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Embracing the diversity of European national identities: the importance of the nation as part of the collective European whole

“The more solitary you are, the more vulnerable you will be”¹

Paul Theroux, *The Happy Isles of Oceania*

“*Mon dieu non, je ne suis pas la Parisienne qu’aucun autre spectacle que Paris ne doit toucher. Je peux vivre sans les Galeries Lafayette*”²

[Dear God, no, I am not one of those Parisians that is moved by nothing but Paris. I can live quite well without the *Galeries Lafayette*]

Paul Morand, *L’Europe galante*

Benedict Anderson explains our need to construct narratives of identity, since the continually developing nature of identity through history implies that our identities are inevitably subject to the “‘forgetting’ the experience of this continuity”.³ According to Anderson, it is therefore necessary to document an identity as it develops, out of fear that the very essence of that identity will disappear if it is not recorded through cultural production. The authors in question chronicle their experiences of European travel in order to share their accounts of the turbulent periods, namely the two World Wars and the breakup of Yugoslavia, which have been primordial in the development of a European identity in the twentieth century. It is thus due to the fact that these authors produced concrete, written logs of their involvement in and/or observation of these events that has allowed their experiences to become part of the archives of ‘what it means to be European’ today.

Spanning the twentieth century, the narratives of travel of Morand, Zweig, Levi and Theroux promote a forward-thinking and inclusive conceptualisation of the relationship between nation and identity. All four authors show their readers that the importance given to national borders can be subverted through the motion of travel, in which these arbitrary lines on the map are crossed by the travellers in question. In accordance with the renowned pacifist Romain Rolland – who believed that national and European identity were not ‘mutually exclusive’ affinities⁴ – these four authors use their narratives to promote a sense of European or supranational identity, by urging their readership to rethink their relationship with their nation as part of a collective European whole, and to perceive diversity as being not Europe’s weakness, but rather its greatest strength. The authors in question do this by first promoting a sense of national identity as a preliminary step towards creating a European identity and, subsequently, by showing how one can reach beyond the

¹ Paul Theroux, *The Happy Isles of Oceania: Paddling the Pacific* (Kindle Edition, 1992), 154.

² Morand, *L’Europe galante*, “Les Plaisirs Rhénans”.

³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1983), 205.

⁴ For more information, see Romain Rolland, *Au-dessus de la mêlée - Edition intégrale* (Kindle, 2015).

nation in identity construction – thus forwarding a more inclusive sense of European-ness and inter- or supra- national belonging.⁵

In this chapter, I will firstly show how the four travel narratives examine the construction of national identity and how they problematise the traditional link between nation and identity. Secondly, I will discuss how all four of the authors in question encourage their readership to reach beyond national identity to conceive a sense of European identity. Finally, I will examine how the four narratives encourage us to consider yet more inclusive manners of conceptualising the link between identity and place.

Celebrating national differences, whilst pointing to their limits

In order to celebrate difference and forward Kraus' envisioned European 'union in diversity', one must first be aware of the nature of the differences that exist within and between European nations. In the words of Beck, "it would be utterly false to think of the national and the cosmopolitan as two autonomous levels, or as two mutually exclusive political principles, and to play them off against one another. Rather, the cosmopolitan must be conceived as the *integral* of the national and must be developed and empirically investigated as such".⁶ It is to this end that the four narratives of travel in question glorify the great contrasts that exist between the different nations of Europe, whilst nevertheless showing that one must not be restricted to the limits of national borders in conceptualising identity. As E.J. Hobsbawm notes, nationalism is "a complicating factor"⁷ in identity construction and is a phenomenon that is "past its peak"⁸. This was also indicated by Giorgio Agamben (1942-), who exposed that the connection between birth and nation is pure fiction, and thus showed that to speak of 'national' identity is no longer coherent in our modern world.⁹ Yet, many Europeans are still turning to this comforting but over-simplified identity in the political upheaval of the twenty-first century. Bauman notes that the current resurgence of nationalism is, in fact, no more than a misguided attempt to protect oneself against globalisation.¹⁰ Indeed, the post-World War II decades taught Europeans that they must reach beyond the nation to construct their identity, but some confusion regarding the alternatives has caused doubts to be raised, as Bauman suggests. Other common misperceptions are highlighted by Walker Connor, who explains that the 'nation' is the "psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it" and gives them a common sense of belonging and homogeneity, which is not to be confused with the 'state', which is a political construct.¹¹ Connor goes on to point out that although the confusion of these terms has had a "negative impact on the study of nationalism", "a supranational and suprastate-consciousness of being European [must surely become] the primary identity" in the twenty-

⁵ It must be noted here that the authors in question are far from being the fathers of European thought, since the development of a supranational European identity had been previously discussed in great detail by hosts of European thinkers, such as Mazzini (1805-72) or Coudenhove-Kalergi (1894-1972) to cite just two of many.

⁶ Beck, *Understanding the Real Europe*, 7.

⁷ E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth and Reality* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 191.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁹ Angela Pilch Ortega, *Transnational Spaces and Regional Localization* (Waxmann Verlag, 2012), 99.

¹⁰ For further details, see Bauman, *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*.

¹¹ Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism* (Princeton University Press, 1994), 92.

first century.¹² Returning to Hobsbawm, then, we can see that he is not alone in considering that the world of the late twentieth century and the early 21st century “can no longer be contained within the limits of ‘nations’” and requires us to reach towards supranational identities.¹³ This conceptualisation applies to the European one that is forwarded by the narratives of travel discussed in this dissertation and that will be examined in greater detail in the second part of this chapter. Firstly, however, let us concentrate on how Morand, Zweig, Levi and Theroux celebrate the diverse national identities that they discover during their travels.

Indeed, as Romain Rolland pronounces so eloquently, nationalism and internationalism need not be two mutually exclusive concepts.¹⁴ On the contrary, nationalism “*nel miglior senso della parola*”¹⁵ [in the best sense of the word], as Levi would say, ought to be considered an appropriate first step towards creating an enlarged European ‘family of nations’. This should be a step towards bridging the gap between nations and envisaging a European identity, a process that has always been easier to envision for elites than for the common people, as we will see later on in the chapter. This idea of nationalism playing an integral part in internationalism was previously forwarded by Mazzini circa 1840, but resurfaced in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century, through thinkers such as Rolland and Zweig. As Rolland explicitly states in his pacifist essay *Au-dessus de la mêlée*: “*Non, l’amour de ma patrie ne veut pas que je haisse et je tue les âmes pieuses et fidèles qui aiment les autres patries*” [No, a love for my own country does not imply that I should hate and kill the pious and faithful souls that love other countries].¹⁶ This line of thought is further developed in Rolland’s essay *Jaurès*, in which, just a few months after his assassination, the French socialist leader Jean Jaurès is described by Rolland as “*ce grand Européen*” [that great European]. Using Jaurès himself by way of example, Rolland states

¹² Ibid., 100, 90-91.

¹³ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 191.

¹⁴ This idea is equally expressed very clearly in Fuch’s *Cultural Diversity, European Identity and The Legitimacy of the EU*: “National and European identities can coexist and complement each other” (72). For more information, see Dieter Fuchs, *Cultural Diversity, European Identity and The Legitimacy of the EU* (MPG, Books Group, UK, 2011).

¹⁵ Primo Levi, *I sommersi e i salvati*, (Einaudi, 1986), 150.

¹⁶ Here, in order to clarify Rolland’s position, it is necessary to distinguish between the terms ‘nationalism’ and ‘patriotism’. Both terms refer to the relationship between an individual and their nation; however, there is a vast difference between the two. George Orwell, in his essay *Notes on Nationalism* in 1945, sums up this difference quite succinctly (1): “By ‘nationalism’ I mean first of all the habit of assuming that human beings can be classified like insects and that whole blocks of millions or tens of millions of people can be confidently labelled ‘good’ or ‘bad’. But secondly — and this is much more important — I mean the habit of identifying oneself with a single nation or other unit, placing it beyond good and evil and recognising no other duty than that of advancing its interests. Nationalism is not to be confused with patriotism. Both words are normally used in so vague a way that any definition is liable to be challenged, but one must draw a distinction between them, since two different and even opposing ideas are involved. By ‘patriotism’ I mean devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force on other people. Patriotism is of its nature defensive, both militarily and culturally. Nationalism, on the other hand, is inseparable from the desire for power. The abiding purpose of every nationalist is to secure more power and more prestige, not for himself but for the nation or other unit in which he has chosen to sink his own individuality”. For further information, please see George Orwell, *Essays* (Everyman, 2002).

that we must simultaneously believe in “*l’amour de sa patrie et le respect des autres patries*”¹⁷ [love for one’s own country and respect for other countries].

In forwarding this ‘love for one’s own country’, Morand’s narratives are particularly instrumental. As Michel Collomb notes in the *République des Lettres* in 1997 while writing of *Tendres stocks*, Morand – whilst being a “*chantre du cosmopolitisme*” [supporter of cosmopolitanism] – “*est d’abord un vrai Parisien, fier d’appartenir à cette bourgeoisie cultivée*” [is first and foremost a true Parisian, proud to be a part of this well-educated bourgeoisie]¹⁸. Morand’s narratives could not make this more clear, since he often portrays characters that are inherently patriotic, verging on nationalist at times. In “*Les Plaisirs Rhénans*” in *L’Europe galante*, Morand underlines the importance he gives to loving one’s country. In the following dialogue between two lovers, national loyalty and a sense of patriotism are stronger in Walter’s heart than any feelings he may have for his lover.

“- Walter, vous m’aimez?

Il repond: - Moins que ma patrie.”¹⁹

[- Walter, do you love me?

He replies: - Less than I love my country].

This sheds light on the underlying premise of Morand’s narrative, which could easily be misinterpreted; although *L’Europe galante* seems, on the surface, to be little more than a tale of romantic conquests, the text is also used to portray the political landscape of the times.

In his most blatant display of love for France, in “*Le Circuit Circum-Etna*”, Morand writes that “*dans aucun pays, sauf la France, il n’y a assez de femmes*”²⁰ [in no country except France are there ever enough women]. Given the weight that Morand gives to women, seduction and sexual conquest in his narratives, this can be considered to be a particularly strong demonstration of Morand’s love for the French nation. As Morand asserts in *L’Europe galante*, there is nothing wrong with presenting a certain national pride, and such display does not, as a result, imply that one is any less European or any less proud of the unicity of other European nations.

In *I sommersi e i salvati*, Levi also touches upon the issue of nationalism, expressing that he can understand why some people feel such an intrinsic tie to their native lands.²¹ He puts himself into their shoes and writes: “*Questo villaggio, o città, o regione, o nazione, è il mio, ci sono nato, ci dormono i miei avi. Ne parlo la lingua, ne ho adottato i costumi e la*

¹⁷ In this collection of essays, Rolland shows how it is possible to achieve this, by including two manifestos – one by the Dutch and another by the Catalans – which both use the strength of a powerful national group as a tool towards achieving international unity. In these examples, the fiercely unified groups do not believe in forwarding their unity to the detriment of their national unity or to their supranational unity to Europe. On the contrary, in their manifestos, it becomes clear that they see their own individual unity as groups as a step towards creating an over-arching and more inclusive identity at a national or inter-national level, where differences are respected and celebrated as integral parts of the whole.

¹⁸ Michel Collomb, “*Qui est Paul Morand?*” from *La république des lettres*, numéro 36 (Paris: April 1997).

¹⁹ Morand, *L’Europe galante*, “*Les Plaisirs Rhénans*”.

²⁰ Morand, *L’Europe galante*, “*Le Circuit Circum-Etna*”, I.

²¹ For Levi, this is also an explanation as to why the Jews did not save themselves by emigrating before the situation in Europe escalated in the 1930s.

cultura"²² [This village, or town, or region, or nation, is mine. I was born here, my ancestors were laid to rest here. I speak the language of this place, and I have adopted its customs and culture]. Levi, however, always remains clear that love for one's own nation must not come at the expense of hating the nations of others. His coherence does not waiver even when put to the ultimate test; when asked whether he hates the Germans in a letter to his German translator, he responds clearly that "*non sopporto che si giudichi un uomo non per quello che è ma per il gruppo a cui gli accade di appartenere*"²³ [I cannot stand it when a man is judged not for what he is, but for the group that he happens to belong to]. This does not mean that Levi believes that we should not celebrate the diversity and the uniqueness of the national identities that exist within Europe:

*"uno spirito di ogni popolo esiste (altrimenti, non sarebbe un popolo); una Deutschtum, una italianità, una hispanidad: sono somme di tradizioni, abitudini, storia, lingua, cultura"*²⁴

[a spirit of each people exists (otherwise, it would not be a people); a *Deutschtum*, an Italian-ness, a *hispanidad*: they are the sum of traditions, habits, stories, language and culture].

Here, Levi champions an inclusive supranational identity, as will be discussed in greater detail in the remainder of this chapter.

Zweig also deals overtly with this notion of national identity in the constitution of a 'popolo', or people, in his article *Il pensiero Europeo nella sua evoluzione storica* [European Thought in Its Historical Evolution], originally presented at a conference in Florence in 1932.²⁵ Zweig explains how each nation within Europe has the right to desire to express its unique national identity whilst still remaining part of a European whole, in much the same way that a person is justified in wanting to express their unique individuality within any given group. "*Cos'altro sono i popoli, però, se non individui collettivi?*" [What are peoples, in fact, but collective individuals?], Zweig writes. As we have seen, it is pertinent, in fact, that in her biography of her husband, Zweig's first wife Friederike intelligently notes that "internationally-minded men, not enslaved by love for their homeland, may yet miss their indigenous earth as much as one-sided nationalists".²⁶ In her lucid comment, it becomes apparent that patriotism is not an evil in itself. Friederike accounts here for Zweig's deep-rooted love of Austria and the German language when he is far from his 'indigenous earth'.

Curiously, despite their inclusive and open-minded conceptualisation of Europe as a 'union in diversity', all four of the authors in question make explicit references to national stereotypes in their narratives. For example, Morand writes of Germans as being typically bragging: "*Walter a dû tout lui raconter. C'est bien allemand*"²⁷ [Walter must have told him everything. That's very German]; Russians as being typically stony-faced and elusive: "*C'est le premier Russe que je vois sourire, parler sans baisser la voix*"²⁸ [It's the first Russian that I have seen smile, or speak without lowering their voice]; and the French as being typically

²² Levi, *Sommersi*, 133.

²³ Levi, *Sommersi*, 143.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

²⁵ This article is, as yet, unpublished in English, hence why I have used the Italian translation, published in 2015.

²⁶ F. Zweig, *Stefan Zweig*, 198.

²⁷ Morand, *L'Europe galante*, "Les Plaisirs Rhénans".

²⁸ *Ibid.*, "Je Brule Moscou", II.

regarded as romantic gentlemen: “*En amour, n’est-ce pas, être Français, c’est la moitié du chemin. J’adorerais les Français, si j’étais étrangère*”²⁹ [In love, being French is half the work, is it not? I would love French men, if I were foreign]. In all of these passages, it is unclear whether Morand is mocking these stereotypes or perpetuating them. In the following passage, however, it becomes clear through Daniel’s rage at Mme Fredda that Morand is actually going against these stereotypes by using his narrative to show quite how frustrating it is to be judged by them:

[Mme Fredda] “*Je vous ai abordé, Monsieur le Joli [Daniel], parce que je voudrais connaître l’amour avec un Français. Les Français ont, chez nous, une énorme réputation de raffinement extraordinaire. [...]*”

Accablé de fatigue [...], Daniel eut de la peine à contenir sa rage.

[{Mme Fredda} I approached you, Mr le Joli {Daniel}, because I would like to experience love with a Frenchman. In our country, the French have a great reputation of extraordinary sophistication.”

Overcome with fatigue [...], Daniel struggled to contain his rage.]

In *L’Europe galante*, Morand introduces a meta-narrative reflection on the reason behind including such stereotypes in his writing, and justifies them as a way to promote and celebrate national differences within Europe. In one of the *nouvelles* from *L’Europe galante*, “*Céleste Julie*”, at yet another upper class dinner party, the Russian opera singer Julie criticises the character of the writer (surely modelled on Morand himself) as a writer that merely repeats stereotypes:

*“En fait de merveilles, vous prenez à tache de ne nous montrer que l’épilepsie des Russes, la bêtise des Anglais, l’avarice des Français, la paresse des Espagnols, la vanité des Italiens, la vulgarité des Belges, la petitesse des Suisses, la natalité des Allemands, la sauvagerie des Bulgares, l’épaisseur des Hollandais, les grâces universitaires des Tchécoslovaques, les canailleries des Roumains, l’âpreté des Grecs, l’idéal démocratique des Portugais, l’inutilité des Norvégiens, la gymnastique des Suédois, l’ingratitude des Yougoslaves, la légèreté des Autrichiens, la méchanceté des Hongrois, la susceptibilité des Polonais”*³⁰

[In terms of marvels, you take it upon yourself to show us the epilepsy of the Russians, the stupidity of the English, the laziness of the Spanish, the vanity of the Italians, the vulgarity of the Belgians, the pettiness of the Swiss, the birth rate of the Germans, the wildness of the Bulgarians, the thickness of the Dutch, the university graces of the Czechoslovakians, the crookedness of the Romanians, the bitterness of the Greeks, the democratic ideals of the Portuguese, the uselessness of the Norwegians, the gymnastics of the Swedes, the ingratitude of the Yugoslavians, the frivolity of the Austrians, the nastiness of the Hungarians, the sensitivity of the Polish]

To which, the fictional Morand – through whom the true Morand is able to speak – replies in a manner that allows him to anticipate critiques and show an awareness of his own use of

²⁹ Ibid., “Je Brule Moscou”, I.

³⁰ Morand, *L’Europe galante*, “Céleste Julie”.

stereotypes, and perhaps thus excuse himself in the ensuing response. Morand obviously considers his use of stereotypes to be an important matter as he consecrates such a lengthy exchange uniquely to this subject. His character's reply is as follows:

*"... Ou le contraire, madame. Les rêves, dit-on, sont soumis à la loi des contraires. Or, l'écriture n'est qu'un rêve ; cherchez et vous trouverez. Vous verrez soudain, sous ma plume, apparaître la générosité des Russes, la ténacité des Anglais, le jansénisme des Français, le bon sens des Belges, l'altitude des Suisses, la force des Allemands, le savoir des Tchécoslovaques, le courage des Bulgares, l'économie des Grecs, le parisianisme des Roumains, le don d'oubli des Autrichiens, la francophilie des Portugais, le panache des Italiens, etc, et, surtout, la sympathie d'un auteur sans cœur pour ce qui est vivant, sans parler de son admiration pour vous, madame"*³¹

[... Or the opposite, *Madame*. Dreams, they say, are subject to the law of opposites. Writing, therefore, is but a dream; look and you will see. You will see, all of a sudden, flowing from my pen, the generosity of the Russians, the tenacity of the English, the Jansenism of the French, the common sense of the Belgians, the altitude of the Swiss, the strength of the Germans, the knowledge of the Czechoslovakians, the bravery of the Bulgarians, the economy of the Greeks, the Parisianism of the Romanians, the gift of forgetting of the Austrians, the francophilia of the Portuguese, the panache of the Italians, etc., and, most of all, the sympathy of a heartless author for all that is living, without mentioning his admiration for you yourself, *Madame*].

Zweig and Theroux also both reinforce national stereotypes in their narratives, but without the same meta-narrative awareness that is shown in Morand's writing. In describing his meeting with a Russian sculptor in Florence in *The World of Yesterday*, Zweig writes: "I arrived punctually at four, forgetting that she was, after all, a Russian, so time and punctuality meant nothing to her".³² Zweig also refers unashamedly to "the reserved, stiff upper-lip attitude generally displayed by the British with such virtuoso skill".³³ In a similar manner, Theroux writes of "Corsicans themselves [who...] are tremendous generalizers"³⁴ and of typical Galicians: "I looked at the florid triumphant face of this Galician. He was said to have all the Galician traits – above all, Galicians were inexplicable and enigmatic".³⁵ Theroux uses his narrative to note that stereotyping is an inevitable process in identity construction that is thus practised by all national groups during his conversation with a group of Syrians. Herein, Theroux ascertains that the Syrians refer to Turks as 'Mustache', Egyptians as 'Take-your-watch', Jordanians as 'they-only-see-themselves', and Israelis as 'the sun shines out of their arseholes' or "arseholes for short".³⁶ Whilst each of the authors in question clearly uses their narrative to go beyond these restrictive stereotypes, they all also use stereotyping as a technique to display the wealth of differences within Europe, and a way to accept them, which forms an integral part of Kraus' 'union in diversity'.³⁷

³¹ Morand, *L'Europe galante*, "Céleste Julie".

³² Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "Brightness and Shadows over Europe".

³³ *Ibid.*, "The Death Throes of Peace".

³⁴ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 144.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

³⁶ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 419.

³⁷ In Claudio Magris' *Danubio*, a book that could equally have been chosen as a viable primary source for this dissertation, Magris writes that: "*La vera letteratura non è quella che lusinga il lettore, confermandolo nei suoi pregiudizi e nelle sue sicurezze, bensì quella che lo incalza e lo pone in difficoltà, che lo costringe a rifare i conti*

Contrary to the compartmentalising of identity according to national traits that is evident in the use of stereotyping, Theroux's narrative *The Pillars of Hercules* nevertheless overtly challenges nation-centred identity construction through his portrayal of the impact of the advances of technology and globalisation on one's rapport with the nation. Theroux discusses the fact that, in his opinion, "many aspects of Euro-culture had been inspired by America. On the cosmopolitan shores of the Mediterranean, our [American] electronic modernity had been absorbed along with our crass popular culture".³⁸ In a later chapter, Theroux also mentions, with some amusement, that all the Croatians he meets only want to talk of the NBA basketball scores. Despite his disparagement of the idea that Europe should be influenced by the USA, Theroux shows that national borders no longer restrict the flow of knowledge and ideas in our increasingly globalised society. Theroux writes that "the earth is often perceived as a foolproof Google map -- not very large, easily accessible and knowable by any finger-drumming geek with a computer. In some respects, this is true. Distance is no longer a problem".³⁹ With the ease of travel that is particular relevant in the context of the later twentieth century in which Theroux is writing, *The Pillars of Hercules* shows that it is becoming increasingly easier to reach beyond one's own national borders in constructing one's sense of belonging. For Anthony Pagden, the process of identity construction makes understandably slow if tangible progress, but he too acknowledges that this progress is inevitably sped up by the technological advances that Theroux describes. As Pagden notes, "one can detect a very gradual transition from a Europe of competing and frequently hostile nations to a 'Union' of people".⁴⁰

The emphasis that Pagden places on the gradual nature of this transition is mirrored in the way in which these narratives of travel are caught between endorsing a love for one's own nation and a love for Europe. Each country must be strong enough to celebrate its own unique identity whilst also remaining open to collaboration, in order to construct a community of inclusion rather than exclusion, and to stop the spread of the narratives of xenophobia that Hobsbawm describes as becoming "the most widespread mass ideology in the world".⁴¹ Hobsbawm refers to xenophobia as "a reaction of weakness and fear" and it is evident that these four authors are not afraid to push boundaries in their forwarding of a European identity that resonates with Kraus' 'union in diversity'. As is obvious in all of the narratives in question, but is discussed particularly poignantly in Levi's *I sommersi e i salvati*, a love for Europe must logically stem first of all from a love for one's own village, town, region, country and nation. These authors have thus been seen to use their narratives to encourage their readers to rethink their relationship with their nation as part of a collective European whole.

col suo mondo e con le sue certezze. Non sarebbe male se chi inclina a ritenere "semi-uomini" i propri vicini prendesse la penna [...] solo per scrivere il proprio autografo [True literature does not pander to the reader and confirm his prejudices and his self-assurances. Instead, it pursues him and puts him in the difficult situation of having to reposition himself in the world and challenge his certainties. It would not be a bad idea if those that consider their neighbours to be 'half-men' were to take up a pen [...] and attempt to write their own autobiography]. Claudio Magris, *Danubio* (Garzanti, 1990), "Kyselak", Chapter 10. Translation from the Italian my own, Rhian Collings (2016).

³⁸ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 38.

³⁹ Paul Theroux, "Why we travel" (New York Times, 3 April 2011), Academic OneFile, Web. 13 April 2015.

⁴⁰ Woodrow Wilson, *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 32.

⁴¹ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 170.

Going beyond the promotion of a national identity, and sharing a love for Europe's 'union in diversity'

In the first part of this chapter, I have discussed the many ways in which the writers in question use their narratives to promote a sense of national identity. In this section, however, I will show how the writers all reach beyond national borders to celebrate Europe's 'union in diversity', in much the same way that Zweig writes of Switzerland as a microcosm for Europe. He suggests that Europe ought to take Switzerland as "an example to the rest of our confused continent of Europe [as a country that] raise[s] linguistic and national differences to a sense of fraternity".⁴² As Zweig points out very explicitly: "My ideas have always been European and not nationalist"⁴³ and he writes at length of his disliking for "the ultimate pestilence that has poisoned the flower of our European culture, nationalism in general".⁴⁴ Since these authors regard nationalism as just one modality of identity construction, they must therefore present their readers with an alternative model in their narratives. In this section, I will discuss how the narratives in question promote Europe's *e pluribus unum* (plurality in unity), through their discussion of the international union of the European intellectual elite and their permeating love for Europe in all its diversity.

All four authors portray European unity from their privileged position within the social sphere of the intellectual elite, and perhaps none so much so as Paul Morand. Morand takes pride in mixing only with the upper class society of Europe and limits himself to portraying the life of "*une aristocratie du plaisir*"⁴⁵ [an aristocracy of pleasure] or "*des gens très riches*" [very rich people], in the words of the character of Francine in *L'Europe galante*.⁴⁶ Morand acknowledges that international exchange undoubtedly exists "*entre esprits d'élite*" [amongst the spirits of the elite], but goes little further in his conceptualisation of the ensuing responsibility of the elite.⁴⁷ Zweig, on the other hand, considers his privileged position within the intellectual elite as being more than just to his own personal advantage. In fact, Zweig sees his position within the European network of intellectuals as a point of great responsibility, in much the same way as his dear friend Rolland.

Described in Prochnik's biography as "a man who prided himself on serving as a connector between the intellectual and artistic luminaries of Europe", Zweig praises Rolland's conceptualisation of the role and responsibility of the elite and, consequently, makes it clear that he shares his friend's ideals.⁴⁸ Zweig's description of Rolland's novel *Jean-Christophe* is as follows: "Here at last was a work serving not just one European nation, but all of them and the fraternal connection between them" and goes on to add that "this was the first consciously European novel being written at the time, the first vital call for fraternity".⁴⁹ Zweig also describes Rolland's inclusive pacifist essay *Au-dessus de la mêlée* as

⁴² Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "In the Heart of Europe".

⁴³ *Ibid.*, "Out into the World Again".

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Foreword.

⁴⁵ Fogel, *Morand-Express*, Chap. 3.

⁴⁶ Morand, *L'Europe galante*, "Les Plaisirs Rhénans".

⁴⁷ Paul Morand, *Rien que la terre* (Les Cahiers Verts, Ohio State University, 1926), 127.

⁴⁸ Prochnik, *The Impossible Exile*, Introduction.

⁴⁹ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "Brightness and Shadows over Europe".

being “remarkable” and recognised Rolland “as the man who would be the conscience of Europe in its time of crisis”.⁵⁰

In fact, in Rolland’s unpublished correspondence with the early French feminist Louise Cruppi, a letter from Thursday 12th January 1911, (number 87 in the archive), shows that Rolland classifies himself as being more European than French: “*J’ai reçu ces jours-ci, un assez grand nombre d’articles de revues anglaises, italiennes et suisses sur Jean-Christophe. Je crains bien de devenir européen, avant d’être français*” [Over the last few days, I have received a rather large number of articles from English, Italian and Swiss reviews about *Jean-Christophe*. I do fear that I am becoming firstly European, before being French].⁵¹ In *Lettre à ceux qui m’accusent* [Letter to Those Who Accuse Me], Rolland describes his pride in his international network of friends, and explicitly states that he does not see any reason to break off his relations with German friends despite the fraught Franco-German relations during World War I. Rolland writes, “*j’ai des amis allemands comme j’ai des amis français, italiens, anglais, de toute race. C’est ma richesse, j’en suis fier, et je la garde*” [I have German friends, much as I have friends that are French, Italian, English, of all races. This is my wealth, I am proud of it, and I will keep it]. This converges with Zweig’s attitude towards the importance of maintaining international friendships during wartime, which is evident in the following passage from *The World of Yesterday*:

“I addressed all my friends in other countries, saying that I would be loyal to them even if closer links were impossible at the moment, so that at the first opportunity I could go on working with them to encourage the construction of a common European culture”.⁵²

Both of these writers see intellectuals as having a key responsibility in forming public opinion and Rolland stresses the importance of intellectuals not displaying anti-European thought as he writes in *Littérature de Guerre* [Literature of War] of the necessity of “*ne pas ‘saccager’ [...] avec leur plume, l’avenir européen*”⁵³ [not destroying [...] the future of Europe with their pens].

Whilst it is true that Rolland played a key role in emphasising the responsibility of European intellectuals to promote a sense of European union, one ought not to forget that Zweig himself is equally, if not, more important in the promotion of this model. Prochnik notes that Zweig is part of a “community of elite global citizens” and clearly describes Zweig’s position as “inspired by the dream of pan-Europeanism on a humanist model, to be achieved through peaceful, transnational understanding and ruled over by an elite assembly of global scholars”.⁵⁴ For Zweig, the arts are a ‘safe space’, in which national – and linguistic⁵⁵ – borders lose all relevance, and thus the arts create his envisaged “ideal of peaceful understanding and intellectual brotherhood crossing linguistic and national

⁵⁰ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “The Fight for International Fraternity”, “Brightness and Shadows over Europe”.

⁵¹ Unpublished correspondence between Rolland and Cruppi, from the *Fonds Romain Rolland at the Bibliothèque nationale de France* (call number: MS 6862).

⁵² Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “The Fight for International Fraternity”.

⁵³ Romain Rolland, *Au-dessus de la mêlée*, “Littérature de Guerre” (1915), 2.

⁵⁴ Prochnik, *The Impossible Exile*, Introduction.

⁵⁵ This can be traced back to when intellectuals were united by the use of a common language, Latin, in all European universities.

borders”.⁵⁶ Writing of an international group of poets, for example, Zweig states that: “One lived in Germany, another in France, yet another in Italy, but they all inhabited the same homeland, for they really lived only in their poetry”.⁵⁷ As he expresses so eloquently in *Appello agli Europei*, “*al di sopra dell’Europa geografica è sempre visibile un’Europa dallo spirito*” [above and beyond geographical Europe, a Europe of the Spirit can always be seen] and it is precisely this intellectual unity of Europe that Zweig demonstrates in his example of the union of the German, French and Italian poets, and encourages his readers to work towards such achievement.⁵⁸

In *L’unificazione dell’Europa* [The Unification of Europe], written in 1935 while Zweig was living in London, Zweig showcases his idea that “*solo una stretta interconnessione di tutti gli Stati rivolta a una duratura alleanza potrà attenuare le difficoltà economiche, ridurre i rischi di guerra*” [only a tightly-knit interconnection between States aimed towards a long-term alliance will have the power to alleviate economic difficulties and reduce the risks of war]. In this essay, Zweig admits that the idea of a European identity “*non ha affondato le sue radici nell’humus dei popoli*” [has not reached its roots down into the humus of the people], since it is far easier to identify with “selfish nationalism” rather than “altruistic Europeanism”. In addition, Zweig notes that debates and conferences only touch a tiny portion of Europeans, and often these are the ones that already believe in the European project. Hence Zweig believes that he needs to diffuse his ideas outside the “*sfera esoterica delle discussioni intellettuali*” [the esoteric sphere of intellectual discussions] and obtain more “visibility”, despite the fact that he was already, by nature, an intellectual who was very much in touch with his audience, and successfully reached out to the masses, as his wide-scale popularity shows. This resonates particularly with Pagden’s European theory, who also believed in the need for increased ‘visibility’. Pagden writes that “the difficulty in actual practice is that all the attempts to “construct Europe”, and with it a notion of European citizenship, have been the work of elites – elites composed of ‘experts’ whose work has generally been conducted behind closed doors”.⁵⁹

Similarly to both Morand and Zweig, Theroux is clearly part of the intellectual elite and uses *The Pillars of Hercules* to follow in the footsteps of the great intellectuals of the past, as can be seen in his frequent references to many European and American authors that travelled around Europe whilst writing their works of fiction and travel writing in the past. For example, Theroux uses the work of Joyce to enhance his visit to Trieste and claims that he was “delighted to be able to guide [him]self through the city by using a novel that was almost a hundred years old”.⁶⁰ Amusingly, Theroux occupies a liminal position at the boundary between the elite world of European intellectuals and the growing backpacking culture of the 90s. In Arles, for example, he chooses his hotel in a manner that is very inconsistent with a member of the cultural elite as conceived by Morand or Zweig: “Arles had three or four large luxury hotels, but I was put off by their ridiculous prices. I had found the name of a twenty-dollar hotel in a guidebook”.⁶¹ Theroux deliberately tries to escape his intellectual heritage, since in the context of the late twentieth century, excessive

⁵⁶ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “Brightness and Shadows over Europe”.

⁵⁷ Ibid., “Paris, the City of Eternal Youth”.

⁵⁸ I must point out that I am using the Italian translation, since no English translation yet exists from the original German. All English translations from the Italian are my own, Rhian Collings (2016).

⁵⁹ Wilson, *The Idea of Europe*, 26.

⁶⁰ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 223.

⁶¹ Ibid., 87.

intellectualism was no longer particularly appealing to the intended audience of travel writing.

What was, however, and always is appealing to a readership is an author's tangible enthusiasm for what they love. All of the authors in question show a pure love of Europe that they share unhesitatingly with their readers in their narratives. In *The World of Yesterday*, Zweig describes Europe as being the "true home of [his] heart's desire"⁶² and, talking of his group of intellectual friends, Zweig proclaims: "How we all loved Europe!"⁶³ He claims to feel "nerve-racking anxiety about the fate of Europe" and even goes so far as to state: "However far I went from Europe, its fate went with me".⁶⁴ Zweig's biographer Prochnik describes a meeting between Zweig and the journalist Brainin in New York in *The Impossible Exile*. Upon interviewing Zweig, Brainin understood that when Europe "began to split up into little cubicles," Zweig "suffered the pain of physical dismemberment" because the Europe that he loved was being destroyed by the political upheaval of World War II.⁶⁵

It is thus that Zweig's love for Europe is often expressed in seemingly negative, nostalgic terms. Even Morand, writing before the rise of Fascism in *Rien que la terre* in 1925, describes his sentimental attachment to the "*Europe devenue si laide, mais notre mère*" [Europe become so ugly, but still our mother], in a way that converges with the nostalgia of Zweig's writings about his beloved Europe.⁶⁶ Morand counteracts any doubters that he meets during his travels who believe it to be "*la fin des privilèges de la race blanche, la décrépitude de l'Europe*" [the end of the privileges of the Whites, the decrepitude of Europe], with the argument that all that Europe is reproached for is, in fact, "*des phénomènes de croissance*" [phenomena of its development].⁶⁷ According to Morand, this striving towards development is what differentiates Europe from "*les pays qui croulent et ne savent pas rebâtir*" [countries that fall apart and do not know how to rebuild themselves].⁶⁸ Morand differs from Zweig here in his conceptualisation of the countries outside Europe as being inferior to European nations. In contrast to Morand's characterisation of other continents in *Rien que la terre* that are portrayed as being somewhat backwards, Zweig's final book, in fact, refers to his land of exile, Brazil, as being "the land of the future". Zweig's belief that Europe is not the only place where one can be civilised and forward-thinking can be interpreted in light of the historical context in which he was writing, where Europe and any ideas of European union had fallen so far that it seemed difficult to imagine how to pick up the pieces of a collective identity in tatters.

Despite the apparent difficulty in believing in a shared future for European nations in such a troubled period of the history of Europe, the authors in question nevertheless clearly do succeed in promoting Kraus' 'union in diversity'. Pagden – who believes, like Kraus, in Europe as *e pluribus unum* (plurality in unity) – renders indubitable the relevance of a collective European identity in the twentieth century, explaining that:

⁶² Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, Foreword.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, "Brightness and Shadows over Europe".

⁶⁴ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "The Death Throes of Peace".

⁶⁵ Prochnik, *The Impossible Exile*, Chapter II.

⁶⁶ Morand, *Rien que la terre*, 251.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 251, 252.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 252.

“The experience of two world wars, combined with ever-increasing migration for political, economic or broadly cultural motives across the rapidly dissolving frontiers of Europe, have forced upon Europeans the uneasy sense that their self-confidence in knowing just who they are is almost certainly unfounded”.⁶⁹

According to Pagden, the logical upshot of this is that “it now matters what being ‘European’ is and is not”, thus resonating with the importance that the authors in question give to promoting a European ‘union in diversity’.⁷⁰

In *Rien que la terre*, for example, Morand also shows that he has given deep thought to the question of what it means to be part of an integrated European identity. His narrative deals specifically with the lack of international cooperation in Europe at the time. Morand uses the example of France and England to show quite how disconnected and distant two countries can be that are only separated by “*trois quarts d’heure de mer*” [three quarters of an hour at sea]. He describes France and England as being “*aussi éloignés que la Perse l’est des Antilles*” [as far apart as Persia and the Antilles]: two places that, despite having shed blood together fighting for the same cause during World War I, feel only “*ignorance et mépris*” [ignorance and contempt] for each other.⁷¹ Interestingly, Morand, does not blame Britain for this, but accepts instead that both countries ought to have a sense of mutual responsibility for this situation. As a Frenchman, he thus implicitly self-criticises his own nation and acknowledges that we must move beyond this ignorance of the other in order to create a sense of collective belonging.

In contrast, Zweig promotes a sense of a European ‘family of nations’ by using Europe’s cities as specific examples of multicultural meeting grounds. In his description of Vienna, he writes that, during the Hapsburg Empire, “unconsciously every citizen of Vienna also became a supranational, cosmopolitan citizen of the world”.⁷² This resonates with the political theories exposed by Habermas in *The Post-National Constellation: Political Essays*, where he claims that to form a post-national democracy, “political communities [must] form a collective identity beyond national borders”.⁷³ In this vein, Zweig describes Vienna as a city in which intellectuals and artists from different countries come together to celebrate a transcendental “love for culture” that goes beyond national differences.⁷⁴ Zweig acknowledges that his upbringing in a cosmopolitan city is what allowed him to conceptualise the European community in such embracing terms: “Nowhere was it easier to be a European, and I know that in part I have to thank Vienna [...] for the fact that I learnt early to love the idea of community as the highest ideal of my heart”.⁷⁵ The example of Paris is also used in *The World of Yesterday* to enforce the idea that a place is home not only to those who were born there: “Chinese and Scandinavians, Spaniards and Greeks, Brazilians and Canadians, we all felt at home on the banks of the Seine”.⁷⁶ Recalling a conversation with André Gide,⁷⁷ Zweig notes how Gide feels that foreigners almost seem to know Paris

⁶⁹ Wilson, *The Idea of Europe*, 1.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁷¹ Morand, *Rien que la terre*, 13.

⁷² Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “The World of Security”.

⁷³ Jürgen Habermas, *The Post-National Constellation: Political Essays* (Wiley, 2000), 90.

⁷⁴ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “The World of Security”.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “Paris, the City of Eternal Youth”.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

better than the French, thus showing to what extent these 'foreigners' have become an integrated part of the international and multicultural community of Paris, which functions once again as a microcosm of a supra-national Europe.⁷⁸

Levi also uses his narratives to illustrate his belief in European identity as a 'union in diversity'. In the aftermath of Auschwitz, Levi shows that the European peoples are united by the horrors of the war that they have lived through together: a war that Levi describes as a European phenomenon involving all of the countries of Europe and whose termination is celebrated by groups of *Europeans* and not by compartmentalised national groups.⁷⁹ Even during his time in the concentration camps, Levi shows his readers that he believes that the community of the Lager is "a common sample of humanity",⁸⁰ considering primarily what unites the human race rather than the factors that separate it into restrictive national categories. Linguistic and national differences are of little importance in this atrocious new community, where "thousands of individuals differing in age, condition, origin, language, culture and customs, are enclosed within barbed wire", since they are all living "a regular, controlled life, which is identical for all".⁸¹

This perception of the human race as one united and equal body persists in Levi's description of the aftermath of the camps in *La tregua*. As the survivors are slowly repatriated, they pass through a series of transit camps. In each of these places, the survivors create a community by forming attachments to each other and to the land, with often a large part of them not wanting to move on when the various authorities arbitrarily decree that their homeward journey must continue. Flury writes of how this "entangled body of people struggle and strive to situate themselves", forging a "community on the move".⁸² For example, Levi's description of the heterogeneous community of the transit camp in Staryje Doroghi as that of a community diverse in sex, race, colour, nationality and religion, fully reveals how these camps were successful melting pots of European languages and cultures.⁸³ In his account of the Katowice transit camp, Levi even goes so far as to refer to the group of survivors as the "*popolazione*"⁸⁴ [population] of the camp, thus grouping together "*parlatori di tutte le lingue di Europa*" [speakers of all the languages of Europe] as a multilingual and multinational community.⁸⁵ Levi describes the temporary communities of the transit camps in very positive terms, as forming "*una stagione unica nella [sua] esistenza*" [a unique period of [his] life], where the people and peoples encountered "*[gli] stavano nel cuore*" [stayed in [his] heart].⁸⁶ Levi shows how the survivors of Auschwitz are aware that the only way to survive the aftermath of the camps is to collaborate, by

⁷⁸ Zygmunt Bauman underlines the importance of 'foreigners' or migrants in deconstructing our preconceptions about national identity in *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*. Bauman describes the 'crisis of belonging' that migrants bring to the foreground with their very presence that is similar to what Zweig describes here. For more information, see Bauman: *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*, (University of Leeds and Warsaw, 2004).

⁷⁹ Levi, *La tregua*, 144, 107.

⁸⁰ Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 87. Levi further highlights that mankind is a single race (71): "The conviction that life has a purpose is rooted in every fibre of man, it is a property of the human substance".

⁸¹ Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 87.

⁸² Flury, *Discovering 'Europe'*, 65.

⁸³ Levi, *La tregua*, 150.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 218.

embracing the 'other' and creating cross-national friendships. In the Staryje Doroghi transit camp, for example, the men and women prefer to share a room: "*una situazione meno intima ma più sicura*" [a less intimate but safer option].⁸⁷ The safety of sharing a room in this case serves to protect the women from the advances of the lustful Russian soldiers, but Levi provides us with several other examples in *La tregua* of international collaboration that has a less obvious immediate goal. Indeed, in Iasi in Romania, Italian and Romanian Jews form a mutually aiding community in the form of a help centre that defies national borders and Levi also describes how Hungarian Pista works willingly and diligently in an Italian aid camp.⁸⁸

International solidarity is also shown in relationships between individuals and not only in group partnerships. Through Levi's portrayal of his alliance with the Greek, Mordo Nahum, he shows how Nahum is prepared to help a man weaker than himself by sharing his extensive, gruff advice and with the practical aid of "*due pezzi di tela robusta*" [two pieces of robust cloth] that Levi subsequently uses to craft himself some rudimentary footwear.⁸⁹ In a time where resources are hard to come by, Nahum's albeit grudging sharing of his possessions is praiseworthy. Levi's narrative is precise and factual in nature, but the mere fact that he mentions this division of materials is enough; any discerning reader will comprehend the magnanimity of Nahum's gesture. Levi also takes great care in recounting another partnership between individuals, this time between Hungarian Henek and the *nulla* child, Hurbinek, who was born and raised in Auschwitz. In the period immediately following the closing of the camps, Levi observes the relationship that grows between Henek and Hurbinek from his hospital bed in the room that they share. Selflessly, Henek "*gli portava da mangiare, gli rassettava le coperte, lo ripuliva con mani abili*" [brought him food to eat, adjusted his blankets, cleaned him with skilful hands].⁹⁰ These examples of common humanity in times of persecution show that national borders are of no importance in the creation of a sense of community amongst Europeans, which proved necessary in order to endure the sufferings inflicted by the Fascist regime.

Levi shows that these moments of "*spontanea umanità*" [spontaneous humanity] exist not only in the aftermath of the camps, but also within the camps themselves.⁹¹ In *Se questo è un uomo*, Levi describes his encounter with the Hungarian dentist upon his arrival in the Lager. The new Italian inmates are bewildered at how quickly they must come to terms with this horrific new world and are grateful that the dentist appears of his own free will to explain to the new detainees all that he can about the running of the Lager. Levi writes that the Hungarian came "*perché gli sono simpatici gli italiani e perché, dice, "ha un po' di cuore*" [because he ha[d] a liking for Italians, and because, he [the Hungarian] says, 'has a little heart'] (Italics mine).⁹² Levi explains how the Hungarian man's gesture is particularly significant in the context of Auschwitz, since he was defying the rules of the camp at his own risk. This episode proves that the Germans did not fully succeed in quashing all sense of humanity in all of the inmates, although the rest of *Se questo è un uomo* leaves its readers in no doubt that the Hungarian dentist was more fortunate than most of the prisoners in the Nazi Lagers.

⁸⁷ Levi, *La tregua*, 205.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 230, 253.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁹⁰ Levi, *La tregua*, 23.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁹² Levi, *Se questo è un uomo*, 28.

In his narratives, Levi writes not only of embracing the 'other' in a general sense, but also more specifically of embracing the German 'other'. This is particularly meaningful, since the German 'other' was inevitably negatively charged after the war. Levi's portrayal of his and Cesare's encounter with an old German lady in her shop near Katowice shows no consideration for the animosity that is almost expected to exist between survivors and their German oppressors. Levi illustrates how the woman is, at first, brusque and mistrusting of them, but upon hearing that they are Jews from Auschwitz, "*allora era un'altra faccenda*" [well, that changed things].⁹³ The woman suddenly alters her attitude and urges them to sit down, to drink her beer and eat her food, and, in perhaps her most notable display of trust and comradeship, she invites the Italians to listen to her stories of her own encounters with Nazism. In a small shop in Poland, Levi shows how an innate bond can exist between people of different nationalities, in this case between representatives of Italy and Germany. Indeed, Levi's inclusion of this episode in his narrative shows that he has maintained the emotional and rational capacity that allows him to distinguish between his German oppressors in the camps and this German shopkeeper, thus embracing different nationalities as part of the European whole with no sense of remonstrance for any nation's past ills.

It has been seen that all four of the narratives of travel in question urge the readers to reach beyond the nation in identity construction and to conceptualise identity in broader terms than the national, and ideally on the collective European scale. In this conceptualisation, each European nation needs the others in order for its own separate national identity to exist and shine in light of this contrast. In the words of Cacciari in *Geofilosofia dell'Europa* [Geophilosophy of Europe], "*mai l'assolutamente distinto può esistere se non con ciò, insieme a ciò da cui si distingue*" [the purely distinct can only ever exist together with that from which it distinguishes itself].⁹⁴

Beyond Eurocentrism: Europe from the outside

In order to perceive what Kraus and Cacciari truly believe that it means to be European – where "*l'armonia proviene dal [...] differire delle parti*" [harmony comes from [...] the difference between the parts], and the great multiplicity within Europe is celebrated as being a fundamental part of what it means to be European – we will now discuss how the narratives of travel in question all show that it is necessary to take a third step in identity construction.⁹⁵ Between the first and second parts of this chapter, we have seen how the authors of these travel narratives encourage Europeans to step outside the boundaries of their nation in order to see it as part of a collective European whole. Now, it will become clear that, to perceive this very European-ness, one must, in fact, go one step further and see European identity as just one step on the way towards envisaging a globally inclusive identity.⁹⁶ Since three of the four writers in question were all excluded from belonging to Europe in some way, their perspective of what it means to be European is particularly poignant, as will be seen in the ensuing paragraphs. In the twentieth century, when a seemingly never-ending succession of wars was narrowing the mind-set of many Europeans,

⁹³ Levi, *La tregua*, 127.

⁹⁴ Massimo Cacciari, *Geofilosofia dell'Europa* (Adelphi, 1994), 147.

⁹⁵ Cacciari, *Geofilosofia dell'Europa*, 132.

⁹⁶ This is an idea that is much discussed by Habermas, as will be discussed in the Beyond Eurocentrism: conclusions section.

the writings of Morand, Zweig, Levi and Theroux aim to reach beyond this caging of the European mind.

By way of example, let us examine the way in which Dr. B is forced to think narrowly in Zweig's *A Chess Story*, and has to harness his mind with the constant replaying of chess games as a survival technique. This mirrors the situation in which Zweig and his wife found themselves whilst in exile in Brazil, where they were largely deprived of books and entertainment. They themselves also turned to chess as a pastime, which undoubtedly represented a narrowing of their horizons. Perhaps these restricted horizons, which were present both in Zweig's own life at the time and that of his protagonist in *A Chess Story*, could signify his outlook on the impact of the World Wars on Europe as a whole: how closed- or narrow- mindedness leads to an inevitable loss of identity construction on a Europe-wide scale. Although Zweig had no direct experience of the Nazi lagers, this sensation of 'narrowing' that he describes through the experiences of Dr. B could interconnect with Levi's description of how caging his mind was a method he used in order to keep his sanity in the concentration camps.

Through the very nature of travel writing, borders are transcended and the bars of the cage enclosing the European mind in this turbulent period appear to become less tightly spaced. In the latter half of the twentieth century, when asked why he is travelling through Gibraltar, for example, Theroux simply answers: "Because I've never been here before", thus showing how, in his era, he has the luxury of traveling quite simply for "a sense of discovery".⁹⁷ By using travel to raise multicultural awareness and make readers aware of the joy of discovering the cultures that exist beyond the national or continental borders of the place where they reside, all four writers conceptualise Europe from the outside looking in, thus showing the arbitrary nature of territorial borders and how flexible our conceptualisation of the limits of Europe ought to be.⁹⁸

As Pagden notes in *The Idea of Europe*, Europe is sometimes difficult to conceptualise from the inside. Pagden writes:

"Viewed from Europe, there may be no such thing as a 'European culture'. Viewed from Japan there clearly is. What the new Europe must generate is a sense of belonging that retains the Japanese eye-view, a sense of belonging that can perceive diversity while giving allegiance to that which is shared".⁹⁹

This phenomenon is equally evident in the fact that it is possible to read 'European Studies' at universities in North America, whereas one would struggle to find a similarly broad and inclusive course within the borders of Europe itself. It is thus interesting to note that three of the four authors in question who conceptualise Europe so openly, so inclusively, are very clearly outsiders from or in the very Europe they revere. Zweig was a Jewish exile in Brazil, whose books were censored and even destroyed under the Third Reich; Levi, a Jewish inmate in Auschwitz, the liminal 'non-place' from which he looked back at Europe; and

⁹⁷ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 9, 10.

⁹⁸ Although not all of the writers in question conceptualise Europe 'from the outside looking in' in the four narratives in question, they have all also written other narratives that do just that. Morand looks back at Europe from a distance in *Rien que la terre*; Zweig sees Europe from his position as an exile in Brazil; Levi is excluded from belonging to Europe during his internment in Auschwitz; Theroux, being American, already has the gaze of an outsider when travelling through Europe.

⁹⁹ Wilson, *The Idea of Europe*, 24.

Theroux, an American expatriate living in the United Kingdom. One must nevertheless distinguish between the position of Zweig and Levi – as outsiders against their will – and Theroux, who chose of his own volition to leave behind his native land of America and live in Europe for 25 years of his life.

In this vein, one can also consider Morand as having occupied the position of outsider, since he chooses to travel widely beyond Europe during his lifetime. Morand's texts undoubtedly convey a deep-rooted love of Europe when seen from the outside, as Fogel explains in his biography in this snippet of Morand speaking during his travels in Tanger, Morocco: "*Je me prive d'elle [de l'Europe] pour mieux, d'ici, la contempler, je la regarde avec tendresse*" [I deprive myself of her [of Europe] in order to see her better from here. I look at her with tenderness].¹⁰⁰ It is, in fact, this stepping beyond the limits of Europe that helps Morand to better understand the shared culture that he has left behind. Morand's privileged position as a traveller allows him to realise that, seen from this new perspective, Europe is but a "*curieux et minuscule spectacle vu du dehors*" [curious and minuscule spectacle seen from without]. With this opening of his horizons, Morand shows an awareness of the vast world that exists outside his own country and continent. Curiously, in *Rien que la terre*, Morand views all the countries that he visits through a European lens, or what he refers to as "*l'oeil européen*" [the European eye]; everything must be compared to European culture and customs in order to be understood.¹⁰¹ For example, the prairies of Alberta in Canada are so large that they could fit "*deux Hongries et quatre Roumanies mises bout à bout*" [two Hungaries and two Romanias placed end to end].¹⁰² Furthermore, to Morand, the "*faubourgs de Bangkok*" [suburbs of Bangkok] are "*un Rotterdam oriental, une sorte de Hambourg barbare*" [an oriental Rotterdam, a sort of barbarian Hamburg].¹⁰³

Not only does Europe become a central theme for Morand in his using it as a standard to understand the non-European places that he visits, but it also functions as an englobing identity that goes beyond national borders, as is shown in Morand's regular use of the adjective 'European' rather than nation-centred adjectives such as 'French', 'German' or 'English'. Morand describes "*ces chauffeurs qui font marcher notre vapeur*" [these workers on our steam-boat] as "*des Européens*" [Europeans]; these workers are European to Morand in opposition to the local Chinese.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, Morand writes of "*la conversation européenne*" [European conversation] and describes the gatherings of European people abroad as "*tous ces Européens comme une seule famille*" [all these Europeans like one single family].¹⁰⁵ This conceptualisation of the shared values of Europe is, of course, only possible because Morand has taken a step beyond Europe's borders.

Likewise, Zweig deals overtly in *The World of Yesterday* with the necessity of becoming an outsider in order to understand one's own culture. Zweig states: "I owe Rathenau his suggestion that I should look beyond Europe. [...] "You can't understand our continent until you have gone beyond it at least once"".¹⁰⁶ Following this advice and after his wide travels, Zweig notes that "Europe no longer seemed [...] the eternal axis of the

¹⁰⁰ Fogel, *Morand-Express*, Chap. 3.

¹⁰¹ Morand, *Rien que la terre*, 13.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁰⁵ Morand, *Rien que la terre*, 35.

¹⁰⁶ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "Detours on the Way to Myself".

universe”.¹⁰⁷ With the physical distance that he puts between himself and his continent, Zweig is able to reach the realisation that, although he may have lost his sense of belonging to his native country due to his enforced exile, he can still belong to and identify with a wider community. Zweig writes in the foreword of *The World of Yesterday*: “I am no longer organically bound to my native land and I never really fit into any other”, but adds in the final chapter: “I was sure in my heart from the first of my identity as a citizen of the world”.¹⁰⁸

Theroux, on the other hand, uses his position as an outsider to somewhat different ends and, rather than singing the praises of Europe from a distance, he prefers to concentrate instead on pointing out the unpleasant truths about Europe, the awkward truths that are too uncomfortable to be noted by insiders. In *The Pillars of Hercules*, Theroux writes:

“The Frenchmen who talked about the Romans would be evasive when the subject of the German occupation was raised. Israelis might not be happy talking about something that occurred in South Lebanon last year. There was a book to be written about Mediterranean notions of time”.¹⁰⁹

Theroux goes on to point out that in Italy, mentioning the name of Mussolini in polite company “was immeasurably worse than farting”.¹¹⁰ As an outsider, Theroux thus notes Europe’s desire to bury its less than laudable past and shows that Europeans are clearly not yet ready to discuss the political upheavals of the twentieth century with foreigners. Theroux also uses his presence as an outsider within Europe to mention that which one might prefer to gloss over and ignore:

“The Mediterranean, this simple, almost tideless sea the size of thirty Lake Superiors, had everything: prosperity, poverty, tourism, terrorism, several wars in progress, ethnic strife, fascists, pollution, drift-nets, private islands owned by billionaires, gypsies, seventeen countries, fifty languages, oil-drilling platforms, sponge fishermen, religious fanatics, drug smuggling, fine art, and warfare. It had Christians, Muslims, Jews; it had the Druzes who are a strange farrago on all three religions; it had heathens, Zoroastrians and Copts and Bahias”.¹¹¹

Despite this seemingly negative conceptualisation of Europe and the Mediterranean – one must not be beguiled by Theroux’s caustically ironic writing style – Theroux, along with the other authors in question, uses his narrative to present an inclusive vision of Europe in which the arbitrary nature of European borders becomes immediately apparent. For example, let us examine his description of the Mediterranean Sea:

“Continuous and unchanging, the simultaneous calm in eighteen countries, and those aqueous and indistinct borders, made it seem like a small world of nations,

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., “Foreword”, “The First Hours of the 1914 War”.

¹⁰⁹ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 71.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 180.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 7.

cheek by jowl, with their chins in the water. And it was so calm I could imagine myself trespassing, from one to the other".¹¹²

Hence Theroux sees borders as "indistinct" and easy to trespass across, leading him to state that "that feeling of being at the edge of the sea [...] obliterated any clear idea of nationhood".¹¹³ Theroux thus encourages his readers to see Europe as a flexible entity in which territorial borders hold little or no importance. In fact, the only significance of European national borders for an international traveller like Theroux is as a mere nuisance, as can be seen in how he views border checks as a frustration due to excessive and, as his comment implies, unnecessary nationalism. "This was one of the irritations of nationalism" writes Theroux, "every few miles a passport check, just a ritual, at the frontier of another tinkly-winky republic".¹¹⁴

Despite not having the same freedom in crossing these borders as Theroux, Zweig also uses his narrative to forward the idea that borders are arbitrary and are, in his own words, "nothing but symbolic lines on the map".¹¹⁵ He underlines the random nature of the placing of national borders, particularly in times of conflict: "I could not help wondering whether the fish on the right bank of this little river at the border were also at war, while the fish on the left bank were neutral".¹¹⁶ In fact, in his article, *Disintossicazione morale dell'Europa* [Moral Detox of Europe]¹¹⁷, Zweig tackles how a nation tells its own history, and how each nation inevitably represents bordering countries as the wrongdoers in order to justify their own acts. Consequently, in his true all-embracing fashion, Zweig claims that we need to change the way we teach history, shifting the emphasis from teaching about wars and conflicts and the placing of borders, to teaching about the unique cultural heritage of neighbouring countries. This teaching should not limit itself to the past, but should also detail modern-day creative developments in other European countries and should encourage inter-European university exchanges that cross borders.¹¹⁸

Morand also uses his narratives, particularly *Rien que la terre*, to deal with the concept of the arbitrary nature of the artificial lines that separate land into countries, and even continents. Morand states that "*on pouvait fixer la frontière entre l'Asie et l'Europe en bien d'autres points qu'à l'Oural*" [we could put the border between Asia and Europe in many other places instead of the Urals].¹¹⁹ Even the very title of the work, *Rien que la terre* [Nothing but the Earth], suggests his opposition to humanity's inherent desire to separate and categorise. It is hence no surprise that, in 1932, Ernst Robert Curtius described

¹¹² Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 82.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 228.

¹¹⁵ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "The Death Throes of Peace".

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, "In the Heart of Europe".

¹¹⁷ Once again, I must point out that I am using the Italian translation, since no English translation yet exists from the original German.

¹¹⁸ Not only in his autobiography and in his critical essays, but also in his works of fiction, Zweig, like all of the four authors in question, uses his narratives to portray characters that move between countries and cross national borders in their travels, thus allowing him to break down the importance of these very borders. In his short stories, although Europe and European identity may not seem to be a central issue, Zweig depicts many characters that travel, even if only within their own countries. The 'unknown woman' moves to Innsbruck from the countryside and Margaret in *The Debt Paid Late* travels to the Italian Alps. The main character in *A Chess Story* is also a traveller.

¹¹⁹ Morand, *Rien que la terre*, 24.

Morand's writing as "*brouillant les cultures et les continents*" [mixing cultures and continents].¹²⁰ Many years later, in 1980, Morand's biographer Fogel also describes Morand as a natural traveller who is "*partout chez lui et moquant les frontières, [qui] n'a ni patrie, ni époque*" [at home everywhere and mocking borders, [who] has no homeland and no era].¹²¹

Although it is Morand who is described here as having an open-minded and forward-thinking conceptualisation of territorial borders and the meaning of Europe, the author whose narrative makes the most dramatic statement concerning the creation of an all-embracing European identity is, undoubtedly, Theroux. Theroux's use of the word 'Mediterranean' rather than 'European' takes the subversion of national boundaries to a new level.¹²² Theroux's own description of his traveling style as being "a quest for detail, conversation as a form of ambush, the traveller as an agent of provocation"¹²³ matches his *osé* espousal of Europe's Eastern 'other'. Indeed, the emphasis that he places on the inclusion of North Africa in his conception of Europe is immediately evident even in the choice of the title of his work. '*The Pillars of Hercules*' is a reference to ancient Greek mythology, when this expression was used to describe the Straits of Gibraltar, which were previously considered to be impassable, treacherous waters. Theroux's choice of title shows that he considers the crossing of these straits as being a key movement in his travels around Europe and North Africa. For instance, he describes the mixing of Western and Eastern cultures in overwhelmingly positive terms – "the Arabesque of Marseilles, loathed and feared by the French, was one of its most interesting and liveliest aspects" – and praises the "cultural bouillabaisse, made up of distinctly Mediterranean ingredients" that he sees in this multicultural French town.¹²⁴

Theroux describes the Mediterranean as a "limitless" and "inspirational" feature that unites its Western and Eastern seaside dwellers in a 'union in diversity' and writes frequently of the "resemblances, Mediterranean similarities" that exist between European (and non-European) countries.¹²⁵ Theroux notes that what he sees as he travels around the Mediterranean bears "little relation to what was happening five miles inland [...]. That hinterland was not my subject, though; I did not care about the perplexities of Europe".¹²⁶ Despite this problematic comment, Theroux evidently is making a significant contribution to an inclusive construction of European identity, even as he shies away from this precise terminology. As he points out, "there were advantages to being in the European community, but the Mediterranean was a community, too".¹²⁷ Herein, Theroux takes his readers beyond Eurocentrism and shows us how flexible our concept of Europe can and should be. In line with the view that Waldron expresses in *Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative*, Theroux's narrative shows to what extent he believes that one must, in the words of C. Taylor:

¹²⁰ Curtius, *Essai sur la littérature française*, 23.

¹²¹ Fogel, *Morand-Express*, Chap. 3.

¹²² For further information, the idea of a Mediterranean identity is also discussed in detail in Norma Bouchard's *Italy and the Mediterranean: Words, Sounds and Images of the Post-Cold War Era* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), in which Bouchard writes of the Mediterranean as "an 'ideal' of integration and reconciliation" that values the "convergence, rather than a clash of civilisations" (41).

¹²³ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 405.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 94, 96.

¹²⁵ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 93, 86, 120.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.

“question, first, the assumption that the social world divides up neatly into particular distinct cultures, one to every community, and secondly, the assumption that what everyone needs is just one of these entities – a single, coherent culture – to give meaning to his life”.¹²⁸

Controversially, Theroux denies that Europe can ignore the existence of its external Eastern ‘other’ and instead challenges Europeans to include the East in their conceptualisation of what it means to be European or, as Theroux posits, ‘Mediterranean’.¹²⁹

Conclusions

As the very title of his work suggests, Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities* that the concept of nationhood “is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of the fellow-members”,¹³⁰ but goes on to add that nevertheless “in the minds of each [of these members] lives the image of their communion”.¹³¹ This same discourse can be applied to the forwarding of a European identity, which is undeniably an ‘imagined’ construct, but equally one that is of great value in that it unites factions rather than categorises and separates them in our increasingly fragmented society. In this chapter, it has become manifestly obvious that, despite their incredibly different backgrounds and approaches, Morand, Zweig, Levi and Theroux all use their narratives to de-/re-/construct a sense of European or supranational identity, by urging their readership to rethink their relationship with their nation as part of a collective European whole. Consequently, these four authors encourage their readers to perceive diversity as being not Europe’s weakness, but rather its edifying strength. This chapter has shown how all four of the narratives in question celebrate difference and national distinctness, but also aim to promote an englobing notion of European identity. Finally, we have seen how these authors even go beyond the borders of Europe in their conceptualisation of European-ness, thus challenging our traditional preconceptions about identity construction and proving that the inclusive ‘union in diversity’ promoted in these texts is not even limited by Europe’s external borders.

Let us return now to the quotation used at the opening of this chapter, in which Theroux speaks with some independentist islanders living in a remote corner of Oceania about their xenophobic attitude of not wanting to share their island with foreigners. Theroux listens politely to their opinions, but then reminds the islanders of the importance of collaborating, of building bridges between different nations and creating unions that

¹²⁸ Charles Taylor, *Thinking and Living Deep Diversity* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 128.

¹²⁹ Roberto Dainotto in *Europe (In Theory)* (Duke University Press, 2007), takes a somewhat contrary stance and claims that European identity is not formed as an antithesis to Asia or the East, its external other, but rather it is formed in contrast to its *internal* other: the South, or the PIGS, as Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain have been unsympathetically nicknamed within the European Union. Dainotto thus states that he wishes to “question Eurocentrism not from the outside but from the marginal inside of Europe itself” (4). Unembarrassedly, he admits his desire is to “trouble the tranquil waters of European studies” (4) and his lack of faith in the existence of a true European identity does not, in fact, sit well with my own dissertation that argues my belief in a collective sense of belonging to Europe that includes both the South and the North of Europe on equal footing.

¹³⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities* 6.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

transcend our differences. In constructing a modern-day European identity, we would do well to heed Theroux's advice to the islanders that "the more solitary you are, the more vulnerable you will be".¹³²

Once again turning to Theroux by way of example, it is uplifting to see that these four narratives look to the future and leave their readership with hope for the de-/re-/construction of European identity in the economic and political turmoil of the twentieth century. Morand, Zweig, Levi and Theroux, albeit in very different ways and to different extents, all look towards Europe's future, much like the character of Albanian Fatmir in *The Pillars of Hercules*, who says to Theroux: "I hope you will come back in ten years. [...] You will find that the houses are better, the town is better, the port is better, the food is better, and I am better".¹³³ There is undeniably still much progress to be made, but it is through valuable cultural productions such as these narratives of travel that Europeans are exposed to an alternative and more inclusive mode for identity construction, which triumphantly forwards Kraus' 'union in diversity'.

¹³² Theroux, *Happy Isles of Oceania*, 154.

¹³³ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 285.