

CHAPTER I PERFORMATIVE ACTS AND GENDER

I

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of all places, the socioeconomic sector features the fewest common principles. This is because, *despite* the noble goal of generally increasing affluence by means of joint institutions and the redistribution of funds within not only the EU but also to non-EU states, this sector remains the purview of individual states. Thus far, no social union has emerged. The socioeconomic dimension—that is, the dimension in which the economy, social structure, and specific social practices most closely intertwine—has not only remained the purview of the nation state but also tremendously strengthened it. After 1945, this dimension became one of the nation state’s main responsibilities, whereas other responsibilities became progressively less important in the nation state itself, being assumed instead by supranational institutions or mitigated by numerous self-imposed commitments as states participated in inter-governmental organizations. Globally, the EU accounts for 7% of the population, 25% of net product, and 50% of all social welfare spending⁴—and the latter is the preserve of the nation states.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

II

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

This combination of approaches seeks not to displace other strategies that approach European history in terms of conceptual, intellectual, or political history or general structuralism, but rather, to expand and, where possible, sharpen such strategies. After all, political history and gender history have long ceased to be mutually exclusive concepts. Of course, European history as gender history is also more than “Europe in Love, Love in Europe,” to quote the title of Luisa Passerini’s very good and insightful book, which pursues a very specific interwar period debate.⁸ More than the history of women⁹ or the history of manliness¹⁰ in Europe, it pertains to something quite fundamental: the ancient world featured the development of a relationship model, inasmuch as *Europe*, in connection with the long developmental phase from matrifocal—and also at times egalitarian and warrior-masculine—societal configurations to patriarchal societal configurations, became a *woman*, whose

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

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

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

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

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

This development resumed in the Middle Ages, particularly after the turn of the millennium. The ever more recurrent use of the name Europe and the female form appeared in the semantic field of men. The most important narrative in this respect—based on the Old Testament—was that of Noah’s son Japheth, whose descendants ostensibly populated Europe, his sons becoming the ancestral fathers of Europe’s most important nations. Custom went so far as to refer to Europe as “Japheth land,” but this re-designation failed to vanquish the name of Europe and was abandoned in the early modern period. Declared saints such as Martin of Tours were understood with reference to their importance for Europe. This was also especially true with regard to the fame and power of “individual rulers,” among whom Charlemagne enjoyed a certain preeminence.¹¹ This development intensified immensely during the Renaissance, while America and the figure of America¹² received a treatment similar to that of Europe and the figure of Europe, preserving the heterosexual-patriarchal connotations from antiquity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

III

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

The concept of *performativity* developed from speech-act theory, which assigned a central role to performative speech. Proceeding from the work of John L. Austin¹⁴ and John R. Searle¹⁵ in the 1950s and 1960s, for quite some time—in large part due to the influence of Derrida¹⁶ and Butler¹⁷—the concept has been broadly applied not only in linguistics but also in gender research, theater studies, art theory, historical scholarship, and communication and media studies. The concept can be elastically deployed in a broad range of cultural studies, for its essence exists in

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Here and in the following, sometimes I use words like “constitute” or “ascribe,” while at other times I write “engender awareness,” depending on the situation. When referring to the speech attitude, I write “engender awareness” because the speech attitude in the performative speech act is such that an imputed identity is posited as true and the speech act “merely” engenders an “awareness” of this identity. But when I refer to the scientific attitude, I write “ascribe,” “constitute,” “create,” or “produce.” The expression “engender awareness” always connotes that the speech act “engenders awareness” of an identity posited as antecedent. This sets the performative speech act apart from all other possible (non-performative) speech acts that undoubtedly also can engender an awareness of something by establishing it, but which acknowledge the act of establishment. In contrast, with regard to the performative speech act, engendering awareness means that the identity already *is*. Somebody needs only to declare it. It is a “swindle”—to use a word from the title of a book by Christina von Braun²²—because, viewed scientifically, there is no admission that the speech act itself attributes or constitutes the identity, that it creates the identity. The pretense is that the performative speech act merely declares something that is ontologically antecedent. In reality, the identity is created in the moment of performative speech act itself, but the performative speech act is not acknowledged as an act of creation.

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

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

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

IV

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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