

---

## EUROPE AND EUROPEAN CHARACTERISTICS

Andrei MARGA

Rector of the "Babeş - Bolyai" University, Cluj - Napoca

Whoever thinks about European unification must first make clear what he is referring to. What is Europe, therefore ?

If we take into account all the connotations of the word Europe we cannot help but begin with mythology. Greek legend has it that Europe was the daughter of the king of Phoenicia, whose beauty aroused Zeus' love. Disguised as a bull he kidnapped her and carried her away to Crete. There she became the mother of King Minos of Crete, King Rhadamanthus of the Cyclades Islands and Prince Sarpedon of Lycia. She later married King Asterion of Crete, who adopted her sons. She was worshipped under the name of Hellotis in Crete, where the festival Hellotia was held in her honour for a long time<sup>1</sup>. Ancient decorators and also painters in the Renaissance and in later periods took motifs from this legend. "Europe's kidnapping by Zeus disguised as a bull" was a motif for Dürer, Tizian and Tiepolo.

Another connotation of Europe comes from astronomy. It denotes the fourth largest satellite of the planet Jupiter, discovered by Galilei and named after him by a German astronomer. However we are much more interested in the geographic connotation. Europe is the second smallest continent (after Australia), its area being 10,4 million square kilometres. Its population in 1990 was estimated at 785.7 million. It is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, the Arctic Ocean, the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea and the Ural Mountains, it occupies one - fifteenth of the world's total land area. Its islands and archipelagoes are also included in this: Novaya Zemlya, Iceland, the British Isles, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Crete, Malta and Cyprus. The most prominent features of this area are, firstly, the low relief, the medium height elevations, the favourable distribution of waters, the wide range of climates generated by the permanent interference of polar and tropical currents and the remarkable complexity of the vegetation.

But European unification is not only linked to the geographic connotation of Europe, which is easily definable. It implies, from the very beginning, a historical connotation of the term which intermingles geographical, cultural and political aspects in an intricate way. The following chapter is dedicated to the

---

<sup>1</sup> See Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon, Band 8, Bibliographisches Institut, Mannheim, Wien, Zürich, 1980, p. 253; The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, London, Chicago, 1992, Volume 4, p. 602.

definition of this connotation. We try to answer the following questions: where are the frontiers of Europe? What are the specific cultural features of Europe?

1. We all feel we belong to an ethnic community and to a state. To what extent do we feel we belong to an ethnic community, to a state and, at the same time, to a continent? On account of tradition the first two affiliations are experienced in a concrete way; they confer advantages, rights and duties whereas the third one remains the most abstract. It had long been a subject for meditation for several learned men. In the decades after the war it became the field of action of the West - European political élite who were preoccupied with establishing the political and economic unity of Europe. Is it also a concrete perspective of a considerable number of West - European citizens?

Such a question generates by now not only plausible hypotheses but also precise answers, as the European Community turned in the last decade to apply systematically public - opinion polls in this field. The 1990 Eurobarometer<sup>2</sup> proved for example that in every country of the Community the percentage of the supporters of European integration is higher than that of its adversaries. Denmark has the worst score in this respect, 64 % to 29 %, however. The emotional identification with Europe is, interestingly enough, trifling: 34 % of those interviewed declare themselves indifferent to their countries' withdrawal from the Community, 48 % declare that they will never feel "citizens of Europe" and a great majority are proud of their traditional country. We must admit that "national pride" does not exclude "European pride", but we cannot help admitting that there is a much stronger identification with the traditional homeland than with Europe. Is the latter condemned to remain an abstract appearance for extremely idealist intellectuals and sensation - mongering politicians to brood upon? No. For Eurobarometer shows a very slow, but actual progress in European emotional identification. Therefore we can admit that we do not have absolute constants in the case of these identifications but variable quantities; variable over great intervals, though.

The state of public opinion in a given moment is never the sole indicator of possibilities in a situation. The institutions which provide the framework of public rationalisation and the élites which could functionalise the considerable role of institutions are the essential part of possibilities and are an essential factor in directing an evolution. These institutions exist and are active; the professional and political élites are growing up all over Europe. Groups of specialists and politicians who

---

<sup>2</sup> See Nico Wilterdink, "The European Ideal. An Examination of European and National Identity", in *Archives européennes de Sociologie*, 1, 1993, pp. 126 - 129.

are engaged in a pro-European activity can more and more rely on growing categories of the population in their activity that aims at European unification: those who practice tourism; those who perceive the advantages of relaxing the frontiers and communication between services; workers, technical staff, trained staff in general who welcome the extension of the market of selling products as well as that of manpower - recruitment; students who profit from the boundless mobility during their studies; bureaucrats who work in European institutions; intellectuals who consider European unification a chance for the present generation to re-shape its existence.

Acting in the service of European unification needs a conceptual clearing-up. From a certain point of view the question cannot be avoided: where are the proper limits of Europe? It is well-known that European unification began in Western Europe. It led to the birth of "little-Europe" whereas "Great-Europe" contains, historically and geographically, Central and Eastern Europe, too. How does this part of the historical and geographical Europe politically integrate with the New Europe? The chain of the Urals is Europe's Eastern frontier, from a geographical as well as a historical point of view. How does it relate, after all, to this part of it?

With a characteristic lucidity besides a politician's precautionsness Richard von Weizsäcker acknowledged that "naturally, my opinion is that Europe ends at the Berlin Wall."<sup>3</sup> He reiterates a concept of Europe that remained dominant in the postwar period, until 1989. The Berlin Wall was the sign of the sharp division between two parts of Europe that had social organisations with opposite values, supported by military blocks armed with the most sophisticated nuclear and electronic techniques. On one side of the Wall, the Western, liberal part established the European Community which changed into the European Union in 1993, after a complex process of mutual accommodation of the economic, legislative indices and those of the defending, external and other politics. Of course, not only the adepts of the concept which identifies Europe with "little-Europe" ignored the fact that the geographical and historical Europe is much larger. On the other side of the Berlin Wall there was a "Socialist" Europe, controlled by the Soviet Union, its scientific, technical, social and institutional development retarded and its political traditions not synchronic. The "little-Europe" adepts also avoided thematising "great-Europe", not only for the fear of evoking irritated answers from Eastern leading circles but also because of the backwardness of modernisation in the East. The new tribute

---

<sup>3</sup> Richard von Weizsäcker, "Europa muß bleiben", in Europa. Horizonte der Hoffnung, ed. by Franz König and Karl Rahner, Verlag Styria, Wien, Köln, 1983, p.231.

the East European countries had to pay the Soviet Union to have a "safety-belt", the frailty of democratic traditions in some of the countries and, above all, the reality of the effects of their political systems after the war determined the reservation of the "little-Europe" adepts in giving up their concept.

However, even when the famous "iron-curtain" was in place in the middle of Europe there were some who spoke in favour of the geographical and historical concept of Europe, for example Heinrich Böll who defended the thesis which claims that Europe is not limited to Western Europe. "Regarding new ideas about Europe and new plans about Europe, I am afraid - he writes - that Europe is always defined as Western Europe, that is, drawing the frontiers at the Elba, which is madness if the word and the concept of Europe are taken seriously, from both the historical point of view and the history of culture. The Soviet Union and old Russia belong to Europe; Poland, Czechoslovakia and all countries of the Balcan belong to Europe."<sup>4</sup> Heinrich Böll as many other adepts of the geographical and historical concept of Europe argue with the fact that there is no feature of the terrain that can separate Western Europe from the rest of Europe. Similarly, it is impossible to separate the crucial events in the history of Western Europe from the course of events in the central and Eastern part of the continent. They also add an argument which is the result of a simple calculation: Europe reduced to little-Europe cannot be exposed, without harm, to the imminent danger of a new population migration from the troublesome and relatively poor East to the rationalised and attractive West. Only a Europe which contains both the East and West of the continent can be, in reality, stable and safe, a house for all.

But are the Russians Europeans? The question arises first of all because of the great number of Russians which has enabled them several times to play the role of an entity distinct from the rest of Europe. Other factors have been added to this. Some of them are constants of Russian history: adopting the Greek-Orthodox branch of Christianity; using the Cyrillic alphabet which isolated Russians from the rest of European culture; accepting "Oriental despotism" as a political form taken over from the Tartars; the proclamation of the "Third Rome" by the Russian theocracy which pretends to be the depository of true faith; a propaganda of fear from "contamination" with "foreign" ideas and habits; the effort of replacing the objective need of social structures for reform with nationalist mobilisation; leading intellectuals' strive for impe-

---

<sup>4</sup> Heinrich Böll, "Europa - aber wo liegt es", in *Merkur*, 371, 1979, p. 343.

rial grandeur which always precedes the pressing need for liberalisation. These factors are deep and strong; they have set us thinking. De Gaulle's famous formula, "from the Atlantic to the Urals" is evidently a reckless or, at least, a purely propagandist formula in their light. As Russia's actions in the last years show, the democratisation of New Europe has had a too narrow frame for its imperialistic aspirations. It is still true that "Europe is too small and not too important for the Russians today; America is their goal. It is America they want to be compared with, even if this comparison will be unfavourable for them. Moscow is neither cosmopolitan, nor imperialist, says Zinoviev. Europeans must consider this."<sup>5</sup>

The issue of European affiliation must be tackled, for a number of reasons, by more precise theoretical means. Not only in order to avoid the naivety of some intellectuals fed by praiseworthy historical and moral considerations, tempted to see Europe everywhere between the Atlantic and Siberia or the theoretical adventures of politicians fed by comprehensible theoretical reasons, postulating a Europe extending from the Atlantic to the Urals. There is another reason worth taking into account. It is the haste of some nationalist movements in Eastern-European countries - that have perceived the growing pro-European tendency in these countries and the international pressure in its favour - to declare the "affiliation to Europe" even if they diffuse the new ideology of national communism. They want Europeanisation, but without rationalisation.

The reckless use of the term "Europe" by Western intellectuals and politicians is grist to the mill of nationalism masked in Europeanism. In order to tackle this problem it is necessary to distinguish between (1) the geographical affiliation to Europe: placing it between the Atlantic and the Urals which is the accepted geographical limit of the continent; (2) the historical affiliation to Europe: taking part in movements which established the institutional and cultural forms of Europe, beginning with the creation of polises, the contact with the Judeo-Christian tradition, the modern revolution in knowledge, economy and law, and the defence of the basis of a free society; (3) the institutional affiliation to Europe: setting up the organisations and the legislation of an open society; (4) the cultural affiliation: cultivating an attitude towards knowledge and everyday life, characterized by the belief in factual analysis and fallibility, and the cultivation of a critical spirit. If these distinctions are properly made, we

---

<sup>5</sup> Josef Riedmiller, "Sind die Russen Europäer?", in *Merkur*, 400. 1981. p. 914.

must admit that in view of the process of European unification beginning after the war, the geographical and historical affiliation do not decide the European affiliation that is at stake at present. Geography and history are indispensable conditions, but European unification is first of all an institutional and cultural process; European affiliation must be judged according to the criteria of institutions and culture. Belonging to European geography and history does not automatically generate a cultural Europeanism. Similarly, a cultural Europeanism might be found in countries that do not belong to Europe from a geographical and historical point of view.

2. If we think of institutions as the objectivisation of culture - we cannot help doing it, otherwise - then the whole discussion of European affiliation can be narrowed down to the field of culture. However, we must add that culture means more than philosophical ideas, artistic symbols, scientific theories and ideological programmes. Culture encompasses all these, but alongside their embodiment in the living forms of the social being of human life. Culture implies the production and circulation of the products of thinking, feeling, research and imagination - spiritual life, in a word. We assimilate, or, at best, assimilate and also create ideas, symbols, statements, projects - and this makes us cultured. The process of European unification implies the concept of individual culture, but also, and first of all, that of culture shared by the structured mass of individuals. We have sufficient evidence to say that there are individuals on the same intellectual level in the different national communities of Europe, but not all communities include the same values in their institutional structures or not to the same extent. From another point of view, European culture has separated itself from Asiatic cultures against which it has formed, precisely because of the fact that it promoted spiritual culture in behaviours and institutions.

What is European culture? What are its characteristic features? Generally, the answer is in the European history of culture as compared with what was and what is outside Europe and compared to what was in Asia at the beginning, then in Africa and South America and now Asia and America. Europe began to define itself in the midst of the Ottoman Empire and has always defined itself as something outside it.<sup>6</sup> Europe in its present relevant sense was born in the 11th and 12th centuries, when our continent consecrated a distinct cultural order. "The 12th century can rightly be called the first century of a new

---

<sup>6</sup> Heinz Gollwitzer, "Europa, Abendland", in Joachim Ritter (Hrsg.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Basel - Stuttgart, Band II, p. 826.

Europe. The characteristics of European history became perceptible for the first time during this century: the agon, the controversy between partners of the same origin, which is politically, religiously, spiritually, culturally, socially and economically determined.<sup>7</sup> But the specific character has often been taken over in terms of the "history of the spirit" outlined in the last century and consolidated in the self-development of the spirit (Geist) and the purely spiritual relationship. The formula failed because it had to postulate a view that could not be extended to the history of the spirit (inspired by Catholicism or Protestantism, enlightenment or the deification of the past) and which had to isolate the spirit from the dynamics of the autonomised fields of modern society (market economy, the method of production based on the application of science, factual science which gives nomological explanations in order to solve technical problems.) It has recurred with amendments rediscovering the spiritual identity of Europe<sup>8</sup> against the anti-European actions of political extremism in the 1930s. It remains useful in such a context. Beyond it the formula produces only less applicable generalisations fed by an obsolete idealism. Obviously, men of action (politicians, entrepreneurs, bureaucrats) need an other concept of Europe than that which is based on the history of spirituality.

However they are often satisfied with a purely technical concept of cultural affiliation to Europe and beside this, with a narrow concept of Europe. According to this Europe means participating in political alliances, military blocks and nominalised economical organisations. There is no reason for diminishing the importance of these participations. Finally, any concept, that of Europe or of European unification inclusively, must be definable in terms of institutional organisations or, at least, in rules of action and norms of behaviour. But Europe is linked not only to facts but also determinant ideals. Consequently, "what is actually thought of Europe must be between a nebulous idealism and a purely pragmatic community of interests. Only if it is more than one or the other can Europe offer for a long period of time a real but also ideal aim of a morally impregnated political action. Pure reality without a formulating, moral idea gives no results; an ideal without a clear political content remains empty and ineffective (...) Only by becoming a synthesis of political reality and moral idealism can the concept of "Europe" be capable of marking the reality for the future.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Heer, *Aufgang Europas*, Europa Verlag, Wien - Zürich, 1949, p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> See Friedrich Heer, *Europäische Geistesgeschichte*, W. Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1953.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger, "Europa - verpflichtendes Erbe für die Christen", in Franz König und Karl Rahner (Hrsg.), *op. cit.*, pp. 61 - 62.

What are therefore Europe's characteristics in view of these preliminaries? What are the cultural characteristics of Europe? Without reconstructing the history of the views on specific characteristics, I would like to present first some opinions serving as reference points so that I can delimit the present analysis and the point of view I defend.

Europe was identified with Catholicism until Luther's reform which created an alternative to Catholicism within Christianity. Novalis still uses this identification in his formulation "Christianity as Europe" (1799), but it had already been undermined for a long time. In his overall view on world history Hegel identifies Europe with the conscience of individual liberty that was born within it - a liberty which is objectivised as will and action. He started from the general principle according to which "the world is the spiritual empire in its being in facts, the empire of will which generates its existence."<sup>10</sup> This is not will as whim, depending only on sensuality, instincts, etc, but a will that assimilated all that is general. On the basis of this concept Hegel delimits Europe as compared with Asia which immediately precedes it in the development of the universal spirit. "Achilles is the greatest character of Greek spirituality, the son of the poet, the young Homeric adolescent from the Trojan war. Homer is the natural element of the Greek world just as air is of man. Greek life is a real youthful realisation. The young, poetic Achilles imitated this life and Alexander the Great, the really young man closed its cycle. They both fought against Asia. Achilles, the central character of the national expedition of Greece against Troy did not stand in front of it; he was a subject to the King of kings because he could not rule without acquiring dimensions of fantasy. Unlike him, the second young man, Alexander, the most free and charming individual who ever lived, was the epitome of youth; he was mature, he completed the revenge against Asia."<sup>11</sup>

Protestantism divided Europe from a religious point of view, the French Revolution divided it politically. The modern, experimental, nomologic, quantitative science divided it from the point of view of cognitive modalities. Hegel presented European characteristics linked to the first two alternatives of tradition, Protestantism and the French Revolution. He did not consider the third one. The other definition of Europe which is linked to the cognitive modalities appeared with Nietzsche in the discussion about Europe's cultural characteris-

---

<sup>10</sup> Hegel, *Prelegeri de filosofie a istoriei*, Editura Academiei, București, 1968, p. 409.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 218.



tics. What is Europe therefore? Nietzsche answers: "Greek culture, grown from Thracian and Phoenician elements, Hellenism, the Romans' Philohellenism, their Christian empire, Christianity bearing ancient elements, elements which finally give as a result scientific nuclei, Philohellenism leads to Philosophism: belief in science means Europe. Romanism was left behind, Christianity sank into insignificance.<sup>12</sup> He does not base Europe on a tradition any more, but on several traditions and he configures the "cultural concept of Europe". America appears to be the "daughter of our culture", whereas Russia is that which flows from Europe to Asia." "Only the peoples and parts of peoples that have a common past in Greek, Roman, Jewish and Christian cultures" belong to this concept.<sup>13</sup> Cultural Europe and geographical Europe do not overlap. Cultural Europe is not even the same as Western Europe which is, according to Nietzsche, a decay as compared with Europe proper: "the weakened, Romanised Greek culture which became rough and decorative, accepted by the weakened Christianity as a companion in the form of a decorative culture, disseminated by force among the uncivilised population - this is the history of Western culture.<sup>14</sup> From a cultural point of view Western Europe is, according to Nietzsche, the triumph of Hellenism and Romanised Philohellenism over Greek tragedy, the conversion of Christianity into a bureaucratised formative tradition, a "Hellenism in a fourfold roughening and deprived of foundation" of the Greek culture.<sup>15</sup>

Life growing in rigid forms imposed by particularist ideologies (nationalism, socialism, conservatism) and bureaucracy - what Nietzsche denounced in Western Europe - these became the main characteristics of European life in the last century and of this century too, leading to the First World War. Noticing this tendency Max Scheler adopted the reflection on European unity in *The Genius of the War and the German War* (1914). He noticed that unity is hindered from the beginning by contrasting terms of "nationalism" and "internationalism" (or "cosmopolitanism") which embrace the problems of European life. These terms and the strategy of the problem solving that created them must be examined in order to arrive at the unity of Europe. What is this unity? Obviously, it is not a geographical one (because not everything that is in the geographical Europe

<sup>12</sup> Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente* (1878), apud Manfred Riedel. "Herkunft und Zukunft Europas. Nietzsche in unserer Zeit", in *Studia Universitatis "Babeş - Bolyai"*, Philosophia, I, 1991, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Apud Manfred Riedel. *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> Apud Manfred Riedel. *op. cit.*, pp. 11 - 12.

<sup>15</sup> Apud Manfred Riedel. *op. cit.*, p. 12.

belongs to cultural Europe), neither is it a racial unity (from a racial point of view Europeans are a mixture of Celts, Romans, Slavs, Germans, etc.) Europe is a unity which "has as its nucleus a certain spiritual structure, a specific form of the ethos, for example, a specific way of dealing with the world as a whole and of forming the world through activity."<sup>16</sup> This structure makes Europe a *Liebes- und Geistesgemeinschaft* which cannot be reduced to a certain country or nation. Our continent is a "cultural circle" (*Kulturkreis*), a spiritual unity above any other unity. Max Scheler rejects the identification of the nucleus of this spiritual unity with modern capitalism; he treats Europe as a spirituality characterised by the autonomy of values and by the acknowledgement of the general laws and rules that sustain the basic value of solidarity.

After World War II when Europe was close to total collapse and becoming only a colony of powers outside it, the return of liberal Europe became a real crisis. Europe was conceived on the lines of individual possibilities. Max Horkheimer exposed this view indicating two features of the concept of Europe: an individualisation due to the inclination to reflection ("free time", meditation, the liberty of melancholy and many others) and humanism. "While the greatness of American thinking consists of a view that the free man must be protected in his rights, he must not be offended, he is the legislator and no dictator can order him, European humanism maintains all these forces so that he can fulfil this determination."<sup>17</sup>

Those who reflected on Europe in the postwar period could not accept Asia as the reference point of definition, as at the beginning of the century. Meanwhile America created an alternative of European culture and it could no longer be considered just a "daughter" of this.

Clear-thinking Europeans in the 1920's already took into account the new situation when they tried to define Europe. This is most obvious in the case of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, one of the initiators of the pan-European movement. He claimed that America and Russia followed the way of collectivist societies whereas Europe was characterised by the pre-eminence of individuals in the organisation of life. "Between the capitalist collectivism of America and the communist collectivism of Russia, Europe remains the holy land of individualism, of

---

<sup>16</sup> Max Scheler, "Der Genius des Krieges und der Deutsche Krieg", in Max Scheler, *Gesammelte Werke*, Band 4, A. Francke Verlag, Bern, 1982, p. 182.

<sup>17</sup> Max Horkheimer, "Das Europäische" (1954), in Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Fischer, Frankfurt am Main, 1985, Band 8, p. 88.

the personality, of liberty.<sup>18</sup> Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, like other intellectuals of his generation (Heidegger, for example) labelled America without reservations "capitalist collectivism". This can be explained by the limited knowledge about America in Europe. They were all deluded by the terrifying impression of the evolution of modern society towards mass societies. In fact, America presented sooner that "collective individualism" which Europe is trying to build up today.

Let us put aside this aspect and notice that Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, commencing with the idea of European individualism, projected the fight for individual liberty on the whole European history. "The history of Europe - writes he - is a series of fights for liberty (...) European individualism means the European cult for personality and the consideration that personality is the 'greatest happiness for the children of earth.' Every European tries to be a personality, a differentiated and fulfilled man; limits and forms are imposed on him by his inner laws, not by external restrictions. European art, religion and politics expresses this evaluation of the personality. European democracy has as its aim the assurance of every individual for as much liberty for the development of his personality as can be fitted in with other people's liberty. The completion of liberty is a responsibility without which, every democracy becomes anarchy."<sup>19</sup> European individualism has three supporting pillars: "Christianity gave Europe depth; the Greek gave it form; the Germans gave it power. All these three dimensions and elements meet each other at the point of the heart of Europe: liberty."<sup>20</sup>

Today we can define Europe even more precisely from a completely factual basis and with a larger basis of comparison. In proof thereof, the new characterisations are more thoroughgoing and define concepts from much less context-dependant perspectives. I would like to sum up some definitions characteristic to the postwar period, formulated in different parts of Europe (and therefore based on somehow different individual experiences), presenting various views. André Philip characterized European culture in *Towards a European Politics* (1958) by three concepts: "the Greek concept of individuality", "the Roman concept of law and of the citizen" and "the Biblical concept of the human

---

<sup>18</sup> Richard Coudenhove - Kalergi, *Panuropa*, 1922 bis 1966, Verlag Herold, Wien. München, 1966, p. 123.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 123 - 124.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 121.

person".<sup>21</sup> Cardinal Ratzinger specifies the same culture by four concepts linked to its heritage: "the Greek heritage" ("the difference between Good and goods, that is, the difference in which it is given the right of moral conviction and the relation between ratio and religio); "the Christian heritage"; "the Latin heritage"; "the heritage of the modern epoch" ("the separation of belief from legislation"). He defines Europe in four theses: a.) "the inner coordination of democracy and eumony, the unalienable right is constitutive in Europe from its beginning in Hellas" b.) "if eumony is the presupposition of the capacity of democracy to exist, opposed to tyrants and the ochlocrats, then eumony has as its basic presupposition the common and compulsory veneration for the public right of moral values and of God"; c.) "to renounce the doctrine of atheism as a premise of public right and of the formation of the state and to venerate God as the foundation of ethos and rights in a publicly acknowledged way means to renounce to the nation as well as to world revolution as summum bonum"; d.) "the acknowledgement and assuring of the freedom of thought, of human rights, of the freedom of human science and, consequently, of a human society based on freedom must be constitutional in Europe."<sup>22</sup> Richard Löwenthal defines European culture in *The Nature, Situation, Power and Chance of Europe* (1985) by some basic value judgements. They are "the acknowledgement of reason as the key of understanding world order, of the individual which was born with inalienable rights and a responsibility from which he cannot be exempted, of the community which can voluntarily be entered, which is not based on blood relationships and which can nevertheless compel, of the order of rights which draws a line between the sphere of the individual and that of the community, and the acknowledgement of work, physical work inclusively which is no more considered the necessary bad but as a content that gives life a meaning."<sup>23</sup> Constantin Noica characterised Europe in *De dignitate Europae* (1988) by the development of an individuality that is endowed with the capacity of producing the general, an individual which permanently creates by apperception the "synthetic unity" of the world and through this his own unity which varies continuously.<sup>24</sup> Finally, Jan Patočka

---

<sup>21</sup> André Philip, "For a European Policy", in *The Absent Countries of Europe*, Schriftenreihe der Osteuropa, Strasbourg - Robertsan, 1958, p. 258.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger, "Europa - verpflichtendes Erbe für die Christen", in Franz König und Karl Rahner (Hrsg.), op. cit., pp. 71 - 73.

<sup>23</sup> Richard Löwenthal, "Europas Eigenart - Europas Zwangslage - Europas Chancen", in Leonard Reinisch (Hrsg.), *Dieses Europa zwischen West und Ost*, Verlegt bei Kindler, 1985, p. 153.

<sup>24</sup> Constantin Noica, *De dignitate Europae*, Kriterion, Bukarest, 1988, p. 44. See for details, Andrei Marga, "Vernunft und Schaffen. über Constantin Noica's Philosophie", in Andrei Marga, *Philosophy in the Eastern Transition*, Apostrof, Cluj, 1993.

defines European culture in *Europe and Its Legacy* (1988) from the point of view of the philosophy of history, the steadfast cultivation of reflection which is always searching for the final essence of things. His basic idea was that "radical reflection which appeared only in Greece, fights in Europe with the unreflecting, unphilosophical experience, forms it, confronts it in continuously changing shapes. It is the process of this confrontation that determines the interior and exterior destiny of Europe."<sup>25</sup>

3. European culture has been characterised at the beginning in comparison with Asia and more recently as against Asia and America. In the meantime Europe itself has changed. Parting with old Europe became a reference for the definition. Historians, philosophers and artists used the term old Europe to denote a Europe stylized by imagination and conceptualisation, a Europe of the merchants, masters of their initiatives and travails, believing in the possibility of solving life problems by factual arguments and of finding together, reunited, the right way of the institutions of the national state. This term is used by Metternich and Bruckenthal; Goethe also had the feeling of leaving "old Europe", but the most precise description of parting with old Europe belongs to Proudhon: "Civilisation today is really in a crisis which has a unique analogy in history, a crisis which determined the birth of Christianity", says he. "All traditions are depleted, all beliefs are dull. However, the new program is not yet drawn up and people are not yet conscious of it. Hence it appears as, what I call, dissolution. This is the most frightening moment of human society. Everything plots against people who mean well: the prostitution of conscience, the triumph of mediocrity, blending true with false, trading with principles, the baseness of passions, neglecting morals, the oppression of truth, rewarding lies (...) I do not have illusions and I do not think that the courage of expression, the good faith of newspapers, the morality of the government, the reason of citizens and the public-mindedness of plebeians will miraculously be born again tomorrow in our country."<sup>26</sup>

What has happened, in fact? Everything pointed to Europe entering an epoch of confrontation and, on the other hand, to the beginning of a technical revolution that would profoundly change the old organization of production and

---

<sup>25</sup> Jan Patočka, "Europa und sein Erbe", in *Agora*, Band 14, 1988, p. 166.

<sup>26</sup> Proudhon, apud Karl Löwith, *Der Mensch inmitten der Geschichte. Philosophisches Bilanz der 20 Jahrhunderts*, J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Stuttgart. 1990, p. 65.

that of commerce and social life. The harmonious individuality Goethe postulated for the far but also near past of Europe could no longer be considered a feature of the European present even if it remained a specific representation of its culture. Otherwise, the following generation of European intellectuals lost his faith in this representation. They outlined European nihilism. "What Goethe could foresee from the healthy state of Europe with a calm, knowing view amounted, already two decades after his death to the range of the apocalyptic pictures of the great mourners: Baudelaire and Kierkegaard, Dostoievski and Nietzsche.<sup>27</sup> They all experienced the feeling of displacing the hierarchy of values around which Europe has been built and that of the end of a world. They vigorously denounced rationalism in favour of scepticism, hierarchy and selling out art as the supreme form of knowledge. In art the forms attached to the idea of a cosmos of human life were manifestly abandoned; the forms of the purely subjective experience took their place.

However, not only the parting with old Europe became a reference point in defining Europe, but also another direction of European history: the effort of freeing Europe from Europeanism. It has been done by national-socialism in a way and by communism in another way. As comprehensive phenomena they both belong to the past but they remain present, even if peripherally, in the intellectual manifestations of Europe. The first form of freeing Europe from Europeanism makes an appeal to dismiss the Humanist and Christian, rationalist and Enlightenment components of European culture and to return to what preceded European culture or remained contemporary with it. This appeal was supported by intellectuals and trends that have different motivations: the moralist of "popular heroism" of national-socialism in Germany, in the 30s and in Europe later on, the re-evaluation of "wild thinking" in the anthropology of Lévi-Strauss, the French "new philosophers in the 70s and, more recently, certain personalities of postmodernism in the 80s. Beyond substantial differences these personalities and trends present European culture as dominated by Christianity and therefore, by an exigence of self-forming by self-discipline which is a synonym of obedience to hypothetical authorities or it predisposes to such an obedience. The second form contains an appeal to leave the liberal and individualist element and the critical rationalism based on factual treatment and to adopt manifestly a collectivism in which traditional European culture would be surpassed. It promises a Europe in which differentiation and all traditional antinomies of European culture would be laid aside. More intellectual trends

---

<sup>27</sup> Karl Löwith, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

announced the divorce from the values of individual life. Beyond their differences these trends present European culture as being dominated by individualism and, consequently, by a libertine spirit which continuously scatters and endangers the communities, so that this culture must simply be abandoned.

4. After the preliminaries which were meant to define reference points and to delimit the analysis the question of the nature of European culture might be addressed directly. The answer to this question often becomes essayistic, impregnated with context-dependant experiences which comprise partial aspects of European culture without defining it. It is high time, however, for a systematic approach against the background of European unification, an approach which would satisfy the needs of conceptual clearing-up by using the method of the theory of systems which remains capable of describing what is relevant in a situation.

In defining European culture I am going to start from the idea of society as a system made up of final subsystems differing in the aspect of their specific performance and, consequently, in the criteria of testing propositions and actions. I have in mind the following subsystems: the technics of production that potentiates the results of human energy investment; economy which produces the goods that satisfy the needs of the population; administration, which ensures that activities are effectively organised within a community; politics, which assures the legitimacy of basic options; spiritual culture, which generates the motives indispensable for the functioning of institutions. A system whose subsystems fulfil these performances is obviously preferable to another whose subsystems achieve them to a lesser extent or fail to fulfil them. It is tempting, by virtue of the easiness of the procedure, to choose one of the subsystems and to define European culture in terms of the conditions of its specific performance. This is, otherwise, a procedure frequently used in defining European culture by philosophers attached to the postulate of a unity which develops and varies in all that exists. Patočka and Noica, for example, obtain specifying concepts that are attractive at first sight and apparently profound but which can not in fact sufficiently specify European culture or, at least, they leave space to contrary, alternative concepts. But generally, philosophies which organise themselves around a postulate of a unity which develops, by phenomenologising itself, in all that exists, do not allow for a specific enough description of the situation. Nowadays philosophies centred round the idea of the interaction of multiple instances with different performances are preferred to them. Experiments

show that we cannot obtain profound analyses able to provide the basis for programmes of viable action if some kind of monist reduction is applied. The monism of economy and the monism of spiritual culture or any kind of monism does not allow the definition of European culture and a viable programme of its promotion based on this definition.

If we consider European culture the totality of ideas, symbols, theories which can be found in the social experience of life, the following subsystems can be delimited: technical competence; economic behaviour; administrative skills; political action; spiritual culture. We can define European culture on the basis of these subsystems and the definition in our days must be based on them.

European culture contains a concept of science shared with ancient cultures: science is the knowledge of the "final cause" of things which explains them indicating their destination in an overall scenery of the world. Aristotelism was the systematic expression of this concept of science in European culture. But this culture also generated another concept of science, the so-called modern natural science which gains methodological quality with Kepler, Galilei and Newton. Modern natural science characterised as part of culture meant knowledge based on experience and directed towards identifying the efficient cause of things; it meant a knowledge which always aimed at reaching maturity, that is, at identifying the law-like correlations between cause and effect; it meant a knowledge led by an immanent interest in taking control of and transforming the known thing; it meant mathematised knowledge of the logical correlation between things. European culture produced for the first time a science that is factual knowledge oriented at the representation of efficient law-like causes which can be expressed mathematically, a knowledge in the service of solving technical problems, controlling and transforming things. This science influenced it profoundly and characterises it. By modern science it mostly influenced other cultures. "In all other fields Europe had deeply influenced other cultural circles - and this holds good for religion and art and even more for politics, law and economy; but the domination of ideas developed in Europe has never been complete, there was always a good nucleus of original ideas so that European elements merged in most cases with original cultural traditions. The case of science and technique is completely different: theories exported from Europe, methods and techniques of production came to unlimited world domination, they completely suppressed local traditions."<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Wolfgang Wild. "Europäische Naturwissenschaft und Technik in der Welt von Morgen", in Franz König und Karl Rahner (Hrsg.), op. cit., p. 181.



Modern science put at people's disposal the laws of efficient causality of things in order to control and transform these things. It discarded traditional techniques of production, it created machines and automats and technical machines of production in a broad sense. Its ideal was the machine with minimum consumption and maximum output. Perpetuum mobile remained the ideal. It enlarged their sphere of possible and that of the desirable to such an extent that only one limit remained: the inherent laws of the things themselves. The enlargening meant an always new level of the possibilities of machines and automats to carry out operations and to solve problems. In the meantime Europe reached the epoch of technical civilisation. This event strengthens and supplants what European culture produced and diffused: the conditioning of productive competence by a perpetually ascending technical competence. You belong to European culture if you adapt yourself to different situations and, at best, you take part in creating techniques of production and new levels of technical competence of production, in general.

Economic behaviours were and are various from the point of view of their interior motivations and exterior organisation. The primitives were content to pick the fruits offered by nature; the peasants of different epochs of European history were content or forced to be content with a production that hardly met their needs of survival from one year to the other; the communist "worker" considered participating in collective work more important than the efficiency of this work. All these are variants of a certain economic behaviour. European culture put aside this type of economic behaviour, operating and consecrating a totally different one. It is a behaviour characterised by economic rationality that is, formed in a way that makes calculation possible and the result is a surplus of the results as compared to what is invested. The origin of this behaviour is identical with "capitalism" in its classical meaning. It is confounded in fact with the rational economic behaviour of the enterpriser as it was initiated in European culture. Max Weber described it, even if in terms that are not precise enough in the present day, in this way: "Where people rationally strive for capitalist competition, the respective action is oriented towards the calculation of capital. This means that it is inserted in an application, according to a plan of useful results of competition so that the efficiency of the factory calculated according to the balance sheet must outstrip (...) the objectual means of competition applied by exchange ( in case of long-lasting factories it must outstrip it always, again and again )."<sup>29</sup> The calculation which is the core of European economic behaviour is

---

<sup>29</sup> Max Weber. *Die protestantische Ethik*, Siebenstern Verlag, Hamburg. 1975, Band I, p. 13

subordinated to the apparently prosaic value of profitableness. It appeared in European culture as a real principle - the principle of efficiency - it moved it away from other cultures and sent it on its own way. You do not belong to this culture if you underestimate or ignore the principle of efficiency.

The individual enterpriser appeared in European culture but it remains linked to the principle of efficiency which led it. Its historical experiences (maximum nationalisation of property, the socialisation of the main means of production, the collectivisation of production and consumption) proved that only private initiative is compatible with the principle of efficiency. Its suppression led to the abolition of this principle. However, private initiative presupposes the individual entrepreneur but not his exclusivity. Anyway, the individual entrepreneur (at a certain level of his enterprise), the entrepreneurs who work in associations, the sections of society and society as a whole faces the problem of coordinating the efforts and initiatives of many people distributed over large areas, people who have different professional competence, that is, the problem of administration. It can be solved by the same calculation of economic efficiency. You do not belong to European culture if the administration of your own society does not pass the exam of rationality. However, European culture made free individuals subjects of the calculation of efficiency. It contains a culture of efficient administration relying on a culture of law characterised by personalism, legalism and formalism. The individual within it is the subject, reference and aim of juridical regulations; the decision on social relations submits to rules of law which are worked out and promoted by the state; the cases are treated beginning with general and, in a way, abstract rules which form together a formal organisation of the law.<sup>30</sup> This law culture is, in its turn, a product of European culture and remains linked to its characteristics. You belong to European culture when the culture of law promotes the individual as a subject and aim of the law as well as the sovereignty and generality of law.

The culture of law is, after all, based on a concept of man and, vice versa, the concepts of man are formulated and expressed, from a historical point of view, in connection with those concepts on man that take the "aired" form of philosophies and religions. This statement holds good even more for European culture which autonomised the fields of activity and values but also rendered evident their interior relations. The dignity of the individual, the philosophical concept of reason and the practical recognition of the status of

---

<sup>30</sup> See Franz Wieacker, "Europäische Rechtskultur", in Franz König und Karl Rahner (Hrsg.), *op. cit.*, p. 145

the individual in the political community belongs to, have been differentiated within European culture but remains in a continuous relationship. However, it was the placement of fields of activity and values on the base of personal liberty and conceiving this liberty as autonomy that specified European culture, at least from the Renaissance on. It has been stated that "autonomy is the European concept of freedom" and that "the right to freedom or civic rights are linked to a wholly determined image of man, that of man as a citizen who has certain basic rights. These are always globally prescribed by the first formula: life, freedom, property".<sup>31</sup> You belong to European culture if you are assured, by law, these basic rights.

Personal autonomy is not equivalent in European culture with the dictate of whims and arbitrariness. It must not be confounded with the trivial slogan "I do whatever I want because I am free". As Kant observed, the term 'autonomy' is composed by 'auto' and 'nomy' and it means "to impose your law" but it refers to a law, that is, to a rule which has the nature of generalism and of reciprocity therefore. Autonomy takes the individual out from the private sphere and puts it in interaction with the sphere in which it meets the other individuals, the public sphere. It always assures the individual's right to self-determination, but it always claims a self-determination within the law. From the beginning it consecrates the sphere of the individual free in his singularity, which is formed starting from his property. European culture is linked to the construction of the human being as a private sphere relying on his property and guaranteed by laws which contain basic and inalienable rights.

But laws themselves are the result of people's travail in the public sphere of their lives. The state and the different institutions which become more or less autonomous develop within it. European culture was specified by the modern concept of deriving public will and state policy from the public debate on problems of general interest. It produced institutions which organise and maintain the debate and it made reasoning in the sphere of public life the frame in which interests are promoted. You cannot belong to this culture if you do not admit that arguing and, more precisely, the better arguments prevail in the controversy of opinions linked to divergent interests. Politics is a medium of life in European culture which mediates solutions of general problems and does not let itself be reduced, exactly by its structure, to either ontology or spiritual interiority. Only in epochs of crisis did European intellectuals turn politics into an adventure of the "univer-

---

<sup>31</sup> Arno Baruzzi, *Europäische "Menschenbild" und das Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Karl Alber, Freiburg, München, 1979, pp. 10 - 13.

sal spirit", as Hegel did, or into an interiorised phenomenology of subjectivity, as Kierkegaard did. On the other hand, politics or the ensemble of strategies solving problems of general interest is linked in European culture to the paradigm of argumentation and of the prevalence of better arguments.

European culture is not only a spiritual culture - that is, interiorised and lived in solitude and confinement, far from the turbulent world of production, business, social and political disputes and, sometimes, in spite of it - but also a culture of research, of the systematic knowledge and transformation of the experienced reality, according to man's aims. Reality is not "caught" in its conceptualisations as an alien body from which we must be withdrawn, but rather a material that must be superseded and, a basis for achieving our aims. European spiritual culture developed round the recognition of reality as the unique world of our life. It can only be completely understood as a potential of an effective form of life. You belong to this culture if you carry out the continuous communication between intellectual reflexivity and the problems of the humane living of life.

European tradition is often referred to when the nature of European spiritual culture is discussed. Tradition is broadly everything that has been produced in the past in Europe. Hence a mosaic in which important things are neutralised and rendered formally equal with trifles. We must admit that many various items have been and are still being produced in Europe, not all of them of a European nature. The old continent was, in its turn, a ground for exterior influences. Mystic arhythmology, taken over by the Pythagoreans from East, or the elogium of nirvana of the late romantics, or demonology that reappears on the verge of Christianity do not belong to the nature of Europe, although they have been produced in Europe. We must also add that European nature cannot either be defined when the mosaic contains only pieces that are not results of influence. In vain we lay down the Galileo-Newtonian science, Husserl's phenomenology, Salvador Dali's painting, Eastern folklore and the orthodox existentialism of the Russians side by side in a programatic eclecticism. Naturally, European traditions have to be taken into account by whoever tries to find European cultural characteristics, but merely enumerating and characterising them, as they often do nowadays, is not enough. We must find something within them that unites them, but not an essence that phenomenologises in everything that exists. "Essentialism" does not face the empirical diversity of facts. It is high time to prefer "generativism" to "essentialism". It is proper therefore to look for "matrices", but not matrices which imprint visions and perceptions as screens do, but matrices which generate the structure of specific actions.

Irrespective of our point of view, we cannot avoid a considerable difficulty: the "good" specific to Europe coexisted with the "bad" which is nevertheless specific to it or, perhaps, had been produced by it. "Europe is this spirit of the Greek state, of the state of citizens, but also there is the possibility of tyranny. It is patient waiting for the tyranny of God but also has the impatient will to create it by spiritual or worldly power. Europe is faith, but also enlightenment. Europe is the authority of religion but also the continuously renewed striving of the spirit for knowledge, for judging things and for admitting only that which has been known by itself. Hence the grandeur of European science, to the extent it is based on reason and experience instead of revelation. But Europe is also the domination of doctrine and submitting to the general line. Europe is belief in the power of spirit, idealism, but no less is it materialism. Europe means people's rights (... ) but Europe has also discovered the totalitarian state, the principle of the leader; it drowned personal liberty in the sea of collectivity in the name of nation, people, class or mass.<sup>32</sup> Faced with the situations mentioned above - and others perhaps that could be discussed - perplexity is the first feeling that even the skilled specialist has: how can you finally reconcile "European characteristics" under the common title when opposite terms are presented historically by European reality? There is a temptation to answer that Europe does not have a specific character but only some peculiarities, more exaggerated perhaps than those of other places. Probably we have to deal with a group of diverse and divergent realities instead of realities that lead to a concept.

Naturally, those who are tempted to give this answer, are right in some points. In the following case, anyway: we would exaggerate if we would ignore the dark side of Europe and take into account only the glorious one which is mainly the result of the dreaming of some intellectuals. Generally speaking, Europe has two faces. It always presents excellent service but not long afterwards the opposite service as well. In this way the first feeling of the analyser is not a good adviser. Europe which is a complex constellation, differentiated and consisting of counterparts can be defined only reflectively in terms of its specific characteristics.

Treated reflectively, European culture shows that its counterparts never did have equal roles. Max Scheler observed for example that "nationalism" had been the catalyst of a significant cultural dynamics, in modernity, at least, but it

---

<sup>32</sup> Dolf Sternberger, "Komponenten der geistigen Gestalt Europas", in *Merkur*, nr. 382, 1980, p. 236.

had accompanied the European concept of man's natural freedom, as a restriction of it. However, the recognition of personal liberty which was really European, became dominant after all, repressing "national" limitations. "The national 'historical' schools of law could not repress the universality of Roman law."<sup>33</sup> This is the case with the other polarities of European culture. The specific character of European culture gained the upper hand over that which was contrary to it or came from outside without completely removing it. The state of citizens replaced tyranny on the greatest part of the continent: religious tolerance is an imposing fact, the respect for particularity is indubitable, the domination of ideological dogmas had been undermined and reduced.

But what is specifically European in the field of spiritual culture ? We can answer this by referring to symbols (Faust for example has been used as specific symbol of modern European culture) or invoking the great frames of interpretation of the world ("the Copernican space" for example) but the discussion is more precise and verifiable if it is centred round concepts. European culture developed the implications of some great options defined by some pivotal concepts: the concept of truth as a basic value understood as a correspondence between propositions and facts, verifiable by experience; the concept of knowledge aimed at solving people's problems of life which is confronted with the criteria of usefulness; the concept of rationality which consists of calculation and is defined by results; the concept of rights as a set of rules that are general and formal; the concept of personal autonomy as a form of his freedom; the concept of public sphere as a medium of defining political will; the concept of the human being as an individuality destined for creating a superior meaning to his mere living.

All these concepts belong to what we call the European tradition in the sense that they have been formed in European history and mark it up to the present. European history had been for a long time the locomotive of world history. Europe has been the main scene of world history. The former "powers" and "superpowers" extended on large areas of the world from Europe. The situation of the continent radically changed after the Second World War. "Europe built the system of its world interests on an Earth which was empty from a political point of view. Now it finds itself at once among the grandest powers, in the middle of a world politics which has new reference points. Two spheres, two dimensions, two rhythms move dangerously towards each other - dangerously for Europe, beyond doubt: great tensions

---

33 Max Scheler, "Internationalismus oder Europäismus?" (1914), in Max Scheler, *op. cit.*, p. 601.

and previous decisions of a world history of the future has been mixed with unsettled European contradictions and vice versa, in an acute way.<sup>34</sup> The new situation of Europe sorely tries the whole of its tradition. This latter is no more valid in the new circumstances. Undoubtedly, traditions can always be called upon. This is otherwise done in epochs of spiritual crisis, mainly, as in the present epoch in which appealing to tradition is like a superficial solving of problems. Traditions generally lack the sense of reality and, unobserved, rather complicate than solve the problems. Anyway, the new situation of Europe asks for a thoughtful use of traditions.

The thoughtful use of tradition is also asked for by another powerful fact: the duality of Europe, the existence or perhaps even the generating of polarities of that which is specific to European culture. This duality led Europe to a crisis just before the superpowers which were to put it under control, emerged at its borders. In a way Europe itself indirectly contributed to the development and establishment on the world arena of the two superpowers which controlled the postwar period. The European crisis prevented the mature approach of the imposing European tradition (an approach responsible from the point of view of the consequences) be a direct one; it could only be reflective.

In fact, no one can stop us taking again the bigotry of isolated communities in the Middle Ages, restoring the premodern belief in the "mission" of leaders, thinking of the "mission" of nations, as it was two centuries ago, separating again thinking from the problems of life like in the golden age of inner philosophies. But we shall not have desirable results if we thoughtlessly undertake again certain traditions. We shall have only an old Europe, again.

5. The point of view of the involved observer is rightly suspected to be subjective. It is impossible to get involved in the interactions of a community and to obtain at the same time an image of this community which is free of the mark of subjectivity. In other words, and in a more concrete way, you cannot have an objective view of European culture if you are a European. However, we must admit in spite of the quasi-current impression that the exterior observer's perspective is not immune to error either. To illustrate this, I take into consideration an evaluation of Europe "from the point of view of the Third World"; this is a paradigmatic example of many an analysis that treats dogmatically a distortion of European specific characteristics and sings uncritically the age-old melody of the

---

<sup>34</sup> Hans Freyer, *Weltgeschichte Europas*, Deutsche Verlags - Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1954, p. 607.

decayed Europe. It starts from an indisputable premise: Europe produced modern science which backed up a "technical development" that went hand in hand with an "industrial civilisation" and, especially, offered the paradigm of "rationalism" which characterises it.<sup>35</sup> I pass over the fact that the definition of Europe by its peculiar "rationality" is correct but limited and that this limitation is connected to the deficiency of integration and of the objective readiness to learn from what we examine. Poverty is not only material, there is also a poverty of complex interrogation, whereas interrogations are linked to an objective readiness to learn. This evaluation points out only gaps in "European rationalism" - which is admissible in the last resort, depending on the philosophical point of view that has been chosen - but these are imaginary gaps. "Science, as a paradigm of rationalism, refuses to admit that which was valid in the Middle Ages in the name of God; it proclaimed nature an autonomous entity that has its own laws. Man became equivalent to nature. He saw in this new identification the possibility of freeing himself from the cover of theology. But this freedom deprived him of the security and individuality that God gave him before."<sup>36</sup> According to this evaluation European rationalism has three gaps which are neither accidental, nor contextual, but structural: it cannot absorb in its determinations the uniqueness of the individual: it can only grasp in its determinations the system of reality and not the elements of it; it can offer only probable prognoses.

Whoever wants to form an image of European culture can take into account an unusually large amount of widely different views that prove the unique complexity of this culture. The above mentioned analysis considers the systematic, technical treatment connected to industrialism and restricts the characteristic of European culture to it. As the analysis tacitly confronts individualisation with individual spirituality, it cannot sense the immanent meaning of European rationalism and the broader nature of the characteristic of European culture. The immanent meaning of European rationalism is formed at the level of a "preliminary" of its methodology that contains options on the endless map of the world leaning on options of the meaning of human life on earth. And here the issue of individualisation is taken again. Moreover, the nature of European culture cannot be exhausted with one of his concepts. However, in order to understand it, the interrogator must ask enough questions and must be ready to learn without the limits imposed by his own context.

---

<sup>35</sup> R. C. Pandeya, "Europäischer Rationalismus. Aus der Sicht der <<Dritten Welt>>," in *Merkur*, nr. 371, 1979, pp. 356 - 357.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 356 - 357.