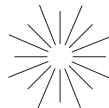


NOTES ON EUROPE

"In fact, the question of the essence of Europe is not mysterious or unanswerable. (...) But let us not worry about sterile questions on the true borders and ethnic entities of Europe. There is no doubt that Europe has neither a substantial popular base nor strong borders to the east and the southeast, nor an unequivocal religious identity ... The question should not be: who, according to what criteria and what traditions, belongs to a "true Europe"? ... but: which scenes do Europeans play in their decisive historical moments? What are the ideas that animate them, the illusions that mobilize them? How has Europe achieved its driving history and by what means does it keep moving? Where does Europe's power and unity run the risk of failing?" [Peter Sloterdijk | *If Europe Awakes*]

"Let this new Europe keep its luminous memory this way: philosophy, democracy, the Enlightenment, and even what is called, in a very dubious way, "secularization". May it also keep its nocturnal memory, the memory of all the crimes it committed in history and which were committed in its name, all these forms of hegemony, of colonialism, and, in the course of this century, all the monstrosities of European totalitarianism: fascism, nazism, stalinism ...

But I still appeal to you, to a Europe that ... proposes a "new international" and not a "cosmopolitanism". [Jacques Derrida | *Letter to Europe*]



The notion of "Europe" has been called into question since the last decades of the twentieth century, especially in the field of the so-called European Studies. Since World War II, Europe has lost its visionary project of a privileged race of the human kind, thanks to the consequences of its policy of self-destruction, already present in the first half of the last century, to the effects of decolonization and the loss of ethnocentrism. The convulsions at the level of world politics and geopolitics have definitely changed the course of history. What Europe is left after the great historical controversies that have crossed and continue to cross it? What critical framework can we outline today so as to understand the various interactions and disseminations that fundamentally make Europe a kind of financial and commercial brand? What place can there still be in the world for a Europe that does not yield to the imperialist tradition? As Sloterdijk critically asks, is this commonplace that tries to formulate Europe as a "unity of differences" or "a set of contradictions" a empty one? What is the possibility of a heterotopic becoming for Europe? How to wake it from the dogmatic sleep, as did Kant in respect to Reason? Since the modern age, in which European cartography has practically reduced the terrestrial globe and the representation of the world to Europe, until today, the old continent has lost its enchantment, its mystical character, being increasingly challenged as a paradigm. While it is true that it will continue to be a privileged one, this fact can not prevent us from thinking about what we are as history, from establishing a dialogue with ourselves, a kind of personal archaeology. Similarly, in the territory of art, Europe has been the subject of complex debates, in the domain of which some artists have been called in to participate, questioning both the political reorganization of post-Second World War, recent political decisions or artistic mapping based in geopolitical strategies in a global context. If European art was then regarded as the world's art, its protectorate seems to have been emptied. Will those who Sloterdijk calls "the second-rate artists" be the ones who continue to overestimate heterogeneity and otherness, making an effort to maintain the myth of the European dream?