The Brave Struggle: Jan Patočka on Europe's Past and Future

Francesco Tava (francesco.tava@kuleuven.be)

KU Leuven, Institute of Philosophy
Leuven, Belgium

Abstract

This article proposes to investigate Jan Patočka's idea of 'post-Europe', in the context of his understanding of European contemporary history. Therefore, I first stress how important it is for Patočka to conceive a 'post-European perspective', i.e. a peculiar insight into historical problems and conflicts that would allow humanity to find a possible path out of the condition that characterises the twentieth century. Second, I focus on the existential figure that, according to Patočka, is capable of engendering this perspective, and whose fundamental traits are equality, detachment, openness, and courage. Thus, I consider Husserl's idea of Europe, Arendt's concept of the political, and Bergson's concept of the open soul as fundamental references for Patočka's reconstruction. I conclude by showing how Patočka's ethical stance on Europe and post-Europe can also be meaningful in light of the current European economic and political crisis.

The idea of Europe recurs often and constitutes an important *topos* in the thought of Jan Patočka from his early writings on phenomenology and the history of philosophy to his late effort to skech a 'heretical' philosophy of history. In this respect, two distinct sources seem to fuel Patočka's reflection. On the one hand, there is the legacy of phenomenological analyses of the European situation and crisis throughout twentieth century, which Patočka aimed at further developing, taking especially Husserl's and Heidegger's accounts on this topic as fundamental references. On the other hand, another aspect worthy of consideration concerns the peculiar historical perspective from which Patočka looked at Europe and its crisis. Prague, Czechoslovakia and Central Europe represent for Patočka not just a neutral geographical space, but rather a specific intellectual angle from which he addressed his insight into European history and civilisation.

Looking towards Europe from its former centre, which after 1945 became its periphery, entails an act of imagination and courage; it means, indeed, foreseeing the possibility of a unified Europe in a historical moment in which its fragmentation was more than ever visible. Already in the 1950s, as we

will see in what follows, by analysing the various shapes taken by modern civilisation, Patočka strived to imagine Europe beyond its political divisions, insofar as what he called 'supercivilisation', addressed features and problems that belonged to both western capitalist societies and to eastern socialist states. Later, in the 1970s, during the era of political normalisation which hit Czechoslovakia after the setback of the Prague Spring, Patočka coined the idea of post-Europe, in order to re-address the question of Europe in a new way, not on the basis of an ideological stance, but starting from the position of single individuals who, facing Europe's critical situation, look back at European history in a new way, from a newly-achieved perspective; they do not go along with any idea of positive progress, but rather emphasise the most conflicting and tragic events that mark the history of Europe, and for which European humanity must acknowledge its responsibility. In this sense, as I will clarify, post-Europe does not correspond to Europe's ultimate collapse. Post-Europe is not outside or beyond Europe, but simply settles on its temporal borders, as much as central Europe does on its spatial ones, thus allowing the individual who inhabits it to look at Europe from a new standpoint, and from a detached and yet deeper and more responsible perspective. This peculiar character of post-Europe also suggests the profound distance between Patočka's position and the various conceptions that, with a mix of fatalism and nostalgia, tend to consider the breakdown of Europe as the end of modern civilisation. Nothing really ends with post-Europe, whose 'post-', rather than a simple overcoming acquires the meaning of an insightful stance toward Europe's ongoing conflicts and crises. This is also the reason why this concept remains salient today, in light of Europe's current economic and political crisis. Subjects and objects have indeed changed, but not the kind of critical perspective, which, according to this vision, the individual has to engender, in order to both face the crisis and imagine its possible solution.

Here, I will retrace Patočka's insight into the idea of Europe, by analysing his critique of modern civilisation, his concept of post-Europe, and the peculiar meaning that engendering a 'post-European perspective' acquired in this scheme. I will focus particularly on the figure of the 'post-European individual', which stems from this perspective, in order to show how Patočka conceived this figure as a possible way of deepening and enhancing human rationality, not in the sense of technical rationalisation, of which Patočka was rather critical, but in the sense of practical reason, which was already at the basis of Husserl's idea of Europe.[1] In order to clarify the character of this individual, to which Patočka referred in various ways throughout his late work ('post-European human', 'spiritual person', 'open soul'), I will recollect some peculiar traits of this practical reason: insight into history, detachment from mere facts, openness to the other, courage and willingness to sacrifice oneself in order

---

[1] See the introductory remarks in this Issue.

to defend freedom.

1. Becoming Addicted to Things

In one of his late essays from the 1970s, Patočka attempted to trace a 'scheme of history', which he believed was useful in understanding the upheavals that have led to the present. At the end of this essay, Patočka argued that the nineteenth-century was the 'last European century'.[2] According to his reconstruction, the process of world rationalisation, which was fostered by European modern thought and consisted in an affected division between subject and object, between human beings and their lifeworlds, ran up against insurmountable complications in that period.[3] The idea that humans are not only separated from but also opposed to the world that surrounds them, indeed, turns into a necessity for them to regain control of this alienated world in some way, by establishing a human rule over it. Nonetheless, this effort has had an unpredictable result; according to Patočka, twentieth-century humanity, far from succeeding in dominating the objective world, has become rather subjected to what it wanted to rule.

Patočka describes this peculiar overturning in various ways. In the *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, his late philosophical masterpiece, he refers to an 'addiction to things',[4] in order to describe the human condition, after the setback of Europe's rationalistic project. In another essay, conceived as a preparatory text for the *Heretical Essays*, he points out how the European humanistic dream, which originally consisted for him in establishing a sort of *regnum hominis* in the world, turned into a *regimen hominum* in modern times, insofar as humankind ceases to be the leading character of the world process, and becomes subjected to the same objective power that it was initially striving to achieve.[5] The accumulation of this power, from being a simple means for establishing human control over the world, has thus become the only end of this whole process. Finally, also in the above-mentioned essay, 'The Scheme of History', Patočka describes this same phenomenon in terms of a

---

[2] Patočka, 'Die Epochen der Geschichte', 196. I'm quoting the German revised version of this essay, which in its first editions was also known as 'Das Geschichtsschema'.

[3] Patočka's interest in the debate on social rationalisation is already visible in his writings from the 1950s, where he often refers to Max Weber, as well as to Marxist and critical theory, with regard to this issue. See for instance Patočka, 'Nadcivilizace a její vnitřní konflikt' [The Supercivilisation and its Inner Conflict]. Jóhann P. Árnason stressed how Patočka's critique of existing societies is influenced by both critical theory and a more conservative conception of modernity. See Árnason, *Civilizations in Dispute*, 139. On the possible convergence between Patočka and critical theory, see also Lau, 'Jan Patočka: Critical Consciousness and Non-Eurocentric Philosopher of the Phenomenological Movement'.

[4] Patočka, *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, 113. See on this aspect of Patočka's thought James Dodd's analysis in Dodd, *Violence and Phenomenology*, 124ff.

[5] Patočka, 'Die Selbstbesinnung Europas', 259. ('It really looks as though the *regnum hominis* has become a *regimen hominum*, in the objective genitive sense of the term, where the same accumulation of energy is the unrestrained ruler'). Unless otherwise specified, all translations from German and Czech are mine.

'primacy of the objective' over subjective experiences.[6] The outcome of this condition is a widespread particularism, namely, the inability to achieve a minimum distance from bare things and the impossibility of appraising the horizon of human existence beyond the limits of daily subsistence. Isolated domains, closed communities and narrow-minded ideas all result from this same fundamental tendency.

If we look back at the First World War from this angle, we see how Patočka interprets it as both the extreme consequence and the inevitable eruption of this particularism; the aim of each political formation involved in the conflict to impose its control over the others in the attempt to establish a new supremacy becomes eventually apparent: 'The war erupts in the atmosphere of a particularism that turns into universality, its meaning is widely perceived like a will to power that tends to impose itself'.[7] This idea, which especially arose during the World Wars, of an imposing power which tends to forcibly unify every heterogeneous element in society, is at the root of twentieth-century totalitarianisms.[8]

Patočka had already cultivated a precise understanding of this phenomenon in the 1950s, when he coined the idea of 'supercivilisation', in order to define this particular pathology of power which can be summarised by the phrase '*Ut omnes unum sint*' ('that they may all be one', Gospel of John, 17:21).[9] The effort to fix any social conflict by erasing every element of political and intellectual diversity within society is at the basis of 'supercivilisation', i.e. of that particular political conformation that according to Patočka emerged in early modern history and developed until the twentieth century.[10] The consequence of supercivilisation is the same 'addiction to things' to which Patočka would later refer in the *Heretical Essays*; being incapable of taking a step back from the factual reality in which they live, humans seem completely lost in the 'quantifiable meaninglessness'[11] of the mechanisms that they wanted to rule.

What the shattering experience of war truly showed is the failure of supercivilisation; the efforts of European politics to re-establish its supremacy by overcoming the particularism into which historical events forced it led to failure. Europe, conceived as the context in which the modern political project of

---

[6] Jan Patočka, 'Die Epochen der Geschichte', 191.

[7] Jan Patočka, 'Die Epochen der Geschichte', 199. On the importance of war and especially of the First World War in Patočka's thought, see de Warren, 'Homecoming. Jan Patočka's Reflections on the First World War'; Hagedorn, 'Europe's 20th century: History of Wars and War as History'.

[8] I especially refer here to Arendt's definition, according to which totalitarian politics deviate from mere antisemitism, racism, or imperialism, inasmuch as they 'use and abuse their own ideological and political elements until the basis of factual reality … have all but disappeared'. See Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, xv.

[9] See Patočka, *Nadcivilizace a její vnitřní konflikt*, 263.

[10] Analyses of this concept can be found in Árnason, *Civilizations in Dispute*; Homolka, 'The Problem of Meaning in the Rational (Super)Civilisation'; Meacham, 'Supercivilisation and Biologism'; Tava, *The Risk of Freedom*.

[11] See Patočka, *Heretical Essays*, 116.

humanity originated, definitively lost its centrality. A new 'planetary era' ruled by what Patočka calls the 'Europeides' begins, that is the extra-European empires which saved the old continent from an ultimate deflagration.[12]

2. Nonequivalence

The new historical configuration which stemmed from the First World War, and later crystallised after the Second, is particularly vivid to Patočka's gaze, if we consider his life context – Central Europe – and the transformation this political space underwent during the twentieth century.[13] From a position of geographical and mostly cultural centrality, Central Europe progressively turned into a mere border district between newly established political blocs. This new perspective finds its global equivalent in the situation of continental Europe as such, which during the twentieth century lost the political and intellectual prerogatives that characterised its previous history and became a new world periphery, in the face of the rise of the United States first and, more recently, of new powerful actors in the international panorama: most notably, Soviet Union and China.

The sense of loss and decline that for Patočka essentially inheres to the idea of Europe prevents, in part, the charge of Eurocentrism to which his thought has been often subjected.[14] The centrality of Europe in Patočka's reflection can indeed be affirmed only in light of its fundamental negativity. Europe, in its contemporary facet, is represented for Patočka first and foremost by the reiterated attempts of its political actors to establish their hegemony, by perpetrating violent acts inside as well as outside of European borders. All these attempts did not however save Europe from substantial marginalisation, which from Patočka's Central-European perspective (which can be considered as doubly peripheral) is particularly visible. More than Eurocentric, Patočka's reflection on Europe appears to be 'Eurocentrifugal', insofar as the only way to detect Europe's very centre is gazing at this fundamental emptiness, opened by the terrible setbacks of its social and political projects. In other words, for Patočka the only way to envision Europe today is by conceiving it as a post-Europe that is a new historical and political space whose inhabitants are aware of Europe's inability to become a

---

[12] See Patočka, 'Die Epochen der Geschichte', 201-2.
[13] Among the numerous investigations on the peculiar situation of Central Europe, also with reference to Patočka's stance, see in particular, Garton Ash, 'Does Central Europe Exist?', as well as other important contributions by István Bibó, Zygmund Bauman, Czesław Miłosz, Predrag Matvejević, and others in Schöpflin and Wood (eds.), *In Search of Central Europe*. A more recent historical analysis of the 'question of Central Europe', in light of the origins and development of the idea of Europe, can be found in Mikkeli, *Europe as an Idea and an Identity*.
[14] An excellent analysis of Patočka's supposed Eurocentrism can be found in Novotný, 'Europe, Post-Europe, and Eurocentrism'.

structured and monolithic civilisation.[15] The only centre of this new political space, its unique coagulating motive, will therefore be the lack of any defined centre; a necessary fragmentation will emerge from which, as we will see in the following paragraphs, the post-European humans organise their existence, which will not be regulated by any external authoritative principle (as it was in the supercivilisation), but will be rather grounded only on personal responsibility. Patočka's recovery of ancient Greek thought, and particularly of the Platonic idea of 'care for the soul',[16] presupposes this change of perspective. Only a free individual can actually engender this kind of care, which entails overcoming a conception of life based on primary subsistence and mere obedience to impersonal prescriptions. Taking care of one's soul from this perspective means learning to move in the world as free actors, who are able to actively interact with this world, modifying its course, and who are also aware of the responsibility that this agency inevitably involves.

Becoming aware of this new existential condition means, first and foremost, taking responsibility as European people for Europe's weakness and marginality. This is the fundamental precondition for engendering what Patočka defines as a 'post-European perspective'. Dealing with this subject today, however, demands a step further. If the nineteenth century had been, in fact, the last European century – as is stated in 'Die Epochen der Geschichte' – and if the twentieth century represented the setback of the European political and intellectual project and the rise of post-Europe – as Patočka maintains both in the *Heretical Essays* and in 'Europa und Nach-Europa' – we can contend that the twenty-first century is the age in which post-Europe truly blossoms. This circumstance implies undertaking further analysis of this topic beyond the historical context that Patočka witnessed first-hand. In this way, post-Europe can be considered a pivotal idea, which becomes useful not just to understand Patočka's thought, but to face the historical problems of the present.

From this post-European perspective, the position of the human individual assumes an eminent importance. In this regard, it must be noticed that the 'post-' to which Patočka refers does not correspond to a mere overcoming. Inasmuch as the failure of the European rationalistic project does not entail the end of Europe, the post-European subject does not settle outside of Europe. On the contrary, as Patočka himself clarified in a letter to a French correspondent in the 1970s, this 'post-' does not

---

[15] In addition to 'Die Epochen der Geschichte', see on this idea especially Patočka's late essay 'Europa und Nach-Europa', as well as various other fragments to which I refer in the following paragraphs.
[16] See on this especially Patočka, *Plato and Europe*, 71ff. On Patočka's idea of the care for the soul, also in relation with the Europe concept, see in particular Gasché, *Europe, or the Infinite Task*, part III. On the role that Patočka's concept of soul can acquire in the context of political dissidence, see Forti, 'The Soul as Site of Dissidence'.

deny, but rather presupposes, the existence of Europe.[17] Patočka also tackles this same issue in the *Heretical Essays,* with regard to the decadence to which the technological civilisation appears to be doomed. In the fifth essay, whose bond with the texts on post-Europe is clear, Patočka clarifies how this decadence does not imply any simple ending; for modern civilisation being decadent does not necessarily entail being close to extinction. On the contrary, a peculiar characteristic of this civilisation is its capacity to last, despite its inner conflicts, which are essentially due to the failure of its unifying political project. Moreover, this same consideration can be detected already in 'Supercivilisation and its Inner Conflict', which was written twenty years prior to the *Heretical Essays*; the conflictual, decadent civilisation succeeds indeed in surviving, not by resolving, but perpetuating its contradictions. The result is an alienated and sclerotised society, plunged into a sort of limbo that has resulted from the collapse of political ideologies, with no chance to rebuild a positive idea of the world.[18] Post-European humans move entirely within this field, which is marked by an existential inauthenticity, for which they risk losing any active role in the surrounding world, becoming passive spectators of civilisation's malfunction, without any change to give it a new kick-start.

In light of what we have seen thus far, a fundamental ambiguity can be retraced in Patočka's understanding of post-Europe. Whilst on the one hand the post-European condition is indeed characterised by the above-described static situation, in which humankind has to face the setback of European political projects, on the other hand, the rise of a 'post-European perspective', from within this problematic condition, could determine for Patočka a new beginning. Developing a post-European perspective does not simply mean overcoming Europe's sclerotised condition, but rather contesting and contrasting from the inside the existential inauthenticity that this condition has caused. As Patočka noted in the fifth heretical essay, human beings have to 'alienate from this alienation' and to rediscover their active role in the world. The solution is not therefore an exit from the world but consists rather in shaping a more responsible perspective on it.

> The true 'perspective' is one of *nonequivalence* for which there is a fundamental difference between the responsibility which *bears* and 'exposes itself' on the one hand and avoidance and escape on the other. Thus the reality of human life does not allow a perspective from without, the perspective of a 'disinterested observer'.[19]

---

[17] See Patočka, '[La genèse et la catastrophe de l'Europe]', 272. English translation forthcoming in Meacham and Tava, *Thinking after Europe*.
[18] See more on this in Tava, 'Lifeworld, Civilisation System'.
[19] Patočka, *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, 98. My italics.

The capacity to restore this fundamental 'nonequivalence', an element of discontinuity in the midst of the paralysis in which reality languishes, is precisely what the borderline condition of the post-European subject makes possible. It is indeed by virtue of their peculiar position – within reality but also detached from it – that these individuals can look back at their lasting past, Europe, questioning and judging it and revealing its contrasts and tragedies. Only in this way, can humans again become historical beings and break the vicious cycle into which the technological age has thrust them. This possibility emerges in the last words of the fifth essay, when Patočka argues that the only way to face the decline of civilisation consists in asking '[...] whether historical humans are still willing to own up to history',[20] namely to responsibly address historical conflicts and the problem, which '[...] may not be resolved, it must be preserved as a problem'.[21] Once again, we see how, according to Patočka, Europe's collapse finds in post-Europe a way to become an opportunity for humankind, as long as humans are ready to bear the full burden of this collapse. Owning up to European history fundamentally means acknowledging Europe's guilt towards the rest of the world and accepting the consequences of this guilt: decline, marginalisation, social and political conflict. This acknowledgement is the precondition of any new attempt to re-found a European political community.

3. Sighting towards History

As we have seen, through the idea of post-Europe, Patočka further develops his way of looking at and thinking about history and its problems. What really changes in this perspective is the viewpoint from which Europe is addressed. By assuming the detached perspective of the 'post-', which involves questioning the past from the complex 'beyond-perspective' that characterises our present, it becomes possible to delineate a fundamental distinction. In light of this perspective, Europe is considered on the one hand the political structure that aims at achieving a perfectly rationalised political power. On the other hand, Europe is rather understood as a cultural and spiritual space that essentially overcomes any specific political task. As Patočka points out at the end of 'Die Epochen der Geschichte', in order to rediscover history's complex traits, a 'historical reflection on history' must be engendered.[22] This is, according to Patočka, the only way to conceive life beyond its purely biological level, to which the

---

[20] Ibid., 118. (Translation partially changed on the basis of the original Czech text).
[21] Ibid.
[22] Patočka, 'Das Geschichtsschema', 203. ('The historical reflection on history [*geschichtliche Besinnung auf Geschichte*] has become very rare').

present, 'planetary' age tends to reduce it.[23]   A deeper and more complex understanding of human existence that is exemplified by the condition of post-European humanity must thus be rediscovered.

This point is also recalled in 'Europe and post-Europe', where Patočka starts his analysis by recollecting Husserl's critique of the objectivist knowledge fostered by European sciences. According to this critique, since early modernity European humanity has progressively lost its interest in truth – that is in what actually exists and makes sense – and has rather opted for mere effectiveness of knowledge.[24] Rediscovering European *logos*, that is its authentic rationality, means returning to a practical orientation of knowledge, i.e. to a knowledge understood not as an abstract combination of notions, but as a responsible formation of the self. According to Patočka, this knowledge takes the form of a 'historical insight' (*geschichtliche Einsicht*)[25] into the events and catastrophes which have marked the development of European history. This insight does not correspond to a simple knowledge of facts, but is rather a look addressed to the moral relations that inhere in the historical events and which allow human beings to distinguish between success and decline, between what makes freedom possible and what prevents it. From this point of view, which necessarily entails the borderline position that we have already encountered, historical catastrophes, whose scars are visible in the post-European era, are not comprehended as ultimate defeats, but rather as events that have the power to positively shatter reality, and break its crystallisation. Concretely, sighting towards history entails for Patočka looking back and gathering all the elements that characterise human history and pre-history at a higher level. Dealing with myth, the birth of language and the human relationship to mortality, Patočka shows in 'Europe and post-Europe' what this post-European perspective involves – overcoming the flatness of the present and the limits of the immediate, looking at its hidden foundation.[26] From this new perspective, philosophy takes the shape of a call to question. The mistake of European knowledge involves the belief that thinking means defining. On the contrary, according to Patočka, thinking is the action by virtue of which humans come to possess themselves, realising all their potentialities. What Patočka has

---

[23] On the relevance of this biologic element in Patočka's reflection, see Meacham, 'Supercivilisation and Biologism'.

[24] This point has been thoroughly addressed by Kenneth Knies in his contribution to this Issue, where he pointed out that, according to Husserl, European humanity, instead of using science as a tool to overcome its intellectual naiveté, received from it only worldly 'prosperity'.

[25] Patočka, 'Europa und Nach-Europa', 230.

[26] All the mentioned topics, which are recalled in 'Europe and post-Europe', constitute *leitmotivs* in Patočka's work. The topic of myth and religion in Patočka has been addressed, for example, by Ludger Hagedorn, in 'Beyond Myth and Eternity: On Religion in Patočka's Thought'. On Patočka's reflection on language, see Jervolino, 'Reading Patočka, in Search for a Philosophy of translation'. With regard to mortality and death, Derrida's attempt to tackle Patočka's understanding of this problem still deserves careful attention. See Derrida, *The Gift of Death*.   .

in mind while drawing this new paradigm of knowledge is the Socratic lesson.[27] In light of this conception, Socrates' knowledge of not-knowing takes the form of an open enquiry that must lead humanity to this new post-European field, allowing it to look back at its past as well as to imagine a possible future.

The existential position that Patočka has tried to sketch here is anything but stable and peaceful. On the contrary, realising this enquiry entails recognising the conflicts that profoundly subtend reality, the tensions that inhabit it and therefore rejecting any attempt to consider reality as something clear and univocal, aiming to govern it more easily. The hope for a new form of political community, which deviates from the collapse of twentieth-century political dreams, relies on the human capability of recognising the importance of this element of shaking and conflict which constitutes European history's most distinctive character. Establishing a concrete dominion over reality or even merely adapting to the rules that someone else has set does not constitute a sufficient condition for comprehending reality. On the contrary, according to Patočka, this comprehension can actually emerge not through a movement of domination but rather through an active opposition against any attempt to violently control reality and to conceal its authentic traits. In order to engender this opposition, which corresponds to the ultimate outcome of a post-European insightful position, a particular depth has to be discovered within reality; it is a deeper level which is invisible on the surface of everyday life and which humans learn to identify only as long as they start moving '[...] against the stream and the general attitude of reality', and not going along with its natural course.[28] In order to understand the meaning of this opposition, analysing what the position of the post-European individual within society consists in will be necessary.

4. Equality and Detachment

In light of what has emerged so far, we see how the borderline perspective of the post-European human for Patočka is essentially related to a rising element of conflict and opposition. Envisioning history from this 'post-' allows one to raise a retrospective look (i.e. an insight into history) that shatters the homogeneity of European tradition. This idea of a conflicting attitude, which develops as a counter

---

[27] The figure of Socrates often recurs in Patočka from the 1940s, and acquires a remarkable role especially in his 1950s writings on the idea of 'negative Platonism'. On this, see Patočka, 'Negative Platonism'. About the meaning of Socrates in Patočka's reflection, see Forti, *The New Demons*, 267ff.

[28] Patočka, 'Europa und Nach-Europa', 282.

current within reality, is a recurrent topic in Patočka's work.[29] The existential characterisation that this attitude entails clearly emerges in various drafts and fragments from the 1970s that appeared in *samizdat* only after Patočka's death and that are closely related to the post-Europe concept. In one of these texts, which consists of a series of addenda to 'The Scheme of History', Patočka gives a further explanation of his idea of a 'historical insight', clarifying what distinguishes this kind of 'insight' for him from any other common way of seeing.[30] Envisioning history means for Patočka first and foremost facing the problem of the historical manifestation of human freedom, by means of an analysis of the fields in which this manifestation occurs—politics and philosophy. Conceiving these two domains as essentially bound to freedom enables us to re-evaluate their authentic function, which consists in striving to overturn (respectively in a practical and in a theoretical way) the decline that grips the present.

What emerges from this conception is a strong link between history and freedom; indeed, there seems to be neither history nor historical insight without the human historical struggle for a higher level of freedom. Similarly, there is no space in this scheme for any idea of freedom which settles outside of history, beyond the concrete existence and experience of individuals who attempt to become free. What eventually results from this attempt by free individuals to take a stance in history is the authentic domain of the 'political', understood in its original sense, which refers back to the Greek *polis*, namely to that freely established community in which humans can show who they really are. In defining this alternative way of thinking about the 'political', Patočka refers to Arendt's discourse on the idea of '*polis*' in *The Human Condition*: '[The *polis*] is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be'.[31] This organisation corresponds for Patočka to a fundamental being-with (*Mitsein*), which is not, however, understood in a Heidegerrian sense, that is ontologically, as an a priori transcendental condition of human existence,[32] but rather historically, as the authentic political dimension of humankind. In this sense, human being-with can truly emerge only in a condition of 'equality' between people: equality which is not founded on any external higher principle (equal in front of nature, law, God), but exclusively on the condition of being free that the members of this

---

[29] This element emerges in particular in the late 1960s, in correspondence with the rise of the reform movements that led up to the Prague Spring. See, for example, Patočka, 'Inteligence a opozice' [Intellectuals and the Opposition]. An English translation is forthcoming in Meacham and Tava, *Thinking after Europe: Jan Patočka and Politics*.
[30] Patočka, 'Fünf Bruchstücke zum Geschichtsschema'. A French translation by Erika Abrams of this and other cited fragments is available in Patočka, *L'Europe et après*.
[31] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 198.
[32] See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 107ff.

political community equally share. This kind of equality, which Patočka compares to Hegel's idea of mutual 'recognition' (*Anerkennung*),[33] is the opposite of the 'equality' which supercivilisation also strives to accomplish, not through an active and dialectical process of recognition between community members, but rather — as we have already seen — through a flattening process which tends to eliminate every difference between people in order to reach a complete social cohesion (*ut omnes unum sind*). The equality that Patočka has in mind here, as possible fundament of a new political community in a post-European era, is an equality that, far from erasing the natural distinctions between individuals, allows them to recognise themselves as equals, as well as to detach themselves from one another, and from society in general, any time this society seems to jeopardise their free and autonomous position. Authentic 'equality' is precisely a kind of social bond that does not prevent, but rather makes this 'detachment' possible: 'Only from this perspective of equality and on its ground can the detachment arise that urges each individual to show what he really is, as an active subject, i.e. what he is able to accomplish'.[34] This second element of detachment seems to be for Patočka as important as that of equality in framing post-European community. The individuals, who recognise themselves in this community as equals and yet detached actors, will have to be capable of balancing these two aspects of their existence. Whilst in fact, on the one hand, authentic equality is what makes this detachment possible, on the other, only by detaching themselves from the reality in which they live can the individuals preserve their 'equality in freedom'.

> Such a detachment [*Abständigkeit*] must strive for the protection of equality in freedom. It cannot resort to the will to power as a fundamental parameter. Its authentic form emerges beyond conscience's solitary reflection, right in the middle of public action and under its light. Authentic [detachment] is possible however only by means of an outstanding engagement [*Einsatz*] with one's own life. The political sphere can be managed only by such humans who through other political humans are ready for this extreme engagement.[35]

From this reflection, an idea of the 'political' emerges, which only the post-European individual seems

---

[33] The locus classicus for Hegel's thinking about recognition is, of course, the Master-Slave dialectic in the *Phenomenology of Mind*, which Patočka translated into Czech in 1960. See Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 229ff. On the desire of and fight for recognition in Hegel, see Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 7ff. On the importance of Kojève's interpretation for Patočka, see Paparusso, 'The End of History and After'.
[34] Patočka, 'Fünf Bruchstücke zum Geschichtsschema', 347.
[35] Ibidem.

to be able to successfully engender. This figure of an alternative political figure is often addressed by Patočka in his late output. In particular, in a private seminar from the mid-1970s, he defined this figure as a 'spiritual person', where the word 'spiritual' (*duchovní*) is deprived of any religious or spiritualistic content, and is rather referred to as human intellect and mind (*duch*), as the fundamental quality to which this person must resort, in order to maintain an independent position in the political sphere. A new element that emerges here is the difficulty that maintaining this position entails. Patočka underscores how brave this position is and also points out that, in order to fully engender it, a fearless sacrifice is needed: 'The spiritual person, who is capable of sacrifice, who is capable of seeing its significance and meaning [...] *cannot* be afraid'. It is in this ability to take a risk and expose oneself that Patočka detects a new meaning of 'political': 'The spiritual person is not of course a politician and is not political in the usual sense of this word. He is not a party to the dispute that rules this world – but he is political in yet a different way, obviously, and he cannot be apolitical, because he throws into the face of this society and of everything that he finds around himself the non-evidence of reality'.[36]

This spiritual person seems hence to summarise the fundamental aspect that we have encountered while dealing with the post-European perspective: directly looking at the hidden conflicts that subtend reality, showing their seriousness, being responsible for them and for their historical outcomes.

5. Open Souls

There are still some elements in the post-European existential position that need further analysis: the significance of the idea of 'soul' in this reconstruction, and the aspect of 'courage' that characterises this human figure. The difficulty of determining this position is acknowledged by Patočka, who declared his dissatisfaction with the term 'spiritual person' to describe the peculiar character he had in mind.[37] In some other texts focused on the problem of post-Europe, Patočka referred to another term, 'open souls' [*offene Seelen*], in order to describe the individuals who are able to engender this difficult position.[38]

This is not the first time the philosopher used this phrase, which stems from Henri Bergson's thought.[39] According to Bergson, there are two fundamental attitudes in human morality. The first is the attitude of the individual who is 'part and parcel of society', and who lives like a cell: at the same

---

[36] Patočka, 'The Spiritual Person and the Intellectual', 63. I have partially changed the English translation here, on the basis of the original Czech text; see Patočka, *Péče o duši III*, 366.
[37] See Patočka, 'The Spiritual Person and the Intellectual'.
[38] See Patočka, 'Dokončení eseje Die nacheuropäische Epoche und ihre geistigen Probleme'; 'Was Europa ist...'.
[39] See Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 34. Patočka has already referred to the idea of 'open soul' in the 1960s, while dealing with the figure of Comenius. See Patočka, 'Comenius und die offene Seele'.

time, for herself and for the organism to which she belongs.[40] This attitude is essentially grounded on the human survival instinct, from which, according to Bergson, moral obligation stems, and whose precondition consists in the fact that individual and society are not distinct or distinguishable: 'This is what enables us to say that the attitude to which [this instinct] corresponds is that of an individual and of a community concentrated on themselves. At once individual and social, the soul here moves round in a circle. It is closed'.[41] An affinity between Bergson's argument and Patočka's above-mentioned discourse on equality and detachment can be easily noticed. Whilst indeed 'closed soul' characterises individuals who are incapable of distinguishing their personal positions from the social framing; on the other hand, the fundamental trait of 'open souls' consists for both Bergson and Patočka in their capacity to detach themselves from society, taking a step back from the reality that surrounds them and opening to what is other than themselves.

Although both philosophers agree upon this first definition of 'open soul', the remainder of Bergson's argument does not fully satisfy Patočka. For Bergson, the open soul is the one who choses love instead of instinct. Not a kind of love which can be limited to a specific object, but a love for humanity. By means of this unlimited love the individual can engender that 'process of expansion of the self' in which the passage from the first to the second attitude takes place. By recovering Bergson's concept of 'open soul', in the context of his reflection on post-Europe, Patočka has another fundamental target, which consists in developing the philosophical project started by Husserl, whose fundamental aim was realising a re-orientation and deeper foundation of human subjectivity, beyond the 'addiction to things' that affected modern European humanity.[42] To this task, Bergson's attempt constitutes for Patočka a step forward, as it succeeds in rejecting the absolute character of the subject as the world's unique producer, as once depicted in positivism. Yet this attempt is still insufficient, as is Scheler's theory of spiritual acts (inspired by Bergson) and Sartre's negative conception of the human subject,[43] since they are all incapable of understanding the otherness toward which the soul tends, while becoming 'open', in all its radicality: 'They mostly underestimate human reliance on others, on what is not ourselves [*Nicht-Eineges*]'.[44]

This 'reliance on others' is not something that only superficially concerns the subject; on the contrary, it becomes a peculiar trait of post-European individual, determining her fundamental finitude.

---

[40] Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 26.
[41] Ibid., 27.
[42] See on this again Novotný, 'Europe, Post-Europe and Eurocentrism'.
[43] See in particular Scheler, *The Human Place in the Cosmos*; Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*.
[44] Patočka, 'Dokončení eseje Die nacheuropäische Epoche und ihre geistigen Probleme', 379. In this respect, Patočka's position seems to be much closer that of Levinas, and to Levinas' conception of 'Other'. See Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*.

Experiencing this otherness, the existence of something that overcomes our limited situation, we become aware of our detached existence, of the fallacy of our pretension to completely frame the world, as though it was put at our own disposal. Detaching the subject from any simply-given objectivity, it becomes possible to think of a new subject. In other words, only by comprehending this subject from its position of finitude and marginality will it become possible to recognise its authentic depth, understanding it as an 'open soul'. For this reason, Patočka can argue that this finitude is at the same time the 'insurmountable lack' (*unüberwindliche Armut*) and the 'sole possession' (*alleinige Besitz*) of this subject;[45] it constitutes the only way to face the post-European condition, appraising its historical complexity beyond the vain desires of modern philosophy and politics to seize the world as a present and given totality. The only way to approach reality consists henceforth in an 'active opening' from the marginal situation of our souls, an action which constitutes at once their weakness and their force. The essence of this soul consists actually in 'being out of itself' (*Aussersichsein*); its authentic alienation therefore takes place, paradoxically, when it is 'closed in itself', when it overlooks its opening, its constitutive imbalance. Trying to objectively determine this kind of subjectivity, on the basis of its measurable experiences, involves the death of the 'open soul' and the rise of a 'closed soul', which it is for Patčka, as it is for Bergson irremediably flattened to its own social stratum.

The fact that Patočka often goes back, in these texts, to this topic, always using the same terms, demonstrates the importance he attributes to it. Actually, if the main problem that the post-European age has to face, after the loss of any idea of philosophical and political centrality, is an uncontrolled horizontal expansion, that tends to unfold the entire reality on a flattened level, conceiving the individual as an open soul can supply an inner deepening which may interrupt this process, reintroducing in reality its authentic depth, an element of sudden discontinuity.

The problem here consists in understanding how this subject can bear this difficult existential position, essentially unbalanced, without falling apart; how these individuals can hold onto their everyday living, maintaining a specific ethical behaviour, albeit their contact with the otherness compels them to be constantly out of themselves. In his texts on post-Europe, Patočka has only shed a light on this problem, which remains inevitably open.

6. The Brave Struggle

---

[45] Patočka, 'Dokončení eseje Die nacheuropäische Epoche und ihre geistigen Probleme', 380.

Instead of directly answering the question whether and how post-European individuals can survive and even prosper despite the constitutive unbalance that characterises their position in history and society, what I think is worth analysing is rather the significance that this unstable position can acquire, in light of today's Europe and of the political and financial crisis that characterises the current European scenario.

Although the crisis that Europe is currently facing is different from the one that Patočka had in mind when he first addressed the issue of European history and its conflicts, the reaction of European political actors and institutions to these two different crises show some similarities. The 'addiction to things', which Patočka had already denounced in the 1970s as one of Europe's problematic traits as well as the tendency to close up human 'souls', excluding from them any element of difference and otherness, seems to re-emerge in today's reiterated attempts to conceive of Europe as a fortress, i.e. as a closed, self-defending universe rather than as a complex structure which from its very foundation essentially includes within itself diversities and contradictions.[46] In this sense, the phenomenon of immigration, with all its tragic outcomes, manifests a paradoxical situation. Whilst within European countries it seems to be more and more difficult to share a common idea of Europe, with the consequent risk of building protective walls around a bare emptiness, a vacuum deprived of any substantial trait, it also seems, on the other hand, that a strong idea of Europe could only emerge from outside the European borders, on the initiative of people who are ready to jeopardise their own lives, just to access a universe that is making every effort to keep them out.[47]

In light of this framework, what has resulted is the ambiguity and the inadequacy of the term 'fortress' when applied to Europe. What we mean by Europe is something more complex, something that can be conceived neither as a fully closed realm nor as a wide-open space. Contemporary philosophy has often tried to handle this complexity. The Italian philosopher and politician Massimo Cacciari, in a close confrontation with Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe, referred to Europe not as a continent, but as an 'archipelago', i.e. as something which is necessarily plural, finding its authentic

---

[46] The phrase 'Fortress Europe' was probably used for the first time during the Second World War, as a propaganda term, by both the Royal Air Force and the Nazi propaganda. See for example Blood, *Hitler's bandit hunters the SS and the Nazi occupation of Europe*, 99-100. More recently it became a slogan to which the Freedom Party of Austria and Alexis Tsipras referred, meaning by it respectively something to build and to dismantle.

[47] The dynamics of exclusion and rejection in the ongoing immigration crisis in Europe, as well as a possible way to resist these dynamics, are analysed in Jansen, Celikates and de Bloois, *The Irregularizatin of Migration in Contemporary Europe*. About immigration politics, and the difficulties encountered by liberal democracies in handling this issue, see Hampshire, *The Politics of Immigration*.

unity precisely in this condition of plurality.[48] In a recent article, Cacciari has recovered this topic, originally discussed in the 1990s, showing how global migration flows have revealed once more the impossibility of thinking of Europe as a European nation-state, with clear-cut borders, and the necessity of rediscovering the true dimension of Europe, which is not mere 'container', but rather an extreme limit, a threshold which time after time is defined and re-defined by the encounter with one's other, that is with the stranger.[49] Rejecting Europe's constitutive inclination toward what is other involves a logic of pure identity, according to which Europe corresponds to a centralised area, isolated from the interplay of differences, which regulates its internal structure. In Patočka's words, this also means rejecting the balance of equality and detachment which is at the basis of a post-European perspective.

The only possible answer to this trend would consist in giving up all the debates about European identity and unity, highlighting on the contrary precisely the differences that make Europe what it is: a complex creature whose essence corresponds to its same inner heterogeneity.[50] The difficulty in defining it, even geographically, reveals the fundamental permeability of this region, that is, its essentially dynamic character. The main challenge consists here in determining what kind of political arrangement would be capable of organising this space, in respect to its complexity. In other words, it should be asked whether the task of building an 'inclusive community' can be seen as a valid alternative to the idea of a fortress.[51]

Defining a community as 'inclusive' can actually sound quite pleonastic. How could a community ever be 'exclusive', rigidly closed on itself, rejecting the other? The same idea of 'common', as a space of 'being-with', according to the practical and historical definition given to it by Patočka,[52] implies this character of inclusiveness. As we have seen, for Patočka the possibility of being-with, which is at the basis of any political project, rests on the capacity of the members of a community to usefully regulate both equality and detachment, inclusion and exclusion, between themselves and the political scenario in which they operate. Already in the 1950s, many years before his meditations on post-Europe, Patočka identified the greatest danger for a European political project in the effort to transform a

---

[48] See Cacciari, *L'arcipelago*. See also *Géophilosophie de l'Europe: Penser l'Europe à ses frontières*, with contributions on the same topic by Nancy, Lacoue-Labarthe, and others.

[49] See Cacciari, 'Europe or Philosophy'. On the impossibility of thinking of Europe's 'borders', see also Balibar, 'Borderland Europe and the Challenge of Migration'. About the role of the 'Stranger', in the Platonic sense of the word, in defining Europe, see Rodolphe Gasché's contribution to this Issue.

[50] On Europe's complexity, also with reference to Patočka's position, see Morin, *Penser l'Europe*. About the necessity to reject any traditional idea of identity with regard to Europe, see Balibar, *We, the People of Europe*; 'Out of the Interregnum'.

[51] The juxtaposition between 'fortress Europe' and 'inclusive community' was proposed for example by Tsipras during his 2014 European election campaign.

[52] Nancy also refers in a similar way to the idea of 'being-with', referring both to Heidegger and Levinas. See Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, 103-5.

'comm-unity' (i.e. an ensemble of alterities who spontaneously decide to coexist) into a 'unity'. The consequence of the elimination of any element of alterity corresponds precisely to that 'addiction to things' that we have already encountered. This same phenomenon was noticed already in the 1940s by María Zabrano, who dealt with an 'atrocious enchaining to mere facts', in order to describe the agony of Europe in the twentieth century. But Europe is also something more that this atrocious condition; its recalcitrance in the face of attempts at univocal definition and its complex character, allow Europe and the subjects who inhabit it to take a distance from this flattened structure, even in the harshest situation. 'The genius of Europe — says Zambrano — is its capacity to detach itself from reality'.[53] The 'agony of Europe' consists in the struggle of the individual to maintain the last hint of this detachment, even in the most devastating condition. In light of this situation, Patočka's attempt to think from a detached post-European perspective can be seen as an attempt to preserve Europe's original meaning and framing, even in a situation of political crisis. As he clarified in 'Europe and post-Europe', the European philosophical and political project – exemplified by the idea of '*ut omnes unum sind*' – has already come to an end. Nonetheless, as we have seen, the acknowledgment of the failure of this project does not entail a simple overcoming of Europe. On the contrary, the subject who engenders this post-European perspective must be capable of looking back on European history, recognising the 'essential relationship' that bonds the present to the past. The only way to measure the depth of the abyss which divides Europe from its 'post-', seems to consist then in the desperate attempt to fill it, trying to comprehend Europe's complex meaning, envisioning its history. This is what Patočka has in mind, when he deals with the necessity to realise a 'historical insight' into Europe.

What does this historical insight entails for the life of the individual who engenders it? According to Patočka, this perspective requires openly questioning what a good life is; surely not a mere existence, whose only task would consist in satisfying immediate needs, but rather a life in which the subject decides '[…] to bravely behave against the general misery, to struggle-in-the-trenches', aiming to invert the 'force of gravity' that affects the collectivity and determines its flatness. This idea of 'courage', of brave struggle, often recurs in these pages: 'The fundamental precondition of the "being-good" is the courage, the possibility and the will to brave a danger, which is essentially a danger of life'.[54] This courageous behaviour, however, also hides a risk, if the subjects who engender it do not have a clear acknowledgement of the gravity of their situation. The post-European individual, who is willing to engage in this brave struggle, is not comparable to the figure of titanic heroes who, because

---

[53] Zambrano, *La agonía de Europa*.
[54] ('Die Grundvoraussetzung des "Gutsein" ist der Mut, die Möglichkeit und der Wille, der Gefahr zu trotzen, welche im Wesen Lebensgefahr ist', 'Europa und Nach-Europa', 27).

of the exceptional nature of their agency, can simply detach themselves from their world experience. In doing so, the moral action would deflate to a sort of pseudo-heroism. The dangerous trait, on the contrary consists in the capacity of such individuals to adopt a distance from reality, in virtue of the 'post-' that characterises their position, but always maintaining their fundamental insight into the world, which does not allow them to easily abandon it. In other words, in order to fulfil this difficult existential position, the individual is called upon to jump the borders of fortress Europe ceaselessly, living on a threshold, dismantling any trivial division.

What kind of impact can this brave exposition of the post-European individual have, if we conceive of it not only as an individual perspective, but also as the fundament of a renewed community? Roughly speaking, a community built on this base should be a community ready to give up the same idea of identity, conceived as a closed, impermeable unity, unable to face the conflicts that characterise any intersubjective space. Basically we should start understanding Europe not as an idea but rather as a clash of ideas;[55] as a community whose ground is not an exclusionary identity, but rather a comprehensive solidarity. This kind of new community should be capable of envisioning the otherness to which it essentially opens, without any intention of reducing it to any sort of unity; it would be essentially influenced by an 'active tension', as Patočka also clarifies in his essay about post-Europe, as our soul is influenced by its *thumos*, which according to Plato corresponds to its median part, 'the space of the conflict in ourselves', the component that aggressively defends our same authenticity, not closing ourselves up, but, on the contrary, engaging us in a dangerous and courageous movement toward the other, through an overcoming of our single and limited existence.[56]

As Patočka points out, applying the idea of *thumos* to a communitarian space involves a harsh contradiction. How could something be, at the same time, an element of safeguard and an element of division? An element of defence and an element of conflict? The essence of this new community, according to Patočka, consists in maintaining both these elements, facing the contradiction they entail, as well as being capable of concealing intellectual distance and courageous involvement, detachment and responsibility. Adopting this new perspective would mean casting new light on the most problematic phenomena of the present European condition – immigration, movements of protest and dissidence, reviving nationalisms, anti-politics – with the intention of finding new interpretative tools

---

[55] See on this Anya Topolski's response to Balibar's 'Out of the Interregnum'. Topolski, 'From the idea of Europe to a Europe of ideas'.

[56] See Patočka, 'Europa und nach-Europa', 277ff. On Plato's idea of *thumos*, see in particular Tarnopolsky, '*Thumos* and Rationality in Plato's Republic'; Kraugerud, '"Essentially Social"? A Discussion of the Spirited Part of the Soul in Plato'.

that could allow us to handle these questions not despite, but because of, their complexity.

Bibliography

Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1957.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1967.

Árnason, Johan P. *Civilizations in Dispute*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1993.

Balibar, Étienne. 'Borderland Europe and the Challenge of Migration'. 8th September 2015. https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/etienne-balibar/borderland-europe-and-challenge-of-migration.

Balibar, Étienne. 'Out of the Interregnum'. 16th May 2013. https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/etienne-balibar/out-of-interregnum.

Balibar, Étienne. *We, the People of Europe*. Trans. James Swenson. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Bergson, Henri. *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. Trans. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton. London: Macmillan, 1935.

Blood, Philip W. *Hitler's Bandit Hunters: The SS and the Nazi Occupation of Europe*. Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2006.

Cacciari, Massimo. *L'arcipelago*. Adelphi: Milano, 1997.

Cacciari, Massimo. 'Europe or Philosophy'. *Phenomenology and Mind* 8 (2015): 138-45.

Derrida, Jacques. *The Gift of Death*. Trans. David Wills. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Dodd, James. *Violence and Phenomenology*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Forti, Simona. *The New Demons*. Trans. Zakiya Hanafi. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014.

Forti, Simona. 'The Soul as Site of Dissidence'. In Meacham and Tava, *Thinking after Europe*.

Garton Ash, Timothy. 'Does Central Europe Exist?'. In Schöpflin and Wood, *In Search of Central Europe*, ##-##.

Gasché, Rodolphe. *Europe, or the Infinite Task*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009.

Hagedorn, Ludger. 'Beyond Myth and Eternity: On Religion in Patočka's Thought'. In Ivan Chvatík and Erika Abrams, eds., *Jan Patočka and the Heritage of Phenomenology*, 245-261. Dondrecht: Springer, 2011.

Hagedorn, Ludger. 'Europe's 20th Century: History of Wars and War as History'. In Meacham and Tava, *Thinking after Europe*.

Hampshire, James. *The Politics of Immigration: Contradictions of the Liberal State*. Cambridge: Polity, 2013.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Trans. J.B. Baillie. London: Allen & Unwin 1955.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper, 1962.

Homolka, Jakub. 'The Problem of Meaning in the Rational (Super)Civilisation: Patočka's interpretation of modernity after World War II'. In Lubica Učník, Ivan Chvatík, Anita Williams,

eds., *Asubjective Phenomenology: Jan Patočka's Project in the Broader Context of His Work*, 167-86. Nordhausen: Traugott Bautz.

Jansen, Yolande, Robin Celikates and Joost de Bloois, eds. *The Irregularizatin of Migration in Contemporary Europe*. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

Jervolino, Domenico. 'Reading Patočka, in Search for a Philosophy of translation'. In Ivan Chvatík and Erika Abrams, eds., *Jan Patočka and the Heritage of Phenomenology*, 121-33. Dondrecht: Springer.

Kojève, Alexandre. *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*. Ed. Allan Bloom, trans. James H. Nichols. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1969.

Kraugerud, Hanne Andrea. '"Essentially Social"? A Discussion of the Spirited Part of the Soul in Plato'. *European Journal of Philosophy* 18, no. 4 (2009): 481-494.

Lau, Kwok-Ying. 'Jan Patočka: Critical Consciousness and Non-Eurocentric Philosopher of the Phenomenological Movement'. *Studia Phaenomenologica* 7 (2007): 475-92.

Levinas, Emanuel. *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1969.

Meacham, Darian. 'Supercivilisation and Biologism'. In Meacham and Tava, *Thinking after Europe*.

Meacham, Darian and Francesco Tava, eds. *Thinking after Europe: Jan Patočka and Politics*. London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016 (forthcoming).

Mikkeli, Heikki. *Europe as an Idea and an Identity*. Ed. Jo Campling. New York: Pelgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Morin, Edgar. *Penser l'Europe*. Paris: Gallimard, 1987.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Inoperative Community*. Ed. and trans. Peter Connor. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

Novotný, Karel. 'Europe, Post-Europe, and Eurocentrism'. In Meacham and Tava, *Thinking after Europe.*

Paparusso, Riccardo. 'The End of History and After: Rethinking Kojève and Patočka on the idea of Post-History'. In Meacham and Tava, *Thinking after Europe.*

Patočka, Jan. 'Comenius und die offene Seele'. In *Kunst und Zeit*, ed. Klaus Nellen a Ilja Šrubař, 175-90. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987.

Patočka, Jan. 'Dokončení eseje Die nacheuropäische Epoche und ihre geistigen Probleme'. In *Péče o duši*, vol. 3, 371-81. Prague: Archivní soubor (samizdat), 1988.

Patočka, Jan. 'Die Epochen der Geschichte (Skizze)'. In *Ketzerische Essais zur Philosophie der Geschichte und ergänzende Schriften*, ed. Klaus Nellen and Jiří Němec, 183-203. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1988.

Patočka, Jan. 'Europa und Nach-Europa. Die nacheuropäische Epoche und ihre geistigen Probleme'. In *Ketzerische Essais zur Philosophie der Geschichte und ergänzende Schriften*, ed. Klaus Nellen and Jiří Němec, 207-87. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1988.

Patočka, Jan. *L'Europe et après*. Ed. and trans. Erika Abrams. Paris: Verdier 2007.

Patočka, Jan. 'Fünf Bruchstücke zum Geschichtsschema'. In *Péče o duši,* vol. 3. *Soubor statí, přednášek a poznámek k problematice postavení člověka ve světě a v dějinách*, ed. Ivan Chvatík and Pavel Kouba, 343-53. Prague: Archivní soubor (samizdat), 1988.

Patočka, Jan. '[La genèse et la catastrophe de l'Europe]'. In *L'Europe et après*, 273-74.

Patočka, Jan. *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*. Ed. James Dodd, trans. Erazim Kohák. Chicago, IL: Open Court, 1996.

Patočka, Jan. 'Inteligence a opozice'. In *Češi I*, ed. Karel Palek and Ivan Chvatík, 233-49. Prague: Oikoymenh, 2006.

Patočka, Jan. 'Nadcivilizace a její vnitřní konflikt'. In *Péče o duši I*, ed. Ivan Chvatík and Pavel Kouba, 243-302. Prague: Oikoymenh, 2002.

Patočka, Jan. *Plato and Europe*. Trans. Petr Lom. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002.

Patočka, Jan. 'The Spiritual Person and the Intellectual'. In *Living in Problematicity*, ed. Eric Manton, 51-69. Prague: Oikoymenh, 2007.

Patočka, Jan. 'Was Europa ist...'. In *Péče o duši,* vol. 6. *Kacířské eseje o filosofii dějin a texty k Chartě 77*, ed. Ivan Chvatík and Pavel Kouba, 299-306. Prague: Archivní soubor (samizdat), 1988.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness*. Trans. Hazel E. Barnes. London: Routledge, 2001.

Scheler, Max. *The Human Place in the Cosmos*. Trans. Manfred S. Frings. Evanstone, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2009.

Schöpflin, George and Nancy Wood, eds. *In Search of Central Europe*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989.

Tarnopolsky, 'Thumos and Rationality in Plato's Republic'. *Global Discourse* 5, no. 2 (242-257): 2015.

Tava, Francesco. 'Lifeworld, Civilisation System'. *Horizons of Phenomenology* (2016: forthcoming).

Tava, Francesco. *The Risk of Freedom*. Trans. Jane Ledlie. London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015.

Topolski, Anya. 'From the idea of Europe to a Europe of ideas'. 24th May 2014. https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/anya-topolski/from-idea-of-europe-to-europe-of-ideas.

Various Authors. *Géophilosophie de l'Europe: Penser l'Europe à ses frontières: Strasbourg, 7-10 novembre 1992*. La Tour d'Aigues: Editions de l'Aube, 1993.

de Warren, Nicolas. 'Homecoming. Jan Patočka's Reflections on the First World War'. In Michael Staudigl, ed., *Phenomenologies of Violence*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Zambrano, María. *La agonía de Europa*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana 1945.