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THE EUROPEAN DREAM

THE FRONTIER IN EUROPEAN HISTORY

ABSTRACT Many European citizens do not have a clear idea about European identity. But a *European Dream* (in many ways parallel to the *American Dream*) has raised hopes and offered opportunities for democratic and peaceful development. As F.J. Turner emphasized the importance of the frontier in shaping American character, we can also see the importance of the frontier in shaping the European mindset. In terms of topological mapping, a frontier is often also a war-front. Outside Europe as well, borders such as the Great Wall of China have defined territory as a defended area. However, boundaries have seen not only war. Many cross-border regions have in fact seen dialogue, communication, commerce, change, travel, and mutual inspiration. European identity was strengthened and defined through ancient reasoning concerning frontiers. According to Braudel, the Mediterranean cannot be understood independently from what is exterior to it. The first European identity was strengthened and defined on the frontier and the values of Europe are best perceived along its borders. The light shines strongest in the point of its source, but it is more appreciated to the point of its limit, where darkness and brightness compete for space – and even for life. European peripheries may be seen as a problem, yet they are the bastions of Europe and today, like yesterday, they have frequently prevented the institutional collapse of the center of Europe. Sometimes, an institutional breakdown begins at the peripheries and then, like an avalanche, sweeps the center away.

Keywords: sociology, Europe, frontiers

1. A EUROPEAN UNION PROJECT

Here I present the results of a 2008 project, “EU and Turkey: Connecting Identities, Bridging Cultures”, supported by the EU, focusing on the values of EU membership and, in particular, on issues regarding Turkey joining the EU. The project had what may be defined as an educational objective: providing information and guidance to students and academics on the concept of “being” an EU citizen today. The project explored the Copenhagen criteria together with the “classic” elements of civil consciousness, participation and commitment. All those engaged in the project, from educators to employees, embraced their European identity and committed themselves to explaining and promoting their pro-EU viewpoints. When the project was launched we can say that a European Dream, parallel to and able to compete with the American Dream was shining. The initial idea for the project evolved from a research perspective, since we discovered that a vast number of European citizens do not possess a clear sense of European identity. We reached the conclusion that the “true” European citizen is a patriot who is aware of their “ideal” heritage: in terms of specific aspects of European history (while some periods are perceived as shameful). The burden of centuries of European history makes it difficult to educate and motivate citizens to become European patriots – in fact, Europe’s past and present difficulties require citizens to understand, select and reject a wide variety of facts and ideas. Consciousness is therefore a consequence of education and the “European frontier” therefore lies in our minds and within our souls.

University professors from Heidelberg and Ludwigsburg, from the University of L’Aquila in Italy and from several universities in Turkey, with Canakkale taking the lead, participated in the project. Thanks to the project, we visited nine Turkish universities; we reached the borders of Iran, Iraq, Syria, Greece, Russia, and Bulgaria. Several meetings were held in Germany and Italy and many hundreds of people have been involved in the project and its organization. Before, during and at the end of this project, we carried out surveys, interviews, meetings with thousands of students in Germany, Italy, Turkey and in the most historical and meaningful places in the world, from Venice to Istanbul.

After three years of hard work, we prepared a final report on the project, but it seemed incomplete: we realized that a further clarification and elaboration was necessary. Above all, in the course of our project, we have seen the difficulties in terms of dialogue with young Europeans. For a relationship with the classics, some recommend a narrative style of “academic aristocracy”, others recommend “academic populism”¹ instead. We tried to explain it in the simplest way, but we came up against many difficulties. From the beginning of the project, the data questionnaire was a big problem: in Europe and in Turkey a small number of students were able to understand the basics of EU

¹ V.D. Hanson, J. Heath, B.S. Thornton, *Bonfire of the Humanities. Rescuing the Classics in an Impoverished Age*, Wilmington 2000; M. Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity. A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, Cambridge (Mass.)–London 1997.

identity and citizenship. Few had a clear idea as to the meaning of Europe and of European identity (which was confusing for Italian, German, and Turkish citizens as well).

In an age of question-raising, students are not satisfied with simple answers. For this project, it was our job to provide answers for people and we discovered that sometimes people had no idea about the subject. Generally speaking, we were asked strange questions, because the issues raised were unfamiliar. Regarding Europe, many people do not know the simplest aspects of what is at stake, let alone knowing how to answer questions correctly. Even worse, with some crucial questions, we discovered that our answers (provided by the most institutional of books) were not satisfactory: they were sometimes contradictory and sometimes rather obscure.

The initial educational project was transformed into a true research study.² We thus initiated a second phase from 2010 to 2012, in which a detailed analysis was of primary importance, through a comparison with the results achieved in parallel international experiences. The final part of this second phase of our research work took place in 2012, in England, Greece, Morocco, Italy, Poland, Serbia: precisely in Thessaloniki, Fez, Catania, Warsaw, Belgrade, Manchester. We focused on the European borders. For our purposes, the richest areas of Europe, in the Netherlands, northern Italy, Belgium, Germany, France, were less important than European frontier areas. *In Westphalian Europe, conflicts were primarily about borders and jurisdiction over them*, while EU politics now has *empowered neighbors rather than colonizing them*.³

We periodically checked our analysis; for example, in 2010 the main points of this volume were presented and discussed at the meeting of the International Sociological Association, which was held in Gothenburg in September 2010. The last focus group concerning the research was held in Manchester, September 2012.

2. FROM THE EUROPEAN DREAM TO THE EUROPEAN NIGHTMARE

By signing the Treaty of Rome in 1957, a process began in Europe which has influenced a political renewal in many directions: Spain and Greece were both helped in the transition to democracy, Portugal and Poland were both helped in the transition to a fully developed market economy. There is no doubt that Europe, a *European Dream* (in many ways parallel to the *American Dream*) has raised hopes and offered opportunities of democratic and peaceful development: to the south of the Mediterranean, from Morocco to Turkey; on the eastern border of Europe, in Serbia and Albania; in the far north, from Gdansk to Kiev (obviously, in different ways and for different reasons).

² F. Sidoti, M. Gammone, *Che cosa significa essere europeo? Una ricerca al cuore e ai confini dell'Europa*, Milano 2013; M.Y. Eryaman, S.Z. Genc, E. Aktan, 'Perceptions of the EU and Democratic Values' in J.A. Spinthourakis, J. Lalor, W. Berg (eds.), *Cultural Diversity in the Classroom. A European Comparison*, Wiesbaden 2011, pp. 180-196 (*VS Research. CrossCulture*).

³ J. Zielonka, 'Why the World Should Worry about Europe's Disarray', *Current History. A Journal of Contemporary World Affairs*, Vol. 111, No. 750 (2013), pp. 7-12.

When we started the first phase of the project, in 2008, what has been defined by many as the *European Dream* was at its full peak.⁴ The second phase of our research, however, has become intertwined with various unexpected European troubles. In Thessaloniki, in 2011, the economic crisis was already tragic; in Fes, in 2011, our analysis took place simultaneously with the effervescence of the tumultuous Arab spring. Once more in 2011, from Romania to Hungary, from Bulgaria to Ukraine, afterthoughts and suspicions emerged even in former communist Europe. While politicians and technocrats were highly involved in attempts to find remedies and solutions, intellectuals were the most pessimistic ones. Our research was characterized by interviews and focus groups; in Manchester we found a gloomier description about the stalemate the Eurozone found itself trapped in.

During the years in which our research was being carried out, the Euro and the EU itself appeared under a new light.⁵ The countries of the Eurozone appeared to be tangled and interconnected in a web of banks, debt, overproduction and cross-border lending. Thus, in the event of major insolvencies, mutually assured destruction seemed plausible. While not every major problem is destined to end in disaster, large-scale bank failure inside and outside Europe could lead to a chain of defaults. For some merciless observers a crash was necessary in order to restore Europe's soul, borders, duties and rights.

The idea of a European nightmare has frequently been advanced and can be explained through two erroneous claims which have however gained support. On the one hand, Germany and its allies have been accused of forcing countries located in the Eurozone periphery to bear the full-cost of the debt crisis, causing economic recession and social misery which threatened to destroy the very essence of the European Dream (by not applying burden-sharing principles to allow such countries to recover from the crisis). On the other hand, the EU has been accused of leaving Eurozone peripheries in a state of economic stagnation causing mass unemployment of youth and political turmoil. Clearly such claims depict nightmare scenarios for the EU.

Generating turmoil, in July 26, 2012, the former Editor in Chief of *The Economist*, Bill Emmott, claimed in an article that Europe was threatening the world.⁶ He wrote that the global economy between 2002 and 2007 had the fastest five years of growth that it had enjoyed in more than 40 years. Even though a war had started in Afghanistan in 2001 and another war had started in Iraq in 2003, the attitudes of financial markets and corporate managements were optimistic. In 2012, on the contrary, attitudes

⁴ L. van Middelaar, *Le passage à l'Europe. Histoire d'un commencement*, trans. by D. Cunin, O. Vanwersch-Cot, Paris 2012 (*Bibliothèque des Idées*); J. Rifkin, *The European Dream. How Europe's Vision of the Future is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*, New York 2005; A. Giddens, *Europe in the Global Age*, Cambridge 2006; R. Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power. America and Europe in the New World Order*, New York 2004.

⁵ A. Alesina, F. Giavazzi, *Goodbye Europa. Cronache di un declino economico e politico*, Milano 2006.

⁶ B. Emmott, 'Europe is Threatening the World', *The Muslim Observer*, Vol. 14 (2012), at <<http://muslimmedianetwork.com/mmn/?p=11586>>; V.D. Hanson, 'Europe's Dream Becomes Its Nightmare', *National Review on line*, 24 January 2013.

were pessimistic and driven by uncertainty.⁷ In his vision, Bill Emmott had previously⁸ declared a weak future for the EU and labelled the euro as *a temporary phenomenon*, but his words in 2012 were astounding.

From the Arab Uprising to the civil war underway in Syria, from the tension over Iran's nuclear program to that over the price of energy, many factors were widening the range of fear and unpredictability. But, Bill Emmott wrote, *the biggest source of worry is much closer to home. It is Europe. The problem is not simply the fact that government debts are huge, that growth is non-existent and that there is a basic disagreement between the debtor and creditor countries about how the euro should be run. Those things are important, of course. But the real problem is that the range of possible outcomes looks so wide.*

In order to explain these dire concerns, he quoted the possibility of Greek withdrawal from the euro and Italian elections, the chance that some countries might leave the euro, defaulting on its debts, or that the currency might collapse. He quoted the possibility of the Eurozone splitting into two, with different currencies for northern and southern Europe. These possibilities, in his view, were non-existent and virtually inconceivable, but they were real for corporate boards, financial institutions, and ordinary people. So the prophecy was becoming self-fulfilling. It's not only a *European Nightmare*, but *Europe threatening the world*.

3. THE FRONTIERS IN CLASSICAL EUROPE

In our research, we understood the idea that the first European identity was strengthened and defined on the frontier. The best perception of the values of Europe is in its periphery and along its borders. The light shines strongest in the point of its source, but it is more appreciated to the point of its limit, where darkness and brightness compete for space – and even for life. We referred to lines which are in the famous paper read by F.J. Turner at the meeting of the American Historical Association in Chicago, July 12, 1893: *What the Mediterranean Sea was to the Greeks, breaking the bond of custom, offering new experiences, calling out new institutions and activities, that, and more, the ever retreating frontier has been to the United States directly, and to the nations of Europe more remotely.*⁹

The European Union was born to avoid a reiteration of huge massacres that cost the life of millions of human beings.¹⁰ Two world wars left an apocalyptic toll of millions

⁷ J. Habermas, *Zur Verfassung Europas. Ein Essay*, Berlin 2011 (Edition Suhrkamp, 6214); W. Laqueur, *After the Fall. The End of the European Dream and the Decline of a Continent*, New York 2012; H.M. Enzensberger, *Sanftes Monster Brüssel oder Die Entmündigung Europas*, Berlin 2012 (Edition Suhrkamp); F. Heisbourg, *La fin du rêve européen*, Paris 2013 (*Les Essais*).

⁸ B. Emmott, *20:21 Vision. The Lessons of the 20th Century for the 21st*, London 2003.

⁹ K.L. Klein, *Frontiers of Historical Imagination. Narrating the European Conquest of Native America, 1890-1990*, Berkeley 1997.

¹⁰ M. Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century*, London 1998; T. Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, New York 2010.

of dead, maimed, wounded, widows and orphans, and tons and tons of rubble, genocide and nuclear bombs. Robert Schuman, Alcide De Gasperi, Konrad Adenauer, Jean Monnet had humility and a sense of shame. From many point of views, the Founding fathers of the EU were at the fringes of the old Europe. In the post-World War II years, they reached the peak levels of the European power, but previously they were peripheral, marginal, borderline. They had nothing to do with the old European history, characterized by militarism and colonialism. The Founding Fathers of the EU are linked to another European heritage. They were immigrants in the New World of a *European Dream*. It was a dream¹¹ come true after everything they went through.

Forced to summarize a very complicated and controversial history, in our research we told the students that what people mean as *classical civilization* was born along the frontiers of the Mediterranean, in a multitude of shores and islands. In that classical Europe, the discoverers (for the first time in history) of freedom and self-government were immigrants, comparable to those of the *Mayflower*. Coming from the primordial boiling pot of the Bronze Age, they flew from the autocratic regimes located in a pre-historical Balkans and irrupted on to the stage of human life. As free immigrants in almost uninhabited Mediterranean domains, rich in land and poor in population, they invented rules for conducting a new associative existence, unchained from the overwhelming dominance of an archaic noble birthright. Without the slavery demanded by kings and landlords, in the Mediterranean colonies they constructed the first complete human alphabet; they discovered the meaning and the rules of an open society. The so-called *miracle* was born in remote regions of the Ionian and Aegean, in distant sides of Anatolia and Southern Italy, in the shady line where Asia, Africa, Europe are now so different and they used to be so alike. Those primordial travelers, fugitives, renegades, migrants, returned to mainland Greece, where they re-proposed the institutional organization experienced in the colonies. Watching them closely, Babylonian mathematicians and Egyptian theologians, Sumerian ideograms and Phoenician consonants, came to be immersed in the same melting pot. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were written in the Ionian language and Ionian were the first political, mathematical, medical, sculptural, architectural, and philosophical Mediterranean discoveries. From the frontiers, civilization shifted to the West.

The contribution of Presocratics is a case in point. The so-called "Presocratics" were 6th and 5th century BCE thinkers who lived in the Mediterranean colonies at the eastern or western fringes of the ancient world. The first volume in which we find the expression "pre-Socratic age" is the *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie*, written by the German scholar Johann Augustus Eberhard in 1788. In the twentieth century, the expression was popularized by Hermann Diels in *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 1903, and was meant to mark a chronological and ideal difference: the Presocratics were thought to be inferior to Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. They were interesting only in terms of being predecessors. The suggestion of archaism implied the idea of a Canon and of a Classical Period (represented by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle). On the contrary, from Marx

¹¹ R. Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, New York 2008.

to Nietzsche, all the Western unquiet outsiders were more interested in people living on the fringes of classical and canonical ages. However, only Karl Popper gave the greatest importance on their relevance. His observations are in the context of his own epistemological theory: science originate in some kind of imaginative explanatory narrative. What distinguishes science is the regulative idea of truth, that is the correspondence to the facts. Hypothesis, not episteme, was at the center of the primordial Mediterranean approach; wonder, not dogma, was at the center of the pre-Socratic approach in the shores and islands, towns and villages of ancient Mediterranean settlements.

Popper says: *The history from Thales to Plato is a splendid story. It is almost too good to be true.* This was the main theme in his *Presidential Address*, delivered to the Aristotelian Society in October 1958: "Back to the Presocratics". The conference was firstly included in an anthological book.¹² At that time, Popper was known as a defender of democratic systems of government and author of two books: *The Open Society and its Enemies* and *The Poverty of Historicism*. Later, a unique book collected, for the first time, Karl Popper's engagement with Presocratic thinking.¹³ In these pages, Popper described himself as an amateur student of the Presocratics *completely out of my depth when an expert begins to argue which words or phrases Heraclitus might, and which he could not possibly, have used.*¹⁴ In this famous conference, Popper makes a bid for a specific theory of knowledge, which is always an attempt to understand the world we live in. Knowledge proceeds by way of conjectures and refutations. *The critical approach exerts something like an evolutionary selection pressure upon the theories and so encourages their evolution towards greater truthlikeness.*¹⁵

According to Popper, the only method of expanding knowledge is through an endless feedback process of criticism. In his view, the great achievement of the ancient Mediterranean thought was critical discussion, which is the only way to expand our knowledge. The supreme appreciation of critical discussion changed the standard definition as to the function of a school: the exposition of definite doctrines. A new tradition arose in Ionia and was rediscovered in the Renaissance, especially by Galileo (who understood the meaning of rational knowledge). The Ionian school is incorporated in modern science. According to Popper, tradition of criticism had its main source in Ionia, marking a crucial innovation in human history.

Xenophanes is the author of the oldest fragments in this field. The Presocratics rejected the previous Mediterranean account of a world (as in Homer and Hesiod), which is god-saturated, where the gods intervene from above in all aspects of life, telling humans what to do, frequently without explanation and understanding. For the Presocratics, the world is a *kosmos*, an ordered physical environment, rational and intelligible, with no supra-natural supervision. In the well-known fragments B14-16, Xenophanes comments on the general tendency to conceive of divine beings in human form:

¹² K. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations. The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*, London 1963.

¹³ Idem, *The World of Parmenides. Essays on the Presocratic Enlightenment*, London 1998.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 126.

*But mortals suppose that gods are born,
wear their own clothes and have a voice and body.*

*Ethiopians say that their gods are snub-nosed and black;
Thracians that theirs are blue-eyed and red-haired.*

In presocratic and Mediterranean cultures, we cannot find a clearer expression of the Ionian “intellectual revolution”. The passage from anthropomorphism to anthropocentrism is extraordinary. In the Ionian tradition, we had the famous Protagoras saying: *The Human being is the measure of all things: of things which are, that they are, and of things which are not, that they are not*. Having deprived the skies of human forms, Xenophanes proceeds to strip natural phenomena of mysterious significance. In the striking fragment 21B32, he says:

*And she whom they call Iris, this too is by nature a cloud.
Purple, red, and greenish-yellow to behold.*

In his de-mythologized account of human phenomena, there is, as a logical consequence, his thoroughly de-mythologized account of the physical realm. In Xenophanes’s words, there is no Iris, the time-honored messenger of the gods. In Xenophanes’s words, the rainbow is not a supra-natural sign from the gods on Olympus: the rainbow is only colorful cloud. In the presocratic refusal of the traditional account, there is the beginning of European science: an approach to the world that employs direct observation and prefers logical awareness of intelligible causes. From Aristophanes’ *Clouds* to Desmond Tutu’s *Rainbow Nation*, Xenophanes heritage has been great. The cloud analogy was used to represent the Internet as early as 1994.¹⁶

4. EUROCENTRISM AND FRONTIERS

Right from his first pages Turner says that *the American frontier is sharply distinguished from the European frontier – a fortified boundary line running through dense populations*. As F.J. Turner emphasized the importance of the *frontier* in shaping *American* character, we can say that the importance of the *frontier* shaped the European mindset. Undeniably, the frontier has been a recurring landmark of American exceptionalism, from the heyday of Kennedy’s *New Frontier* to the *electronic frontier* of the Wikipedia editors, which have been explicitly compared to the pioneers of Turner’s American frontier for their boldness and rejection of limitations.¹⁷ But while frontiersmen in the Wild

¹⁶ D. Weinberger, *Too Big to Know. Rethinking Knowledge Now That the Facts Aren’t the Facts, Experts Are Everywhere, and the Smartest Person in the Room is the Room*, New York 2011; J. Gleick, *The Information. A History, a Theory, a Flood*, New York 2011.

¹⁷ R. Jensen, ‘Military History on the Electronic Frontier: Wikipedia Fights the War of 1812’, *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 76, No. 4 (2012), pp. 523-556; E. Schmidt, J. Cohen, *The New Digital Age. Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Business*, New York 2013.

West settled their disputes with shoot-outs and lynch mobs, the European mapmakers were producing their most horrendous massacres just for boundary-naming. It has been said that in some way Europe was as an immense Far West,¹⁸ but the carnage over boundaries was a commonplace in Europe, because it was well-known that it was on the borders that the possibility of *depriving others of their own border*¹⁹ occurred first. In an overpopulated Europe, terms like *Hackordnung* or *Lebensraum* were familiar to zoologists and politicians.

In terms of topological mapping, a frontier is often also a front. Not only in Europe, historic borders such as the Great Wall of China have defined *territory* as a *defended* area. However, boundaries have seen not only war: many cross-border regions have seen dialogue, communication, commerce, change, travel, and mutual inspiration.

Herodotus' description is unequalled by a peculiar sensibility to borders and frontiers. Born in Halicarnassus (modern Bodrum in Turkey), Herodotus was at the border of the Greek speaking world. He was the first great traveler who left us his diaries. Moved by doubts and curiosity, open-minded and respectful of human diversities, he is the archetypical reporter, according to Ryszard Kapuściński and to his wonderful *Podróże z Herodotem*.²⁰ Herodotus was not a fanatical sponsor of Greek superiority; for that motivation he was severely disapproved of (for instance, by Plutarch). Toward the people of Asian borders, in Persia, Egypt, and Lydia, Herodotus showed empathy: he intended a common *Menschlichkeit* in the barbarian "otherness".²¹

For many reasons, Herodotus' vision of borders, in the Persian wars, is the classic must-read. Xerxes and Darius thought that independent Greek cities were the only obstacle to the conquest of the known world. In the spring of 480 BCE, Xerxes crossed the narrow Hellespont straits, just to wipe out the frontiers of his power, already immense. By defeating the Greeks, and reducing Athens to slavery, he would arrive to absolute power: *Once let us subdue this people, and those neighbors of theirs who hold the land of Pelops the Phrygian, and we shall extend the Persian territory as far as God's heaven reaches. The sun will then shine on no land beyond our borders; for I will pass from one end to the other, and with your aid make of all the land which it contains one country* (*The Histories*, 7, 282).

With these quotes, we stress one qualifying point for us: European identity was strengthened and defined in ancient reasoning concerning frontiers. In order to provide answers for the people involved in the project supported by the EU, we have been helped a great deal by the publication of a book,²² which in its title states that the first identity of Europe was born in a border place, at a periphery and at a frontier, at the margins of the

¹⁸ L. Febvre, *L'Europe. Genèse d'une civilisation*, Paris 1999.

¹⁹ M. Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymnen "Germanien" und "Der Rhein"*, Frankfurt am Main 1999 (first edition 1934).

²⁰ B. Nowacka, Z. Ziątek, *Ryszard Kapuściński. Biografia pisarza*, Kraków 2008; as explication of Sigmund Freud's dictum about the non-existence of biographical truth, see A. Domosławski, *Kapuściński non-fiction*, Warszawa 2010.

²¹ E.S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*, Princeton 2010 (*Martin Classical Lectures. New Series*).

²² S. Price, P. Thonemann, *The Birth of Classical Europe. A History from Troy to Augustine*, London 2010.

Hellenic world: in Troy. Regarding Troy, in Homer, we found seminal definitions and insights regarding the European heritage. Moreover, on a formal and organizational level, the project sponsored by the EU was proposed and headed in Çanakkale, whose territory coincides with ancient Troy, located 30 km south-west of the city. The case seemed a sign of academic destiny. Çanakkale is the city that governs the territory of the legendary Troy, where, according to one interpretation, the first identity of Europe was born, with Homer and Virgil, which then became canonical in Shakespeare and Milton.²³

Finally, in the research we understood that not only was the first identity of Europe born on a border and in Troy, but in an area which is now outside European borders! Although located beyond the frontiers of the institutional EU, culturally Troy is a European tabernacle location, so much so that (as it can be easily seen among archaeological ruins), for sponsoring the new excavations at the site of Troy, which began in 1988, Daimler-Benz was rewarded by UNESCO, precisely because they have worked in favor of a “European cultural heritage”. The exclusion of Troy from Europe goes hand in hand with the exclusion of Turkey from the EU. In our research we arrived at the conclusion that the exclusion of Turkey is a disgrace, motivated by ignorance towards the extraordinary vitality of its democracy and by an underestimation of the essential geopolitical importance of Turkey.²⁴ Ignorance about the greatness of the Ottoman Empire and of its heritage of tolerance and integration is part of an old Eurocentrism, antiquated and no longer appropriate.

The peripheries of Europe can be seen as a problem, but they are the bastions of Europe. Today, just like yesterday, they have prevented the institutional collapse of the center of Europe. Frequently, institutional breakdown begins at the peripheries and then, like in an avalanche, sweeps the center away. In our idea of Europe, borders count a great deal.

Often scholars talk about liberty and democracy, referring to the fascist or communist experiences, which allow us to grasp the merits of freedom. It's all water under the bridge. It is history which does not return, while cases such as Turkey and Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan, Albania and Hungary, Kosovo and Serbia, although very different, are opening up a completely new dossier: very controversial, very instructive, and very urgent.

5. THE HEROES OF EUROPE

Contemporary Europe is very different from the Europe which produced the killing of over 60 million people in World War II.²⁵ Current Europe is characterized by the convergence of science and the rule of law, more than by external conquest and by internal

²³ R. Portale, *Virgilio in Inghilterra. Saggi*, Pisa 1999.

²⁴ B. Lewis, 'Forward' in D. Rustow, *Turkey, America's Forgotten Ally*, New York 1989; H. İnalçık, *Turkey and Europe in History*, Istanbul 2006; A. Davutoğlu, 'Turkey's New Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007', *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2008).

²⁵ G. Marks, 'Europe and Its Empires: From Rome to the European Union', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (2012), pp. 1-20, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02218.x>>.

wars. European society has always been a society of knowledge, where the legal system has worked as an essential integrative mechanism, contributing *order and co-ordination* to everyday routine. Consequently, in the ranking of professions, scientists and judges are the two top positions. Even if some countries are in notorious difficulty, honesty and integrity require the same public care that any institutionalized religion does. There are sinners, but they are uncivilized exceptions.

Lord Bolingbroke said that *history is philosophy teaching by examples*. Heroes are examples, symbols of a civil religion which could be accepted as a fulfillment of the best human hopes. The central theme of every religion is not a form of national self-worship, but subordination of territorial identity to ethical beliefs. True Europeans have rejected the principle “My country, right or wrong” and its substitute “My party, right or wrong”. As in the finest traditional churches, there are European civil heroes and they have the normal cosmopolitan religious dimension, based on duties and dignity.

From King Casimir to Napoleon, from Danzig to Vilnius, in its history many times Poland was forced to struggle to define national borders. In same period it was shrunk drastically or ceased to exist. After 1989, the rebirth of Poland is a symbol of the rebirth of classical Europe. It is in many ways a miraculous rebirth (in T.G. Ash words: „*it is remarkable to see how the frontiers of long-dead empires re-emerge on the election maps of post-communist democracies, including Poland's most recent one. But neither geography nor economy nor culture make inevitable fate. [...] Good politics, good constitutions and good courts can, given time and luck, change the course of rivers*”²⁶). About the Polish miracle, many heroes have been mentioned, from Karol Wojtyła to Lech Wałęsa. In memory of the European heroes, we programmed the closure of our research in Warsaw, where, on November 8, 2012, an international event celebrated Judge Giovanni Falcone, on the twentieth anniversary of his killing by the mafia in Sicily.

Judge Giovanni Falcone created the police operation known as *Pizza Connection*: the most successful anti-mafia investigation in the postwar period, made possible by the deep collaboration between loyal Italians and Americans. The old world of the Sicilian Mafia, made famous by Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola, in Sicily and in the United States, is today over. This was said, in New York, 2011, by the Attorney General Eric Holder (first African American to assume that role), commenting a final blow against the New York Sicilian mafia. The engagement continues, but in other ways. *Pizza Connection* was an impressive and enduring victory for freedom, for democracy, for the republican spirit. It was also a majestic figure of the power of international collaboration. In Italy, judge Falcone was a lonely hero, but he was not alone in the USA, where he was at home and where he is remembered in the most solemn way, as an American hero. See the testimony of his sister, beginning precisely with the mention of the special relationship between Giovanni Falcone and the USA.²⁷

²⁶ T.G. Ash, ‘As Poland Shines, Ukraine Sinks. Yet Both their Trajectories Can Be Changed’, *The Guardian*, 19 October 2011; idem, *History of the Present. Essays, Sketches, and Dispatches from Europe in the 1990s*, New York 2009.

²⁷ M. Falcone, F. Barra, *Giovanni Falcone. Un eroe solo. Il tuo lavoro, il nostro presente, i tuoi sogni, il nostro futuro*, Milano 2012.

In our perspective, the true European spirit shines especially on the borders: Warsaw was a great place for a final commemoration. Many times Poland has been home to a duel to the death between old and new: today it is a trench, like Italy, for the affirmation of a cosmopolitan legality. A meeting was held under the auspices of the Italian Embassy in Warsaw and with the participation of the highest authorities in the fight against the mafia, such as the chief national prosecutor Pietro Grasso. Above all, of significance was the participation by the most prestigious American people who worked with judge Falcone on *Pizza Connection*: US investigators such as Dick Martin and Rudolph Giuliani.

The achievement of *Pizza Connection* was huge: immediately after, Rudolph Giuliani began the hunt for Wall Street speculators, gaining further successes (mayor of New York during September 11); Louis J. Freeh became and remained a very prestigious FBI Director for years. In L.J. Freeh's book,²⁸ Giovanni Falcone is the second most quoted name, after President Clinton.

In Warsaw, during the celebration of judge Falcone, we spoke a lot with students following the meeting; they taught us an important lesson. Among Polish heroes, an extraordinary figure is Maria Skłodowska Curie. She is the only woman to have won two Nobel Prizes, and in two different disciplines. She is the only woman in the French *Panthéon*, where she was buried (in 1995) with the greatest possible solemnity, accompanied by the music of Berlioz's *Temple universel*. Considering that the *Panthéon* contains, in its frieze, the writing *Aux grands hommes, la patrie reconnaissante* (to the great men, the grateful homeland), her figure is an exceptional exemplification of the concept of inclusion. In fact, she included herself in the history of civilization, as a scientist, as a woman, as a mother, as a spouse, and, at same time, she was included at a supreme Nobel level. Finally, she was included in the top – the biggest temple of male chauvinism.

In French culture the *panthéonisation* is the secular equivalent of canonization in religious mores. Therefore, it is not far-fetched to talk of sanctity, a heroism in science, knowledge and culture. Women like Maria Skłodowska-Curie and men like Judge Giovanni Falcone contain, in their lives, heroic in different ways, however rare and immense, a light that illuminates Europe from the periphery to the center. Europeans like Giovanni Falcone and Maria Curie-Skłodowska are classical European heroes. If we look at them, we have a confirmation that, in Europe, an indispensable perception of human value is at the periphery and along its borders. What would Europe be without people like Maria Curie-Skłodowska or Giovanni Falcone? Can there may be a Europe of knowledge without a Europe conscious of its democratic and republican security?²⁹

²⁸ L.J. Freeh, *My FBI. Bringing Down the Mafia, Investigating Bill Clinton, and Fighting the War on Terror*, New York 2005.

²⁹ P. Arlacchi, *Mafia Business. The Mafia Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Oxford–New York 1988 (*Oxford Paperbacks*); R. Baker, *Capitalism's Achilles Heel. Dirty Money and How to Renew the Free-Market System*, Hoboken 2005.

6. CLASSICAL EUROPE AND SELF-COUNSCIOUSNESS

Our research has shown vitality, but, at the same time, uncertainty, in the values of peace, social consensus, international cooperation, certainly not absent across the Atlantic and in many other national histories and cultures, but which have been themed, discussed, deepened in Europe in a special way.

The financial crisis has produced a high level of insecurity both social and in terms of ideals, but the values of Europe may continue to be the basis of a compact between rights and growth, capitalism and democracy.

A common currency, a common history, a common culture, a common foreign policy, a common social model, despite contradictions and afterthoughts, have, in the past, been a hope of civil development and cannot today be obstructed by the euro crisis, but relaunched, as a concrete proposal of coexistence.³⁰

This target is reachable through institutional intervention which should be aware of the great specific European legacy, and condensed into a European patriotism which could be much more assertive than it is today. A widespread self-consciousness as to the significance of the European legacy is necessary for Europeans, and for those who look to Europe while ignoring the shadows that surround an experience that is sparkling in other ways.

In Europe, prejudice, chauvinism, and intolerance are not only addressed to Muslims or immigrants. A very well-known sentence summarizes the relations between Germans and Italians: the Germans love Italians, but do not respect them; the Italians respect Germans, but do not love them. We could continue listing similar prejudices and stereotypes.

In our perspective,³¹ educational intervention is an approach that seeks to implant mutual understanding and to remove routine stereotypes.³² General assumptions of educational intervention are: humanity is the result of construction and education. Society unintentionally creates the background for scapegoats and illiberal ideologies by unintentional institutional arrangements. Law-abiding people can be drawn into illiberal ideologies if they regularly meet easy opportunities for those ideologies. Removing stereotypes and promoting dialogue is a permanent aim of a democratic country. The promotion and maintenance of civil society requires educational intervention as a permanent background for republican virtues. Educational intervention is an attempt to make sense of the deep social transformation which is going on.³³

³⁰ J. Habermas, *Kleine politische Schriften*, Vol. 10: *Der gespaltene Westen*, Frankfurt am Main 2004 (*Edition Suhrkamp*, 2383).

³¹ F. Sidoti, M. Gammone, 'The Sociological Intervention' in R. Kincal (ed.), *International Symposium on Democracy and Democracy Education in Europe*, Ankara 2009, pp. 216-228.

³² M.Y. Eryaman, 'From Reflective Practice to Practical Wisdom: Toward a Post Foundational Teacher Education', *International Journal of Progressive Education*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2007), pp. 87-107.

³³ D. Vrancken, O. Kutty (eds.), *La sociologie et l'intervention. Enjeux et perspectives*, Bruxelles 2001 (*Ouvertures Sociologiques*); 'Public Sociology in the Age of Obama', *Innovation. The Europe-*

The aim of our EU project was to build close connections and increase trust between Turks and Europeans, by creating more understanding and awareness of the many contributions that both have made to history. In spite of connections and inspiring exchanges with Islam, many polls show that mutual perceptions between Muslims and Westerners are based on mistrust and fear. Moreover, there is a wide ignorance about the Islamic civilization. In our search, we have found an exaggeratedly pessimistic perception of Europe and an exaggeratedly pessimistic perception of Islam. There is a common pseudo-knowledge, characterised by massive ignorance about many substantial factors. Finally, we decided to indicate that existing perceptions as *McCulture*, borrowing the term in analogy with the very famous metaphors of *McWorld* and *McMafia*. McDonaldization of culture gives McUniversities and McStudents, in a fast-track pick-and-mix fashion, constantly repackaging and reinventing the same basic product.³⁴ Above *McCulture*, we have educational aristocracy, and, below *McCulture*, we have a mix of hunger and anger, where *McMafia* flourishes.³⁵

In our EU project, the aim of symposiums, seminars, and workshops was to improve dialogues among the countries. Above all, our sociological intervention gave us an unforeseen insight about the current educational system, both in Europe and in Western Asia. The best weapon against intolerance remains education, which can create solid foundations for an open society, respectful of pluralism and diversity. Promoting republican and democratic values is particularly important during the crucial formative years, when children are in primary school. But in our project we discovered that even future educators are able only to speak generically about freedom, tolerance, multiculturalism. The meaning of the best European identity is ignored.

Our research has shown how poor the common knowledge of Europe is within the school system, especially concerning the themes of citizenship. We found that in European schools there is still a strong dimension of Islamo-phobic prejudice. There is also a nationalistic rhetoric, still alive, mistakenly supposed as dissolved in the civilization of the well-intentioned global village. The old nationalism was often racist, xenophobic, chauvinist. Many believed that it had disappeared, but the reality is quite contrary – it is strong, even if disguised. It seems less strong than it used to be, because it is expressed in a different manner than in the past.

Who stole the European dream?³⁶ In promoting democratic identity (in the direction of the Copenhagen criteria), Europe's educational systems are not very suc-

an Journal of Social Science Research, Vol. 22, No. 2 (2009), pp. 189-199, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13511610903075837>>; idem, 'Public Sociology Wars' in V. Jeffries (ed.), *The Handbook of Public Sociology*, Lanham (Md.) 2009, pp. 449-473.

³⁴ G. Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society*, Thousand Oaks 2012; B. Barber, *Jihad vs McWorld. How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World*, New York 1995.

³⁵ J. Glenn, *McMafia. A Journey Through the Global Criminal Underworld*, New York 2008.

³⁶ H. Smith, *Who Stole the American Dream?*, New York 2012; S. Faludi, *The Terror Dream. Fear and Fantasy in Post-9/11 America*, New York 2007; R. Heinberg, *The Party's Over. Oil, War and the Fate of Industrial Societies*, Gabriola (BC) 2003.

cessful. Some reports show that clearly; our research gave us new insights. Here, we are speaking about an international problem, known and discussed in many ways. Perhaps Daniel Bell's book (listed by the *Times Literary Supplement* as among the 100 most important books in the second half of the twentieth century), was the first in a long series of highly controversial books defending the idea that universities and academic culture are failing to serve the needs of contemporary citizens.³⁷ From that perspective, the current state of higher education in American universities was very bleak. In his first big speech on education, President Obama (a clear beneficiary of an aristocratic education) made clear that changes were desperately needed in the USA. Part of the problem, he said, is that American schools have been engaged in "a race to the bottom", consisting in the adoption of low standards, in order to permit survival in the school system of underprivileged students, even if they are performing poorly in objective terms. Education statistics indicated some 5.1 million students in the United States as English language learners, a 60 per cent increase from 1995 to 2005. As old concerns vanish, new concerns arise: many quote the waves of immigration. Some observers note that a nation which once prided itself of being a melting pot, now is searching an arrangement of the means to teach immigrant students. In recent years, students learning English have flooded into small towns and suburban districts, leaving teachers and the population under pressure. It is hard to assimilate the newcomers and their children. In a souring economy, school's financing challenges have intensified resentment over foreigners and immigrants, promoting proposals which question about whether those people should be educated at all. Kids gravitate toward unhealthy food items such as cookies or chips even when more nutritious items are available.

In a parallel way, the same concern is compelling in many European classrooms and in many European minds. There is always a kind of European dream in the classrooms. All the pupils are immigrants in the New World of the educational system. Within classrooms of primary schools, alien immigrants and native born immigrants have not in the right measure the kind of intense educational training they deserve.³⁸ In our data and discussions on education, it was easy to detect latent and uncivilized fixtures in a sort of *McCulture*, even if apparently good to taste, ready and cheap for everyone.³⁹ *Tell me what you eat*, said the French gastronome Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *and I will tell you what you are*.

Many European citizens do not have a clear idea about European identity. Above all, they love their own country; this love is not a constitutional patriotism and they do not have a cosmopolitan outlook.⁴⁰ *McCulture* gives a sweet pick-and-mix offer of

³⁷ D. Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, New York 1976.

³⁸ G.W. Domhoff, *The Scientific Study of Dreams. Neural Networks, Cognitive Development, and Content Analysis*, Washington DC 2002.

³⁹ B. Bueb, *Lob der Disziplin. Eine Streitschrift*, Berlin 2006; W. Hassemer, *Warum Strafe sein muss. Ein Plädoyer*, Berlin 2009.

⁴⁰ U. Beck, E. Grande, *Das kosmopolitische Europa. Gesellschaft und Politik in der Zweiten Moderne*, Frankfurt am Main 2004 (*Edition Zweite Moderne*).

liberty, tolerance, multiculturalism, and so on, but, under the sweet external surface, the internal feelings of mistrust remain. It is hard to be a good citizen; it is hard to raise good citizens.⁴¹ Our classical Europe is insufficiently appreciated even by the people who must teach the best of it. In Europe and America, in the Middle East and in the world, in the schools and in the media, in universities and at home, for the young and the old, for women and men, dissatisfied people have a right to be properly informed about their roots and their dreams.⁴²

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⁴¹ R.N. Bellah et al., *The Good Society*, New York 1991.

⁴² M. Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations. The Politics of Reality*, Cambridge 2002 (*Cambridge Studies in International Relations*, 83).

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