perhaps the sole people who (as historical subjects and actors of culture) have no identity – fixed identity, or an identity deemed and believed to be fixed: ‘we do not know who we are’, and even less do we know what we

⁴ For further discussion of the ‘self-awareness’ of ‘European culture’, see the sections by Cacciari and De Vitiis in Alici & Totaro 2006, 21–34 and 189–204.

can yet become and what we can yet learn that we are. The urge to know and/or to become what we are never subsides, and neither is the suspicion ever dispelled about what we may yet become following that urge. Europe's culture is one that knows no rest; it is a culture that feeds on questioning the order of things – and on questioning the fact of questioning it' (12). And such an aware, self-conscious and self-constituting identity is indeed very different from national-territorial 'cultures'/identities:

another kind of culture, a silent culture, a culture un-aware of being a culture, a culture that keeps the knowledge of being a culture a secret, a culture working anonymously or under an assumed name, a culture stoutly denying its human origins and hiding behind the majestic edifice of a divine decree and heavenly tribunal, or signing an unconditional surrender to intractable and inscrutable 'laws of history' [...] (12)

The 'self-awareness', the self-doubting that characterizes European cultural identity, according to Bauman, has most recently been ascribed as a distinguishing marker also of Europe's geopolitical identity, as a number of prominent commentators have suggested over the past two decades. In the section that follows, I will briefly review some of their arguments, before moving on to a consideration of Europe's current geopolitical moment and persona.

3 A Doubting Actor?

Although political as well as scholarly reflection on Europe's possible geopolitical role is quite recent, the European integration project has had an external component seeking to promote a collective European role in the world since its very inception. The signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 established the European Development Funds (EDF) as a first common framework towards what were then mostly colonies and former colonies of European countries. The first explicit geopolitical visions for Europe started to emerge in the late 1960s and early 1970s, with the most prominent, in many ways, being François Duchène's vision (1972, 1973) of Europe as a global 'civilian power'. Duchène (much like Bauman) described 'Europe as a process' whose goal was to 'domesticate relations between states, including those of its own members and those with states outside its frontiers' (Duchène 1973, 19–20). This 'domestication of international relations' referred to the transfer of 'the interior level of civilianized structures [of domestic policy conduct] to the international system' (Kirste & Maull 1996). Based on the goal of creating an interdependent area

of peace and prosperity, Duchene observed and advocated an international system of regulated interactions centred around institution-building, multilateralism and supranational integration, democracy, human rights and the restriction of the use of force in international politics.

Duchene's ideas have since served as a key point of reference for a range of geopolitical visions of global 'EU'rope (cf. Bachmann & Sidaway 2009; Manners 2010). Many such visions calling upon an integrated Europe to play a leading role in world politics tend to forget, nevertheless, Europe's imperial history as the 'most civilized and best governed of all the world regions', as Bassin (1991) has argued and therefore with the innate right to 'teach' its model of political and economic organization to the rest of the world. Indeed, as Hooper and Kramtsch have suggested, to those viewing the European project 'from the outside', 'EU'rope often appears

oddly un-reflexive about its own imperialisms, past and present [...] The result is a geopolitical analysis which not only precludes recognition of the spatiotemporal complexities of empire, but masks Europe's current complicity in the production of exploitative and oppressive relations within as well as beyond its newly minted frontiers. (Hooper & Kramtsch 2007, 527)

The lack of self-reflection remarked upon by Hooper and Kramtsch has, indeed, been confirmed in various empirical studies of perceptions of the EU's 'actor-ness' abroad: in a wide-ranging research project on 'The External Image of the EU', Lucarelli and Fioramonti examined external perceptions of the EU, finding that the EU's role towards developing countries was, more often than not, criticized for 'double standards, protectionism and the vigorous pursuit of European economic interests' (Fioramonti & Poletti 2008; also, Lucarelli & Manners 2006).

This stands in stark contrast to the EU's self-representation as a 'helping hand' for the Global South (European Commission 2007). At the same time, Lucarelli and Fioramonti's research also revealed, however, positive perceptions of the EU with respect to its model of political-economic organization and its commitment to 'civilian' standards in international policy conduct, albeit its influence in this realm was generally regarded as limited.

Such apparent disjuncture between the appeal of the EU's 'geopolitical model' and concurrent resentment towards its 'geo-economic power' has been also noted by more recent studies of external perceptions of the EU's role (cf. Bachmann & Müller 2015). This is particularly stark in the EU's extended 'Neighbourhoods', South as well as East. I have written extensively elsewhere

on the geopolitics of the European Neighbourhood Policy (Bialasiewicz 2009; Bialasiewicz, Giaccaria & Minca 2013), noting how the ENP from its outset has been framed around what Tassinari (2005) has termed ‘the EU’s political and ethical *mission civilisatrice*’ (or, more recently, that which Dimitrovova and Kramsch refer to as the EU’s ‘universalization mission’, deployed through the rule of norms and standards in its postcolonial spaces of action).⁵ The EU’s image as a normative and civil power and as a ‘force for good’ in international affairs, has also been (as was noted in the introduction) profoundly tarnished by its increasingly violent policies of border and migration ‘management’. Romano Prodi’s hopeful characterization of the nascent European Neighbourhood space in the far-off 2003 as a ‘ring of friends’ has now been re-christened as the ‘ring of fire’, as *The Economist* termed it in the summer of 2015. The EU’s Neighbourhood is no longer envisioned in policy-speak as ‘a space of opportunity’ (whether for economic integration or, in more optimistic times, for the advancement of norms and values), but rather as a space of dangers to be contained, and whose possible ‘spill-over’ to EU shores and territory must be prevented at all costs.⁶

It would be difficult to conceive today of the EU’s geopolitics in ‘hopeful’ or ‘aspirational’ terms. It is thus useful to cast our gaze back slightly over a decade, to the early 2000s, when a prominent number of leading European intellectuals imagined – hoped? – precisely such a role for the EU. It was indeed the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the ensuing ‘war on terror’ that served as a key Euro-organizing moment, certainly in the geopolitical arena. The Iraq war, on the one hand, unleashed a symbolic assault on the EU by U.S. neo-conservatives (but also European neo-populists), deriding the ambiguity and weakness of the European role in the international arena, depicting a cowering, doubtful (and highly feminized) Europe, lacking a clear sense of strategic purpose and geopolitical identity (Elden & Bialasiewicz 2006; Bialasiewicz & Minca 2005). But it was also the war that provided the occasion for some of the most original and wide-ranging initiatives aimed at re-imagining Europe’s political role.

As a number of prominent commentators (from Etienne Balibar and Tzvetan Todorov to Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Habermas) argued on the eve of the invasion in early 2003, the war provided an important Euro-organising ‘opening’ for two key reasons. First, they suggested, 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,

5 Dimitrovova & Kramsch 2017. See also Del Sarto 2016.

6 For a fuller discussion of some of the geopolitical visions justifying the securitization of the Neighbourhood, see Bialasiewicz & Maessen 2018.

in practice, of 'a common European public sphere' (to cite Habermas' assessment of the events). At the same time, the European reaction against the war was also seen as a strong stand against the US role in the Middle East and thus the emergence – here, too, for the first time - of an alternative vision and geopolitical role for Europe. That role was not uncontested, also among EU states, for the war quickly revealed fundamental 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' in Eastern and Central Europe (to use Donald Rumsfeld's infamous characterisation), where an important majority proclaimed themselves much closer to the American position than the 'Old European' one. 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-U.S. 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, doubting 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 – clearly did not mean the same thing across the now 25-member strong EU.

We could say that, in this sense, broader geopolitical shifts simply allowed to come to the surface existing differences within the Union. At the same time, however, the 'geopolitical vertigo' 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. In their widely diffused intervention on the eve of the invasion of Iraq, Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida argued that Europe could only define itself by defining and defending 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.⁷

Habermas's and Derrida's appeal hinted at a radically new conception of Europe's geopolitical identity, one that was 'future oriented [...] defined by setting off towards the new, rather than pointing towards a perfect past'. The (successful) transcendence of its national past had made Europe, the authors argued, a 'unique geopolitical subject, a unique polity of the future'.

Another important voice in the 2003 debates on re-thinking 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 civilisational 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 putative 'clash of civilizations'. Indeed, he suggested that in constituting itself as a new political subject, Europe should reflect, first of all, upon the 'play of 'illusions and mirrors' within which it is imagined by others – and imagines itself within others' gaze' (Balibar 2003, 22). As a geopolitical actor, Europe could only be a 'mediator', Balibar noted, because there is no (and there cannot be) a singular 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 a 'European inheritance': these, he argued, are present to various degrees, and in various 'reflections', throughout the world. The question for the European Union, then, should then be not one of tracing the contours of a European identity, but rather that of 'recognizing Europe wherever it occurs'.

Such an understanding of Europe has important consequences: it necessarily privileges, Balibar argued, practice over a singular identity; the deployment of 'European ideas' and 'European ways of doing', rather than any fixed 'European identity' (very much echoing Bauman's characterization cited above). Balibar's ideas found close resonance in the work of a number of other authors around the very same time. Tzvetan Todorov's notion of Europe as a '*puissance tranquille*', for example, similarly invoked the European geopolitical subject

⁷ Habermas/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 newspapers.

as ‘an evolving, becoming order, not prescribable, but existing in practice’ (Todorov 2003, 42). The call to Europe to become a ‘different’ geopolitical model was, nonetheless, most clearly articulated in the work of Jacques Derrida (cf. Bialasiewicz 2012). 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’. In the address (entitled ‘A Europe of Hope’, subsequently re-printed in a number of European newspapers) 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. (Derrida 2004)

What was ‘irreplaceable’ within Europe, in Derrida’s words, was precisely its ability to transform itself – and the world; here lay Europe’s ‘exemplarity’. Writing in *L’autre cap* (published in 1991 and translated into English as ‘The Other Heading: Reflections on Today’s Europe’), Derrida described how this ‘exemplarity’ 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’ (Derrida 1991, 76–80).

The temporal dimension is of vital importance here. Elaborating his ideas further in 1993 in *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, Derrida suggested that any ‘politics of responsibility’ 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’. 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 integral part of what Derrida termed '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' (Derrida 1994, xix). 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'.⁸ According to Derrida, the belief in the impermeable solidity (and contemporaneity) of the present has always been key to totalitarian ideologies: every regime would like to eternalise 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 (2004) 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' thus appealed both to notions of Europe's unique 'inheritance' and its 'promise' (or hope). For Derrida, what can be inherited from any sort of 'European legacy' is only its promise: that which it defers, that which it postpones – and thus bequeaths to the future (Derrida 1994, 54). 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 (*ibid.*).

It is interesting that Derrida's call has been taken up by theorists in sketching out the actual spaces of Europe's political and geopolitical responsibility. In particular, juridical experts 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, for instance, that the 'exemplarity' (to borrow Derrida's term) of the EU space of rights comes from the fact that it allows (at least potentially) for claims to its law to come from and extend to also 'non-European' spaces and subjects (Decaux 2004). Within the EU treaties, the safe-guarding 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-possible Europeans (as various recent rulings of the European Court of Human Rights have highlighted).

⁸ See the discussion in Benjamin & Chang 2009 61; also, Silvano Petrosino, 'Scrivere 'Europa' con una mano sola: Derrida e l'anticipazione', in Alici & Totaro 2006, 206–17.

3 Europe's Future Promise

How do we place today's appeals to Europe in this context? How should we understand the seemingly im-possible hopes of those claiming physical or ideological access to Europe's space of rights? The calls of crowds massing in city streets for 'Europe to do something' that resonated in Kiev in 2014, in Istanbul in 2015, in Skopje in 2016, and most recently on the streets of two EU Member States, in Hungary and in Poland in the spring and summer of 2017 cannot be reduced to a naïve blue-flag waving optimism that simply fails to recognize the hard realities of geopolitics. So too the hopes of those willing to risk their lives to enter Europe seeking a better life. The glaring mis-match between what Europe should be and what it turns out to be does not appear to matter to those laying claims to its promise.

As countless observers have noted, historically Europe has always exceeded itself. It has done so most evidently in its imperial and colonial adventures and attempts to remake the world in its image (as a number of chapters in this volume highlight). But Europe has 'spilled over' itself in other ways as well, territorially as well as ideally. Across centuries, Europeans thrust out of Europe by wars or persecution were some of the most fervent believers in the European ideal. Indeed, many of those fleeing the horrors of the real Europe often attempted to make 'better Europes' elsewhere. It is vitally important to recall these histories of the loss and re-making of Europe today. Most directly and banally, because they are a reminder of the fact that many of us, Europeans, were also once migrants (even if only 'internal' exiles – as was the case of those torn from Europe by the Iron Curtain). But it is also important to recall these histories in order to understand how hope for Europe can serve as a powerful mobilizing force – and a powerful political and geopolitical ideal.

Today, the mobilizing potential of such hope-ful (geo)politics makes itself visible at less-than obvious instances and locations. One such instance were the rather muted celebrations marking the 60 years of the Treaty of Rome in March 2017: an event interpreted by most popular commentators as anything but a celebration of the achievements of the European Union, and rather a ridiculously-securitized and highly institutionalized performance piece, with EU leaders 'going through the motions' while Europe burns. And yet the fact that the event generated at least 5 different demonstrations and counter-demonstrations meant that for the thousands of European who travelled to Rome that week, the European project mattered: whether blamed as the root cause of all social, political and economic ills afflicting the continent (by the different Eurosceptic and 'sovereignist' movements that took to the streets in those days), or seen as entirely 'too little European' (by groups such as the Young Federalists that

projected their desiderata for Europe in a light show on the walls of the Colosseum). For whatever little actually took place in the formal gatherings marking the occasion, shifting ones' gaze to their peripheries, to the streets and to the countless meetings taking place across the city, fundamental debates were taking place about what Europe was and what it should be – and especially what should be its purpose in today's world.

The curious turn of argument that emerged from the Rome discussions, however, was the suggestion, repeated by both institutional figures as well as activists, that it was precisely in this moment of internal crisis that an external 'mission' and common external action could provide the European project with the needed renewed purpose to also bolster legitimacy at home. For someone like myself following the emergence and evolution of the EU's geopolitical persona, this was particularly interesting because thus far internal discord regarding foreign policy priorities and directions was always seen as a block to coherent external action. Reversing the equation – that is, aiming to invoke a common external purpose to weave a harmony of 'internal' objectives – was thus a striking shift (cf. European Commission 2017).

One of the affirmations that most powerfully resonated from those days of debates was former Italian prime-minister Enrico Letta's call that 'we need to see the EU with the eyes of the world'. Letta has long been one of the Italian centre-left's most enthusiastic Europeanists, so his appeal was not particularly surprising. Yet in many ways it reflected a wider European 'structure of feeling' (to abuse Jacques Derrida's term) emerging over the past couple of years regarding 'Europe's promise'; a hope and wish articulated most forcefully, indeed, by those outside of European institutions, and outside of Europe.⁹

Two such external figures that had recently attempted to remind Europeans of their role and responsibilities to both to those within and beyond the EU's borders were former President Barack Obama and Pope Francis. Obama's Hannover 'Address to the People of Europe' in late April 2016 received significant media and political attention in its call for 'Europe not to doubt itself'. It would be easy to dismiss Obama's invocation in that moment as simply a geopolitical gesture in support of key EU allies. Nevertheless, it is important to note both the geographical and historical imaginations underpinning his call to 'the people of Europe not to forget who you are' in this moment of 'crisis':

I am confident that the forces that bind Europe together are ultimately much stronger than those trying to pull you apart. But hope is not blind

9 The leading Italian political philosopher Roberto Esposito argues that it is only 'Europe's task in the global world' that can provide its necessary political 'energy' (Esposito 2016).

when it is rooted in the memory of all that you've already overcome – your parents, your grandparents. So I say to you, the people of Europe, don't forget who you are. [...] You are Europe – 'United in diversity'. Guided by the ideals that have lit the world, and stronger when you stand as one. [...] Because a united Europe – once the dream of a few – remains the hope of the many and a necessity for us all. (Obama 2016)

The second case was even more striking and came in May of 2016, on the occasion of the ceremonial award to Pope Francis of the Charlemagne Prize, a prize awarded 'for work done in the service of European unification'. Flanked by Jean-Claude Juncker, Martin Schultz and Donald Tusk and a number of EU heads of state, Pope Francis delivered an impassioned address calling for 'rebirth and renewal of the soul of Europe', and invoking the assembled leaders to remember Europe's founding purpose, 'a Europe that promotes and protects the rights of everyone, without neglecting its duties towards all'. In their speech at the award ceremony, Juncker and Schultz ironized that the EU must really seem in trouble if it has to look for guidance from the Pope in this moment of crisis of the 'European spirit'. The ironies of papal intervention aside, however, what was most striking about the Pope's speech was, as in Obama's address, the call for Europe to reclaim its purpose through a strengthened role in the world.

The EU Global Strategy (EUGS) published in the summer of 2016, has attempted to give formal shape, for the very first time, to the Union's geopolitical vision and persona. As described in its Foreword by High Representative Federica Mogherini:

A fragile world calls for a more confident and responsible European Union, it calls for an outward- and forward-looking European foreign and security policy. This Global Strategy will guide us in our daily work towards a Union that truly meets in citizens' needs, hopes and aspirations; a Union that builds on the success of 70 years of peace; a Union with the strength to contribute to peace and security in our region and in the whole world. (European Commission 2016, 5)

As doubtful as many commentators have been of the EUGS's actual capacity to shape a single and coherent EU foreign policy (cf. Panke 2019), it is important regardless to recognize how such hope-ful geopolitical scripts can (and do) exert real geopolitical effects. The active role played by the EU in its Neighbourhoods, both as an economic but even more importantly as a 'stabilizing and securitizing force' may, in aspiration at least (as the EUGS purports) be 'guided by the values on which the EU is founded'. Nevertheless, such a

framing of Europe's role risks 'simultaneously internalising and occluding prior visions of Europe and European world roles', as Bachman and Sidaway (2009, 105) argued some time ago. In imagining itself as an aspirational model for the world, today's Europe must respond to the hopes of those seeking it, but without (yet again) attempting to remake the world in its image.

Works Cited

- Alici, Luigi & Francesco Totaro, eds. 2016. *Filosofi per l'Europa: Differenze in Dialogo* (Macerata: EUM).
- Bachmann, Veit & Martin Müller, eds. 2015. *Perceptions of the EU in Eastern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa: looking from the outside in* (Basingstoke: Palgrave).
- Bachmann, Veit & James Sidaway. 2009. 'Zivilmacht Europa: A critical geopolitics of the European Union as a global power', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 34: 94–109.
- Balibar, Etienne. 2003. *L'Europe, l'Amérique, la Guerre* (Paris: La Découverte).
- Bassin, Mark. 1991. 'Russia between Europe and Asia: The ideological construction of geographical space', *Slavic Review* 50: 1–17.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 2004. *Europe, An Unfinished Adventure* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
- Benjamin, Ross, & Heesok Chang. 2009. '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).
- Bialasiewicz, Luiza. 2009. 'The new political geographies of the European neighbourhood', *Political Geography* 28: 79–89.
- Bialasiewicz, Luiza. 2012. 'Spectres of Europe: Europes past, present, and future'. In D. Stone (ed) *The Oxford Handbook of Post-War European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 98–119.
- Bialasiewicz, Luiza, Stuart Elden & Joe Painter. 2005. 'The Constitution of EU Territory', *Comparative European Politics* 3:333–363.
- Bialasiewicz, Luiza, Paolo Giaccaria & Claudio Minca. 2013. 'Re-scaling 'EU'rope: EU Macro-regional Fantasies in the Mediterranean', *European Urban and Regional Studies* 20.1:59–76.
- Bialasiewicz, Luiza & Enno Maessen, 'Scaling Rights: The Turkey "Deal" and the Divided Geographies of European Responsibility', *Patterns of Prejudice* 52.2/3:210–230.
- Bialasiewicz, Luiza & Claudio Minca. 2005. 'Old Europe, New Europe: for a geopolitics of translation', *Area* 37.4: 365–372.
- Cacciari, Massimo. 1994. *Geofilosofia dell'Europa* (Milan: Adelphi).
- Cacciari, Massimo. 2006. 'Europa o filosofia', in Alici & Totaro, 21–33.

- Decaux, Emmanuel. 2004. 'Valeurs démocratiques communes et divergences culturelles', *Questions internationales* 9: 32–5.
- Del Sarto, Raffaella. 2016. 'Normative Empire Europe: The European Union, its borderlands and the 'Arab Spring''. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 54.):215–232.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1991. *L'autre cap* (Paris: Minuit).
- Derrida, Jacques. 1994. *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (New York: Routledge).
- Derrida, Jacques. 2004. 'Une Europe de l'espoir', *Le Monde Diplomatique* (3 November).
- Derrida, Jacques, 2010 [1987]. *Heidegger et la question de l'esprit et autres essais* (Paris: Flammarion).
- Dimitrova, Bohdana & Olivier Kramersch. 2017. 'Decolonizing the spaces of European foreign policy: Views from the Maghreb', *Interventions* 19.6:797–817.
- Duchène, François. 1972. 'Europe's role in world peace', in *Europe Tomorrow: Sixteen Europeans Look Ahead*, ed. R. Mayne (London: Fontana/Collins), 32–47.
- Duchène, François. 1973. 'The European Community and the uncertainties of interdependence', in *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign Policy Problems Before the European Community*, ed. M. Kohnstamm & W. Hager (Basingstoke: Macmillan), 1–21.
- Elden, Stuart & Luiza Bialasiewicz. 2006. 'The New Geopolitics of Division and the Problem of a Kantian Europe', *Review of International Studies* 32: 623–644.
- Espósito, Roberto. 2016. *Da Fuori: Una filosofia per l'Europa* (Turin: Einaudi).
- European Commission. 2007. *The EU in the World: The Foreign Policy of the European Union* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities).
- European Commission. 2016. 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy'. https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf
- European Commission. 2017. *Jean Monnet Seminar 'The Future of Europe: A Commitment for You(th)'; Rome, 23–24 March 2017* (Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture).
- Fioramonti, Lorenzo & Arlo Poletti. 2008. 'Facing the Giant: Southern Perspectives on the European Union', *Third World Quarterly* 29: 167–180.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1998. *Die Postnationale Konstellation* (Frankfurt /Main: Suhrkamp).
- Habermas, Jürgen. 2001. 'Why Europe needs a constitution', *New Left Review* 11: 5–26.
- Hooper, Barbara & Olivier Kramersch, 'Post-Colonising Europe: The Geopolitics of Globalisation, Empire and Borders: Here and There, Now and Then', *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 98: 526–534.
- Knut Kirste, Knut & Hanns Maull. 1996. 'Zivilmacht und Rollentheorie', *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen* 3:283–312.
- Lucarelli, Sonia & Lorenzo Fioramonti. 2009. *External Perceptions of the European Union as a Global Actor*. (Abingdon: Routledge).

- Lucarelli, Sonia & Ian Manners, eds. 2006. *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy* (Abingdon: Routledge)
- Manners, Ian. 2010. 'Global Europa: Mythology of the European Union in world politics', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 48: 67–87.
- Obama, Barack. 2016. 'Remarks by President Obama in Address to the People of Europe', <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/25/>
- Panke, Julian. 2019. 'Liberal Empire, Geopolitics and EU Strategy: Norms and Interests in European Foreign Policy Making', *Geopolitics* 24.1:100–123.
- Tassinari, Fabrizio. 2005. 'Security and Integration in the European Neighbourhood: The Case for Regionalism'. *CEPS Working Document 226* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies).
- Zambrano, Maria. 2000 [1942]. *La agonía de Europa* (Madrid: Editorial Trotta).