

The initiation story says: *On a beach in Sidon a bull was aping a lover's coo. It was Zeus. He shuddered, the way he did when a gadfly got him. But this time it was a sweet shuddering. Eros was lifting a girl onto his back: Europa. Then the white beast dived into the sea, his majestic body rising just far enough above the water to keep the girl from getting wet. There were plenty of witnesses.*¹ Just as every mythical tale so this one too has a number of variants; this is the reason why Roberto Callasso tells it in several ways, but the most essential appears in the above-cited fragment. This expressive image leaves an imprint upon memory.

From the catalogue of symbolic figures comprising a graphic abbreviation of Europe, the greatest career, as is known, was made in Western imagination by the vision of a comely girl seduced and raped by a virile bull. The narrative base for this image was provided by Greek mythology. Western iconography is full of assorted versions of the “rape of Europe” and likenesses of a young woman forcefully abducted by a zoomorphic deity. True, this image is revived in contemporary fine arts or political publicistics, but its power seems to have deteriorated somewhat. Texts relating to European identity, its boundaries and inner divisions sometimes mention: “raped Europe”, but this figure is clearly treated metaphorically, a discernible signal of mental distance towards a once living image.² In turn, in the visual arts the topic of raped Europe appears relatively more often, albeit one may readily notice that in this particular case we are dealing with individual statements, many of which are proposed in ironic travesties that disclose a certain distance, while the range of their impact is narrow. Apparently, in collective imagination this symbolic image “giving food for thought” has lost the ability to describe and express contents that involve us.

Nature, as is widely known, does not tolerate a vacuum. The same holds true for culture. If the likeness of Europe as an alluring woman and a victim of perfidious rape is slowly fading and receding into an old curiosities shop, then in accordance with the above-mentioned rule some other image should take its place. Does there exist today a vital and impressive symbolic likeness in which contemporary European sensitivity could recognise itself? Are we capable of discovering a metaphorical expression that would cumulate European experience in such an ingenious way? Do such metaphors still appear in the contemporary discourse? After carrying out a source survey (admittedly fragmentary) I would like to propose two candidates that in my opinion would have a great chance to assume the position vacant for some time. They are the words-images: “home” and “spirit”. Both possess enormous cultural rank and a rich metaphorical-symbolical potential.³ It still has to be tested whether the

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slogans: “House of Europe home” and “Europe-soul” are promising from the cognitive point of view.

Consequently, take a closer look how the mirrors of those two capacious metaphors reflect a portrait of contemporary Europe, and if so, then what sort of knowledge about its inhabitants they disclose. Yes - I use the word: knowledge. In the domain of science no one any longer questions the cognitive value of the metaphor. Actually, the metaphor is almost universally recognised as a useful albeit non-discursive instrument of cognition.⁴ Ortega y Gasset, one of the first spokesmen of the epistemological values of the metaphor wrote that it simply serves the process of bringing closer that, which shines mysteriously on the horizon of our intellectual capacities.⁵ This suggestion was confirmed several decades later by Ricoeur: *A metaphor is not an ornament of discourse. It has more than emotive value because it offers new information. A metaphor, in short, tells us something new about reality.*⁶ In other words, it sometimes makes it possible to better grasp that, which in the space of thought is barely sensed or only assumed. It embraces as if in a single flash that, which the conceptual discourse is not always capable of noticing, aptly naming, and describing.

If this is the case then it is worthwhile to immediately accentuate a fact of special importance for our analysis. Examples cited further in the text, in which the afore-mentioned metaphors fulfil a revealing function, are, apart from their serious intellectual contents, fascinating also because they do not passively continue existing semantics with which language associates by force of habit, but achieve their creative and enhancing reinterpretation. It so happens that the metaphorical mirror in which we would like to observe the essential features of Europe possesses a special property, namely, its registers chiefly dark colours, as we shall soon see. It is worth keeping in mind that this certainly peculiar mirror (it has to be proved whether it is actually “crooked”!) certainly does not lie and at most shows with great intensity the most vivid elements of

the reflected image. In other words, it undoubtedly refers to that, which really exists and is the living matter of actual history.

2.

It is probably not an overly innovative thesis to maintain that in the political publicistics of recent years or, more widely: in discursive space encompassing texts referring in particular to the present-day shape of Europe and its problems, the most frequent has been the figure of the Home. In the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall, upon the tide of the unification of Europe but also in the course of the still continuing expansion of the European Union by including new member states, political publicistics repeats *ad nauseam* phrases about the "common house of Europe", the construction of a "new house of Europe", a return to the "house of Europe", and so on, and so forth...

The metaphor of the European home is conspicuously present in the excellent book by Thérèse Delpech: *Savage Century: Back to Barbarism*, which should not come as a surprise but, and this is much more symptomatic, it appears in invariably dark hues. Delpech is a French politologist, director of strategic problems at Commissariat à l'énergie atomique, researcher at Centre d'études et de recherches internationales, and member of the Institute for Strategic Studies and RAND Europe Advisory Board. The list of her posts indicates clearly that her analyses and expert opinions are conspicuously pragmatic and directly connected with current political praxis. Even more interesting within this context is the fact that Delpech has also proved herself to be a sophisticated scholar interested in culture and specially sensitive to the value and power of the symbol. I accentuate those two sides of the rhetorical strategy applied by Delpech because her book is a rare and actually brilliant example of the productive unity of contradictions. Excellent familiarity with facts from the realm of political history is supplemented time and again by symbolic tropes. The author readily resorted to them, and this sort of hermeneutic praxis is always justified cognitively: Delpech is concerned with a reconstruction of the anatomy of European identity, with particular apprehension for the catastrophes suffered by the twentieth century. On the one hand, there are perceptive political realism, historical erudition, and harsh facts, and on the other hand - a sphere of the imagination and literary fiction. Here politics and art overlap, creating a curious mixture of events from most recent European history. The "real" is viewed from the perspective of the "unreal" and the two cast a light on each other. This blend of two orders produces the outlines of a convincing intellectual construction. The outstanding study also credibly connects two qualities rarely encountered

under a single book cover: analytical aloofness and emotional rage.

Another feature worthy of accentuation is the cognitive attitude demonstrated by Delpech, free of facile simplifications and ideological superstitions. Sober perception, so strong in this case, is not tantamount to a catastrophic vision of history. The French author did not for a single moment assume the pose of a demented contemporary Cassandra. She merely attempted – and did so with rare honesty – to take another look at the European Continent and its blood-stained twentieth-century plight. More, she did so not only due to historical motives, but chiefly in order to carefully follow the symptoms of impending future. In other words, we are not dealing with fortune-telling but with a thorough and careful analysis of the symptoms of that, which could take place in the future and more or less lucidly emerges on the horizon of the contemporary historical moment. Her comments are supposed to incline the readers to once again embark upon a thorough reflection about twentieth-century history, with particular concern for signs delineating the outlines of the possible future.

The metaphor of the Home appears in the reflections pursued by Delpech already in one of the initial chapters. We immediately become cast into a discourse that is far from emotionally lukewarm. It has to be said distinctly - the expression: "the house of Europe" does not resound with pride or excessive warmth:

*The history of the last century showed the ease with which historical transformations of unprecedented violence could follow without warning on the heels of the best of times. As in Greek tragedy, crime engendered crime in the house of Europe, which twice set the rest of the world ablaze. From the experience, lessons were drawn for the reconciliation of the European nations. But what is now at stake is Europe's capacity to assume international responsibilities in a deeply troubled world. And from that point of view, the internal lessons just mentioned are insufficient. The unprecedented historical eruption from which the entire twentieth century arose does not speak only of the madness of Europe and of national passions. It is evidence of a wider adventure concerning humanity as a whole: the sudden appearance of storms whose warning signs on the horizon we Europeans have too long pretended to ignore, storms no one can control once they have been unleashed. When such sudden acceleration of history occurs, it signals the defeat of political action, which can do nothing but run after political events until it is swallowed up by them. If Europe has any message to transmit to the world, it is truly this one.*⁷

In other words, together with Delpech's politological reflection we rapidly depart from positive connotations usually associated with the metaphor of the home.⁸ The "House of Europe" described by the author is certainly not a safe space. It is neither haven

nor a refuge or asylum for its residents. True, it is still a family home, but its foundations rest on unexpired crime. It is, first and foremost, a space full of risk, uncertainty, fear, and anxiety. This is a home encumbered with its dirty family history, which it is incapable of getting rid of and with which, in the opinion of some, it is impossible to battle. Finally, it is a place in which phantoms appear and which brings to mind the image of *the haunted house* with its exemplary realisations by Walpole (*The Castle of Otranto*), Poe (*The Fall of the House of Usher*), or Dickens (*The Haunted House*), so frequent in the English Gothic novel. This is a house full of the ghosts of the past returning at night. A house, which on the outside is imposing and noble but actually is in a state of advanced ruin. A house that conceals unresolved dark secrets.

In one of the subsequent paragraphs Delpech went on to expand this image of the European home. Once again she was assisted by literature, whose fictional products sometimes possess the amazing power of condensing historical experiences into a symbolic abbreviation. Together with successive close-ups the image of the “house of Europe” assumes a concrete form. Now, it becomes the familiar, gloomy castle from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, the Danish Elsinore, the castle haunted by the Ghost of Hamlet’s Father. Recall, however, that this is also space that turns into the scene of consecutive tragedies, set into motion as if by accident. More: the titular character becomes an extremely credible *porte parole* of the European spirit: apathetic, listless, and immersed in acedia. European mentality seeks its reflection in the soul of Hamlet: spacious, ambiguous, and a puzzle even for him:

If one has to define the twentieth century with a single word, Herzelend, the German for "sick at heart", would be the most accurate. It designates a form of melancholy and a debilitation of the emotional side of human nature. Twentieth-century man finds a natural companion in the most universal of tragic heroes, Prince Hamlet, whose paralysis of will he shares. The century's tragedies all arrived without having been willed just as Hamlet never willed the death of anyone, except for Claudius. The detour down which the human species began to travel early in the last century resembles a storm, whose causes and ultimate consequences it remains ignorant of. Those consequences are still washing upon our shores, like the belated waves of a great catastrophe of which we have not heard the last. Elsinore thus possesses exceptional symbolical power for the Europe of the twentieth century.

By chance, the two world wars were the occasion for many studies of Shakespeare's play: like the Elizabethan hero, cultivated Europeans found themselves engulfed in barbarism with no time to understand what was happening to them. In a sense the mystery of Hamlet's character held up a mirror to them: the more he was examined the more

*there was to elucidate. Death was the theme of the play, as it was of the century.*⁹

Delpech regarded this inability to conduct (the admittedly) difficult self-reflection to be the mortal sin of the European spirit. The titular *l'ensauvagement*, barbarity or, more literally, savagery of twentieth-century history is only rarely the object of thorough reflections. After all, the heart of the matter does not involve a simple registration of the phenomenon (this has been already performed by school textbooks!), but a meticulous and multi-strata analysis of the political, mental and, possibly above all, spiritual conditions that turned the “house of Europe” into a space of ghouls, death, and cruelty. The crux of the matter is a lively, emotional response but also a wise examination of the historical trauma on an individual and group scale. Apparently, the absence of such reflection is the reason why bloody history keeps on repeating itself. Add some sort of an organic (Hamletic?) unwillingness on the part of Europe towards embarking upon deeds, a clear-cut opposition towards barbarity. Examples from our recent past only confirm the aptness of this finding:

*While Europeans sleep, others become aware of the power of ideas. But the ideas that are spreading most widely are very much contrary to European values. Contempt for human life, the refusal to distinguish civilians from combatants, assassination presented as a duty - these are direct challenges to the values that our societies are supposed to defend. What price are we ready to pay to do that? Considering the EU's reaction to the appalling massacre in Beslan, South Ossetia, in September 2004, we may conclude that the price must not be very high. Apart from The Netherlands, not a single Western government dared question Putin about his incompetent and ambiguous handling of the tragedy. It seems, however, that more than one question would be relevant, since information about the attack was available beforehand and not provided to South Ossetia, since the explosives and the weapons came from the Russian Interior Ministry, and since at least one of the hostage takers belonged to the Moscow police internal affairs service.*¹⁰

The “House of Europe” in the descriptions formulated by Delpech is also a museum full of junk from the past, of little value and submerged in the stultifying smell of mothballs. This is the source of the helplessness of its residents and their frequent conviction – evidently, quite correct - about the relegation of the “old Continent”, which not so long ago ruled over the whole world, to the margin of history. The “House of Europe” is not only haunted – it is simply lifeless, a space of vanishing vitality, and it seems that its inhabitants manage to move only thanks to the force of inertia and are devoid of a firm substrate. They resemble bloodless shadows from the Elysian Fields, wandering listlessly and without a purpose:

Europe is at once turned too much toward the past (...). Like other Western societies, it lives in the moment and prevents it from adapting its present to its past and from imagining a future for itself. The reason it does it have a politics based on its thought is because that thought has ceased living. European democracy has become abstract like its values, unable to exercise the kind of influence in the world that the world needs. In a period of great international stability, this might have no consequences. In an era of profound transformations and exasperated passions this exhaustion is charged with danger. It is time for Europeans to interrupt the subterranean ruminations about history and start thinking about the future. Otherwise, others will do it for us.¹¹

The paradox formulated at the beginning of this statement must be understood correctly. What does it mean that Europe looks towards the past and, at the same time, is cut off from it? This turn towards the past, a source of negative consequences for European awareness, should be understood as a ritual celebration by Europe of its former glory. The process of being cut off from the past is a traumatic burden, the result of the absence of reflections on the more profound – in other words, not only, and not predominantly political – reasons for its historical decline. Both gestures are the cause, increasingly often stressed by analysts, of the weakness of Europe as a space of ideas, the fragility and meagreness of the civilisation project called “Europe”, which, one has the impression, has exhausted its creative power and can be interred. European ideas no longer constitute a model for the rest of the world or even a source of inspiration. The most striking consequence of this state of things is the absence of a clearly outlined vision of the future. Europe is a home drifting helplessly on the sea of history, a leaking raft full of castaways with an obscure identity.

What sort of a future awaits this “house of Europe”, haunted and with quaking foundations? In the epilogue of her book, *nota bene* titled: *The Human Soul Torn to Pieces* (naturally, from our point of view it is impossible to ignore the fact that in the heart of this gloomy “home” metaphoric there appears and is excellently exploited its “ghostly” supplementation!)¹² Delpech stressed that our present-day situation resembles the one in 1905. The whole second part of the publication (whose protagonists include, i.a. Nicholas II and Wilhelm II, but also Blok, Bely, Einstein, De-rain, Freud, et al.) is a brilliant analysis of forecasts of future misfortune, whose symbolic onset was the year 1905. The French original version of *Savage Century...* appeared precisely a hundred years later, as if to strongly accentuate spiritual affiliation with that period. We know that history never repeats itself exactly, but it is possible to capture analogies between distant moments. The author insists that an earnest identification of certain signs of time is not only an

essential cognitive task but can protect us from the realisation – quite feasible – of a black scenario, from historical recidivism. What is it that we are concealing in the basement of our European home that we do not want to – or do not know how to – adapt?

What is most peculiar about our age is the conviction that evil is installed at the core of history and our frenetic rejection of that conviction. Twenty-first-century man bears a strange resemblance to primitive man seeking to drive evil outside the known world and transform it into a taboo. For us as for him, evil brings misfortune, and we want it out of our sight. But the world no longer has any borders beyond which we might cast it. The experience of evil has such force in contemporary consciousness, and the disorder of minds and things is so evident, that what seems most pressing is restoring vigor to whatever might allay the ubiquitous anxiety.¹³

Our situation resembles the mood prevalent in 1905 - similar to the inhabitants of that world we have eyes full of fear and anxiously await something that we foresee with a sixth sense but which we are incapable of defining and describing. This anticipation is connected in a mysterious way with traumatic memory relegated to the unconscious (the basement) regions of the European soul: *The history of the last century, that hortus inclusus, of which we remain unconscious prisoners, is so full of misfortunes on which to meditate that we sometimes feel the weight of the dead mowed down by wars and revolutions, wandering like ghosts through our cities demanding justice.*¹⁴ As long as we do not adopt that ominous heritage (at this point, I supplement the author's reflection) the European home will be haunted by phantoms of the past. There is no doubt that we have to start thinking by considering that dark backdrop still present in the cellars of our European subconscious, because only such a strategy will enable us to discover once again the promise of the future, dim on the distant horizon. Crimes of the twentieth century are to a great measure committed by the subconscious, and this is why they remain so mysterious and menacing. Delpech cited with unconcealed emotion the words of François de Menthon, the French chief prosecutor at Nuremberg, who was certain that he was adjudicating “a crime against the spirit”, i.e. undermining the foundations of every civilisation. This is the sort of crime that leads towards a decline of the human race into barbarity: *More than fifty years later, those remarks are moving not only because they evoke the atrocities committed but because of the strangeness of the words used by the French prosecutor, particularly the deeply unfashionable expression “crime against the spirit”.* We no longer understand what it designates: the loss of that which constitutes humanity itself.¹⁵

The characteristic of the European home delineated in the discussed book certainly does not emanate excessive optimism. The “house of Europe”, it turns

out, is not merely a pleasant and friendly place, and its residents do not feel comfortable in it. Its twentieth-century portrayal brings to mind a collapsing ruin with a dirty past leaning time and again out of its basements. Apparently, Delpech toppled thoroughly our naive optimism born on the tide of a Union-oriented and very much *ad hoc* Euro-enthusiasm. She does not startle us but merely warns. By placing an analytical probe into the not so distant past of the Continent she pointed out the hidden sources of a possible repetition of the past.

*I looked upon the scene before me - upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain - upon the bleak walls - upon the vacant eye-like windows - upon a few rank sedges - and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees - with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveler upon opium - the bitter lapse into everyday life - the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart - an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime.*¹⁶

Is it so difficult to recognise in this great evocative fragment of *The Fall of the House of Usher* a repulsive (but credible) portrait of our “house of Europe”? Are we to such a degree under the spell of the unification project that we are incapable of feeling any sort of affiliation with it? Remember upon this occasion that a metaphor sometimes assumes a concrete form and does so with brutal literalness. Is the recently announced and widely commented case of the Austrian Josef Fritzl, who in the very centre of merry Europe (*Austria felix!*) for years imprisoned and raped his daughter in the basement of her family home, not – apart from moral revulsion accompanying this discovery – a painful confirmation of the aptness of remarks about a European home with an underpinning of horror? A house that is haunted, continuously and always¹⁷.

3.

It was probably Edmund Husserl who was the first twentieth-century philosopher – and certainly the first to propose such a strong formulation - to conceive Europe not as a geographical, national or political space but as a spiritual being. In his Viennese lecture titled evocatively: *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* Husserl proposed to comprehend Europe not in topographic categories but mental ones or, in more risky albeit exact terms, spiritual ones: *Clearly the title Europe designates the unity of a spiritual life and a creative activity - with all its aims, interests, cares and troubles, with its plans, its establishments, its institutions. Therein individual human beings work in a variety of societies, on different levels, in families, races, nations, all intimately joined together in spirit and, as I*

*said, in the unity of one spiritual image. This should stamp on persons, groups, and all their cultural accomplishments an all-unifying character.*¹⁸

Husserl wrote outright about the “spirit of Europe” and its serious crisis, which in his opinion was closely connected with a re-orientation of Western thought into a naturalistic and objectivising current. I refer to the example of Husserl not for analytical purposes since tracing the “theology of the history of the West”, outlined so acutely therein, and “shaping the idea of European humanity” are not our supreme objective. I recall Husserl’s observations, which, on the margin, resound with the rhetoric of yore (“spirit”, “soul”, “spiritual Europe”) for two fundamental reasons. First: his comments comprise a solid intellectual base for all those thinkers who will perceive the canvas of Europe in “spiritual” categories and are sufficiently bold to write about the “European spirit”. Secondly: curiously, the reflections of two Czech authors - philosopher and theologian - about the “spirit of Europe”, at which I would like to take a closer look, owe much to the reconnaissance performed by the author of *Logical Investigations*. The first, the outstanding Czech thinker Jan Patočka – a student and to a certain extent an heir of Husserlian phenomenology - deliberating on the condition of Europe embarked upon certain motifs indicated by the master, although the course of his thoughts runs in a slightly different direction. The second, the Czech theologian Tomáš Halík – in turn, a student and to a certain degree an heir of Patočka - already considered directly the phenomenon of the “spirit of Europe”, checked by Husserl. In this intellectual rally race it was necessary to determine the point of departure for historiosophic thought. In our case, therefore, such a point of departure is Husserl and his musings, and the goal – those of Halík. Here, contemplations by Patočka play the role of a keystone between the two, and thus we shall start with them.

Just like Husserl, the philosopher from Prague strongly accentuated the metaphor of the soul as a useful tool for understanding the essence of European culture. In order to describe the basic core of European-ness the Czech philosopher evoked the Greek idea of “concern for the soul” (*epimeleia tes psyches*), perceiving it as a foundation of the European existential, cultural, and political idiom.

Man is just and righteous owing to concern for the soul, which is the legacy of classical Greek philosophy. This means that truth is not given once and for all, nor due to its comprehension and acceptance, but that it is a lifelong self-controlling and self-unifying intellectual-life praxis. In Greek philosophy concern for the soul assumes two extreme forms: we care for the soul so that it could transverse the world *via* the eternity of the universe and in this fashion attain at least for a short time a form of existence fitting for the gods (De-

mocritus, then Aristotle); or, on the contrary, we think and learn to render our soul a hard crystal of being, a steel crystal tempered in the perspective of eternity. It is one of the possibilities of being which contains the source of motion, decisions about its existence and non-existence, i.e. dissolution in the indefiniteness of the instinct and unenlightened tradition (Plato).¹⁹

This conceit of the spirit as the foundation of Europe possessed for Patočka foremost importance, and he returned to it upon multiple occasions, both when he stressed the breakthrough nature of the introduction of this category (*psyche*) into the philosophical dictionary of the ancient Greeks, and when he emphasized the existential and cultural relevance of the conceit of "concern for the soul",²⁰ or when he distinctly marked a demarcation line between "spiritual man" and "the intellectual".²¹ Jacques Derrida, in a penetrating commentary on Plato, this time assuming the role of an analyst of famous fragments of Plato's *Phaedo* – *nota bene*, in the French philosopher's text a prominent role was performed by the entries: "spirit" and "Europe" – accentuated predominantly the mysterious and evasive nature of *psyche*, features so strongly indicated by the Czech philosopher.²² The inclusion by Patočka of the "spirit" into the European genotype was certainly not accidental, but a well conceived gesture.

In his theological and philosophical reflections Halik often referred to comments made by Patočka, but in this context something else is relevant: one could have the irresistible impression that the whole time his thoughts contain the philosophical legacy of the Prague phenomenologist. The constant point of reference, which for Halik is Patočka's *oeuvre*, is disclosed in a lecture given in Berlin in May 2003. Its modest title: *What Binds Europe?* seems to announce a rather routine set of banalities about "European values", but the Czech theologian turned out to be the winner of this intellectual confrontation. As is almost always the case he tried unconventional solutions, and his language is free of theological-catechetic newspeak. It is noteworthy that both in the study by Delpech and in her writings political reality enters into close relations with the rebirth of art. In his, let us recall, nominally theological deductions Halik referred to real facts of twentieth-century history but often, in order to render them more expressive, he cited aptly chosen literary examples that are always more than mere rhetorical ornaments. Halik started his reflections by questioning a certain disseminated and obvious view:

In connection with the progressing integration of Europe we frequently hear Christians demand: "give Europe its soul". I cannot help myself, but the longer I listen to this initially justified slogan that more it appears to be a superficial and outright arrogant cliché.

Is Europe really soulless? And if this were the case, does anyone have at his disposal such power as to be

capable of proposing and offering a soul for Europe? Is the person offering a soul not actually proposing exclusively ideology? No man and no institution – even the Church – is able to give a soul: we know from Goethe's *Faust* that it is even quite difficult to take a soul, since at the very last moment such an endeavour can be crushed by the One who is the only capable of granting and redeeming a soul.²³

One way or another, there are no doubts that the concept and metaphor of the spirit comprise the point of departure of Halik's considerations about the phenomenon of Europe. In doing so, he creatively approached the concept of dualistic anthropology, well embedded in European thought. If, according to it, man is composed of "soul" and "body" then such ingredients will be easily found in European identity: In the process of the transformation and expansion of the European Union prime interest is focused certainly on the "body of Europe" – its political, economic and administrative structures; it could appear, therefore, that the spirit of Europe has remained slightly in the shade. Is, however, the courage that leads towards present-day radical operations and changes affecting the body of Europe not based on some sort of non-verbalised conviction about the existence of a unifying principium, which lends "Europe" its meaning, that some sort of a force of inner attraction is at work here and merges Europe at the time of all those changes? Perhaps this is why we could use the "spirit of Europe" metaphor for describing this force?²⁴

The point is not, therefore, to once again whine about the soullessness of Europe or produce yet another publicistic pamphlet maintained in rather well-worn elegiac poetics. By following the example of Patočka cited *verbatim* in the successive paragraph Halik wished consider the rich contents of "the spirit of Europe" metaphor. In doing so, he drew attention to the need for a constant awareness of the fact that we are dealing with a metaphorical expression, i.e. a multi-motif product with extensive meaning. He was particularly concerned with avoiding an overly rapid identification of metaphorical contents and replacing "the spirit of Europe" metaphor with concepts most frequently evoked within this context: culture, religion, spirituality, and philosophy. Let us first allow the whole diverse scale of associations produced by this image be heard.²⁵

By emulating classical differentiations of metaphysical anthropology Halik mentioned three "powers of the spirit": memory, intellect, and will. In turn, by referring them to European history he showed in detail what each of those components means in reference to the collective organism, whose cryptonym was created by the metaphor in question.

Analysing the phenomenon of memory, Halik – and this is significant – was more willing to write about

forgetting. He showed that thanks to the eschatological heritage still alive in Christian science Europe frequently turned towards the future, a dimly outlined perspective of salvation. The revolutionary and utopian spirit intensively permeating European thought denoted a sometimes violent turn towards the future and contributed to rewarding the process of forgetting about one's past. To put it in stronger terms: towards sacrificing the past for the sake of the future. Secularisation and nationalisation only assisted this attitude. Halik proposed an interesting combination of the conceit of memory with that of the conscience. He argued that not only did they refer to identical domains but, on the contrary, they belong to each other inseparably and enter into the reaction of a hermeneutic circle. To possess knowledge about oneself, to possess one's identity is tantamount to knowing one's history and being able to tell it to others, both on a personal level and a group one. Nonetheless, memory without conscience is mute. Only the light of the conscience is capable of penetrating the nooks and crannies of our memory. In turn, to prevent conscience from being susceptible to ideological poisons it must graduate from an exacting school of historical memory. Seduced by promising visions of European integration we cannot forget the past of Europe and in particular its dark sides. This means a readiness to show compassion and "solidarity with the victims", as was put so poignantly by the German theologian Johann Baptist Metz.²⁶

The slogan that Europe places most often on its coat of arms is the intellect. In a brief recapitulation of the adventures of the intellect in European history Halik stressed the diversity of its comprehension. *Nous* and *logos*, *intellectus* and *ratio*, *Vernunft* and *Verstand* are not necessarily semantically equivalent concepts. Events with greatest effects in the history of the European intellect include an alliance of Greek intellect and Christian faith. One of the consequences, with a negative impact upon European thought, was the application of the Greek *instrumentarium* for the purpose of describing divine reality. Due to a thoughtless error the living God of the Old Testament became identified with the Aristotelian supreme being, the Unmoved Mover. This onto-theological hybrid was to haunt for centuries to come. Modern emancipation of the intellect and liberation from this theological supervision had two consequences. On the one hand, the intellect retrieved the rights due to it, and on the other hand there took place its distinction, resulting in the emergence of a current of dogmatic rationalism. The intellect freed from religious concessions started to brilliantly play the role of a harsh critic of assorted religious and ideological delusions. At the same time, there appeared within European space a new protagonist: the intellect blind in one (metaphysical) eye. This intellect does not understand itself and is incap-

ble of excusing itself. Halik perceived one of the ways of leaving this *cul de sac* in expanding the conception of the rational, restricted to unambiguous Logos, and in opening the intellect towards the mythical foundations from which, after all, it originates.

Nothing probably characterises the European Continent and its spiritual identity as satisfactorily as the concept of the will. In his long history the European is constantly permeated by the will of power. "European will" time and again enters a state that Halik described as "European messianism": the truly essential features of European history include the urgent wish to convince the rest of the world, a tireless willingness to offer (...) always that, which in a given period Europe did not regard as its greatest gift, entrusted for the sake of a universal dissemination of goodness: Hellenic and Roman civilisation, Christianity, the emancipation of women, human rights, the protection of the natural environment...²⁷ From time immemorial the European readily assumed the role of a missionary converting others to his "infallible convictions", whose excess he always possessed, or the role of a travelling salesman trading in ideas that were supposed to be – and this is a premise with all the qualities of an axiom – forever superior. Europe performed a catechesis, imposed, urged, and handed out, perceiving in this process the fulfilment of its supposed spiritual mission. In front of our eyes the European will of might (and will of power) fell apart, leaving behind a shadow of its former splendour. Does Europe still have something to offer? The last question, referring to the "post-messianic" status of Europe, does not sound very convincing when asked by Halik (assuming that I captured his tone correctly): Who shall present, and what part of the European heritage to the new inhabitants of our Continent today and tomorrow?²⁸ At the same time, there is clearly no mention of "aliens" but of "our continent"; thus Halik accentuated the thought about the offer that Europeans can make. Old dreams about European might seem to have vanished irretrievably.

Having followed the basically "positive" (although, as we have seen, slightly contested) and culture-creating dimension of the European "spirit" Halik also mentioned and underlined its "dark" foundation. As an expert on psychoanalysis he was well aware of the fact – which he particularly stressed – that the will is always directed by motives. The latter could be situated on the surface, open and discernible, but they are also just as often concealed and embedded in the system of the unconscious. At the same time, and this is essential, hidden motives are beyond the range of our reflections, although this is not to say that they are absent. Halik thus postulated that while speaking about "the origin of Europe" one should speak not only about open phenomena, Europe's visible "bright consciousness", but also to fathom intensively and

earnestly the European “subconsciousness”. Since much of that, which affects Europe is concealed beneath the stratum of consciousness should we not examine also the “dreams cherished by Europe” and its “flawed undertakings”? Should we not study its myths and “archetypes”? ²⁹ Halik suggested that gauging the archaeology of mythical narrations about Oedipus, Odysseus, Merlin, Ahasver, Faustus, Hamlet or Don Quixote could fulfil a revealing role and disclose the hidden - and not necessarily positively evaluated – aspects of impulses steering European projects, plans, and dreams.

We recall that in the reflections pursued by Delpech the metaphor of the “house of Europe” ultimately resulted in that of the “fragmented spirit”. In the case of Halik the opposite is true: the metaphor of the “stratified soul” together with its dark, low, and drive-focused foundation overlaps in a very natural fashion the familiar image of the “haunted house”: a house whose subterranean parts conceal wicked secrets.

Apart from the notorious European longing for “light” mention is also due to the poets, philosophers and mystics of the night. Europe stores many most valuable treasures in its dungeons. Once we examine the place held by European rationalism it seems appropriate to descend to the cellars of mysticism, esotericism and gnosis; since we tour the cathedral of faith we should not overlook the crypts of heresy, superstition and secret cults.

A fragment of the spirit of Europe consists of visions and fantasies concerning “the others”, who initiated their missionary, discovery-buccaneer or war expeditions beyond the boundaries of our Continent. To become acquainted with Europe means to see its relation towards other cultures and civilisations since it frequently transfers to them its hopes and fears as well as its shadows.

A bold project for European unity and a joint European home spanning from the Atlantic to the Ural Mts. is not built on unknown and unploughed soil. It is, however, erected on a foundation composed of a multi-storeyed arrangement of forgotten treasures and charred ruins, the burial ground of deities, heroes and felons, rusty ideas and unexploded bombs. We do not have to grant our Europe a spirit but from time to time we have to follow it towards “the mothers”, the underground, in the manner of Orpheus following Eurydice or the slayed Christ following Adam and the Old Testament fathers, depicted on old icons. ³⁰

Halik persistently reminded us, his contemporary readers, of this simple truth, empirically tested by psychoanalysis: sometimes the repressed returns to the surface and does so with even greater force. He tells us about the traumatic lesson of twentieth-century totalitarianisms, a lesson, which we either did not comprehend or which we refused to deliberate on: The

conflagration of evil and violence, which swept across Europe during two world wars and under the rule of two inhuman “substitute religions”, i.e. Nazism and communism, destroyed, in the opinion of many people, both trust in the might of goodness as the foundation of the world (the metaphysical conception of God) and the Enlightenment-era trust in the intellect and the goodness of human nature capable of creating an ideal society with the assistance of the instruments of its rationality – the power of science and technology. A confrontation with the evil of two world wars, the secular regimes of the twentieth century, and such phenomena as Auschwitz and the Gulag demonstrated that an uncritical lay-humanistic belief in the omnipotence of human rationality was at the very least as illusory as uncritical dependence on divine authority from “the netherworld”. “The divinity of man” proved to be incapable of occupying the throne emptied after “the death of God”. ³¹

alik demonstrated that the spirit possesses a number of bright powers, which play their games in the day. At the same time, he stressed the importance of the exploration of the subconscious, the nocturnal and dark sphere that conceals everything that for assorted reasons we do not disclose or want to reveal to the outside world. Here we store our feelings, desires, and dreams that produce embarrassment and shame. It is here that elements of psychic life described as repulsive, rejected, and unwanted are to be found. Finally, it is here that contents repressed from the space of conscious life exist. Halik did not express this firmly, but I believe that completing his thought will not constitute abuse on my part. As was mentioned, it is in the nature of the repressed that it likes to resurface. If this is the case, then the analogy between the individual soul and that of the group is basically apt, and reflection on the “spirit of Europe” metaphor leads to a conclusion – close to the diagnosis formulated by Delpech – that for the sake of our spiritual wellbeing we should become acquainted with the nature of this dark space. Europe must descend to “the Mothers”, those enigmatic *personae* from the second part of *Faust*, and their dark kingdom in order to establish direct contact with the horror of this world of chaos. One has to pass through such initiation, known in Jungian terminology as “the integration of the shadow”. It is precisely the acceptance of the actual existence of the “shadowy spheres” and their subsequent inclusion into conscious life that is (could be) a condition for spiritual rebirth. Any other path is at best the maintenance of illusion, and in the worst case – of self-deceit.

Interestingly, those two distinctions, at first glance radically different both as regards the profession of their diagnosticians and the points of departure accepted by them, share fundamental conclusions. Delpech accentuated not the peace, warmth, and security of the

“house of Europe” but, on the contrary, its terrifying, concealed spaces. She revealed the horror of dark cel-lars haunted by phantoms of the past and brought to the surface dangerous and spiritually toxic places. Just as Edgar Allan Poe showed the symptoms of the disintegration of the house of Usher so she traced cracks on the walls of the once solid European construction. In a similar vein, Halik first stressed the possibilities and opening outlined in a “positively” comprehended metaphor of the soul. Interestingly, he ultimately concentrated on its dark “interior”. In doing so, Halik stressed and brought forth elements of the dark subconscious of the Europeans, the enormous and still pulsating regions of horror and wilderness. These are the cursed terrains, which we, as a rule, do not wish to know and maintain a safe distance, because subconsciously we experience their toxic power. Both texts, with their careful forecasts and far from optimistic, leave us in a state of uncertainty. There is, however, a single legible suggestion: reality will not change by itself, and, as always, everything is up to us. A transformation of the world has (must have!) a transformation of our interior as its foundation and an inalienable condition for potential.³² *A book must be an ice-axe to break the seas frozen inside our soul.* This motto taken from Kafka and opening the book by Delpech could be engraved on the façade of the renascent “house of Europe”.

4.

At the end of his comments about the “European spirit” Edmund Husserl, sharing his fears with the readers, recalled yet another symbol from the distant mythological European past: the symbol of the Phoenix undergoing rebirth, a strong and spectacular source of food for further thought. Described by the great phenomenologist it becomes the figure of future reborn Europe.

*Europe's greatest danger is weariness. If we struggle against this greatest of all dangers as 'good Europeans' with the sort of courage that does not fear even an infinite struggle, then out of the destructive blaze of lack of faith, the smoldering fire of despair over the West's mission for humanity, the ashes of great weariness, will rise up the phoenix of a new life-inwardness and spiritualization as the pledge of a great and distant future for man: for the spirit alone is immortal.*³³

Husserl wrote those words in 1935. As we all know too well, they were never heeded. Because they were not loud enough? Because no one wanted to hear them? Because they were said much too late? The catastrophe came almost on the next day. The Phoenix turned to ashes in the death camps. It seems, however, that more than seventy years from the time when they were written the above remarks – with the possible exception of their pathos and messianic hype – have not lost any of their therapeutic force. One could add: unfortunately.

Today, we know for certain that the European Phoenix is not strong enough to rise on its own. We have to assist it. To put it differently: we must help ourselves and extract ourselves from the quagmire around us. “History” is a hypostasis and no one will perform our task for us. The problem lies in the fact that no one knows, or is capable of knowing, whether matters have not gone too far. The fact that the spirit is essentially immortal does not necessarily comfort us in this situation.

The sober voices of the two cited intellectuals, deprived of illusions but also far from barren pessimism, propose a difficult lesson, an ominous memento, and cautious hope. Those two tones resound very clearly, a circumstance that renders their identification extremely credible.

Endnotes

- ¹ R. Calasso, *Zaślubiny Kadmosa z Harmonią*, transl. S. Kasprowski, Kraków 1995, p. 14.
- ² M. Kundera, *Zachód porwany albo tragedia Europy Środkowej*, “Zeszyty Literackie” no. 5:1984. An acute polemic with the theses proposed by Kundera was conducted by Joseph Brodsky: *Why Milan Kundera Is Wrong About Dostoyevsky*, in: idem, *Pendulum's Song*, Paris 1989, pp. 99-106; an excellent reconstruction of the ideological and mythological foundation of Kundera's reflections combined with a critical analysis of the omission of the Balkans in his concept of Central Europe is to be found in a chapter in the book by Maria Todorova: *Balkany wyobrażone*, transl. P. Szymor, M. Budzińska, Wołowiec 2008, pp. 301-344.
- ³ An extensive set of symbolic associations connected with the “home” (a reconstruction based on Polish literary and belief material) is contained in the publication by D. and Benedyktowicz, *Dom w tradycji ludowej*, Wrocław 1992; on linguistic stereotypes and symbolic aura surrounding the “spirit” (an analysis based on the contemporary vernacular) see more in: D. Czaja, *Anatomia duszy. Gry językowe i figury wyobraźni*, Kraków 2006.
- ⁴ Texts about the cognitive role of the metaphor total hundreds and reference to even the basic corps would take up several pages. *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony, Cambridge 1993, still remains an instructive anthology of texts on this topic. Owing to the holistic epistemological project directed against the philosophy of concepts let us note by way of example the study by Hans Blumenberg: *Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie*, Bonn 1960.
- ⁵ J. Ortega y Gasset, *Dwie wielkie metafory*, in: idem, *Dehumanizacja sztuki i inne eseje*, transl. P. Niklewicz, introduction S. Cichowicz, Warszawa 1980, p. 223.
- ⁶ P. Ricoeur, *Język, tekst, interpretacja. Wybór pism*, transl. P. Graff, K. Rosner, Warszawa 1989, p. 133.
- ⁷ Th. Delpech, *Powrót barbarzyństwa w XXI wieku*, transl. W. Dluski, Warszawa 2008, p. 41; my emphasis - D. C. Nb. The translation into the Polish is slightly more “narrative-oriented”, while the original has the brief and ambiguous: *L'ensauvagement*.
- ⁸ J. Bartmiński, *Dom i świat – opozycja i komplementarność*, in: idem, *Językowe podstawy obrazu świata*, Lublin 2006, p. 168.
- ⁹ Delpech, op. cit., p.145.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 104-105.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 105.

¹² Analogisation between the image of the house and that of man is a frequent motif in symbolic imagination. Cf. Cirlot's remarks about symbolic oneirism: [...] in dreams we employ the image of the house as a representation of the different layers of the psyche. The outside of the house signifies the outward appearance of Man; his personality or his mask. The various floors are related to the vertical and spatial symbols. The roof and upper floor correspond to the head and the mind, as well as to the conscious exercise of self-control. Similarly the basement corresponds to the unconscious and the instincts (just as sewers do in symbols pertaining to the city), J. E. Cirlot, *Słownik symboli*, transl. I. Kania, Kraków 2000, p. 112, s. v. House.

¹³ Delpech, op. cit., p. 296.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 297.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 304.

¹⁶ E. A. Poe, *Zagłada Domu Usherów*, transl. B. Leśmian, in: idem, *Opowiadania niesamowite*, transl. B. Leśmian, S. Wyrykowski, Warszawa 1976, pp. 319-320.

¹⁷ From this viewpoint it is worth reflecting on the statement made by Elfriede Jelinek, who without any illusions explained the origin of the history of the "monster from Amstetten": The terrible crime committed against Natascha Kampusch or the Fritzl family in Amstetten do not surprise me (and I would no want to know how many similar cases, about which no one will ever find out, still exist). (...) History allowed Austria to feel like a victim without any greater acts of penance, and to always hide behind a beautiful façade its active participation (for instance, in Nazi atrocities). Nonetheless, the repressed returns with doubled force. In Austria, both in concealment (as in the basement in Amstetten) and in public (the economic scandals of the recent period) things take place that could not be imagined elsewhere, at least in comparable countries. Perhaps the reason lies in the fact that, e.g. in Germany the press is much more varied and more critical. I am particularly interested in the paradigmatic nature of such horrible stories as those from Amstetten, and am not surprised by the crimes committed in Austria, Elfriede Jelinek talks to Magdalena Miecznicka, "Dziennik", 16 August 2008.

¹⁸ E. Husserl, *Kryzys europejskiego człowieczeństwa a filozofia*, transl. and introd. J. Sidorek, Warszawa 1993, p. 16.

¹⁹ J. Patočka, *Europa i dziedzictwo europejskie do końca XIX wieku*, transl. J. Zychowicz, in: idem, *Eseje heretyckie z filozofii dziejów*, transl. A. Czcibor-Piotrowski, E. Szczepańska, J. Zychowicz, Warszawa 1988, p. 111.

²⁰ The question, which we shall pose, will be as follows: is concern for the soul, located at the very source of European legacy, capable of creatively attracting our attention today, when amongst general weakness and coming to terms with decline, we need support to such a great extent, J. Patočka, *Sytuacja człowieka – sytuacja Europy*, transl. J. Kłoczowski, p. 191.

²¹ J. Patočka, *Człowiek duchowy a intelektualista*, "Logos i Ethos", no. 1:1993, pp. 125-134. I cite one of the closing paragraphs from this excellent text whose topicality appears to be constantly growing: spiritual man, capable of sacrifice and seeing its sense and significance (...) cannot be afraid. Naturally, spiritual man is not a politician in the commonplace comprehension of that term: he is not a side in the dispute conducted by this world but he is political in a different manner (...) because he compels society and all those around him to face that

unobvious nature of reality, ibid., p. 134.

²² J. Derrida, *Secrets of European Responsibility*, in: idem, *The Gift of Death*, Chicago-London 1995, p. 15.

²³ T. Halik, Co zespala Europe? Wykład berliński, in: idem, *Wzywany czy niewzywany Bóg się tutaj zjawia. Europejskie wykłady z filozofii i socjologii dziejów chrześcijaństwa*, transl. A. Babuchowski, Kraków 2006, pp. 129-130.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 130, emphasis: D. C.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 131.

²⁶ J. B. Metz, *Teologia wobec cierpienia*, transl. J. Zychowicz, Kraków 2008, cf. in particular reflections on "theology after Auschwitz", pp. 31-59.

²⁷ Halik, op. cit., pp. 140-141.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 143.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 144.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 145, my emphasis - D. C.

³¹ Ibid., p. 237.

³² 32. One more thing. Both analytical studies can be included into the wide and truly "unclear" category of texts from a domain of, so to speak, historical anthropology (in the case of Delpech with an accent on the political sphere, and in Halik's writings - on the cultural-religious one). Apart from the contents they possess, in my opinion, yet another methodological value: they demonstrate how within the space of a single text it is possible to readily encounter symbolic anthropology (examining contents *in abstracto*) together with engageé anthropology (stressing the necessity of referring research conclusions to the real world). This benefits both approaches. At any rate, studies by Delpech and Halik prove that between these two attitudes towards research into cultural reality there does not have to exist an insurmountable obstacle.

³³ Husserl, *Kryzys....*, p. 51.

