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## Old Europe, New Europe, Eastern Europe: Reflections on a Minor Character in Fassbinder's *Ali, Fear Eats the Soul*

Anca Parvulescu

IN TODAY'S EUROPE, THE TERM *EUROSCEPTIC* often accompanies accusations of retrograde nationalism, irrational feelings, even fanaticism. When applied to Europe, skepticism, one of the critic's formative traits, acquires a bad reputation, as if it can only be an annihilating, rather than constructive, form of doubt. And yet skepticism is a much-needed critical affect, particularly when it comes to Europe. If we need to be skeptical of anything, it is Europe. Today one hears claims about Europe having become postnational, postracial, even post-Europe. How else can the literary and cultural critic welcome such claims other than with a healthy dose of skepticism?<sup>1</sup>

This essay is skeptical of Europe—the very idea that Europe is one. We speak of Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Central Europe, Northern Europe, Southern Europe, Northwestern Europe, Southeastern Europe. Among these various Europes, each with its own cultural geography and historical baggage, what we continue to call “Western Europe” and “Eastern Europe” stand out in their apparent obdurate endurance. Their perseverance in time is due, at least in part, to their co-constitutive force. Western Europe has come to stand for *Europe* and *the West* through its historical distantiation from Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> In the last decades, in an effort to create “European identity,” the institutions of the European Union worked to render the distinction between Western and Eastern Europe less sharp, but in many ways they exacerbated it. The Schengen Agreement walls off a EU Europe from a non-EU Europe, once again separating what is simply called *Europe* from a reconfigured Eastern Europe. The latter has reemerged in its post-Cold War configuration in the ongoing debates on European migration. Although they, too, are theoretically European, certain Eastern Europeans (typically migrant workers coming from countries like Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Serbia, Moldova, Ukraine) are considered immigrants in Europe. This means that, by definition, Eastern Europeans come from somewhere else, somewhere other than Europe. They are immigrants, because, as the *OED*

definition of *immigrant* reminds us, they intend to “settle” in a country other than their “own.”<sup>3</sup> Similarly, debates about the Eastern European “post-Communist diaspora” suggest that when Eastern Europeans are “scattered” throughout Europe they are away from their “homeland.”<sup>4</sup> How are we to understand this irony?

Theories of Europeanization often clash with theories of postcoloniality. This is a clash from which the student of East-West relations in contemporary Europe has a lot to learn. The countries that are thought to make up Western Europe have a history as colonial powers, while the countries considered to belong to Eastern Europe have a history as colonial subjects. This history carries into the present and translates into hierarchies and stratifications along the lines of “modernization” and “structural adjustment.” Many Eastern Europeans thus find themselves on the unenviable side of the international division of labor and its attendant forms of mobility. But if the international division of labor is the contemporary avatar of colonial history, when it comes to Eastern Europe the task is to trace its colonial histories keeping in mind that it is not only the Western European colonial past that places certain Eastern Europeans on the weak side of the international division of labor.<sup>5</sup> Postcolonial modernities produced by Russian, Ottoman, and Austro-Hungarian colonial projects still await their mapping onto the realities of contemporary global neoliberalism. Finally, the “post-Communist condition,” the outcome of half a century of Soviet hegemony (heterogeneously distributed across the “Eastern European bloc”), is the most important recent factor that determines Eastern Europe’s relation to Western Europe. Post-Communism is difficult to grapple with, because of its double historical genealogy as a specific form of postcolonialism emancipated from Soviet and Russian domination *and* a legacy inherited from the history of the European left and its internationalist ambitions.

Having borrowed its skepticism vis-à-vis Europe from postcolonial theory, this essay focuses on the figure of the subproletarian Eastern European female migrant in contemporary Europe. I reread a film that has been highly influential in framing the cultural debate on European migration: Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s *Angst essen Seele auf*. The film was made over a few weeks in 1973, on a small budget, and received international acclaim at the Cannes Film Festival in 1974. Its title, a rendition of the main character’s accented German, which in a literal translation would read *Fear Eat Soul*, became *Ali, Fear Eats the Soul* in English and *Tous les autres s’appellent Ali* in French (the latter a variation on Fassbinder’s initial working title: *Alle Türken heissen Ali* [*All Turks Are Called Ali*]).

*Ali* has acquired cult status in cinephile circles in the last forty years. It has also been a “useful” film, having consequentially dramatized ques-

tions of migration, labor, gender, and racialization in postwar Germany and, to some extent, Europe.<sup>6</sup> This essay starts from the premise that, forty years after its release, the film acquires new meanings in the current European configuration. At the same time, a close reading of the film shows that Europe retains some of its 1970s attributes when it comes to the nexus of migration, labor, gender, and racialization. Although the film focused on the *Gastarbeiter* (“guest worker”) figure in Germany of the 1970s, generically and mistakenly considered to be Turkish, my reading shows that the question of Eastern European migration to Western Europe was already raised, albeit marginally, by Fassbinder’s 1973 text. Perhaps the time has come to move Herzegovinian Yolanda, a minor character in Fassbinder’s film, to the forefront of contemporary debates on European migration and post-1989 East-West European “unification.”

In the second part of the essay, I juxtapose my reading of Fassbinder’s film to two texts on Europe that are particularly relevant to literary and cultural critics: the letter Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida cosigned in 2003 in response to the American-led war in Iraq; and Derrida’s 1990 essay, “The Other Heading.” Drawing out these two texts’ imaginings of Europe in relation to Eastern Europe, I aim to show that, following 1989 and European “unification,” they reconfigure the relation between the continent’s two poles, but they by no means erase it.

### A Minor Character

In Fassbinder’s film, Ali is what Germans oxymoronically call a “guest worker.” In the 1960s, guest workers came to the Federal Republic of Germany at the invitation of its government, which was trying to meet its booming economy’s demands for cheap labor. They arrived from Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Yugoslavia, and Turkey. By 1973, the number of Turkish guest workers had surpassed that of workers coming from other countries, and “guest worker” became associated with “Turkish.”<sup>7</sup> Guest workers, especially when figured as Turkish, were the first “immigrants” to postwar Germany. The encounter with them tested Germans’ racial and ethnic perceptions of others, revealing a continuum between historical fascism and postwar “everyday fascism.”<sup>8</sup>

Fassbinder’s film acquired documentary resonances when it made clear that in 1970s Germany, in the eyes of the German working class, Ali, who came from Morocco, could unproblematically be considered to be Moroccan, Turkish, Arab, and Negro. In the film, Ali, who is in his thirties, marries Emmi, an older German cleaning lady, and the film revolves around Emmi’s slow realization that her relationship with

a “Negro” necessarily triggers her ostracism within her working-class German community. This is Fassbinder’s way of rewriting Douglas Sirk’s *All That Heaven Allows* (1955) in a European key. The film ends with the two reuniting around the sentence “Together we are strong,” followed by Ali’s collapse from a stress-related ulcer.

There is, however, another “guest” in Fassbinder’s film, who most often goes unnoticed. She is a minor character named Yolanda. She appears at a turning point in the film: Emmi’s coworkers turn their back on her once they find out about her marriage to Ali. In a memorable Fassbinder-signature scene, we see Emmi eating her lunch alone (fig. 1). In the second part of the film, Emmi shows Ali his place (“You should get used to the way things are done in Germany”), and her coworkers integrate her back into the group. This is when Yolanda makes her very brief appearance in the film. She is newly hired and a foreigner from Yugoslavia and the group of German cleaning ladies, who have just welcomed Emmi back in their midst, immediately exclude Yolanda. She is left eating her lunch alone. Fassbinder makes sure the two lunch scenes are structurally identical. Looking at the camera from behind the bars of her imprisoning isolation, Yolanda takes Emmi’s place. She is, structurally, in Emmi’s shoes (fig. 2). She remains in this situation for the rest of the film and, as far as Fassbinder’s viewer is concerned, in the extended temporality of spectatorship.

The main character of Fassbinder’s film is Emmi, played by well-known German actress Brigitte Mira. In her world, Emmi is abject on account of her job and her age. Early in Fassbinder’s film, Emmi reluctantly tells Ali about domestic work and its attendant forms of exclusion. It is hard being a cleaning lady. No one talks to you, no one seems to notice you. Emmi does not have the power to change her situation—until Ali and Yolanda enter the picture. Emmi marries Ali and claims the right to exclude Yolanda. Although a domestic worker, Emmi accedes to the status of major character, while Yolanda remains a functional minor character. The latter is excluded from conversations on unionization and from the social world of female gossip. This is apparently a “cultural exclusion,” but a profitable one nonetheless. Emmi’s class identity as conferred by the domestic division of labor in the film’s initial situation is displaced by a new class status, conferred by an international and European division of labor. Simply by virtue of having Yolanda and Ali around, Emmi moves up in the world. Having known exclusion and abjection, Emmi not only acquires a trophy Moroccan husband, but finds herself in a position to capitalize on her German citizenship on the European stage, claiming superiority over Yolanda. Emmi is still working class, but now Yolanda is below her. The latter has just joined the ranks of an emerging migrant



Figs. 1, 2. Frames from Rainer Werner Fassbinder (Dir.), *Ali, Fear Eats the Soul* (1974).

subproletariat. The transformation in class identity is not presented by the film as an implacable fact. Fassbinder's film makes sure its viewer sees the German cleaning ladies actively exploiting the situation. If Yolanda is being paid less, they are likely to get the raise they want. Far from being threatened by Yolanda's presence, as the alternative scenario would have it, the German cleaning ladies understand swiftly that part of the surplus value extracted from the labor of underpaid immigrants translates into benefits for German citizens.<sup>9</sup>

Most viewers of Fassbinder's *Ali* do not notice Yolanda—a confirmation of her minor status. She does not say anything in the film, except to timidly suggest that she is not from Yugoslavia, but rather from Herzegovina, a detail that remains without consequence. She is from somewhere in Eastern Europe. She is, as Alex Woloch would put it, a *flat* character, reduced to one memorable use within the narrative and necessarily denied actualization as a *round*, full-fledged human being.<sup>10</sup> Yolanda is played by Helga Ballhaus, the wife of the film's cinematographer, Michael Ballhaus. Yolanda's role is so minor that Fassbinder did not even credit Helga Ballhaus (he did not credit himself either, for his role as Emmi's racist son-in-law). She is an extra, the cameraman's invisible wife. In retrospect, however, having paused the scenes of Yolanda's quiet appearance and disappearance, it becomes clear that she is most necessary to the film's narrative universe. While *Ali* is racialized as non-European, Yolanda is racialized as Eastern European.

The film brings together the two figures of European otherness, one coming from outside Europe, the other from within. We know how to read *Ali*'s racialization—he is Moroccan, but is referred to as a "Negro." It is not *ethnicity* that is at work here, as many insist in the European debate, but racialization. We are still learning, however, to discern the process through which Yolanda is racialized. We know we are witnessing a process of racialization in her case, too, because the German cleaning ladies cannot name Yolanda's ethnicity, and neither Yugoslavia nor Eastern Europe are ethnicities. Yolanda is certainly not a "Negro," she can in fact pass for white (she is played by a German actress), but it is clear that she is not-quite-white in the eyes of the German women. In nineteenth century racial typologies that assign *Ali* the caption "Negro," she would have been a "Slav." Not knowing how to name her, her coworkers do not give Yolanda a racialized caption. But their exclusionary silence is thick with meaning. Given the fact that at this time the debate on immigration begins to be imbued with racial meaning and that Yolanda, like *Ali*, is no doubt considered an immigrant, the German women establish their racialized distance from her.<sup>11</sup>



*Ali* was extraordinarily insightful in its diagnosis of the culture of everyday fascism and its racializing practices in 1970s Germany. Despite Fassbinder's objection that "they should find another word beside 'fascism,'" the phrase "everyday fascism" retains its eloquence, drawing attention to habitual gestures of exclusion that are difficult to exorcise.<sup>12</sup> Fassbinder anticipated that, in the last decades of the twentieth century and the turn into the twenty-first, the critical debate would become tied to questions of migration and immigration. The paradigmatic gesture of everyday fascism in Fassbinder's film, reminiscent of Franz Kafka's *The Castle*, is the stare. Fassbinder invented an oppressive, heavy, obdurate, fixing cinematic stare. In the rhythm of his film, he cyclically stages such a stare and then freezes it into a tableau, allowing the viewer to study it. The viewer thus comes to occupy a difficult position: staring alongside the characters in the film and at the same time noting and studying the stare he or she is forced to perform.<sup>13</sup> Exemplary is the haunting image of Emmi's neighbor, Frau Kargus, watching Emmi and Ali leave for work after their first night together (fig. 3). Fassbinder's film is a critical, theoretical document, in that it shows the neighbor's stare to be individual and collective at the same time. Since Frau Kargus is watching, "everyone" is watching, including the viewer.

If in the 1970s the film hit a historical nerve in terms of Ali's situation, today it does so vis-à-vis both Ali and Yolanda. Yolanda becomes noticeable in Fassbinder's film because she anticipates a large number of Eastern European female characters in recent European cinema.<sup>14</sup> She stands out in the group of cleaning ladies in Fassbinder's film, too. She is young, blonde, tall, and slender; in other words, conventionally attractive. Somewhat incongruously in the context of her cleaning job, she wears a pair of red, high-heel shoes. Yolanda is and is not abject. Likewise, the racialization of contemporary migrant Eastern European women needs to be understood relationally and situationally.<sup>15</sup> Today the new Yolandas might still be cleaning houses (cleaning remains the lowest ladder of racialized occupational hierarchies), but they might also be working in other sectors of the European niche of the global "care industry," as nurses, nannies, or sex workers. Following the exultant handover of Eastern Europe to neoliberalism in the post-1989 decades, the European division of labor has assigned these jobs (traditionally conceived of as "women's work") to both non-European and Eastern European women. Reading Fassbinder's film today, Yolanda's presence comes across as uncanny; she is "ahead of her time."

Responding to worries about the death of cinema in the age of the digital, Laura Mulvey argues that digital media provide us with new critical possibilities that effectively democratize the position of the critic.





Fig. 3. Frame from Rainer Werner Fassbinder (Dir.), *Ali, Fear Eats the Soul* (1974).

Allowing us to still, delay, and forward the image, digital technologies interrupt spectatorial narrative desire and transform us into pensive spectators.<sup>16</sup> The cinematic text can become once again a series of photograms we can read, slowly and patiently. Fassbinder stilled his images of everyday fascism into tableaux, inviting such a reading. The new technologies further extend the temporality of these tableaux. We can now linger indefinitely on scenes in various films in the history of cinema, noticing “details” we might have missed as hurried spectators in a movie theater during a film festival in the 1970s. These technologies allow us, for example, to detach ourselves from the fascinating romance between Ali and Emmi and zoom in on an uncredited character’s red shoes—the identifying sign of an otherwise minor, flat character. In the digital age, this minor character makes demands on viewers’ attention in ways she did not on Fassbinder’s contemporaries. Yolanda is a character in a 1973 film and a contemporary figure at the same time.

In his study of minor characters, Alex Woloch proposes that “narrative meaning takes shape in the dynamic flux of attention and neglect toward the various characters who are locked within the same story but have radically different positions within the narrative.”<sup>17</sup> A reading of Fassbinder’s *Yolanda* suggests that a minor character’s position within a narrative can shift over time, in relation to new audiences, who have access to new technologies of viewing and reading. This shift results in the redistribution of attention and neglect vis-à-vis major and minor characters. Today the much-neglected *Yolanda* compels the viewer’s attention—not as if she were a major character, but because her minorness,

the occlusion of her “case,” becomes readable. If the domestic worker is the paradigmatic minor character, with narrative neglect paralleling the social and political neglect of her labor, the narrative redistribution of attention toward Yolanda calls the contemporary viewer to ponder the nature of her work. As Woloch writes, “*minor characters are the proletariat of the novel.*”<sup>18</sup> Yolanda represents the subproletariat of cinema.

## The Traffic in Eastern European Women

In 1973, Fassbinder’s film drove home a message about the centrality of gender and sexuality to any analysis of labor and migration. Perhaps without knowing it, it also taught its audiences something important about the traffic in Eastern European women. It did so, in an apparent paradox, by dramatizing a case of traffic in men.

No other scene in *Ali* is more pivotal to the film’s project than that in which Emmi’s coworkers visit her at home and are introduced to Ali. Let us briefly revisit the scene: The women, prompted by an overly patronizing Emmi, surround Ali and start touching him (fig. 4). They check his muscles and evaluate the smoothness of his skin. They are surprised he is clean and proceed to discuss his hygiene (Emmi assures them he showers daily). In this scene, Ali is circulated between the German women. Although Ali is very masculine and the film lingers admiringly on his strong body for minutes on end, the scene effectively feminizes him. As Kaja Silverman puts it, drawing on a feminist conversation associated with the names of Gayle Rubin and Luce Irigaray, Ali is “taken to market” by the group of German women.<sup>19</sup> He is an object of exchange, while the German women, who otherwise find themselves at the most abject pole of their culture, are for once in the position of exchangers. Add to this the not quite extradiegetic fact of Ali being played by El Hedi ben Salem, a Moroccan *Gastarbeiter* and in 1973 Fassbinder’s lover, and the trafficking structure becomes ever more complex. Ali is taken to market by the German women on the screen, the filmmaker, as well as a viewer fascinated by his sexual versatility.

I revisit this famous scene because Fassbinder productively frames the ambiguity of Ali’s position. He is both an overly virile man and, in the second part of the film, a quasi wife. When Emmi fantasizes about the possibility of happiness with Ali, she necessarily dreams about going away, far from the reach of her neighbors’ ubiquitous stare. Fassbinder does not particularize this elsewhere, but upon their return from a trip Emmi and Ali are transformed. The trafficking scene above is now possible. Ali has become a wife, whom Emmi openly and publicly



Fig. 4. Frame from Rainer Werner Fassbinder (Dir.), *Ali, Fear Eats the Soul* (1974).

patronizes. Once Ali is thus feminized, Emmi's community can accept him, especially since they also need him. But if Ali is objectified by the women who circle around him and touch him, he also uses his sexuality actively. When, after this scene, Ali attempts to escape Emmi's humiliation, he finds refuge in another German woman's bed. Although earlier in the film the latter had announced her ownership of Ali ("By the way, this bar [read: this man] belongs to me"), it is clear that Ali is not her possession. He actively and knowingly trades sex for refuge.<sup>20</sup> It is the ambiguity surrounding a case of traffic in men that makes *Ali* a productive entry point into the traffic in women. Contemporary Yolandas very much inhabit this agentive ambiguity.

Today one begins a conversation on the traffic in women by acknowledging that a man can occupy the structural position of the trafficked woman and that women can exchange men. At the same time, Yolanda prompts us to ask if it still matters whether the sexualized object of traffic is in fact a woman. This essay answers this question in the affirmative. While both women and men can be theoretically trafficked through the structure we call "the traffic in women," we still need to unpack the coincidence of "women" with women. Today, Yolanda occupies Ali's position (fig. 4), in various European scenes—whether as a transnational wife, a nanny, a nurse, a domestic worker, or a sex worker.

The productive ambiguity at the heart of the sexual politics of migration dramatized by Fassbinder's film remains in force in the contemporary European context. The new Yolandas are put into circulation within the

broad economic continuum of “women’s work” and are at the same time entrepreneurial, active agents. They are sexualized and use their sexuality. They are exploited economically and, in a transnational framework, are often upwardly mobile.<sup>21</sup> They often displace masculinities “back home,” participating in the creation of new forms of masculine precarity.<sup>22</sup> These are contradictions that make the fabric of the contemporary world of migration and its attendant sexual politics. We know this is the pattern of Filipina or Sri Lankan women’s migration to Europe. So far we have paid little comparative attention to Eastern European women’s mobility. A comparative analysis is instructive, among other things, because it sheds new light on “immigration.” Since the term refers to non-European and Eastern European mobilities alike, it is clear that it does not name the perils of settlement into a country other than one’s “own.” Rather, it covers over a contemporary modality of subproletarian transnational labor, which draws on all available resources. To be an “immigrant” is to be a certain kind of worker.

It is not that there are no more *Alis* in Germany and in Europe. The “Old Europe” of male migrant workers is still there. The predicament of interracial marriage dramatized by Fassbinder has recently resurfaced in France.<sup>23</sup> But if we are to understand the world of contemporary migration and its sexual politics in the larger European context, I believe today we need to focus on the new *Yolandas*. It is unlikely that Fassbinder thought of *Yolanda* as a “guest worker” in 1973, because the Federal Republic’s labor program focused on the recruitment of a male workforce. Given that in the last few decades Western European economies have entered a “post-Fordist” phase, with limited need for muscular male workers, the latter are no longer the paradigmatic “guests” in Europe. The care industry is the underside of European post-Fordism; its demand is for a female workforce.<sup>24</sup> The phenomenon we have come to call “the feminization of migration,” effectively a symbolic traffic in women, challenges us to focus on a new migrant figure, the woman working in various sectors of the care industry. Today, she often “comes from” Eastern Europe.

It remains important to remember that migration is Janus-faced, emigration and immigration at the same time. On the emigration side, one leaves a place that, for one reason or another, has become unlivable. When it comes to immigration, one is in search of the Aristotelian “good life,” which has been globalized as a normative, consumer-oriented Western life. The affect of emigration cycles around feeling stuck, helpless, and often depressive. The affect of immigration is structured by an entrepreneurial optimism shaped by a transnational upward mobility narrative. This is often “cruel optimism,” in Lauren Berlant’s vocabulary, its

cruelty a function of, as Berlant writes, “the affective attachment to what we call ‘the good life,’ which is for so many a bad life that wears out the subjects who nonetheless, and at the same time, find their conditions of possibility within it.”<sup>25</sup> If, as Berlant argues, in various national contexts in the Western world attachments to what used to be fantasied as “the good life” are being slowly abandoned, in a global and trans-European context the Western good life still looks exciting.<sup>26</sup> Eastern European Yolandas develop a range of affective attachments to it, in response to what Berlant calls the “charisma of the normative.”<sup>27</sup> But the search for the good life retains its cruel dimensions, given that, among other things, it is filtered through the international and European sexual division of labor.<sup>28</sup>

## Habermas and Europe

What does our reading of Fassbinder’s film and Yolanda’s place in it tell us about Europe and Eastern Europe in particular? The answer to this question has to pass through an assessment of how Yolanda’s Eastern Europeanness signifies today. What does it mean to be Eastern European in today’s Europe? In order to begin to answer this question, I will read closely two texts that I believe are symptomatic of the European debate among literary and cultural critics. They have also helped shape the meaning of Eastern Europeanness in the last two decades, if only obliquely. One is signed by Habermas and Derrida; the other by Derrida.

In February 2003, Habermas and Derrida cosigned a letter (which Habermas alone wrote) in response to the American invasion of Iraq. The letter was titled, “February 15, or What Binds Europeans Together: A Plea for a Common Foreign Policy, Beginning in the Core of Europe.”<sup>29</sup> Habermas used the opportunity to express his hope that February 15, 2003, the day of mass antiwar demonstrations in major Western European capitals (and around the world), could be seen as a sign of “the birth of a European public sphere” (F 291). Coming together around a social and political project anchored in principles inherited from the European Enlightenment, Europeans reach a point where, in Habermas’s words, “citizens of one nation must regard the citizens of another nation as fundamentally ‘one of us’” (F 293). Importantly, Habermas’s appeal was for a Europe beyond Eurocentrism. This Europe would nonetheless remain anchored in something Habermas calls “core Europe.”

The “European identity” Habermas called for in 2003 was articulated primarily against an American other (metonymically represented by George W. Bush), but also against disruptive Eastern European others.<sup>30</sup>

Habermas's explanation for these latter countries' support of the Iraq war was that "while certainly working hard for their admission into the EU, [they] are nevertheless not yet ready to place limits on the sovereignty that they have so recently gained" (F 292). Anticipating understandable reactions to the titular emphasis on "core Europe," Habermas tried to reassure his readers that, "Taking a leading role does not mean excluding. The avant-gardist core of Europe must not wall itself into a new small Europe. It must—as it has so often—be the locomotive" (F 292). One of the postwar rationales for the formation of the European Union has been the restoration of European "influence" in the world. Faced with the war in Iraq and American triumphalist disregard for the international community, Habermas wished Europe would reclaim its influence. His article appeared in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* under the headline "Our Renewal. After the War: The Rebirth of Europe."<sup>31</sup> The underlying claim is that Europeans have had a chance to learn the lessons of history, especially the Holocaust, and, on account of their purifying *mea culpa*, can now assume a new leading role in the world.<sup>32</sup> As Habermas put it in a different context, Europe must "pull itself together and play its appointed civilizing role."<sup>33</sup> How can one not be skeptical of such statements?

While Habermas's intention to intervene in the urgency of the political moment is laudable (see also Derrida's signature), it is difficult to imagine a European public sphere birthed in this 2003 document. The spectacle of the public sphere orchestrated by Habermas on this occasion, the concomitant publication of a number of articles on Europe signed by his friends and collaborators (Umberto Eco, Adolf Muschg, Gianni Vattimo, Richard Rorty, Fernando Savater), did not include any Eastern European intellectuals, not to mention any women.<sup>34</sup> Adam Krzemiński saw in the gesture a "deliberate non-invitation."<sup>35</sup> Habermas dismissed such objections as unproductive sensitivities.<sup>36</sup> He subsequently returned to his formulations to propose that a European policy of gradual integration assumes that Eastern European countries can "*align* themselves with the center . . . have the option of *joining* the center at any time."<sup>37</sup> In technical terms, given the assumption that, as Adolf Muschg put it, "the clocks of the liberated countries were set to different times," this is a variation on the "two velocities" theory, whereby the more economically advanced countries of the EU lead the way toward European prosperity.<sup>38</sup> In cultural terms, the rhetoric of social evolutionism cannot but bring to mind familiar images of the colonial avant-garde and its attendant "catching up" motif.

Habermas returned to these ideas in the context of the current economic crisis in the Eurozone, which is thought to be threatening the

existence of the EU. He pleaded once again for “more Europe,” in a laudable effort to produce a “democratically legalized EU” as an alternative to a EU anchored in the common currency. Habermas’s views on the Old/New Europe distinction (where, *pace* former US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Old Europe stands for a Western Europe united around the French/German partnership and New Europe for Eastern Europe) returned in this context: “Political integration based on social well-being is necessary to protect the national plurality and cultural wealth of the ‘Old Europe’ biotope from the increasing standardisation implied by globalisation.”<sup>39</sup> Old Europe is proposed as an alternative to globalization, but lurking behind Habermas’s formulation are concerns about Eastern Europe, from which Old Europe also needs to be protected. Old Europe seems to face two threats: globalization and New/Eastern Europe. Note Habermas’s use of the word “biotope” here, which the OED defines as “an environmentally uniform region or habitat, occupied by a particular biological community.”<sup>40</sup> Somehow the “cultural wealth and national plurality” of Old Europe, imagined as an alternative to the homogenizing effects of globalization, returns us to a biological community. Why do I imagine Habermas brushing this last point aside as mere literary sensitivity?

What cannot be brushed aside is the fact that Habermas is nostalgic for a pre-1989 Western Europe. This was, in his words, a “fortunate historical constellation” (F 294). Nostalgia, however, risks returning us to the Cold War, when European solidarity meant solidarity against the Eastern threat. This is how one can explain the fact that, as Krzemiński put it, “there is obviously no feeling of joy within ‘core Europe’ over the EU’s eastward expansion.”<sup>41</sup> 1989 was a moment of joy throughout Eastern Europe. Exuberant images of the fall of the Berlin Wall metonymically captured the spirit of the moment. Grudgingly anticipating the EU “enlargement,” few Western Europeans felt solidary in this joy.<sup>42</sup> It is no surprise that Habermas, a fervent advocate of European solidarity, does not seem to entertain the possibility of, say, German/Bulgarian solidarity. Having lauded German solidarity in the context of German reunification, Habermas believes that a “thin” solidarity is sufficient for European unification.<sup>43</sup> Such solidarity, if it can be called that, remains at the level of what in EU parlance is called “cohesion”—help for “structural adjustment.”<sup>44</sup> In the debates surrounding the current economic crisis, Europe seems to have become synonymous with the Eurozone, such that even those Eastern European countries which are members of the EU but are not in the Eurozone are falling off the map of European solidarity.



The problem with Habermas's vision of Europe is that the two velocities theory translates into a European division of labor. As an effect of EU immigration and labor regulations, Eastern European "immigrants" do a range of temporary, underpaid jobs in Western Europe. This is a sexual division of labor, because the European subproletarian labor market is profoundly gendered. Eastern European women, alongside women from the global South, engage in "women's work," especially in the care industry. In today's Europe, Yolanda is cleaning houses or pushing strollers and wheelchairs, while her country is struggling to "catch up" and "align" itself with the center of Europe. This is the point where Fassbinder's insights in *Ali* impose themselves. Habermas's exclusion of any consideration of Yolanda in his musings on Europe repeats, structurally, her exclusion by the German cleaning ladies. Habermas's calls for solidarity notwithstanding, Yolanda is still eating her lunch alone. Fassbinder's film has taught us that this is a *productive* exclusion. Someone, somewhere, must be getting a raise.

## Derrida and Europe

In what sense did Derrida sign Habermas's letter in 2003? Did he subscribe to it? Did he countersign its rhetoric? What of the manufactured event that occasioned it? Did he endorse its Old Europe/New Europe distinctions? When it comes to Derrida's Europe, beyond this 2003 signature, I prefer to recall Derrida's "The Other Heading."<sup>45</sup> The essay was written as a talk for a colloquium on "European Cultural Identity," Turin, May 1990. It was published in French in 1991 and translated into English in 1992. In other words, it is situated between 1989 and Maastricht. One of Derrida's tasks was to conceptualize this "today" and imagine its aftermath. I will revisit Derrida's argument here, in an effort to offer it as a counterpoint to the Habermas/Derrida 2003 letter.

Derrida's "The Other Heading" explored the feeling that 1989 was a European moment. History seemed to be open, undecided. The word "revolution" was in the air. There was a sense that 1989 could supersede a much-celebrated 1968 as the Europeans' historical horizon. And yet the undecidability of history sheltered ambivalence. Derrida wrote: "We ask ourselves in hope, fear and trembling, what this face [of Europe] is going to resemble? . . . Will it resemble the face of some *persona* whom we believe we know: Europe? And if its non-resemblance bears the traits of the future, will it escape monstrosity?"<sup>46</sup> Potential monstrosity, Derrida intuited in anticipation of Fortress Europe, is first and foremost a question of borders. Was it possible to create an *open* Europe, when

the very “question of Europe” seems to be necessarily one of borders?<sup>47</sup>

Against the anticipation of the Fortress Europe monster, Derrida pleaded for openness: “An opening and a non-exclusion for which Europe would be in some way responsible? For which Europe *would be*, in a constitutive way, this very responsibility?” (OH 17). In Derrida’s formulations, Europe seems to remain a question of headings, of who gets to lead, to be in the center or core of Europe. Except that, unlike Habermas, Derrida retreated from Europe’s avant-gardist mission, in order to imagine a Europe that can be the very possibility of change. To begin with, Derrida suggested, as if in passing, the ship could, possibly, change captains and, Derrida added, “why not?—the age or sex of the captain” (OH 15). Retrospectively, Derrida’s passing remark acquires renewed force. Without such a change in heading, the all-too-palpable risk is that European “unification” becomes the farcical repetition of German unification, effectively an economic and cultural takeover. It should come as no surprise that Habermas functioned as a spokesman for both.

In order to keep Europe open to its myriad others, Derrida proposed we move beyond the familiar European heading that is always already modern, progressive, and “diverse.” Derrida’s language in 1991 almost seems to be mocking Habermas’s 2003 letter, *avant la lettre*: “all the nation states of the planet preparing themselves to join us at the head of the pack, right at the forefront [*cap*], at the capital point [*pointe*] of advanced democracies, there where capital is on the cutting edge of progress [*à la pointe du progrès*]” (OH 33). When it comes to Europe, instead of “alignment,” Derrida advocated the duty of welcoming others “in order not only to integrate them but to recognize and accept their alterity” (OH 77). Twenty years later, we might repeat the question: What would Europe be if its mission were not to “integrate” through “enlargement,” but to recognize, accept, and cultivate Eastern European alterities? What relation would this Europe have to the rest of the world?

In 1990, Derrida resisted (again, *avant la lettre*) what would become the call concentrated in the phrase “provincializing Europe”: “It [European cultural identity] cannot and must not be dispersed into a myriad of provinces” (OH 39). The problem with provinces is that they are “a multiplicity of self-enclosed idioms or petty little nationalisms, each one jealous and untranslatable” (OH 39). People from the provinces might take issue with the qualification of “province” as self-enclosed, jealous, untranslatable, and nationalist. The point of comparison is the cosmopolitan metropolis: “It [European cultural identity] cannot and must not renounce places of great circulation or heavy traffic, the great avenues or thoroughfares of translation and communication, and thus,

of mediatization" (OH 39). Derrida believed that the ongoing traffic in the metropolis should follow its course, without solidifying into a "capital." One hears Derrida the Parisian here. Does one renounce the great places of European culture? At what risk? At what risk does one not? Those untranslatable provinces, which today have gone trans-European (with Eastern Europe itself being figured as a European province), are also cultural provinces. They have often found refuge in myriad nationalisms in response to their provincialization by the capital. The "jealousy" of the European province is an affect in need of critical elaboration.

Derrida's predictable move is his insistence that one must inhabit the aporia, the unresolved tension between the celebration of "places of great circulation and heavy traffic" and the need to vigilantly limit their ambition to become "capitals of [European] culture." The problem is that, in retrospect, it becomes apparent that the same places of heavy traffic continue to "cap" the heading, especially the European heading. Reading Derrida, Gayatri Spivak cautions against the invocation of "aporias innocent of the discourse of political economy."<sup>48</sup> Inhabiting the ethical horizon of Derrida's aporia requires that we engage the conundrums of European political economy and account for the international and European division of labor and Yolanda's place in their care industries.<sup>49</sup>

Derrida's "The Other Heading" is very much *avant la lettre* in that Derrida, unlike Habermas, the theorist of the public sphere, foregrounded the limits of the conversation itself: "present here at this table are mostly *men* and citizens of Western Europe, writers or philosophers according to a classic model of the European intellectual: a guardian held responsible for memory and culture, a citizen entrusted with a sort of spiritual mission of Europe" (OH 22–23). This was May 1990. One wonders why there were no participants from the newly "liberated" would-be European countries at the table convened by Gianni Vattimo. Derrida mentioned the "techno-scientific and techno-economic givens," which "affect, among other things, the production, transmission, structure, and effects of the very discourses in which one tries to formalize this problematic" (OH 38). What are the techno-scientific and techno-economic "givens" [*données*] that determines participation at the European table? Is the gender of the participants, for example, such a given? Is citizenship? The questions concern the table in Turin in 1990, but also the imagined table of Habermas's 2003 "European public sphere." This table is *produced* as the table it is. What appear as its "givens" are naturalized effects of European political economy and culture. One imagines Yolanda quietly lurking around the table, serving coffee or sweeping the floors, while "European intellectuals" debate the spirit and future of Europe.

## Conclusion

In 2002, German-Iranian film director Shahbaz Noshir made a thirteen-minute short film titled *Angst isst Seele auf*—an homage to Fassbinder. Fassbinder's 1973 title had been *Angst essen Seele auf*. The verb *essen* was used incorrectly. An article was omitted before *Seele*. The grammatical “mistakes” signaled Ali's accented German. Noshir's title returns the verb *essen* to its standard third person singular form but still omits the article, inviting the viewer to speculate that perhaps standard German remains an ideal for Noshir's character, the new Ali. Noshir's camera is positioned in such a way that it sees through the eyes of a young actor, Mulu (played by black German actor Pierre Sanoussi-Bliss). Occasionally, his hands emerge from behind the camera, a confirmation that he is not holding a camera, but rather *is* it. Otherwise, the viewer cannot see Mulu for the duration of the film; he or she can only hear his off-screen voice.

Noshir's film follows a scenario based on a real event, in which a black actor is harassed by a group of neo-Nazis on his way to work. Noshir makes use of Fassbinder's signature stare, as the passersby witnessing the scene of everyday fascism stare in extended duration without intervening. One woman lights a cigarette as she looks down at the fallen man. Even more disturbing is the image of an undisturbed girl who seems to have been socialized into the dynamics of the stare at a young age. Arrested by the police, Mulu explains that he is in a hurry, because he has been cast in the role of Ali in a theater production of *Angst essen Seele auf*. The policeman, a regular theatergoer suspicious of avant-garde productions, has not heard of Fassbinder's film, but dutifully corrects the black man's use of the verb *essen*: “As a native German, you should know that.”

Having followed Mulu as he arrives at the theater late, the viewer revisits the first scene of Fassbinder's *Ali*. Fassbinder's film is thoroughly theatrical, having borrowed some of its distanciation techniques from the world of Brechtian theater. Foregrounding the film's theatricality, Noshir puts Ali and Emmi onstage. In the last scene in Noshir's short, Ali/Mulu and Emmi are sitting at an austere table in the middle of the stage, facing the audience in a small theater. Ali is played by Mulu, who remains invisible to the viewer, while Emmi is played by an ever-older Brigitte Mira, her intricate facial expression rendered even more eloquent by the passage of time. They are replaying the first scene of Fassbinder's film, in which Emmi and Ali meet in the Asphalt Pub. As the two dance, Ali/Mulu tells Emmi about his situation at work: “German master, Arab dog.” Emmi gestures a protest, but Ali/Mulu insists that it is not good to think about it too much: “Think much, cry much.” It is the line that has defined Ali as a docile immigrant figure. It is clear that

Mulu, whom the viewer has just seen respond to neo-Nazi violence by saying “I am Germany,” does not subscribe to Ali’s philosophy of “better not think too much.” Linguistic competence is paramount to this shift in attitude. As it turns out, Mulu speaks standard German, while the neo-Nazi who attacks him (played by German actor Selim Dursun) has a slight, stylized accent. Noshir’s film thus enters a provocative dialogue with the contemporary viewer of Fassbinder’s film. It prompts the viewer to revisit *Ali* and be reminded that, in Fassbinder’s film, the still-not-standard sentence *Angst isst Seele auf* is spoken by Emmi. In Noshir’s short, it is spoken by the policeman. How to make the viewer aware of the fact that he or she remains eager to attribute the nonstandard use of German to Mulu is something Noshir learned from Fassbinder. In another gesture of homage to Fassbinder, Noshir assigns the role of the bystanders in Fassbinder’s bar scene to the staring theater spectator, a stand-in for the film’s viewer.

Aside from the question of the viewer’s complicity with the structures of everyday fascism, the dance scene in Noshir’s short reveals that, forty years later, Emmi is still longing for touch. The short ends with a black hand reaching from behind the camera to caress her face (fig. 5). One is reminded of Ali’s memorable first touch of Emmi’s hand. The two tableaux make touch visible as the paradigmatic gesture of care, including eroticized care provided by black hands. Although Yolanda does not make it into Noshir’s contemporary rewriting of *Ali* and has not captured the distributive attention of critics who participate in the critical debate on migration and racialization practices in contemporary Europe, this essay has argued that today her heirs are often underpaid to do this caring work. I tried to render her invisibility-cum-flatness eloquent—in Fassbinder’s film and on the margins of two influential cultural texts. Today Yolanda is part of the semantic field of the inscription *Angst essen Seele auf*—to be found on T-shirts worn by disenfranchised youth across Europe.

If we are to think about modalities of touch, Noshir’s dance scene also functions as a reminder that at the end of *Ali* Emmi and Ali dance once again. “Together we are strong,” Emmi tells Ali. It is, arguably, a call for solidarity, anchored in a gesture. Let us dance together—the local working class and the migrant subproletarian class. The dance is clumsy, strained, hardly elegant. It requires work. Although the relation between Emmi and Ali still needs our attention, I will offer as a conclusion my wager that our task today is to imagine a postcolonial alliance between Ali and Yolanda. The two never met in Fassbinder’s film, but they certainly meet in more recent films. Their relationship is even less natural than that between Emmi and Ali. Their dance is even more dif-



Fig. 5. Frame from Shahbaz Noshir (Dir.), *Angst isst Seele auf* (2002).

ficult, tense, awkward. Various moves in this new dance have nonetheless become visible in the last few years, pointing to the possibility of imagining Europe beyond the “Old Europe biotope.”

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#### NOTES

1 For a review of how the term *Euroscptic* is used in political science, see Cécile Leconte, *Understanding Euroscpticism* (New York: Palgrave, 2010). As Leconte argues, the term refers to heterogeneous forms of opposition (political, utilitarian, cultural, value-based) to EU-led European integration. I am using the term broadly, to draw attention to a word that brings together the philosophical tradition of skepticism and Europe (not limited to EU Europe). On skepticism, see Richard Popkin, *History of Scepticism: From Savonarola to Bayle* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003).

2 For the emergence and history of the term “Eastern Europe,” see Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994). For the rest of this essay, I will refrain from using scare quotes around *Eastern Europe* and *Western Europe*, although they are implied throughout.

3 “Immigrant, n.” *OED*.

4 On the post-Communist diaspora, see Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli, *Crossing New Europe: Postmodern Travel and the European Road Movie* (London: Wallflower, 2006).

5 On the postcolonial condition of Eastern Europe, see David Chioni Moore, “Is the Post in Postcolonial the Post in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique,” *PMLA* 116, no. 1 (January 2001): 111–28.

6 On precedents for thinking about the usefulness of cinema in various social contexts, see Charles R. Acland and Haidee Wasson, eds., *Useful Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2011).

- 7 Rita Chin, "Imagining a German Multiculturalism: Aras Ören and the Contested Meanings of the 'Guest Worker,' 1955–1980," *Radical History Review* 83, no. 1 (2002).
- 8 Thomas Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany: History, Identity, Subject* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Univ. Press, 1996).
- 9 Due to the influx of foreign guest workers, German citizens were able to switch to more desirable jobs. Chin reports that about three million German workers acquired white-collar jobs in the 1960s (Chin, "Imagining," 47).
- 10 Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2003), 25.
- 11 On how racialization permeates certain debates and labor practices, see Karim Murji and John Solomos, eds., *Racialization: Studies in Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005).
- 12 Rainer Werner Fassbinder, "I've Changed Along with the Characters in My Films," *Performing Arts Journal* 14, no. 2, 1992 [1978], 1.
- 13 In her reading of the film, Shohini Chaudhuri notes that "Emmi always appears too old for those who look at her and Ali too 'black.' Because of Fassbinder's camera technique and casting choices, we as viewers are disquietingly forced to share these attitudes for the duration of the film." Shohini Chaudhuri, "Ali: Fear Eats the Soul: An Anatomy of Racism," *Film Analysis: A Norton Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Geiger and R. L. Rutsky (New York: Norton, 2005), 649.
- 14 See my reading of Ulrich Seidl's film, *Import / Export* (2008), in "Import / Export: Housework in an International Frame," *PMLA* 127, no. 4 (2012): 845–62.
- 15 Roger Hewitt emphasizes that the meaning of "whiteness" in contemporary Europe is in flux and needs to be understood relationally. Eastern Europeanness might carry racializing effects in some situations, but not in others. Hewitt writes: "At one end of things Irish, Polish and Czech Roma gangs brawl with each other in parts of south and north London and members of well-established once-refugee groups distance themselves from newer arrivals. At the other end Arab elites, Russian entrepreneurs and Indian finance brokers share a common competitive interest in the activities of the London Stock Exchange." Roger Hewitt, "Seeing Whiteness Through the Blizzard: Issues in Research on White Communities," in "White Matters," ed. Susan Petrilli, special issue, *Athanos, Semiotica, Filosofia, Arte, Letteratura* 17, no. 10 (2006/2007), 13. On whiteness and the racialization of Eastern European women, see also Sandra Ponzanesi, "Europe in Motion: Migrant Cinema and the Politics of Encounter," *Social Identities* 17, no. 1 (2011): 73–92.
- 16 Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006).
- 17 Woloch, *The One vs. the Many*, 2.
- 18 Woloch, *The One vs. the Many*, 27.
- 19 Kaja Silverman, "Fassbinder and Lacan: A Reconsideration of Gaze, Look and Image," *Camera Obscura* 19 (1989): 54–85, 69.
- 20 El Hedi ben Salem's relationship with Fassbinder was as ambivalently complex. He had a wife and two children in Morocco and had moved to France and then to Germany in search of work, so he can provide for them. He began a tumultuous affair with Fassbinder and suffered the ensuing dramas. After the separation from Fassbinder, he had an episode of violence and ended up in prison, where he committed suicide.
- 21 The new Yolandas teach us that one can be upwardly and downwardly mobile at the same time. This is an addendum to Bruce Robbins's study of the upward mobility narrative. Robbins writes: "By blurring class identities, the international division of labor makes upward mobility genuinely interesting" (239). One of the most "interesting" things about the international division of labor is the fact that Yolanda can be at the same time upwardly and downwardly mobile vis-à-vis her two locations (Western and Eastern Europe).



She might be moving “down” when she takes a cleaning job in Germany, but her cleaning job might make her a “head of household” in Herzegovina, moving her “up” into in the local working class and possibly the middle class. Bruce Robbins, *Upward Mobility and the Common Good: Toward a Literary History of the Welfare State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2007).

22 The postcolonial, now classic version of this argument is found in Franz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967).

23 In October 2008, Josiane Nardi, an older French woman whose thirty-year-old Armenian lover was about to be deported from France, set herself on fire to protest the deportation. See Éric Fassin, “National Identities and Transnational Intimacies: Sexual Democracy and the Politics of Immigration in Europe,” *Public Culture* 22, no. 3 (2010): 507–29.

24 Saskia Sassen, “Global Cities and Survival Circuits,” in *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, ed. Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003), 254–74.

25 Lauren Berlant, “Cruel Optimism,” in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2010), 97.

26 Eloquent here is a film like Dorota Kedzierzawska’s *Tomorrow Will Be Better* (2011), which follows three Russian children crossing the border into Poland and the EU. It goes without saying that the children’s fantasy world is populated by fairy tale-like images of an “elsewhere”—a place where, among other things, one can live the “good life” of a child. For Kedzierzawska’s children, this place is Europe.

27 Lauren Berlant, “Cruel Optimism,” 112.

28 Cruelty need not be understood strictly through the lens of affect theory. Mona Hatoum’s 1998 art object, *Untitled (Wheelchair)*, persuasively suggested that violence is a palpable ingredient of care work. Hatoum replaced the handles of a wheelchair with knife blades, in an effort to draw attention to this violence. The Tate Gallery’s description of the wheelchair reads: “The potential relationship of love and support, for which the wheelchair is a metaphor, has become one of abuse in which both parties are the victims. In the scenario it suggests, the person who needs care and who is dependent on another in order to move is forced to injure the person who helps him.” (<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hatoum-untitled-wheelchair-t07497/text-summary>) Eastern European migrant women are pushing such chairs and suffering the attendant forms of violence in what is believed to be a “soft” industry.

29 Jürgen Habermas, “February 15, or What Binds Europeans Together: A Plea for a Common Foreign Policy, Beginning in the Core of Europe,” *Constellations* 10, no. 3 (2003): 291–97 (hereafter cited in text as F).

30 In the essay he wrote for Habermas’s staged event on February 15, 2003 (an essay which, presumably, Habermas endorsed), Umberto Eco urged Europe to “become European” by means of drawing on a common occidental civilization. He wrote: “Europe will either become European, or it will fall apart. The latter hypothesis seems unrealistic, but we may well trace it: Europe will either become Balkanized or Latin-Americanized . . . In order to survive, so to speak, Europe is condemned to find common strategies for foreign policies and defense. Otherwise it will become, no offense to anyone, Guatemala.” Umberto Eco, “An Uncertain Europe between Rebirth and Decline,” *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations After the Iraq War*, ed. Daniel Levy, Max Pensky, and John Torpey (London: Verso, 2005), 19, 20. Note that, in order to “survive,” Europe has to equally fight Balkanization and Latin Americanization.

31 Jürgen Habermas, *The Divided West*, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity, 2006), 89.

32 Fatima El-Tayeb critiques the assumptions behind Habermas’s Europe, which “reclaims World War II as the source of European particularity and ultimately superiority: it was

after all exactly the descent into (anti-Enlightenment and thus ultimately un-European) barbarism that motivated the unique success story of the European Union: during the second half of the twentieth century (Western) Europe has repented, has proven that it has learned from its mistakes and reemerges exceptionally qualified for renewed world leadership." Fatima El-Tayeb, *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2011), 9.

33 Habermas, *The Divided West*, 5.

34 Habermas mentions in an interview that he invited a few other friends to participate in the event: "Paul Ricoeur was the only one who declined for political reasons; Eric Hobsbawm and Harry Mulisch could not participate for personal reasons." Habermas, *The Divided West*, 87.

35 Adam Krzemiński, "First Kant, Now Habermas: A Polish Perspective on 'Core' Europe," in *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe*, 151.

36 Quoted in Gustav Seibt, "Please Don't Be So Sensitive: Jürgen Habermas Continues Arguing for Europe in Berlin," in *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe*, 132.

37 Jürgen Habermas, *Europe: The Faltering Project* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 103, my emphasis.

38 Adolf Muschg, "Core Europe: Thoughts about the European Identity," in *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe*, 23.

39 Jürgen Habermas, "Democracy is at Stake," *Le Monde*, October 27, 2011. It might be worth remembering that Rumsfeld explained his Old Europe/New Europe distinction in the following terms: "You're thinking of Europe as Germany and France. I don't. I think that's old Europe. If you look at the entire NATO Europe today, the centre of gravity is shifting to the east" ("Outrage at 'Old Europe' Remarks," BBC News, Thursday, January 23, 2003). Western European politicians and intellectuals reacted vehemently and subsequently took up the phrase "Old Europe" as a badge of pride—against Rumsfeld, but also against the apparently ridiculous assumption that the center of Europe could ever shift toward the East.

40 "Biotop, n." *OED*.

41 Krzemiński, "First Kant, Now Habermas," 147.

42 Speaking during a seminar organized by Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe in Strasbourg in 1991, Étienne Balibar offered another explanation for the joyless reception of 1989: "Although I am well aware of the enormity of that event known as the collapse of 'real socialism' in Europe over the space of a few months, I am not all that distressed by it. At least not as much as I might have expected to be. Perhaps simply because we are not 'on site' in Eastern Europe, or even in the 'reunified' Germany that is only a few kilometers away. But also because I feel a certain sense of déjà vu, as if I had already attended the dress rehearsal for the play. Having belonged to the French Communist Party for twenty years (from 1961 to 1981), I believe I have already lived, even if in an attenuated form less heavy with consequences, the 'implosion' of the apparatus that was called communist and that claimed to be based on Marxist theory. The 'end of communism,' in one form or another, has seemed to me inevitable since the late 1970s or early 1980s" (78). Balibar went on to acknowledge that 1989 acquires a different signification if one considers the events starting not with an account of military and economic factors and political pressure coming from the West, or, indeed, Western intellectuals' feelings of déjà vu, but from the role played in it by "the peoples of the East" (80). Étienne Balibar, "Europe After Communism," *We the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2003).

43 Habermas, *The Divided West*, 55.

44 The EU cohesion policy was substantially changed before the Eastern "enlargement." John Pinder and Simon Usherwood write: "This [cohesion] posed a particular problem

with the enlargement to the East, since under the policy that prevailed in the late 1990s, new member states stood to receive very large amounts of funding, while existing members stood to lose out . . . richer member states were not prepared to foot the bill. . . . [I]t was decided that most of the existing funding should be ring-fenced for existing members, regardless of new members' objective needs." John Pinder and Simon Usherwood, *The European Union: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), 88. Leconte argues that Eastern European forms of Euroscepticism need to be understood in relation such conditions of "accession."

45 The other text of interest here is the interview Derrida gave in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001. Derrida was asked: "So you see an important role for Europe?" He responded: "I hope for it, but I do not see it. . . . I decipher, I wager, I hope. If I put so many cautionary quotation marks around these proper names, beginning with 'Europe,' it is because I am not sure about anything. Especially not about Europe or the European Community *such as it exists* or announces itself *de facto*." Derrida nonetheless went on to deplore the lack of a strong European response to the US-led "war on terror" and to speculate on how the situation might be different if Europe had a unified military force, capable of European-style "interventions." Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003), 118–19.

46 Jacques Derrida, *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1992), 6 (hereafter cited as OH).

47 Using documentary footage of the 1989 euphoria and its ensuing illusions, Ibolya Fekete's film *Bolshe Vita* (1996) dramatized the attempts of various Eastern Europeans to travel West during the year 1990, only to be reminded that they could not pass the Hungarian-Austrian border. *Bolshe Vita* was a bar in Budapest, a short-lived cosmopolitan haven, closed by the end of the film such that a new establishment can be open on its premises, announced by a new sign: *Sex Shop*.

48 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 113.

49 In a review of Rodolphe Gasché's *Europe, or The Infinite Task* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2009), in which Gasché traces the concept of Europe as it develops in Husserl, Heidegger, Jan Patočka, and Derrida, revealing it to name an exposure to the other and the responsibility for this exposure, Samuel Weber returns the philosophical discussion first to questions of violence and then to political economy. First, Weber invokes Fortress Europe: "Europe as fortress: the sinister resonances of this notion return today to remind us of its continuing force . . . the history of Europe entails not only the unique recognition of and response to a certain heterogeneity but also a continuing violence that even today accompanies its efforts at self-definition" (80–81). Second, Weber quotes Gasché's argument that Europe names the "first addressee of this thought of uprooting oneself in order to become open to the other, a demand that goes as far as to include Europe's own de-Europeanization" (73), but reminds Gasché that his notion of "dispossession" cannot be separated from the emergence of capitalism, itself a European event. Samuel Weber, "Europe and Its Others: Some Preliminary Reflections on the Relation of Reflexivity and Violence in Rodolphe Gasché's *Europe, or the Infinite Task*," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 8, no. 3 (2008): 71–83.