

## EUROPE: UNDERSTOOD AND MADE \*

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I have been long intrigued by the combination of comprehension and “doing”, the most common motivation of encroaching on numerous historical and political texts. This peculiar type of doing is especially well explicated in its subject, usually a sort of “we”, whose interest organizes the narrative or the plea on the problems of its collectivity. Beneath these problems, though, a much more fundamental one is underlying; i. e. the gross “we” subjects, the pleaded ones, are unstable. These subjects are real, and yet, in a progress of formation; besides they are ill-defined and interwoven with other “we” subjects. A family participates in the multitude of a minority group or in a social strata, that on their turn participate in larger multitudes of particular ethnic groups, peoples, nations or races.

This text doing is explicated by the advancement of the theme of the new membership affiliation to the European Union. The revealed or the concealed European’s “they” is set in relation to the national groups and countries of “we”, the ones, willing to be accepted as members of the Union. The intention is the local “we” to be transformed into the more global “they” of the Europeans. The topic of the day is to what extent this text “doing” is ideological and to what – a project of non-textual doing. The occasions are numerous and of wide range. Undoubtedly, though, the transition to the doing is arduous. This transition is eventually to be facilitated if the analysis is to be a bit more discursive and able to discriminate the genuinely given from the wished for and in its own turn to discriminate in the wished one the one of utopian and sublimative character and the one capable of realization. Becoming aware of the reality of the subjects’ “we” and “they” referents, organizing the text, is just one of the conditions of the attainment of an effective transition from the usual ideological textual “doing” to the real doing.

It all starts from the habit any human multitude to consider itself homogeneous and defined. On this ground it allows someone to speak on its behalf. Or, in this respect, it allows the discriminative distinction between the traditional and the contemporary culture. In the traditional culture the human multitude is concealed and its destiny is coded in the myth and the feats of the hero – its chosen representative. Under the conditions of the contemporary life the multitude and its spokesman are differentiated, they have a differing destiny and the relation between them is temporal and conditional. This relation is at hand, though, and can be sensed in the intensity of the concealed or the revealed “we”, used up by the spokesman. It makes no difference if the spokesman is Demosthenes, who speaks of the Athenians or Huntington, who refers to the European citizens. Both they juxtapose a certain multitude of people.

Thence comes the question of the real definiteness of suchlike multitudes. To what extent the multitude of “Athenians” was naturally given and to what extent – wanted and done? Does the definiteness find its expression in a certain similarity among particular Athenians or in their shared nature? What is the form welding together the multitude of the contemporary Bulgarians and how is it guaranteed anthropologically, linguistically and historically? Of course, there is no

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synonymous answer – there are nuances. National identity is less natural than the natural sex determination. The identity of large a multitude as the European one is, is marked by still lower degree of natural identity. Europeans are doing their utmost to be something definite and though they are backed up by the old European, participating in this procedure of doing, their “we” is unstable.

The naturalness of human populations is a sort of a compromise. Collective identities come into being and are sustained in a consecution of accidental acts; they are resulted by historically confirmed contrivance; on the other hand, they are a cultural fact and therefore – natural. Hence, in the consequence, the collective identity is well-worded only when we word it complicatedly and constantly implementing it with old and new settings. The referents of “we” or “they” - Bulgarian, Greeks, Europeans and correspondingly Bulgaria, Greece and Europe - are something in process, something on the move, and therefore in constant disagreement with themselves. In its turn this refers to the corresponding denotees of Bulgarians, Greeks or Europeans. They are nothing but a ratio. As to the Germans, we will be more precise if we set a variance among Lotharingians, Pomeranians and Bavarians, and look for the common German, connected with these groups’ local peculiarities. It is the same as it comes to multitudes of women or members of a political party.

In the time perplexity arises out of the implication of the individual identity standpoint. The speculations on “we” and “they” in the historical and politological texts would not have been so intense if they were aimed at the construction of a collective identity. Texts, though, are intended not only on something, but on somebody too. The worded or conveyed most often maintains the organization of the reader’s or listener’s own identity. Myth, story, tale or politological exposé – we turn to them to come to grip with our own “self”, built in one or another collective affiliation; but vice versa too – by turning it into an element of our own “self”. We persist on being original and distinctive from others, and at the same time on being the go-getters in a community of alike. Seemingly, one would say, quite opposing concerns. Therefore our own identity is a question of a constant compromise.

Hence, the texts, in consequence, as mechanisms of communication, discrimination and transformation, are excellent means of managing the compromises obstructing our way. It all depends on the model the text has to offer us. The historical discourse confirming my Bulgarian affiliation may fundamentally postulate it affirming it’s me, in so far as I am Bulgarian. It can be done in a more sophisticated way: by imparting this affiliation with other ones and affirming the dependence of the blend of my peculiar identity alone on me. Numerous are the options between the excessively fundamental definition of the “self” and the excessively complicated impartment of the multitude affiliations for its module constitution. Collective affiliations are substance of the incessant procedure of one’s own identifying.

This fact complicates the performativity of any historical or politological text. We could comprehend its depths if we have inquired ourselves not only about the working of the transformation of “we” into “them”, and vice versa, but also about the procedure by which this working means another text working – the transformation of “we” into “me”. In the text we follow the speculations of “we” and “they”, and to an extent - the weaving of the “self” of the spokesman or the character hero if the narrative is plot driven. We could only guess as to the transformations of the “selves” maintaining the narrative. The text of an act of reasoning or of a narrative is just a virtual setting liable to the forthcoming intervention of numerous “selves”

attaining in the process of understanding of the text to the new position in the world and therefore – to a definite passing identity.

This mode of thinking hardly will afford us to find one-dimensional fundamental expression of themes on Europe, Bulgaria and the relation between these two. Quite the contrary – we will construct their referents complicatedly as objects unfinished and in a process of making, dependent on the usage of numerous and diverse “selves”.

**The theme of Europe.** To illustrate the application of this approach I’ll try to introduce the theme of Europe. The refrain of so called by us “Europe”, and behind which the grand “we” of the Europeans stand, is objectively complicated, dependent on the interweaving of traditions, and on the numerous diversities, and fortuitousness. It is complicated because it is connected with a notion, instrument of a changing understanding, used by various applications and projects. A project of such a grand scale is the present one – Europe and the European Union.

As to the phenomena of this type - coming to be and changing - it is a common occurrence the interweaving of real and of ideal aspects, of heterogeneous substances of this place and of another’s, whose unification missing, the simultaneously real and ideal milieu of the constant becoming “other”, what is Europe like, would not have been possible. The becoming “other” is set too in the mythical history that generated once the name “Europe”. Zeus turned into a bull and abducted Agenor’s daughter from the Phoenician coast – there you are an image of the connection between the celestial and the earthly. But everything else in this narrative postulates the origin of a new earth from the old one; of a new one’s own from the real “other” here, on the Earth. The first Europe of Crete is the place where Europe gave birth to the three Zeus’s notorious sons. She didn’t turn back to Phoenicia. Neither did her brother Cadmus who set off to find her and extended the boundaries of Europe of Crete to these of Europe of Hellas.

The idea of the new continent, the geographical point at issues for Anaximander, Hecateus and Herodotus, originates from the efforts of the Antiquity writers to discriminate the compact, stable world of the East from the particularistic, mobile universe of the Hellenes. This first “West” will consequently slowly step back to the West persistent in it’s being particularistic and mobile. This, perhaps, is one of the most enduring characteristics of Europe. “Other” in relation to an older world, it is a milieu of intrinsic origin of a multitude of otherness and differentiation. The differentiation manifests itself as a tolerated diversity, as a horizontal and vertical opening but as a peculiar relation between reality and ideal too.

The attempt to discriminate the aspects of the real and the ideal in the phenomenon “Europe” can’t be brought to an end. Mostly, the ideal, the thought of Europe, is in the reality when projects are materialized but when it comes to the community dreaming as well. The European values are ideal-real components of this type - ideal at definite points outside life but practiced and transformed into the traffic code of the real Europe. Analogically, we are able and at the same time immersed in the difficult position of making a distinction between Europe or the multitude of different types of Europe of the past and Europe of our contemporaneity. Nowadays, there are on one hand indiscernible historical values and milieus, and on the other - responses and life principles, unchanged from the time of the Classical Athens.

**The real Europe and the European milieus.** In the manifestations of the real Europe two principle aspects are interweaved and interrelated – the people as individuals, and the milieus and

environments where their mobility eventuates. At any rate, human in its origins, Europe appears to be a secondary milieu, developed above the initial one – that of the nature. There is no prearranged presentational scientific model for the basic manifestations of one aspect or of such a major “aspect” as Europe. The problem is that people and the milieu are not identical but at the same time they amalgamate into common characteristic. In that case we have a higher degree of mobility and change – an original trait of *Homo sapiens*. Mobility and change acquire positive value and turn out to be conscious constituents of the existence of *Homo europaeus*. In consequence, in Europe, there are numerous and versatile milieus, self-dependent individuals and communities with a peculiar choice of theirs.

Among the milieus participating in the big, complex European milieu, the geographical one is easiest to be described. Just like the biological body for the human being, it is the spot where the nature binds together with the culture. Europe is not culture altogether. The 20<sup>th</sup> century science has taught us that the distinct border between the nature and the culture is rather wished for than real.

**Europe as a cultural milieu.** As a cultural milieu, Europe is first of all an urban space. Both Europe of the ancient Greek antiquity and the contemporary Europe originate in an attempt to develop in towns of one or another type a bit more conditional and more intensive life with stimulated horizontal relations. European urban space is a milieu of refined existence with highly mobile subjects. At earlier times the town is juxtaposed to the village that, seemingly, is immersed in the nature and therefore, seemingly, remains outside the urban Europe. It is a place of immediate relations. Indirectness is the principle of the town. Three are the implications of the indirect – more self-dependent, with more people and trough mediators.

The distinctive feature of the European city is not easily discernable one in the origin of mediators typical of each human milieu. Talking big, the European city introduces itself to us as quantities, as intrinsic diversity and susceptibility to change. Europe is a milieu with numerous objects and appliances, with bookish texts and living mediators, specialized in promoting particular individuals or groups of humans in attaining particular aims. It's not homogeneous, of course; in it there are zones of mediation of different degrees of unopenness and openness. Gellner's proposal Europe to be divided into four zones from West to East is generally known. Done on politico-cultural basis, it ties together the past and the present, and virtually explicates that the material culture of the genuine Europe of the West is due to an inherited high culture of strong dynastic countries. Further to the West we go, numerous are the mediators. According to this plan the European citizenship is gradualness of saturation and rarefaction not only of living and non-living mediators but of dependable on them liberties too.

The perspective of the unblemished cultural milieu brings the European out of the continental borders. The cultural Europe is disseminated all over the world. Transfers outside “the Europe of this place” are so multifarious that for us it is difficult to scrutinize them as milieus. The scrutinization would have been facilitated if we had had on our disposal a microsociology of the contemporary Europe of the type of Norbert Elias's *The Civilizing Process* or Fernand Braudel's *Structures of Ordinary Life*. But it is the Europe of the past the subject of their concern. A tendency to a description of the general macromilieu seems to be characteristic of the contemporary Europe. Discernable in bold outlines everywhere, it is resulted by the expansion of the European culture, by the tendency to turn it into a world civilization. The final

outcome of this process is unclear. For the time being, at least, the discussed European micromilieu is nothing more than a ratio of the complex of the intertwined milieus of numerous local cultures. This is the case not only in the rest of the world but in genuine Europe too.

The open exchange among zones of varied cultural existence is a distinguishing feature of the European civilization of the second part of 20th century. It's discernable in the open space of the Western Europe. Earlier closely organized as an opposition of national cultures and of a center and a country, the contemporary genuine Europe develops towards leveled co-relation of equal in rights variants of cultural existence. Compared to the urban France, Germany is no longer a rural area. On its turn, the British life-version does not coincide with the French one, either none of them occupies a higher value level. Central Europe, the region of the former Austro-Hungarian empire, participates in the European cultural space too. The spacious zones of the Catholic and Protestant Culture are not opposed each other, neither are the Mediterranean and the North European ones.

The closer scrutiny reveals that this leveled dynamics is a process of overcoming of the old center-province relation. In this sense without having done it, Europe is not conducive of a unified cultural milieu. It makes provisions for its vitality by developing a set of differentiated zones. The fact mentioned above is relevant not only to the national countries but to the regions inside them too. The milieus of the modern European, of the provincial urban, and of the rural life, all are getting into such a leveled relation. As a result the megapolices are starting to fuse while the villages are preserved modified. Nature is not drastically expelled from the urban space, as it was in the old European city, neither is the village uncivilized. Simultaneously the two earlier far off milieus of the public and private existence are getting closer. The public life loses its strained formality and the private one acquires ever growing open character.

**Europe as politico-economical milieu. The European Union.** Even if we had the necessary knowledge, we hardly could have given a correct description of the European cultural milieu. It doesn't exist in pure form, and indeed, it's more effective to think of it as of a ratio, set outside the brackets of the local cultures formulae. These considerations weight with the big national European cultures. Notwithstanding the intensified exchange, their closed existence continues. However, European cultural milieu is intimately related to the zones of mutual political and economic existence under formation. Contemporary European culture is politicized and economized. European Union in its efforts to grow into a state of a certain type, the milieu of the public apolitical existence distinguishing itself from it, together with the interwovenness with the global economics, are not able to set themselves apart from the cultural macromilieu. Mutually interwoven, they are forms of additional association, imposed by the increasingly dissipating, independent individuals and detached groups of people.

Such is the function of the European Union – to balance the growing number of the subjects who consume more and more liberties; to ensure definiteness of the European space. At the beginning European Coal and Steel Community (1951), then European Union (1957), and further on Union again, it develops in the direction of a growing integrity on political, social, economic and cultural level. Of course, the culture remains disparate and elusive. Lord Dahrendorf is right asserting that Europe and the European Union are different phenomena. Good or bad, economical-political alliance guarantees not only definiteness but supplies the Europeans with communal subject. It is of necessity for the full value communication with the big

realizations of the European outside Europe. These are to begin with USA and Japan. European Union assimilates the experience of these realizations and establishes set of relations with them. This corresponds to its intrinsic experience in so far as it, taken alone, develops as a set of coordination of various entities – earlier predominantly national countries, but gradually – of more and more diversitile community subjects of international character. These differing types of Europe are attempts at connection, at raise of an effective world micromilieu. The move to recognition of the other might be a preparation for the extraterrestrial contact shock.

**Europe of the West and Eastern Europe.** Consciously directed towards adopting of differences, the more “European” Europe of the West is naturally faced to the neighbouring Eastern Europe, which, in a certain sense is a part from it, and in a way is something different. Interweaving together the spaces of the Orthodox culture, of the ex-Soviet space and the old Balkan region, Eastern Europe strives for affiliation to the West. The West is a natural center of an existence where Eastern Europe feels peripheral. Formerly a center of its own and well Europeanized in 19th and the beginning of 20th century, for long Eastern Europe has been used to be in relation to the other. Western Europe is a better other, wanted in the East.

But the Europe of the West is attracted to the Eastern Europe too. Mostly because of the fact that the contemporary mode of existence realized in it lives together with forms of former life preserved to a greater extent intact, and besides, in Eastern Europe, the boundaries of the contemporary diffusing of the public and private existence are not diluted to such an extent. Peculiar region of transition, a closer “other” mediating the far-off “other” of the non-European life, Eastern Europe is a spot of value and of certain risks which the more “European” Europe is conscious of. Among them are the worldly opposition of order and chaos and of life and death. The negative consequences of these transitionless oppositions, at hand in the Western European life, are not so explicit in the Eastern-European world.

**Contemporary Europe and Europe of the past.** The real contemporary Europe of nowadays shouldn't be analyzed out of the contextual multitude of the “real” Europe of the past. This multitude is presented in the contemporary Europe as an element of the complex European Union. According the instance of building in of the respective events, different historical beginnings of the contemporary Europe are appropriated. In terms of the liberal organization of the public life these beginning are in classical Athens times. Then the model of the liberal West was born and set against the non-liberal East. Isocrates, reasoning on this relation in his speeches in 4<sup>th</sup> BCE, perhaps is the first theoretician taking the theme under exclusive consideration, and Alexander the Great – the first practician endeavouring to transmit the “Western” cultural forms to the East.

Hellenic polices, even Athens of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BCE with 300 000 population, are quite provincial. Therefore, it's correct to look for the beginning of the European urban culture in the Hellenistic period and at the time of the Imperial Rome. This outset, though, is not definite either. Europe marks it's beginnings on several other occasions – with the advent of the Medieval European cities, at the time of the first universities in 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> c., and even more unquestionably during the Enlightenment and Romanticism up to the awakening to the idea of the United Europe during the mutual last decade of Goethe's and Hegel's lives. Knowledge on the multitude of these older types of Europe is not a guarantee of the better comprehending the

contemporary Europe. A synonym of diversity and change, it abandons some of them and others – modifies.

**The ideal Europe of values.** A milieu of realization of certain life principles, today's Europe has a bearing on durable ideal milestones, elaborated in the past and constituting the framework of a long-lasting tradition. Among them is the development of the Greek secular rationality of the Classical Greece and the liberal organization of life, the Judeo-Christian respect to the individual that reinforced and altered the Hellenic democratic experience, the Roman civic inception and the concept of the unabolished human rights, the Protestant personal responsibility and the recent new-European division of authorities. The listing may be carried on and can rely on other formulae. In any case, in principles of this kind, there are dropped off moments, but stable provisions too, whose life is prolonged in the setting of the contemporary European values. Notwithstanding the difficulties of the comprehensive presentation, this setting invariably includes the esteem of the individual, the realism of the particular and of the detail, the analytics, the practicalness, the horizontal orientation in the world, the sense of the topical and the idea of the progress.

The problem of such listings is that particular values are formulated in different way and that no matter how large or restricted, their variety is relegated to different, representative of the European culture principle conditions. Depending on the point of view of the personal investigation or of the culturally postulated, the ideal European might turn out to be the progressive change, the secular rationality, the respect to the individual or some concept of community. Thus, in the well-known thesis of Edmund Husserl, who perpetuated Kant's ideas from the end of 18<sup>th</sup> c., Europe is comprehended on the basis of the ideas of progress and community as a turning point and inceptive development to universal humanity. Actually, Europe can be determined as an operative reality in the achievement of universal affiliation, as an attempted common culture of humanity. Hence, the contradiction of its association to a certain place, but its affiliation to something pandemic too. Husserl's thesis seemingly is confirmed by the moulding practice of the European Union, of this complex project for internal and external univesalization, in rivalry with other projects, and especially with that of USA.

Besides, ideal Europe is difficult to be formulated because of the possible subjective choice of eventual representative position of one or another type, but also because even when accepted by numerous people, circumstances of that kind tie together the complicated existing reality with ideals, wishes and projects. Europe is a subject, indispensable from the wishes provoked by it in itself. In a process of development and change, Europe is a desirable object not only for those, outside it, but for its members (individuals and communities) forward looking absolute status.

**Contemporary European relation between reality and ideal.** At this spot we can discern the substantial characteristic of the contemporary European relation between reality and the ideal. While in the past of the Europe and at the present of the Eastern Europe the relation between reality and the ideal is strained and defensive, and the ideals are detached from the unchangeable reality, contemporary European milieu cultivates offensive relation between the changeable reality and the mobile goals, transformed into projects for implementation. Not that it invariably

occurs. It is rather a trend. At any rate, though, there is difference between defensive yearning after Europe in Eastern Europe and the offensive wish for the other by the real Europeans.

In the course of the effective comprehension of Europe formula search, another substantial characteristic of the contemporary European is constantly brought to our attention, i. e. the strained oppositions, typical of the traditional European sense of direction in the world, are getting looser. Contemporary milieu develops as a structure of bringing together previously juxtaposed small milieus. The ideal and the reality are getting closer; analogously the boundaries of the public and the private existence, of the urban and the rustic life, of the spheres of the ideas and of the belongings are diluted. It has been got the better of the most opinionated antithesis of the traditional European orientation – i. e. the opposition of the material and the spiritual. Though not sufficiently aware, we are getting near the realization that belongings and ideas in themselves are not good neither bad. Signs incarnated, means setting, facilitating the complex mobility in the world of so many subjects, just like the words in the language that are always more than it is necessary, the belongings and the ideas are equally valued guarantees of the growing up freedom in the European milieu. Among the traditional antithesis losing their tension is the old value opposition of the past and present too. European experience of today presumes the past as not that far completed and allows roads unfared that the present may bring into reality to be searched for.

In this sense, there is no place for pride that the way, chosen by the European Union is the best one, neither for conceit that those living outside this more “European” Europe are predestined to imperfect being. The veritable Europe is forthcoming; it may not coincide with the present project of the European Union. Or perhaps in the future, another project, of another great “we”, will gain upper hand over and will draw a more effective way to the serene goal of the universal humanity. And yet, this goal will be difficultly feasible if we envision the universal “we” of the mankind in fundamentalistic and globalistic way. Universal humanity is more possible as more modular is the individual “self” to constitute freely chosen collective affiliations.

Hence, Europe is not something that can be properly prescribed or described. The proposed plan is just one option in the organization of the whole. The whole is always virtuality, shaped by the momentum of a certain milieu and certain work to be done. The peculiar relation between the two presupposes who what of the possible whole accepts as its sign. Both concise and extensive, it is represented as a sign, and as a symbol too. These representations are not comprehension of a genuine type, they do not deal with the subject in itself; they maintain the completion of work of a certain type. Most often they serve the definiteness to be acquired by a certain person or a group of people. The necessity follows, therefore, insights of this type to be deployed by a sequence of statements. Thus diverse aspects are provided and the choices are supported for the various “selves” imposing the text.

A more complete presentation of Europe is assessed by the complexity of this undergoing changes phenomenon by its complicated relations with the mobile, not coinciding with it, concept of Europe, but also by the future use of the many multifarious subjects with highly varied goals. Because of this, and because of the proceeding occurrence that is a proceeding comprehension too, no matter how full our introduction of the subject of Europe will be, it will stay insufficient and non-identical with itself. This refers to the most of the subjects under scuritization, and to us as well.