

Wolfgang Schmale

# Gender and Eurocentrism

A Conceptual Approach  
to European History

Geschichte

*SGEI – SHEI – EHIE*

Franz Steiner Verlag



Wolfgang Schmale  
Gender and Eurocentrism

STUDIEN ZUR GESCHICHTE DER EUROPÄISCHEN INTEGRATION (SGEI)  
ÉTUDES SUR L'HISTOIRE DE L'INTÉGRATION EUROPÉENNE (EHIE)  
STUDIES ON THE HISTORY OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION (SHEI)

Band / Volume 29

Herausgegeben von / Edited by / Dirigé par Jürgen Elvert

In Verbindung mit / In cooperation with / En coopération avec

Charles Barthel / Jan-Willem Brouwer / Eric Bussière / Antonio Costa Pinto /  
Desmond Dinan / Michel Dumoulin / Michael Gehler / Brian Girvin /  
Wolf D. Gruner / Wolfram Kaiser / Laura Kolbe / Johnny Laursen / Wilfried  
Loth / Piers Ludlow / Maria Grazia Melchionni / Enrique Moradiellos Garcia /  
Sylvain Schirmann / Antonio Varsori / Tatiana Zonova

Wolfgang Schmale

# Gender and Eurocentrism

A Conceptual Approach to European History

Translated by Bernard Heise



Franz Steiner Verlag

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek:

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

Dieses Werk einschließlich aller seiner Teile ist urheberrechtlich geschützt. Jede Verwertung außerhalb der engen Grenzen des Urheberrechtsgesetzes ist unzulässig und strafbar.

© Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2016

Druck: Bosch Druck, Ergolding

Gedruckt auf säurefreiem, alterungsbeständigem Papier.

Printed in Germany.

ISBN 978-3-515-11461-5 (Print)

ISBN 978-3-515-11462-2 (E-Book)

## CONTENTS

Preface .....	7
CHAPTER I: Performative Acts and Gender .....	9
CHAPTER II: The Meaning of “Europe” in Historiography .....	29
CHAPTER III: “Eurocentrism”—The Performative Act of the Eighteenth-Century Republic of Letters .....	61
CHAPTER IV: Aftermaths of the Eighteenth-Century’s Performative Act	
Case Study I: Eastern Europe – Part of “Eurocentrism”? .....	77
Case Study II: The Gender of Eurocentrism: <i>Homo Europaeus</i> .....	96
Case Study III.1: The Holy Alliance and the Rise of Christian Imperialism .....	126
Case Study III.2: Imperialism and Colonialism in the Early Discourses of European Integration .....	138
Case Study IV: From (Christian) Imperialism to European Identity .....	149
CHAPTER V: Towards Post-Performativity .....	163
Documentation	
Primary Sources .....	175
Research Literature .....	179
Abstracts	
Deutsche Zusammenfassung .....	193
Résumé français .....	197
Index .....	207



## PREFACE

How can one write European history? This question is raised quite frequently and answered in very different ways. My own answers to this question are distributed among many individual studies that, for me, link together like a hypertext. The nodes in this hypertext consist of three monographs: *Geschichte Europas* (Europe's History, first published in 2000); *Geschichte der Männlichkeit in Europa, 1450–2000* (History of Masculinity in Europe, 1450–2000, first published in 2003); *Geschichte und Zukunft der Europäischen Identität* (History of European Identity and its Future, first published in 2008). With this present volume, which combines original texts and earlier studies that have been thoroughly revised for this current English-language edition, I endeavor to concisely elaborate the connections between Europe, gender, identity, performativity, and other key concepts. For me as an historian and author, achieving this concision has also meant pausing to take stock and clarify the profile of the hypertext.

I have viewed Europe from continually changing perspectives, which are expressed broadly in the titles of my books and in greater detail in my essays and contributions to anthologies, but what this produced? The result consists of a conceptual approach that can be used in an effort to elucidate that which is European in history in Europe. The first core component is the concept of the performative speech act, which I expand in this book into the concept of the “collective historical performative speech act.” The second core component lies in the rigorous integration of the gender approach. But how does the concept of “Eurocentrism” enter here? In this book, “Eurocentrism” designates a fundamental performative act, whose prehistory must be considered along with its “afterwards,” referred to here as the post-performative epoch.

I would like to thank my faculty—the Faculty for Historical and Cultural Studies, University of Vienna—for helping finance the translation. I heartily thank my translator, Bernard Heise, for his excellent work. I thank Jürgen Elvert for his willingness to accept the manuscript for the current book series. I am grateful to the Franz Steiner Verlag and specifically Katharina Stüdemann for their smooth collaboration and to Şahin Mavili for preparing the typescript.





## CHAPTER I PERFORMATIVE ACTS AND GENDER

### I

After 1945, the idea strongly prevailed that for the sake of the future any recurrence of a catastrophe like the Second World War had to be prevented. At the time, people basically entertained two conceptual models as to how this could be achieved. Some felt that Europe in 1945 had reached such a nadir that the nation state model could be abolished in favor of a European state or community of states with predominantly supranational institutions, to a degree that has not been attained to this day. Others believed that the avoidance of such a colossal catastrophe could be ensured only by reconstructing the nation states and through the regulated and institutionalized collaboration of these states, by all means also in supranational structures. The latter model prevailed and determined the path, one that undeniably has been lined with many successes. But this model inevitably meant that Europeans—in both the Western and Eastern Blocs—retained or reconstructed the national character of their states as institutions.<sup>1</sup>

States that view themselves as nation states are very obstinate. While certainly not the same as nationalism, national obstinacy nonetheless has proven counterproductive in an epoch characterized by not only European but also global interconnectedness—an epoch so aptly described by Zygmunt Bauman as “liquid modernity.”<sup>2</sup> National obstinacy simulates a secure national identity that promises to provide people with a secure and stable foundation during difficult times, such as now. But this identity is a deception. National obstinacy no longer even works as a corrective, a function performed much more effectively by globally networked and interconnected so-called anti-globalization activists, precisely because they are global. Even small countries such as Cyprus can no longer simply adopt a strategy of national obstinacy without potentially endangering the greater whole.

During recent times, people have increasingly declared that Europe is standing at a crossroads. Europe will either progressively develop its qualities as a state (meaning first and foremost the EU) or succumb to overwhelming tensions and disappear like the sunken city of Atlantis. Although this scenario usually refers to the EU, it also includes quite a few non-EU states that want to become EU members, thus applying to virtually all of Europe. In this respect, the issue is not about immediate urgencies but rather primarily about the joint determination of solid objectives. In my opinion, such a determination—and subsequent realization—of a solid

1 See Alan S. Milward, *Rescue of the Nation-State*, London 1994.

2 Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge 2000/2008.

objective has occurred only once, namely, the Common Market of the EEC Treaty. Admittedly, this refers to a framework outlined by considerations focused on the EU. Other goals of the 1957 EEC Treaty—in particular, “approximating the economic policies of Member States,” the “harmonious development of economic activities” throughout the community, and “increased stability”—have not been reached to this day. Quite obviously, none of these conditions obtain in the current crisis because efforts to realize them have failed due to national obstinacy. Other basic “solid objectives,” such as the elimination of border controls, only affect the Schengen states, and not all EU countries use the common currency, and EU objectives formulated in the Maastricht, Amsterdam, and Lisbon treaties contain too many national exceptions.<sup>3</sup>

Of all places, the socioeconomic sector features the fewest common principles. This is because, *despite* the noble goal of generally increasing affluence by means of joint institutions and the redistribution of funds within not only the EU but also to non-EU states, this sector remains the purview of individual states. Thus far, no social union has emerged. The socioeconomic dimension—that is, the dimension in which the economy, social structure, and specific social practices most closely intertwine—has not only remained the purview of the nation state but also tremendously strengthened it. After 1945, this dimension became one of the nation state’s main responsibilities, whereas other responsibilities became progressively less important in the nation state itself, being assumed instead by supranational institutions or mitigated by numerous self-imposed commitments as states participated in inter-governmental organizations. Globally, the EU accounts for 7% of the population, 25% of net product, and 50% of all social welfare spending<sup>4</sup>—and the latter is the preserve of the nation states.

Social structures, as well as social practices and relationships, are part of culture; they form culture. In other words, viewed socioculturally, Europe does not constitute a culture in the singular. Sociocultural systems that differ too strongly from each other are not suited for the goal of unity. The financial and debt problems have rendered obvious something that has long been known in sociology and other academic disciplines, namely, the parallel existence of very different sociocultural systems in Europe and the EU. These are sociocultural systems that remain largely closed to the outside; they are not structured horizontally but rather hierarchically and characterized by a heterosexually connoted hegemonic masculinity. Consequently, they risk being simply swept away by liquid modernity if their pace of adjustment remains too slow.

Meanwhile, the discussion of Europe’s possible “solid objectives” goes nowhere. One could demur, arguing that the Final Act of the Conference on Security

3 German version of the treaty according to the Bundesgesetzblatt dated 19 August 1957: <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/brussels/website/media/Basis/Vertraege/Pdf/EWG-Vertrag.pdf>> (the accessibility of all URL quoted in this book has been controlled 22 May 2016). The treaty was officially published in German, French, Italian, and Dutch.

4 <<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/sozialausgaben-die-quelle-der-schulden-11923880.html>> (13 October 2012).

and Cooperation in Europe in 1975, as well as German reunification in 1990, constituted solid European objectives that were also achieved. But in these cases, the international embeddedness of these specific objectives played a very major role; they were not primarily objectives of the European Community (EC). The transformation of the EC into the EU, as well as the small expansion in 1995 and large expansion in 2004, constituted substantial and realized goals, but they were qualitatively different from the Common Market in its day.

The above applies for the Europe of the European Union. Meanwhile, for greater Europe, discussions about solid objectives have virtually ceased, even though the *Council of Europe* continues to remain the institutional expression of joint European objectives. Proposals to further develop the *EU* into a federation of states fail to gain any traction. Neither do proposals to revert the EU to a free-trade zone. Efforts to create an EU constitution were abandoned when referendums held in Netherlands and France on the proposed constitution failed in 2005. Since the EU's legal status—namely the applicable Lisbon version of the underlying international treaty—nonetheless amounts to a kind of constitution, ongoing discussions have focused on how this constitution could become more democratic.

It must be concluded that efforts to formulate and declare plans, important solid objectives, and potential constitutional and state models are evidently running into difficulties and do not work. Some of these efforts have been met with indifference on the part of Europeans; others—as in 2005—have faced clear rejection. The skepticism is clearly reflected by the lack of enthusiasm during the European parliamentary elections, judging by the low voter turnout (in 2014, 42.54% for Europe as a whole). Looking toward Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and the Ukraine, where the EU is actively involved as a major player, the problems admit to no foreseeable solutions—no ideas or plans have thus far gained sustainable traction.<sup>5</sup>

This is not because ideas and plans don't exist but rather because of pragmatic impossibilities that perplex us because they escape our basic rationalistic attitude. We are loath to admit that the traditional rationalistic approach—namely, developing a model from a comprehensive analysis of the problem, the implementation of which amounts to the problem's solution—isn't working. Nonetheless, the public media resounds with calls for iconic leaders with groundbreaking ideas and objectives, not to mention vision. But such iconic figures do not exist—nor can they exist anymore. These heroic stories are over, no longer possible. In France, people are looking once more to Nicolas Sarkozy, despite the failure of his policies, because he knows how to exploit the heroic model. Viktor M. Orbán, who according to the well-known US senator John McCain is treading the path toward a neo-fascist dictatorship,<sup>6</sup> is also using the heroic model to make a go of it in Hungary; and that leaders are presenting themselves as heroes applies even more so to Vladimir Putin

5 <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/de/country-results-be-2014.html#table01>>. Voter participation fluctuates strongly among the countries. Belgium: 89.64%; Slovakia: 13.05%.

6 *Handelsblatt*, 3 December 2014: <<http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/attacken-von-us-senator-mccain-nennt-orban-neofaschistischen-diktator/11069776.html>>.

and President Recep T. Erdoğan of Turkey. Right-leaning politicians like Marine Le Pen in France, Heinz-Christian Strache in Austria, and formerly Silvio Berlusconi in Italy are operating according the same heroic schema. This lineup also includes the former regional president of Catalonia, Artur Mas.<sup>7</sup> In the United States, Obama was set up as a democratically operating hero—in principle, an antitype to the “strong men” mentioned above: the motto “yes, we can!” amounts to nothing less than a heroic slogan. We have also seen it fail.

Most self-stylized hero politicians are right-wing nationalists, but this does not apply to President Obama. Indeed, it is the model itself—which can contain a wide range of political content—that no longer works.

There are reasons why the postwar strategy of developing plans for European integration that are jointly implemented by heroic civilian politicians no longer works. The times are wrong and we need to ask ourselves: why? My answer is that we have entered into a *post-performative* era, which we would do well to accept and to adjust European actions accordingly. This book facilitates a reflection on this problem against the background of a “longue durée.”

## II

The situation analysis sketched out above demands that we view European history “differently” than is usually the case. I combine a gender-historical approach with the approach of performativity, taking seriously the original core of latter, namely, the performative speech act, which needs to be expanded here, however, into a *collective historical performative speech act*. In this respect, I focus on the performative act of Eurocentrism.

This combination of approaches seeks not to displace other strategies that approach European history in terms of conceptual, intellectual, or political history or general structuralism, but rather, to expand and, where possible, sharpen such strategies. After all, political history and gender history have long ceased to be mutually exclusive concepts. Of course, European history as gender history is also more than “Europe in Love, Love in Europe,” to quote the title of Luisa Passerini’s very good and insightful book, which pursues a very specific interwar period debate.<sup>8</sup> More than the history of women<sup>9</sup> or the history of manliness<sup>10</sup> in Europe, it pertains to something quite fundamental: the ancient world featured the development of a relationship model, inasmuch as *Europe*, in connection with the long developmental phase from matrifocal—and also at times egalitarian and warrior-masculine—societal configurations to patriarchal societal configurations, became a *woman*, whose

7 For a critical view on Mas and his nationalism, see: Nuria Amat, Das Gift des Separatismus, in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung* Nr. 251, 31.10–02.11 2014, 31.

8 Luisa Passerini, *Europe in Love, Love in Europe. Imagination and politics in Britain between the wars*, London 1998.

9 Olwen Hufton, *Frauenleben. Eine europäische Geschichte*, Frankfurt on the Main 2002.

10 Wolfgang Schmale, *Geschichte der Männlichkeit in Europa (1450–2000)*, Vienna 2003.

eroticized portrayal as Europe with and on a steer became embedded within abundant public visualizations of the patriarchal order. The source material allows us to clearly trace this development into late antiquity. This relationship possesses a heterosexual-patriarchal connotation.

This development resumed in the Middle Ages, particularly after the turn of the millennium. The ever more recurrent use of the name Europe and the female form appeared in the semantic field of men. The most important narrative in this respect—based on the Old Testament—was that of Noah’s son Japheth, whose descendants ostensibly populated Europe, his sons becoming the ancestral fathers of Europe’s most important nations. Custom went so far as to refer to Europe as “Japheth land,” but this re-designation failed to vanquish the name of Europe and was abandoned in the early modern period. Declared saints such as Martin of Tours were understood with reference to their importance for Europe. This was also especially true with regard to the fame and power of “individual rulers,” among whom Charlemagne enjoyed a certain preeminence.<sup>11</sup> This development intensified immensely during the Renaissance, while America and the figure of America<sup>12</sup> received a treatment similar to that of Europe and the figure of Europe, preserving the heterosexual-patriarchal connotations from antiquity.

Without naming it as such, the Enlightenment developed the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which would situate masculinity in relation to Europe in a manner quite different than before.<sup>13</sup> What failed to happen with the Japheth legend happened now: Europe as a “culture” became masculine. The relationship was connoted in terms of heterosexual-hegemonic masculinity and explicitly conceptualized as Eurocentric.

Today, this idiosyncratic connection, which initially projected the transformation of societal relationships onto a continent comprehended as a female body and later during the Enlightenment disembodied them, seems to have dissolved. Europe as a female character is now used only as a watermark depicting a “mythical figure” on Euro banknotes or occasionally reduced to a caricature for other minor purposes.

Behind such developments are performative acts: one during antiquity, one in the late-eighteenth century, and none today (hence, the post-performative). I call antiquity’s performative act “homocentrism.” It can be followed, among other places, in the myth of Europe, for this myth, in conjunction with a series of other myths in which Europe’s brothers and other relatives or descendants play important roles, ranks among the most important sources that attest to the performative act. The myth refers to the societal transformation mentioned above. It is important to understand that myths differ substantially from invented histories. The interesting aspect of myths lies not in the burnished transmissions one finds with someone like Ovid but rather in their dissection into temporal and symbolic layers that over time

11 Klaus Oschema, *Bilder von Europa im Mittelalter*, Ostfildern 2013. Quote on page 219.

12 Essential: Sabine Schülting, *Wilde Frauen, Fremde Welten. Kolonisierungsgeschichten aus Amerika*, Reinbek 1997.

13 Schmale, *Geschichte der Männlichkeit in Europa*, Ch. 4.

merged into a smooth history—a history that, quite literally, is invented. In contrast, the myth's elements, rendered distinct by the dissection, are like empirical primary sources and can be analyzed. However, the performative act becomes just as evident in an analysis of the invention of the alphabet, which constitutes quite literally a performative act (see below).

I call the eighteenth century's performative act "Eurocentrism," which characterizes the core of this performative act. The fact that these performative acts existed means that they were possible. Today such performative acts are no longer possible, a situation that ultimately finds expression in the change of gender roles, their relationships, and their decoupling from "Europe." A retrospective view reaching back as far as antiquity reveals the fundamental importance of this decoupling, because it explains why something that still functioned well into the middle of the twentieth century no longer works. "Europe" is no longer the same female figure who provides a reference point for heroic deeds, the one who was conquered or taken as a bride. "Europe" is no longer the same female figure that one disembodies and replaces first with "European culture," conceptualized as masculine and in the singular, and then in the nineteenth century with the masculine culture of masculine nations that, within the ideal construct, were supposed to relate to each other as brothers. With good reason, the European Union does not want to imagine itself as a replacement for the female figure of "Europe," for the abstract flag was chosen as a symbol on purpose. Europe also no longer means *culture* per se but rather now constitutes only a component of a global culture and designates only one world region among many.

### III

One might perhaps ask why I identify only two performative acts, for is not history replete with performative acts? But while the inflationary use of concepts like "performative" and "performativity" might suggest as much, my usage of the concept of "performative act" restores its essential content.

The concept of *performativity* developed from speech-act theory, which assigned a central role to performative speech. Proceeding from the work of John L. Austin<sup>14</sup> and John R. Searle<sup>15</sup> in the 1950s and 1960s, for quite some time—in large part due to the influence of Derrida<sup>16</sup> and Butler<sup>17</sup>—the concept has been broadly applied not only in linguistics but also in gender research, theater studies, art theory, historical scholarship, and communication and media studies. The concept can be elastically deployed in a broad range of cultural studies, for its essence exists in

14 John Langshaw Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, Cambridge 1962.

15 John R. Searle, *Speech Acts. An essay in the philosophy of english*, Cambridge 1969. As an introduction into speech act theory see James Loxley, *Performativity*, London 2007.

16 On Derrida see Loxley, *Performativity*, Ch. 4 and 5.

17 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter. On the discursive limits of "sex"*, London 1993. See also Loxley, *Performativity*, Ch. 6.

multiple formulations with slight variations.<sup>18</sup> Admittedly, its influence on historical scholarship has not been especially strong, for apart from historical gender research (the reception of Butler), the performativity approach has not prevailed here. Nonetheless, the approach enables a productive perspective on European history.<sup>19</sup>

Applied to history, the performative is apparently not limited to performative speech acts. Rather, scholars have used an expanded definition of performativity that views “society and culture as the result of performative actions,” the decisive aspect being the “constitutive character of social actions.”<sup>20</sup> Scholars in the SFB research project “Culture of Performative” noted: “Judith Butler, Pierre Bourdieu, and Slavoj Žižek refer to the cultural constituting of certain phenomena as ‘performative’ in order to emphasize that they have no ontological (or biological, etc.) antecedence but rather are produced through cultural processes.”<sup>21</sup> Incidentally, it appears that the notion of the “formative phase,” a popular concept used for periodization in scholarship about early cultures, did not figure in the recent development of the concept of performativity.

However, the concept of performativity is becoming blurred due to the pronounced expansion of the fields that apply the performativity approach, as well as the growing permeability in terms of meaning between “performativity” and “performance.” Instead of referring to precisely those phenomena that cannot be adequately described through other concepts, the concept of performativity is developing into a synonym for social constituting or the formation of the social and cultural world by means of performance. This is also demonstrated by the quotation above, insofar as it states that “society” and “culture” are generally described as the “result of performative acts” and refers to the “constitutive character of social actions.” These statements are so general that they explain any cultural result whatsoever. Performative action, I propose, should not be disconnected from the concept of the speech act. At their core, performative actions are speech acts, which, to be sure, are embedded in a performant environment. Also, they do not merely involve “speaking,” but rather the combination of various different performant media—above all visual, theatrical, auditory, and textual media.

If we return to the theory’s origins, performative speech acts are special speech acts, meaning also that they are decidedly non-routine. Therefore, the concept of performativity seeks to classify a special—as opposed to a general—speech situation. Typical performative acts include naming, gender allocation (previously at birth, now usually already during ultrasound exams), and the pronouncement of ritual acts that occur through the pronouncement itself (naming, marriage, divorce,

18 See “SFB 447” (special research focus) “Kulturen des Performativen”, Freie Universität Berlin, completed 31 December 2010: Erika Fischer-Lichte and Christoph Wulf (eds.), *Theorien des Performativen*, in: *Paragrana. Internationale Zeitschrift für Historische Anthropologie* 10/1/2001.

19 Wolfgang Schmale, *Geschichte Europas*, Vienna 2000, Ch. 1.

20 Christoph Wulf, Michael Göhlich and Jörg Zirfas, *Grundlagen des Performativen. Eine Einführung in die Zusammenhänge von Sprache, Macht und Handeln*, Weinheim 2001, 13 and 12.

21 Sybille Krämer and Marco Stahlhut, Das “Performative” als Thema der Sprach- und Kulturphilosophie, in: Erika Fischer-Lichte and Christoph Wulf (eds.), *Theorien*, 2001, 35–64, 45.



etc.). The special feature of the performative speech act is that, because of the speech attitude, it *engenders an awareness* of an (imputed) identity. However, seen in contrast from a scientific perspective, the speech act itself *produces* that identity. The speech act expressly establishes the identity, namely, in such a way that it *is*. The performative speech act is thus ambivalent because within the same action something is ascribed and, with regard to this something, the assertion is simultaneously made that this something is already there, such that the speech act only “engenders an awareness” thereof but does not create it. The performative speech act avails itself of freedom from doubt.

Here and in the following, sometimes I use words like “constitute” or “ascribe,” while at other times I write “engender awareness,” depending on the situation. When referring to the speech attitude, I write “engender awareness” because the speech attitude in the performative speech act is such that an imputed identity is posited as true and the speech act “merely” engenders an “awareness” of this identity. But when I refer to the scientific attitude, I write “ascribe,” “constitute,” “create,” or “produce.” The expression “engender awareness” always connotes that the speech act “engenders awareness” of an identity posited as antecedent. This sets the performative speech act apart from all other possible (non-performative) speech acts that undoubtedly also can engender an awareness of something by establishing it, but which acknowledge the act of establishment. In contrast, with regard to the performative speech act, engendering awareness means that the identity already *is*. Somebody needs only to declare it. It is a “swindle”—to use a word from the title of a book by Christina von Braun<sup>22</sup>—because, viewed scientifically, there is no admission that the speech act itself attributes or constitutes the identity, that it creates the identity. The pretense is that the performative speech act merely declares something that is ontologically antecedent. In reality, the identity is created in the moment of performative speech act itself, but the performative speech act is not acknowledged as an act of creation.

One is not asked whether one views this identity the same way. The newborn cannot be asked, but neither will the child be asked later on. Rather, once it is made, the speech act remains in effect. Throughout history, any reversal of the performative speech act has involved immense effort. This applies for changing gender, once it has been assigned; it also applies for changing one’s name or (in modern terms) civil status; in part, it also applies for reversing one’s religious affiliation. There are numerous reasons why this is very difficult and laborious. In any case, the powerful nature of an *existence* that has been “brought to awareness” of social participants by the performative speech act plays a substantial role. Reversing or changing this existence requires substantial personal effort and is often a very painful act, because it can involve detaching close social connections and always means repositioning the Self within one’s environment. The hurdles are so high that most people during the course of their lives offer no resistance against the implemented performative speech acts that very strongly determine their existence.

22 Christina von Braun, *Versuch über den Schwindel. Religion, Schrift, Bild, Geschlecht*, Zürich 2001.

Performative speech acts install a very specific and largely canonized identity in individuals and, as the case may be, groups. In so doing, the consummators of speech acts do not execute any arbitrarily formulated speech acts; rather, they execute socially conventionalized or canonized speech acts (the quality of *citability*). The implementation of the speech act also follows a ritual (the *ritual* character of the performative speech act), whereby this ritual need not be elaborate and admits to slight deviations that do not impair the speech act's validity. These preconditions and terms of execution form the basis of performative speech act's property of *re-iterability*. Consistently the same or largely similar repetitions that span space and time comprise the power of the performative speech act. Whereas every person carries out speech acts, the speakers of *performative* speech acts are invested with authority and power. Authority and power can be public or private, but they are not socially exclusive. The (historical) paterfamilias carried out performative speech acts regardless of whether he presided over a family of day laborers or was duke with a lengthy pedigree. The speaking person acts in a functional capacity. The social reference need not necessarily be an entire given society; it can also be a gentlemen's club, bowling club or family, just as long as the specified properties that turn a speech act into a performative speech act are provided.

#### IV

Proceeding on this basis, applying the concept of performativity to the study of history proves useful. At the same time, we must remember that performative speech acts are special speech acts, and that not every speech act is performative. When the concept of the performative speech act is transposed to historical events, its properties and circumstances outlined here, including the "swindle," remain the same.

One can well imagine viewing culture, society, etc. as the result of speech acts, that is, as proceeding from the constitutive or productive character of communication. But an identity—a cultural identity, for example—is established only through a performative speech act, or, more precisely, a multitude of *interconnected performative speech acts*. The intention in this case is to discuss a collective historical performative speech act. For the sake of brevity and simplicity, the following shall simply use the term *performative act*.

Before further elaborating this aspect, we need to address the concept of "history," as it has already been deployed. "History" is understood here as a *transcultural hypertext*. This hypertext is not self-contained but rather open; it continues to be written and new links continually accrue, but links and texts are also being lost. The concept of *hyper* refers to the circumstance that many *texts* form the hypertext. *Text* is understood in a Derridean sense as a semiotic term.<sup>23</sup> A *text* constitutes a

23 Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Culture as Text. Reading and Interpreting Cultures*, in: Birgit Neumann and Mirjam Horn (eds.), *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture*, Berlin 2012, 99–118.

nexus of sense and meaning that in each case is jointly formed by a very large number of signs—in fact, an immeasurable or innumerable number of signs. It is the collaboration of people—very different in each respective case—that produces a text. I have described such texts in my book *Mein Europa: Reisetagebücher eines Historikers* (My Europe: Traveloques of a Historian, first published 2013). The book selected “cultural texts” that were produced in the space between Uzbekistan and Quebec, between Denmark and Morocco. One could include many others. The spatial demarcation is actually weaker than it appears, for the texts are linked primarily through mobile people within that space. Nonetheless, the text-bearing media are often firmly situated materials, such as specific buildings, cities, etc. that can be read and understood as texts. Some of these text-bearing media can be accurately described as “sites of memory.” At these places, various different texts are linked together.

This can be clearly demonstrated with the Basilica of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine in Vézelay, Burgundy, for example.<sup>24</sup> The basilica marked the beginning of the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela; here is where Bernard of Clairvaux invoked the second crusade in 1146; here is where a number of kings assembled for the third crusade; Louis IX (Saint Louis) departed from Vézelay in 1248 and 1270 for the sixth and seventh crusades; in 1946, on the 800th anniversary of Bernard’s crusade sermon held 800 years earlier, organizers mounted a “crusade for peace” at the basilica, which among its 30,000 participants also included German prisoners of war. Today the basilica is a UNESCO world cultural heritage site. We might also remember Prosper Mérimée, who visited the church in 1834 as a general inspector and examined its condition. Mérimée represents the nineteenth century’s powerful historicist interest in the Middle Ages and the reconstruction or completion of medieval cathedrals and churches. The concrete events and persons in themselves are references to extremely diverse and numerous texts. Specific to certain epochs, they link together to become larger texts: texts, for example, that demonstrate how Europe was anchored in salvation history through Christian structures and pilgrimage routes, as well as the crusades; texts that designate the shift from war to peace as a central theme in Europe (1946); texts that produce a global dimension (UNESCO); texts that lead into the historicism of the nineteenth century, and so on.

It is precisely in this sense of textual concatenation that the basilica constitutes a site of memory. Such places are points or nodes of concatenation in a hypertext. The *hypertext* is composed of these texts or nexuses of sense and meaning, which are linked or knotted together at site of memory. But this does not mean that the hypertext itself has a single meaning or single significance. As a hypertext, it does not automatically constitute or express a monolithic meaning, like that of a master narrative. It acquires this function only by means of collective historical performative speech acts. With regard to Europe, this gets at the heart of the matter: Europe does not possess any ontological antecedence, so only performative acts from many texts linked together into hypertext can “engender awareness” of a hypermeaning and hyperrelevance.

24 Wolfgang Schmale, *Mein Europa. Reisetagebücher eines Historikers*, Vienna 2013, 175–178.

This approach stands in opposition to most historiography about Europe. With regard to the course of European history, preconceptions with rarely disclosed theoretical implications play an important role.<sup>25</sup> The discussion about the “roots of Europe”—which follows from the tree metaphor that broadly informs the EU’s European discourse—has been widely disseminated into public political discourse. To help visualize the tree metaphor, Britta Orgovanyi-Hanstein elaborated a “history tree” of Europe’s history and printed it as a poster.<sup>26</sup> With aid from the concept of epigenesis, Paul Veyne has entered his objection to the idea of roots, using the example of “Christian roots.”<sup>27</sup> Another presumption is the “birth of Europe” (Bartlett<sup>28</sup>) from this or that constellation; a third is that of a development from A to Z, as expressed in his time by Denis de Rougemont in his book *Vom Mythos zur Realität* (From Myth to Reality)<sup>29</sup> and more recently by Michael Gehler in his book entitled *Europa: Von der Utopie zur Realität* (Europe: from the Utopia to Reality).<sup>30</sup> Other material refers to an assumed European “singularity” that, when viewed critically, is also seen as a “special path”<sup>31</sup>; meanwhile, other accounts are based on the firm belief in the effective power of the ideas that supposedly led to the emergence of at least present-day Europe. These all constitute theoretical presuppositions, inasmuch as they conceptualize Europe’s history as a biography: it starts with an act of birth or possibly a complex beginning with a complicated initial or originating constellation, or with roots from which something develops, grows, and eventually—despite all of the adverse circumstances in the course of history—flourishes. Sometimes, as in the 1998 book by Hagen Schulze entitled *Phoenix Europa*<sup>32</sup>, authors use the model of rebirth or reiterative biography. Already in 1990, on the occasion of the fall of the wall and opening of the Iron Curtain, this same author published *Die Wiederkehr Europas* (The Return of Europe).<sup>33</sup> Representations of recent European history, which lead Europe from its *absolute* low point in 1945 to prosperity and freedom, follow this same biographical pattern.

None of these approaches can simply be declared right or wrong. They always explain only certain aspects from European history, but not the whole. They also

25 For a critical view see: Michael Mitterauer, *Entwicklung Europas – ein Sonderweg? Legitimationstheorien und die Diskussion der Wissenschaft*, Vienna 1999.

26 <[http://www.candorverlag.at/geschichtsbaum/frame/index\\_extern.html](http://www.candorverlag.at/geschichtsbaum/frame/index_extern.html)>.

27 Paul Veyne, Hat Europa christliche Wurzeln?, in: Paul Veyne (ed.), *Als unsere Welt christlich wurde. Aufstieg einer Sekte zur Weltmacht*, Munich 2008, Ch. XI, 140–152.

28 Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe. Conquest, colonization and cultural change, 950–1350*, Princeton 1993.

29 Denis de Rougemont, *Vingt-huit siècles d’Europe*, Paris 1961.

30 Michael Gehler, *Europa. Von der Utopie zur Realität*, Innsbruck 2014.

31 Fernand Braudel, *Europa – Bausteine seiner Geschichte*, Frankfurt on the Main 1989; Hubert Kiesewetter, *Das einzigartige Europa. Zufällige und notwendige Faktoren der Industrialisierung*, Göttingen 1996; Michael Mitterauer, *Warum Europa? Mittelalterliche Grundlagen eines Sonderwegs*, Munich 2003.

32 Hagen Schulze, *Phoenix Europa*, Berlin 1998.

33 Hagen Schulze, *Die Wiederkehr Europas*, Berlin 1990; Hagen Schulze, *Die Identität Europas und die Wiederkehr der Antike*, Bonn 1999.

blend together with performative acts that make Europe into the entity they describe. All of these approaches operate implicitly or explicitly with delimitations and with the assumption of fixed boundaries. In part, these involve geographical boundaries (Europe as a continent); in part the boundaries are religious (Europe as a Christian continent) or cultural (Europe as a culture); in part, they pertain to a mixture of politics and international law, as when, for example, the European Union is referred to succinctly as Europe. All of these approaches reach their respective limits because ultimately they postulate a definable entity named Europe, which they seek to explain.

The texts linked together in a hypertext originate in a broad expansive space that exceeds what is generally understood as the continent of Europe. They are linked by those people who, for very different reasons, move within this space, who migrate and communicate and set in motion cultural transfers, exchanges, and translations. That these texts are interlinked as a hypertext is neither theoretically assumed, nor does it occur automatically. The hypertext does not need to cover the entire space in which texts are accrued and linked. Losses of linkages and texts occur on an ongoing basis; the dimensions of the hypertext depend on courses of time.

The term *transcultural* refers back to a multitude of cognitive categories that shape current historical scholarship. Primarily it involves dissolving working methods that rely on fixed identifying categories or the formation of fixed demarcations that are presented as compulsory but in reality are not compulsory at all. Space, culture, and society are open and relational categories. This does nothing to alter the fact that during an era of nationalism a society could define itself as a culturally, ethnically, politically, etc. homogenous society that is clearly distinguished from other nations and base collective action on this self-deception and faux history. But at least today we understand the connections differently, or perhaps we actually know better today, namely, that these were invented communities, self-deceptions, faux histories, and constructed legends. Historical actuality is based not least on uninterrupted migrations and cultural transfers, on *métissages*, on the dissolution of boundaries. No formation is final. It would be dubious to take at face value not only self-defined nations but also other seemingly fixed categories, such as (ancient) "Greece." In order to name this unfixed and unfixable, this never finalized quantity, the term *transcultural* in connection with *hypertext* seems well suited.

The formation of fixed categories in scholarship and also in people's practice of self-definition both as individuals and as groups naturally has its own (deep) meaning. One assumes an individualized self, a collective self that can be explained and understood not only in mundane but also scientific terms. The individual and social need for this is comprehensible and quite understandable, but does this mean it cannot be questioned? At any rate, even if we can declare and understand the individual and the particular as an identity Self, there is no compelling reason to conclude that the "greater whole" also constitutes an identity Self. Recent historiography is gradually starting to take this into account (see chapter 2). The individual *text* can be explained and understood; it is recognizable as an *individual* text, which does not mean that it is completely delimited and isolated. But this does not

yet—and by no means necessarily—turn the *hypertext* into an entity with an overall meaning or overall significance. In the first instance, the *hypertext* evades such an exact designation. It is the *hypertext* that forms the historical site of the *performative act*.

## V

On the basis of the above discussion, I arrive at the following theoretical sentence: in that transcultural *hypertext* called “European history,” performative acts engender an awareness of “Europe.”

## VI

Naturally: somehow we want to understand “Europe”—the Europe that we know or presume to know from history and present. The “continent” has borne the name for 2,700 years or more. This seductively leads to the assumption of an ontological antecedence, as was vividly demonstrated during the sixteenth century by the understanding of the continent as a female body in the famous 1537 woodcut by Johannes Putsch.<sup>34</sup> A later variation of the woodcut by Heinrich Bünting in 1587/89 included a caption that in a certain sense formulated the associated speech act: “Europa prima pars terrae in forma virginis.”<sup>35</sup>

Yet even so, Europe *as such* does not exist. Insofar as we have available sources, when we look upon the migrations, transfers, etc., never do we find any clearly defined spaces where “some people are like this” and “others are not like this.” Even today, this is reflected by the very history of the name of Europe itself: only the female form, derived as an *icon* from mythology, does not appear to change. But the specific application of the name to the so-called continent was and remains unstable, not to mention the name’s figurative uses that refer back to a community of values, among other things. The long history of the name of Europe suggests merely constancy; but what it actually means changes continuously to this very day.

Performative acts imbue the transcultural *hypertext* as a whole with sense and meaning. As indicated above, this *hypertext* does not inherently possess them. That historical performative speech acts occur with reference to a (supposed) entity named Europe presumably follows from motives similar to those associated with performative speech acts in a narrower sense of the term. Performative and histori-

34 Figure see here: <[http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/HOC/HOC\\_V3\\_Pt2/HOC\\_VOLUME3\\_Part2\\_chapter42.pdf](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/HOC/HOC_V3_Pt2/HOC_VOLUME3_Part2_chapter42.pdf)>. Scroll down to page 1192.

35 Detail: Wolfgang Schmale, Europa – die weibliche Form, in: *L’Homme. Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 11/2/2000, 211–233. See also Peter Meurer, Europa Regina. 16th century maps of Europe in the form of a queen, in: *Belgeo* 3–4 2008, <<http://belgeo.revues.org/7711>>.