

Dominic Eggel

**Imagining Europe in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century:  
the case of Herder**

*Prix Ardit en Relations internationales 2005*

*Foreword by André Liebich*

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Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales, Genève  
Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva



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**Johann Ludwig Gleim**  
**An das achtzehnte Jahrhundert<sup>1</sup>**

Mit Kriegen fingst du an,  
mit Kriegen endigest du  
Mit Säbel- und Federkriegen,  
Jahrhundert! Allen Kriegeszügen  
Sah Gott vom höchsten Himmel zu!  
War Kriege sehen dein Vergnügen?

Nein riefs vom Himmel, Menschenkind!  
Nein, aber eure Seelen sind  
Von Gott und Schöpfer frei erschaffen,  
Das Reich der Tugenden, das Reich  
der Wissenschaften lag vor euch –  
Und ihr wähltet die Waffen!

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<sup>1</sup> In Dietze (1989, p.289).

## **Acknowledgments**

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Dominic Eggel

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## Foreword

*by André Liebich*

Dominic Eggel's study on Herder succeeds in breathing new life into the tired cultural history of Europe without giving way to intellectual modishness. As Eggel demonstrates, with considerable brio, Herder was deconstructing the very concepts he was contributing to define. Moreover, Eggel argues, one of the lesser known outcomes of this undertaking was an "Europabild" that was central to Herder's philosophy of history and to the whole of his political work.

Stages and fashions in Herder research have left us with multiple visions of Herder: the prophet of the peoples of Eastern Europe, the awakener of German pride, the inventor of cultural nationalism, the Romantic expressionist who created a new conception of the self, and the distant father of the linguistic turn. Debate has continued among Herderian "universalizers" and Herderian "particularists." The former see Herder as having saved Enlightenment ideals, such as that of "Humanität", through an intellectual reorientation that grounded unbounded constructs in thick and rich philosophical empiria. The latter consider Herder to have finally imparted dignity to the unique, the individual, the single and the inimitable, by liberating them from overriding totalities and generalities.

Dominic Eggel comes down on the side of the universalizers, with an original twist. Whereas Herder has often been seen as a "fatigué de l'Europe", Eggel takes this characterisation head-on and places Europe on a pivotal plane in Herder's broad holistic scheme. Europe emerges as the irreplaceable intermediary between the lofty abstract universal that grasps only the way of the world as a whole and the ensconced concrete particulars of flesh-and-blood individuals and communities.

That Herder should have any positive regard for Europe comes as something of a surprise after reading Dominic Eggel's account of Herder on the European state system. Surely few critics have been as implacable as Herder in lambasting the superficial and mechanistic pseudo-realism of balance-of-power-based theories of the international system. As we see in the second part of this study, however, Herder as an international theorist does not rest at a critique of the system. He opens up another level of analysis,



focusing on peoples and nations and on non state-determined ties, to found a more complex and potent vision of international relations. Eggel is at his best in scrupulously gleaning the flow of Herder's considerations on Europe and other matters, relating them to historical context and situating them within the evolving stream of Herder' works.

Clearly, Herder's views on Europe are much more nuanced than one might have supposed. So much so that one is left with questions to which this study cannot give clear-cut answers. Where are the borders of Europe, that oldest of questions? What is the political structure towards which Europe is heading? Given the central place of language in Herder's world view, can one evoke a common but non-hegemonic language of Europe? How may Europe arrange its relation with the world, for which it cannot be a model but to which it has something unique to offer and towards which it bears responsibilities?

In carefully comparing and contrasting Herder's discourse on international relations with those of his contemporaries, Eggel's inquiry goes beyond Herder to propose an original reflection on historic conceptions of the international and European system. This inquiry points to a premonitory vision of an emergent "Europe of Nations" founded on cultural and intellectual variety rather than on power politics. This is Herder's achievement but it is the merit of the author of this paper to have brought our attention to it.

## 1. Introduction

Europe has been variously conceived of as a geopolitical chessboard (Gollwitzer 1951, 65), an economical and institutional space (Savarèse 2002, p.205), a spiritual entity with a world-historical mission<sup>2</sup>, a cultural or civilizational entity (Berting 2002, p.45)<sup>3</sup>, an aesthetic category<sup>4</sup>, a mental representation (Burke 1986), a common belief system, a series of heritages and shared experiences (Joll 1980, p.13), an ideology (Barnavi 2001, p.29) and a normative necessity or mission (Gollwitzer 1951, p.65). Since Ripa's sixteenth century "Iconology" ornamented Europe with crowns, compasses, books, temples, musical instruments and horns of abundance comparing her favorably to half-naked Asias and Africas (Hersant and Bogaert 2000, p.89; Gosselet 2001, p.174), she has been represented in a plethora of allegories and anthropomorphic illustrations.<sup>5</sup> Europe has also been described as the continent of extremes (Attali 2001, p.43), unceasingly driven forward by an inherent urge for transgression, innovation (Pomian 1992, p.90), curiosity, thirst for truth and a constant Socratic doubt<sup>6</sup>.

The ever-growing literature on Europe thus covers an immense spectrum ranging from concrete geopolitical reality straight to the metaphysical realm.<sup>7</sup> No wonder then, that a certain amount of lassitude has accompanied this often hagiographic and uncritical literature on Europe: "*Notre agacement ... viendrait plutôt de l'excès de fanfares et de fanfaronnades, colloqués ou pas, sponsorisées ou platement subventionnées, autour de notre cher et vieux cap avancé*" (Goldzink 1994, p.141). Working with the term "idea of Europe" thus requires outspoken prudence and a conscious effort of definition. By using this expression do we refer to a "concept", a "form of consciousness", a "set of beliefs", a "theory" or an "ideology"?

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<sup>2</sup> "There was a Hegelian "spirit of Europe" and we either analyzed its elements or blew wind into its sails, but we did not question that in the end it would prevail" (Hay 1980, p.3).

<sup>3</sup> Berting refers to Norbert Elias' conception of a "Europe of manners".

<sup>4</sup> "L'Europe est le continent de l'invention du beau. Et l'art est capacité de faire du neuf, d'inventer de nouveaux regards sur le monde" (Attali 2001, p.44).

<sup>5</sup> "Au plus fort des crises européennes on a lu que l'Europe était écartelée ou qu'elle agonisait; mais elle peut aussi être au pied du mur, repartir du bon pied, redémarrer ou même s'élargir" (Defay 2001, p.38). For a good overview of artistic representations of Europe see Von Plessen (2003).

<sup>6</sup> "Qu'est-ce que l'Europe? – Une pensée qui ne se contente jamais. Sans pitié pour elle-même, elle ne cesse jamais de poursuivre deux quêtes: l'une vers le bonheur; l'autre, qui lui est plus indispensable encore, et plus chère, vers la vérité. A peine a-t-elle trouvé un état qui lui semble répondre à cette double exigence, elle sait qu'elle ne tient encore, d'une prise incertaine, que le provisoire, que le relatif; et elle recommence la recherche qui fait sa gloire et son tourment" (Hazard 1963, p.450).

<sup>7</sup> Gollwitzer (1951, p.8) uses the term "Spannungsbogen Europa".

(Talmor 1950, p.66) Or are we even in the presence of a class-consciousness?<sup>8</sup> The traps to be eluded in pursuing "the idea of Europe" are many and among them we find the essentialist-Platonic definition of an immanent Europe (Schulze 1997, p.38)<sup>9</sup>, obscure narratives of origins and destiny (Delanty 1995, p.8), unproblematic teleological constructions (Delanty 1995, p.3)<sup>10</sup> and finally the omnipresent danger of anachronism<sup>11</sup>.

To avoid these multifaceted pitfalls several strategies can be applied. First of all, when dealing with the idea of Europe a constructivist and "contextualizing" approach should be used. As Delanty (1995) reminds us, "*Europe does not exist more naturally than do nations*" (p.3) and therefore we should look for the "reference points" (p.5) around which the idea of Europe was articulated and constructed. Delanty therefore suggests (p.4) to treat Europe in the same way as Anderson treats nations, namely as "imagined communities" and "inventions"<sup>12</sup> begging for the "cui bono" question (p.3). This constructivist approach is corroborated by Herzfeld (2002, p.145), for whom: "*The "idea of Europe" has percolated through the complex populations of the European continent and is "refracted" through the prism of daily interactions*". Herder himself warned us that Europe was only a mental representation, changing with each point of reference and epoch: "*Wenn wir uns demnach auf Europa bezirken: so ist Europa auch nur ein Gedankenbild, das wir uns etwa nach der Lage seiner Länder, nach ihrer Aehnlichkeit, Gemeinschaft und Unterhandlung zusammenordnen. Denken wir uns das einst oder jetzt katholische, oder überhaupt das christliche Europa: so ist auch in ihm nach Ländern und Situationen der Geist der Zeit sehr verschieden. Er ändert sich sogar mit Classen der Einwohner, geschweige mit ihren Bedürfnissen, Neigungen und Einsichten*" (SWS XVII, p.80).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> "Europe is not only a neutral geographical term but a word expressing a sense of group identity, a form of collective consciousness not unlike national consciousness, class consciousness, or the sense of belonging to a particular age group or generation" (Burke 1980, p.21).

<sup>9</sup> "Es kann also nicht weiterführen, dass sich die Historiker als Apologeten eines scheinbar schon immer existenten Kultureuropa betätigen, so als ob dieser Begriff dem Raum und seinen Völkern inhärent wäre" (Schulze 1997, p.38).

<sup>10</sup> "Most of Europe is only retrospectively European and has been invented in the image of a distorted modernity." Consider also Pomian's (1992, p.97) remark: "...il faut éviter de poser d'entrée de jeu, comme l'ont fait presque tous les auteurs ayant traité de ce sujet, que ce sont les mêmes forces qui ont opéré tout au long de l'histoire de l'Europe et que c'est un même dispositif qui a imprimé à cette histoire son caractère dynamique et sa direction."

<sup>11</sup> The danger of reading back our own conception of Europe into earlier periods. See Confino (1994) for a critique of how Wolff (1994) forced the notion of "Eastern Europe" onto eighteenth-century philosophers and travelers.

<sup>12</sup> Delanty (1995, p.3) talks of a "...historically fabricated reality of ever changing forms and dynamics..."

<sup>13</sup> Quotes from Herder J.G. (1978), *Sämtliche Werke* (2. Nachdruckauflage, 33 Bände), Suphan B. (hrsg.), Weidmann Verlag, Hildesheim, will be indicated with the letters SWS.

Adopting a constructivist perspective implies looking for the nodal points of communication and mapping their distribution, so as to be able to determine which groups are prevalent in shaping discourses. It seems that in the eighteenth-century the political elite and the intellectuals were widely dominating the debates, as it "*is in their language that the idea of Europe has been codified*" (Delanty 1995, p.6). De Rougemont (1980, p.31) largely agrees with this argument, as for him Europe was a creation of poets and political visionaries such as Dante, Leibniz, Mann or Gide. A top down approach, such as applied by Hobsbawm (1990) to the nation, seems thus appropriate to track the idea of Europe in the eighteenth-century.

Another way to avoid the pitfalls accompanying the idea of Europe is, as Burke (1980, p.23) suggests, not to consider the term Europe in isolation, but always to relate it to other notions of collectivity current at the time: "*To determine what Europe meant to earlier generations is impossible, as long as we consider the term in isolation. We need to place it within what might be called the "repertoire" of concepts available for expressing group identity*". We shall keep this recommendation in mind and try not to treat Herder's comprehension of Europe separately from other concepts of community, such as "Volk", "Nation" or "Humanität", that are essential to his philosophy of history. Finally, we should, just as Herder himself, be wary of all categories and a priori conceptualizations (Homann and Albrecht 1993, p.88). Herder was an advocate of the flexible use of concepts, as their meaning could vary according to situations and perspectives. He thus preferred to put the accent on dynamic and evolving content rather than on rigid and sterile forms. This attitude often led to accusations of inconsistency and even irrationality against him (Becker 1987, p.219).<sup>14</sup>

As Koselleck (1979) has shown in his "Vergangene Zukunft: zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten", many of the concepts like civilization, nation, culture and society were only in their formative stages in the latter half of the eighteenth-century (Homann and Albrecht 1993, p.93). Koselleck attributed an important role to Herder in the elaboration and closer definition of those concepts and Cassirer was correct to point out the paradox thereby created: "*Herders Hauptschriften sind in der Tat von diesem doppelten Problem beherrscht. Sie stehen in beständiger Abwehrstellung gegen die historischen "Abstraktionen" und "Konstruktionen" - die sie andererseits dennoch, in einem neuen Sinne, erst zu begründen und zu*

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<sup>14</sup> And ultimately to the break with his mentor Kant.

*verteidigen haben. Sie sind von dem Drang beseelt, immer tiefer in das Individuelle einzudringen, während es sie andererseits dennoch über das bloss individuelle ständig hinaustreibt*" (quoted in Becker 1987, p.106). Herder was thus "deconstructing" the very concepts he was contributing to define.

To satisfy this prerogative of historicization, the content and evolution of the idea of Europe in the eighteenth century shall, at present, briefly be outlined. Europe was long used only as a geographical expression with a mythological pedigree. Terminologically, preference was given to the notion of "respublica christiana", which for long overshadowed the name of the Sidonian princess. Furthermore, since the fall of the Roman Empire, Europe and Christianity had not perfectly overlapped as there were still barbarians in the North, pagans in the East and Christians scattered all over the territories of the defunct Roman Empire (Den Boer 1993, p.28).<sup>15</sup> Since the Schism of the Orient, a tendency towards "westernization" of Christendom had taken place<sup>16</sup> and sometimes "occidens" or "partibus occidentis" were used instead of the more common "ecclesia" and "imperium" (Gollwitzer 1951b, p.163).

One would have to wait for the Renaissance to see the terms Europe and Christendom used in an almost interchangeable way, although with a large preference for the latter (Hay 1968, p.115). This could be observed most notably with fifteenth-century pope Eneas Silvio (Pius II), who equated Europe and Christendom in his dramatic appeals to solidarity and common defense in face of the Turkish threat (Hay 1957, p.53).<sup>17</sup> In the sixteenth century, Erasmus of Rotterdam still referred to "la communauté chrétienne" in his "Querela pacis": "*La distance d'un pays à l'autre sépare les corps et non les âmes. Jadis le Rhin séparait le Français de l'Allemand, mais le Rhin ne peut séparer le Chrétien du Chrétien. Les Pyrénées mettent une frontière entre les Gaulois et les Espagnols; mais ces mêmes monts ne peuvent partager la communauté chrétienne. La mer sépare les Anglais des Français, mais elle ne peut rompre les liens de la société du Christ*" (quoted in Margolin 1994, p.111). Consider also seventeenth

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<sup>15</sup> Armenians, Jacobites and Maronites (Barnavi 2001, p.28). Augustine had written his "Confessions" in Northern Africa and there was still much talk throughout the Middle Ages of the mysterious Christian Empire of Prester John somewhere in the East (den Boer 1993, p.32).

<sup>16</sup> As Seton-Watson (1989, p.31) reminds us, Christendom should be differentiated from Christianity, the former having territorial and political connotations.

<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, in the Middle Ages, and even the Renaissance, people were expressing their loyalties mainly in local terms. Identities were framed by fiefdoms, towns and regions (Jordan 2002, p.77). Burke (1980, p.27) argues that even the upper classes, as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were still conceiving of themselves essentially as Bretons, Yorkshiremen, Catalans or Suabians.

century Purchas: " ...*Protect thy people in peace, unite the disagreeing parts and disjunct states of Christendom, recover those which have fallen by Mahometan impiety and thy servants which groan under Turkish tyranny...*" (quoted in Hay 1968, p.113). The major us/them dichotomy up until the seventeenth century was thus clearly the one of Christian versus pagan, believer versus infidel (Burke 1986, p.23).<sup>18</sup>

Seton-Watson (1989 pp.33-4) sees four major reasons for the demise of Christendom in the seventeenth and eighteenth century and its final replacement by Europe: the rise of the secular sovereign states, the expansion across the Oceans, the Reformation<sup>19</sup> and, finally, the scientific discoveries. If for sixteenth century men, like de Lery or Botero, being Christian was still the *nec plus ultra*, for Voltaire and Helvetius, Christianity was no more than an ugly stain that had to be erased from European consciousness (Chabod 1963, p.136). Europe, in the eighteenth century, thus endeavored to challenge the gods or better, Europe dared to conceive of a future without them: "...*l'aventure de notre civilisation, la première dans l'histoire qui ait osé définir son idéal sans consulter les dieux*" (Pomeau 1991, p.55).<sup>20</sup>

It is often argued that Europe underwent a "second unification" in the eighteenth century (Pomian 1991; Julliard 2001, p.72). Lively (1981, p.93) joins this opinion, as for him, Europe at that time put on a new skin, namely the one of modernity<sup>21</sup>: "*This identity*

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<sup>18</sup> Which is further testified by Charles V's statement: "...*certains disent que je veux être le monarque du monde, alors que ma pensée et mes actes démontrent le contraire... Mon intention n'est pas de faire la guerre aux chrétiens, mais bien aux infidèles, et que l'Italie et toute la chrétienté soient en paix, et que chacun possède ce qui lui appartient*" (quoted in Escamilla 1995, p.36).

<sup>19</sup> The Reformation and ensuing split are generally regarded as the main reason for the demise of the "respublica christiana" (Delanty 1995, p.68; Strath 2000, p.28; Schmidt 1966, p.173).

<sup>20</sup> Continuities between Enlightenment Europe and declining Christendom were however many. Delanty (1995, p.69) sees three major ones: the idea of the universality of truth, of the unity of humanity and of a redemptive vision of history. Pomeau (1991, p.42) reminds us that religion often simply had been internalized instead of abjured as Catholic Jansenism and Protestant Pietism attest; not to speak of deism that was to permeate the whole of the eighteenth century. Finally, many of the characteristics attributed to the "Republic of Letters" were already well present during the "respublica christiana": a European-wide network of trade and universities, common cultural values such as anti-Semitism and Aristotelian formal logic, and a fluid circulation of ideas. Luther's theses or Wycliffe's heresy, for example, made their way through Europe at an appalling pace (Barnavi 2001, p.24-26).

<sup>21</sup> Protagonist A in Voltaire's "l'ABC" hails modern and enlightened Europe: "...*songez que Paris, qui n'est que d'un dixième moins grand que Londres, n'était alors qu'une petite cité barbare. Amsterdam n'était qu'un marais, Madrid un désert; et de la rive droite du Rhin jusqu'au golfe de Bothnie tout était sauvage: les habitants de ces climats vivaient, comme les Tartares ont toujours vécu, dans l'ignorance, dans la disette, dans la barbarie. Comptez-vous pour peu de choses qu'il y ait aujourd'hui des philosophes sur le trône, à Berlin, en Suède, en Pologne, en Russie, et que les découvertes de*

(European) was now discovered not in a Christian heritage, nor indeed in terms of the past at all; it was discovered rather in the modernity of Europe."<sup>22</sup> Two things that made Europe so distinctly modern were the nascent industrialization and the growing importance of commerce<sup>23</sup>, accompanied as they were by the rise of an entrepreneurial bourgeoisie (Bourgeois 2000, p.206). As we can read in letter twenty-four of Montesquieu's "Lettres Persanes": "*Les Français courent, oui ils volent*" (quoted in Chabod 1963, p.73)<sup>24</sup>.

Another striking characteristic of Enlightenment Europe was the importance of travel. To complete their education young noblemen undertook, accompanied by learned preceptors, the "Grand Tour" that led them to the most important courts all over Europe.<sup>25</sup> Leaving the "voyage pédagogique" to their younger counterparts, more renowned figures took the "philosophical tour", a kind of "intellectual tourism" during which the voyager of renown was received in the salons and Masonic lodges all over Europe (Pomeau, 1991, p.23). As Hazard (1963, pp.424-5) tells us, even the princes were traveling as the routes became faster and safer.<sup>26</sup> Much as today, rich Muscovites came to spend their rubles in the big cities (Hazard 1963, p.424), if possible in the Mecca of this primarily urban "Europe du voyage", namely Paris (Chaunu 1982, p.39).<sup>27</sup>

Europe also became in the eighteenth century a vast "school of judgment", in the form of a community of academic and philosophical solidarity (Coutel 1996, p.91). With the shared heritage of seventeenth century rationalism, based on Spinoza, Locke and Leibniz, the *philosophes* and *Aufklärer* all over Europe stuck together to push for reforms

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*notre grand Newton soient devenues le catéchisme de la noblesse de Moscou et de Pétersbourg?"* (in Hersant and Bogaert 2000, p.644).

<sup>22</sup> Pomian (1992, p.96) argues that time in the eighteenth century became "future-oriented", whereas before it had been conceived mainly in terms of the past. See also Koselleck (1979).

<sup>23</sup> As Venturi (1971, p.25) observes, the period going from 1750 to 1770 was indeed one of economical, commercial and agricultural growth.

<sup>24</sup> Chabod (1963, p.73) rightly claims that it is a huge step from Montaigne's indictment of European greed to Montesquieu's observation of European entrepreneurial dynamism. Once more Montesquieu uses the Oriental other to underscore European activity, as the Orientals, we learn in letter 87 have "*peu de commerce entre eux*" (quoted in Chabod 1963, p.73).

<sup>25</sup> Robel (1992, p.227) notes that the "Northern Tour", including Russia, became ever more popular during the eighteenth century.

<sup>26</sup> One even started to circulate by night (Hazard 1963, p.424). A trip from England to the Caribbean however still took 48 days and an overland trip from Paris to Warsaw 18 days (Woolf 1992, p.76).

<sup>27</sup> Paris was also relatively important in terms of numbers, as it counted 600'000 to 800'000 inhabitants in 1776 compared to 175'000 for Vienna and 140'000 for Rome and Berlin (Havens 1968, p.203).

(Chaunu 1982).<sup>28</sup> Pomian (1990, p.94) illustrates quite nicely the feeling of reciprocity that made this community with cosmopolitan ambitions transcend national and religious boundaries: "*Si, tout en étant catholique, on entretient une correspondance avec un calviniste, un luthérien, voire un socinien – sans s'ériger en controversiste ou en convertisseur – c'est parce que, membre de la République des Lettres, on communique avec un autre membre de la République des Lettres.*"

This European elite shared more than a common voluntarism, optimism<sup>29</sup> and enthusiasm for change, as it also was a sociological community of manners, cultural values, historical heritage and artistic creation.<sup>30</sup> Europeans went to the same Italian operas, met in the same "French salons" and drank the same "English tea" (Hazard 1963, p.425). Havens (1968, p.209) observes that there existed "*a kind of uniformity of the "bonnête homme" through all of Europe*". This was of course a false cosmopolitanism, as most of its trends were set in Paris: French *chefs, modistes, comédiens* and *maîtres à danser* were invading all of Europe's high society (Hazard 1963, p.429). The most coveted "salons"<sup>31</sup>, the one of Madame Geoffrin<sup>32</sup> and the one of the Baron d'Holbach<sup>33</sup> were both located in Paris and French definitely replaced Latin as the new *lingua franca*. Frederick the Great was an unconditional admirer of French culture (Havens 1968, p.206), Voltaire's "Siècle de Louis XIV" was an ode to French civilization and the Marquis de Carracioli could write in 1777 a book with a title that speaks for itself: "Paris le modèle des nations étrangères, ou l'Europe française" (Chaunu 1982, p.36).

Even the militaries shared common rules all over Europe, as they were following the same "officer's code" and entertaining together the mirage of "decadent feudalism". The Prince de Ligne, the archetype of the cosmopolitan, could thus declare in a letter of 1787

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<sup>28</sup> The French Huguenots and Italian humanist diaspora played an important part in the diffusion of that new mentality (Hay 1968, p.123).

<sup>29</sup> Enlightenment has never been optimistic in the outright fashion often alleged. On the contrary, consciousness of the fragility of progress seemed to be very widespread, as the following statements quoted from Gay (1977 pp.104-6) attest: Voltaire made Candide sigh: "*If this is the best of all possible worlds, what are the others like?*" The German *Aufklärer* Lichtenberg lamented: "*People talk a great deal about Enlightenment and ask for more light. My God! What good is all this light if people either have no eyes or if those who have eyes resolutely keep them shut!*"

<sup>30</sup> Jordan (2002, p.9) points towards a common European architecture expressing itself since the twelfth century in the form of Gothic cathedrals.

<sup>31</sup> The "salons", initially being aristocratic meeting places, progressively became the location for bourgeois sociability (Woolf 1992, p.95).

<sup>32</sup> Significantly called "the tsarine de Paris" (Pomeau 1991, p.70).

<sup>33</sup> Even more significantly a German from the Rhineland, who was completely gallicized (Pomeau 1970, p.70).



to the Marquise de Coigny: "*J'aime mon état d'étranger partout. Vous adorant, mais propriétaire ailleurs, Français en Autriche, Autrichien en France, l'un et l'autre en Russie. C'est le meilleur moyen de réussir*" (quoted in Hersant and Bogaert 2000, p.930).<sup>34</sup> Europe had thus become, as eighteenth century observers, such as Adelung, did not fail to remark: "ein bewunderwürdiges Ganzes" (quoted in Hazard 1963, p.422).

Politically this new "Weltanschauung" was to have important implications. Enlightened despots, like Frederick II, Stanislas Augustus, Catherine II, Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II did not miss this wind of change to use it for social engineering. Greater freedom of expression, more religious tolerance<sup>35</sup>, humanized penal systems<sup>36</sup>, poor houses, orphanages, street cleaning, education and sponsoring of scientific research were all part of their programs (Longworth 1994, pp.129-33). Joseph II abolished monastic property and serfdom, imposed the use of German in the administration, fostered religious toleration and limited death penalty (Robertson 1992, p.200). It goes without saying that all this measures in fact centralized power and augmented police and bureaucratic control (Wolf 1962, p.473). The process of domestication of civil society, later to be described so accurately by Foucault, was thus already well under way, right there at the birth of bourgeois society.<sup>37</sup> Prussia, having to sustain the largest army proportionally to resources, also developed the most formidable and efficient administration of the eighteenth century (Wolf 1962, p.468).

The decay of the Ottoman power<sup>38</sup> heavily contributed to the emergence of a secularized version of European consciousness (Neumann 1999, p.53; Durchhardt 1992, p.130). For long, the "respublica christiana" had been pictured as a defensive community,

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<sup>34</sup> Hazard (1963, p.430) also reports that the Prince de Ligne: "*dit qu'il a tant de patries qu'il ne sait plus au juste à laquelle il appartient; il se sent parfaitement à son aise à Vienne aussi bien qu'à Saint-Pétersbourg; toujours en mouvement, l'Europe n'est plus qu'une grande route aux multiples auberges, qu'il parcourt à bride abattue*".

<sup>35</sup> Although the very pious and religious Maria-Theresa did not hesitate to tightly control publications and libraries (Pomeau 1991, p.157).

<sup>36</sup> In the beginning Enlightenment thinkers were indeed mainly concerned with intolerance and cruelty (Venturi 1971, p.27).

<sup>37</sup> Gerhard (1981, p.135) talks of the appearance of the "public", of society as an independent force, that Scottish philosophy and later Hegel were to theorize.

<sup>38</sup> The Ottoman Empire had long been Europe's most immediate and feared other but in the eighteenth century, it seemed, the sultan had lost his teeth (Farangel 2002, p.398). Europe's image of the Ottoman Empire, which had already shifted once from that of the infidel religious competitor to that of the barbarian military rival, by then underwent a second transformation to be stigmatized as the "sick man" (Neumann 1999, p.52 and 59).

a "Schicksalsgemeinschaft" forged by the unceasing offensive and defensive wars waged against "infidel others": the Crusades, the fending off of the Mongols in the thirteenth-century and the repeated wars against the Arabs and later the Turks (Poitiers 722, the fall of Constantinople 1453, the maritime victory at Lepante 1571, and the successful defense of Vienna 1683). With such threats sharply declining in the eighteenth century, Europeans simply did not have to consider themselves any longer as an organic or spiritual community of faith.<sup>39</sup> By then following a mechanical logic of balance of power, European states could even endeavor to contemplate the inclusion of the Ottoman Empire into their alliances.<sup>40</sup>

The way was thus free for the breakthrough of a secularized consciousness of Europe on a broad scale. First, of course, it has to be asked whose consciousness is under consideration. It is clear that, most of the time, research on the idea of Europe in the eighteenth century in fact investigates the mental categories of a social elite. Burke (1980) would probably still be right today, over twenty years later, to observe that the "*social history of the consciousness of Europe remains to be written*". Seton-Watson (1989, p.35) used the term "cultural permafrost" to describe the mental state of the Russian peasantry, a metaphor that probably was valid for most of Europe's eighteenth century peasantry.

The fixed "turning point", that unique moment of "prise de conscience", Talmor (1980) is asking for in her 1980 article "Reflections on the rise and development of the idea of Europe"<sup>41</sup>, is very hard to make out. It can nonetheless be located somewhere between the end of the seventeenth<sup>42</sup> and the middle of the eighteenth century. For Burke (1980, p.26), a social historian by training, the decisive moment was the end of the seventeenth century: "*My own impression, based on rather unsystematic reading, is that the late seventeenth century was the time when ordinary people, at least in towns, began to be aware of Europe.*"<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The United States, at the time, were not (yet) a serious competitor either (Durchhardt 1992, p.130).

<sup>40</sup> It was François I who set the trend in 1536 by allying with the sultan against Charles V (Neumann 1999, p.47).

<sup>41</sup> "*So, rather than looking for successive challenges which Christendom faced over the centuries preceding 1700, instead of adducing dangers to Christians posed by Arabs, Turks, and natives of newly discovered lands, we should perhaps look for a one and only prise de conscience which is, in a sense, unconnected with all the contingencies which form the events related in the history of Europe*" (Talmor 1980, p.64).

<sup>42</sup> The same period Hazard describes as crisis of the European consciousness.

<sup>43</sup> Burke gives the example of a German street ballad titled "Europa freue dich" dated 1684 that referred to the successful defense of Vienna the previous year. Another example given by Burke is an English ballad with the title: "Hogan Mogan or the wise men of Europe" (1980, p.26).

Durchhardt (1992, p.121) confirms this view, as for him, it is "*gar keine Frage dass sich um 1700 auf breiter Front ein Europabewusstsein durchgesetzt hat*"; Hay (1968, p.117) joins the chorus, by claiming that finally, in the eighteenth century: "*it is in terms of Europe that Europeans view the world*" and that "*we have moved from the fact to the consciousness of the fact*" (p.120). Heller (1993, p.12) agrees with this general opinion, insisting that "*European identity was not formed before the eighteenth century*". A critical mass of research thus agrees that an everyday consciousness of Europe emerged in the late seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. Pomeau comes up with a ready explanation for this phenomenon: as the individuals at that time progressively detached themselves from dynastic ties, but were not yet bound by national ideologies, they found themselves on an outmostly propitious terrain to develop a European consciousness (1991, p.245).

As emerges quite clearly from his work and correspondence, Europe was an everyday unit for Herder. In a letter to Heyne, dated December 1775, (B III, p.235)<sup>44</sup> he appealed to Europe as a witness: "*...und ich will antworten, vorm Könige, dem Ministerium und wenns sein soll, vor Europa.*" In a letter to his publisher Hartknoch, dated January 1778 (B IV, p.52), Herder wrote: "*Warum du mich nicht längst mit Kanter auseinander gesetzt begreife ich nicht, da Dir u. ganz Europa seine Umstände so lang bekannt seyn.*" Commenting Raynal's visit to Weimar, Herder wrote to his Swiss friend J. von Müller in June 1782: "*Uebrigens ist für mich nichts an ihm Hochachtungswürdig, als sein jargon philosophique et politique; nach dem er in Europa in jedem Kabinet so zu Hause ist, wie in beiden Indien u. sehr seine Menschen zu finden u. zu messen weiss*" (B IV, p.221).<sup>45</sup> In a poem of the series "Terpsichore" (SWS XXVII, p.295), Herder even referred explicitly to the mythological rapt of princess Europe:

Schöne Sidonerinn, die einst Jupiter über das Meer trug,  
 Schöne Sidonerinn, die liebliche Töchter gebar,  
 Ach, wie bist du verwirret, Europa! Wie rasen die Töchter  
 Gegen einander! Du gehst, Füsse gen Himmel gekehrt,  
 Auf dem Haupt. O führte der Stier dich wieder hinüber!  
 Oder du findest im Meer eigenen Blutes den Tod

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<sup>44</sup> Letters are quoted from: Herder J.G. (1989), *Briefe in 10 Bänden*, Otto R. (hrsg.), Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, Weimar and will be indicated by the letter B.

<sup>45</sup> There are many more such letters in which references to Europe appear. In a letter to Knebel dated September 1784 (B V, p.66): "*Sie sind von aussen Herr über sich geworden (unter Tausenden in Europa kann dies nur einer von sich sagen)...*" or to Jacobi on May 1783 (B IV, p.276): "*Endlich kam Ihr "Etwas von Lessing" u. wenn Sie einen zustimmenden Bruder-Leser in Europa haben, bin ichs gewesen.*"

Currently, Herder is mostly referred to with regards to theories of nationalism (Dann 1994, pp.1-3)<sup>46</sup> and historical relativism. His theories of "Volk" and nation have indeed been received with ready ears in a European East that was still dominated by huge empires in the nineteenth century, whereas his hermeneutical approach to history fell on fertile ground in western Europe (Becker 1987). The aim of this paper is to show that Herder's "Europabild" was in fact essential to his philosophy of history and to the whole of his political work. It is our opinion, that this central aspect of his work has been largely neglected by the Herder literature so far, despite the fact that Gollwitzer (1951), in his still unmatched work on the German "Europabild" of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, underscored the importance of collective intermediate bodies mediating between the individual and the universal in Herder's thought. To illustrate his point, Gollwitzer already referred to both the nation *and* Europe as such intermediate bodies (p.104).

Kantzenbach (1980, p.103), for his part, underscored the importance of the triangular relation between Europe, the nations and peace in Herder's work: "*Die Bewältigung der nationalen Gegensätze und Spannungen wird deshalb von ihm gefordert, und gerade von dem Eintreten für den Gedanken der Versöhnung zwischen Nationen und Völkern legte sich die Ausarbeitung einer Europakonzeption in den "Ideen..." für Herder besonders nahe aus.*" This paper will further explore this triangular relation, notably by contrasting it with more classical conceptions of Europe in the eighteenth-century, centered on the state-system and the balance of power. By doing so, the paper will, it is hoped, contribute to counter the abusive claims considering Herder either as one of the founding fathers of German jingoism or, on the other opposite, as a radical pyrrhonist.<sup>47</sup> Finally, it shall be shown that Herder's conception of Europe was an important alternative in the discursive competition about Europe that took place during the epistemological crisis inaugurated by the French Revolution.

Before passing to the main body of the text, a few preliminary methodological remarks are necessary. To begin with, it should be observed that political writings are only a fragment of Herder's overall work. Herder was a universal mind and concerned himself

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<sup>46</sup> Becker (1987, p.222) argues that Herder's works concerning "Volk" and "Volkstum" have been edited much more frequently than others.

<sup>47</sup> Finkielkraut, in his 1987 book "la défaite de la pensée", accused Herder of "tribalism" (Caisson 1991, p.17).

with almost anything of interest in his time. A great part of his writings was dedicated to literary criticism, poetry, aesthetics, antiquity, anthropology, linguistics, theology and philosophy. His curiosity seemed unlimited, as the huge amount of travel literature he engaged with attests.<sup>48</sup> Dreitzel (1987, p.285) estimates the proportion of books concerning politics in Herder's personal library at 3-4%.<sup>49</sup> Some have thus concluded that political issues were only of minor importance to Herder.<sup>50</sup> This argument can however be challenged, firstly, because most of the classical political authors (notably those with interest in regards to the idea of Europe) are present in his personal library: Dante, Erasmus, Guiccardini, Machiavelli, Campanella, Hobbes, Leibniz, Hume, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Pufendorf, Grotius, Gentz, Fichte, Bolingbroke and Smith, to name but a few (Stolpe 1996, pp.1020-24); secondly, because Herder's holism<sup>51</sup> implies that no aspect of his work can be treated in isolation and, thirdly, because in most of Herder's major works, such as "Auch eine Philosophie zur Geschichte der Menschheit", "Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit", "Humanitätsbriefe" and "Adrastea", politics and Europe did, in fact, play an essential role.

Those who have ignored such a hermeneutical approach to Herder have often done more harm than good, as Herder's frequently fragmentary, aphoristic and analogical style<sup>52</sup> can easily be misinterpreted or abused (Becker 1987, p.226).<sup>53</sup> Herder's own method of empathy or "Einfühlung" (Kamenetsky 1973, p.24) often led him to justify or explain points of views different from his own by putting them into context. His enormous potential for receptivity and integration of alien ideas (Arnold 1994, pp.410-11) made Herder look at times erratic or unsystematic, but this is much less the case if delicate passages are put into the overall perspective of his work. Furthermore, a line is often drawn between Herder's early and late writings. The works of the young Herder,

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<sup>48</sup> For a complete overview of Herder's relation to travel literature see Jäger (1986).

<sup>49</sup> 274 books out of a total of 7747, representing a huge private collection for the time. For more details on Herder's private bibliography see Stolpe (1966).

<sup>50</sup> Dobbeck (1959, p.21) called it "nebensächlich" and Dreitzel (1987, p.285) "zweitrangig".

<sup>51</sup> For an excellent presentation of Herder's methodology see Irmscher (1960). He defines holism as "Prozess der Erklärung aus dem Ganzen", which can thus be related to the contemporary hermeneutical method.

<sup>52</sup> Kant accused Herder of "Analogiensucht" (Irmscher 1960, p.19).

<sup>53</sup> Special carefulness seems appropriate with regard to Cold War literature, notably the one stemming from former GDR, which traditionally depicts Herder as overtly bourgeois revolutionary, democratic and russophile (Gesemann 1965, p.428). Becker (1987, p.209) confirms these apprehensions, by writing that: "*Das kulturelle Erbe Herders galt u. a. als politische Legitimation für die Existenz des Sozialismus in der DDR.*"

such as "Auch...", are held to be more critical of the Enlightenment narrative and are thus often hailed by nationalists and relativists, whereas the later, more political and idealist writings, such as the "Adrastea" and the "Humanitätsbriefe", are frequently dismissed and already had to take a good deal of criticism in Herder's own time.<sup>54</sup> We shall argue that even though there is a change in focus between Herder's early and late writings, the overall narrative concerning Europe, the nation and peace remains consistent. Finally, the importance of unpublished passages and drafts should be underscored, as Herder often reworked his texts numerous times and had to face censorship during all of his career.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> In Jena Herder's later works were derided as "philosophisches Ragout" and "gewaltig lange Brühe" (Maurer 1996, p.47) and even Haym (1954[1880]), Herder's first bibliographer, talks of an "ermüdende Weitschweifigkeit".

<sup>55</sup> Especially after the French Revolution suspicions about Herder's political credentials rose, and with them censorship.

## 2. Europe as a state-system

### 2.1 The Westphalian model and its geographical base

The birth of the European state-system is usually situated at the treaties of Westphalia (1648) terminating the Thirty Years War. The origins of this state-system can of course be traced further back to Machiavelli and Italian *ragione di stato* (Pomian 1990, p.97), or to the very emergence of the European dynasties contesting the "*political theology of empire and papacy*" (Pocock 2002, p.63). Already Periclean Greece was conscious of the dynamism of its' state-system and did not hesitate, with Xenophon and Herodotus, to claim superiority over a forever static Orient (Neumann 1991, p.44). The Westphalian system is traditionally defined as a system of rival states, all equal by rights, driven by competition and evolving in an anarchical international environment. Sovereignty was to be located in the states, with no other authority above them. Walker sums it up quite nicely: "*The principle of identity embodied in Christian universalism was challenged by the principle of difference embodied in the emerging state. This was perhaps not much more than a change in emphasis. But this change in emphasis had enormous repercussions. From then on, the principle of identity, the claim of universalism, was pursued within states. International politics became the site not of universalistic claims but the realm of difference itself*" (quoted in Neumann 1999, p.29).

Division was no longer considered harmful but beneficial, because it was fostering competition and thus innovation and creativity. Incarnating the realm of political diversity and therefore of liberty, Europe was described by Voltaire in his "Siècle de Louis XIV" as: "... *une espèce de grande république partagée en plusieurs États, les uns monarchiques, les autres mixtes; ceux-ci aristocratiques, ceux-là populaires, mais tous correspondants les uns avec les autres; tous ayant un même fond de religion, quoique divisés en plusieurs sectes; tous ayant les mêmes principes de droit publique et de politique, inconnus dans les autres parties du monde*" (quoted in Schulze 1997, p.63). We can infer from Voltaire's quote that at least a minimum of shared values and laws were necessary for the European state-system to function. The system could thus never be completely anarchical, as, just as in any market, a minimal set of rules and shared assumptions had to be guaranteed. Durchhardt (1992, pp.124-4) confirms that by 1720

the European public was permeated with the idea of such an ensemble of European states knit together by a system of rights and obligations<sup>56</sup>.

Traditionally, the dynamism of this European state-system<sup>57</sup> was explained in terms of geographic and climatic determinism and contrasted to a reified Orient. The eighteenth-century champion in this respect was certainly Montesquieu, who attributed Europe's superiority over Asia to its extensive temperate zone (den Boer 1993, p.16)<sup>58</sup>. The Orient was dismissed as millenarian, homogenous, cruel, static, fatalist and above all despotic. Even Voltaire, a declared admirer of Chinese culture, could not but claim: "*Notre caractère est de nous perfectionner, et celui des Chinois est, jusqu'à présent, de rester où ils sont parvenus*" (quoted in Baysson 2002, p.171).

Herder shared most of his contemporaries' assumptions about the European state-system. Although Herder was fully aware of the criminal origin of this system, which he

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<sup>56</sup> See also Malettke (1995, p.79).

<sup>57</sup> One could however ask with Gollwitzer (1951, p.86), whether there did not exist, in fact, several state-systems or sub-systems in eighteenth century Europe. The Northern War and the War of the Spanish Succession at the beginning of the century took place in two completely separate theaters. J.J. Schmauss published a "*Historie der Balance Europas*" in two volumes of which the second dealt exclusively with the "northern powers" (Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Poland, Prussia). During the Seven Years War one could still distinguish between a western and an eastern theater of operations and the partitions of Poland were of course an eastern, or at the time northern, affair. According to Bull, (1995, p.98) Burke claimed in the late eighteenth century the existence of one dominant and four regional subsystems, the first being the great middle balance of Europe made up of Great-Britain, France and Spain, the second the balance of the North, the third the balance of Germany and the fourth the one of Italy. Black (1983, p.60) distinguishes two systems in the latter half of the eighteenth century: the first made up of Great-Britain, France and Spain "vying for oceanic supremacy" and the second made up by Prussia, Russia and Austria, the powers involved in the partitioning of Poland.

<sup>58</sup> This seems to be in stark contrast to Hippocrates who in 400 BC attributed the more warlike character of the Europeans to the greater seasonal variations they were enduring: "*We have now discussed the organic and structural differences between the populations of Asia and Europe but we have still to consider the problem why the Asiatics are of less warlike and more tame disposition than the Europeans. The deficiency of spirit and courage observable in the human inhabitants of Asia has for its principal cause the low margin of seasonal variability in the temperature of that continent, which is approximately stable throughout the year. Such a climate does not produce those mental shocks and violent bodily dislocations which would naturally render the temperament ferocious and introduce a stronger current of irrationality and passion than would be the case under stable conditions. It is invariably changes that stimulate the human mind and prevent it from remaining passive*" (quoted in den Boer, p.16). Probably Montesquieu based his climatic determinism rather on Aristotle's famous passage in "*Politics*", in which the Greek philosopher claimed that Greeks were free and had the best political institutions precisely because they found themselves in an intermediate climate. This set the Greeks apart from the Asians and the Europeans. The Europeans living in a climate too cold, had courage but lacked intelligence and the Asians living in a climate too hot, were intelligent but lacked courage and were therefore subjected to a condition of slavery (Ferrary 1994, pp.49-50). One gets the impression that Montesquieu simply substituted Europe for Aristotle's Greece.



even dated back to the "Völkerwanderungen",<sup>59</sup> he readily recognized the benefits of European divisiveness, divergent political constitutions and resulting competition: "*In unserm Zustande von Europa, bei der so grossen, in einander greifenden Concurrenz der Staaten... . Alles fliesst durch und in einander, Gesetze und Sitten, Wissenschaften und Gewohnheit; Eins bestimmt und vermindert das Andere und in der Gesetzgebung wird zuweilen auf die grösste Contraste neben einander gerechnet*" (SWS IX, p.407). In the "Ideen...", Herder argued that Europe would continue in such a dynamic pattern as long as it remained politically divided: "*Wir also können in diesem einmal begonnenen Lauf nicht mehr stehen bleiben: wir haschen dem Zauberbilde einer höchsten Wissenschaft und Allerkenntnis nach, das wir zwar nie erreichen werden, das uns aber immer im Gange erhält, solange die Staatsverfassung Europa's dauret. Nicht also ists mit den Reichen, die nie in diesem Conflict gewesen*" (SWS XIV, p.36).<sup>60</sup>

Herder too was thus contrasting a diverse and dynamic Europe with a static and monolithic Orient: "*So ungefähr erscheint das Gemälde der Völkerschaften Europa's; welch eine bunte Zusammensetzung, die noch verworrener wird, wenn man sie die Zeiten, auch nur die wir kennen, hinabbegleitet. So wars in Japan, China, Indien nicht: so ists in keinem durch seine Lage oder Verfassung eingeschlossenen Lande*" (SWS XIV, p.285). Herder was seriously wondering whether the Orient would ever free itself from that self-complacent despotism: "*...dass Despotismus vielleicht ewig in Orient seyn wird, und noch kein Despotismus in Orient durch fremde äussere Kräfte gestürzt worden...*" (SWS V, p.483). In the "Ideen..." he complained about China's isolation and the uniform political institutions it imposed on its various peoples: "*Das runde Sina hinter seinen Bergen ist ein einförmiges verschlossenes Reich; alle Provinzen auch sehr verschiedener Völker, nach den Grundsätzen einer alten Staatsverfassung eingerichtet, sind durchaus nicht im Wetteifer gegen einander sondern im tiefsten Gehorsam*" (SWS XIV, p.36).<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> "*Wer hat Deutschland, wer hat dem cultivirten Europa seine Regierungen gegeben? Der Krieg. Horden von Barbaren überfielen den Welttheil: ihre Anführer und Edeln theilten sich Länder und Menschen*" (SWS XIII, p.377).

<sup>60</sup> See also Gollwitzer (1951, p.113). Herder furthermore recognized that the achievements of the Greeks were based on the competition between their republics: "*Die mancherlei griechischen Schulen waren hierinn das, was in ihrem Staatswesen die vielen Republiken waren, gemeinschaftlich-strebende, mit einander wetteifernde Kräfte: denn ohne diese Vertheilung Griechenlandes würde selbst in ihren Wissenschaften nie so viel geschehen seyn, als geschehen ist*" (SWS XIV, p.130).

<sup>61</sup> According to Herder, China was thus lacking the springs that would drive its sciences forward: "*Wie könnte in diesen Reichen (China, Japan, Tibet) der Keim fortwachsender Wissenschaft schiessen, der in Europa durch jede Felsenwand bricht? wie könnten sie selbst die Früchte dieses Baums von den gefährlichen Händen der Europäer aufnehmen, die ihnen das, was rings um sie ist, politische Sicherheit, ja ihr Land rauben?*" (SWS XIV, p.36).

The Orient was, however, "compensated" by nature with qualities unknown to the Europeans, for example a highly developed sense of introspection: "*Bei dieser kargen Weisheit haben alle diese Länder sich den unlängbaren Vortheil verschafft, ihr Inneres desto mehr nutzen zu müssen, weil sie es weniger durch äussern Handel ersetzen. Wir Europäer dagegen wandeln als Kaufleute oder als Räuber in der ganzen Welt umber und vernachlässigen oft das Unsrige darüber*" (SWS XIV, p.37). Nevertheless, for Herder natural determinism is always concurred by human voluntarism and he did thus not hesitate to proclaim, rather bluntly, that: "*Der Asiatische Despotismus, diese beschwerliche Last der Menschheit, findet nur bei Nationen statt, die ihn tragen wollen...*" (SWS XIV, p.39).<sup>62</sup>

Herder too rooted the European state-system in a favorable climatic and geographical environment (Liebel-Weckowicz 1986, p.5; Gollwitzer 1951, p.111). The winning combination for Herder was a mild climate, a rugged terrain ensuring internal diversity, rivers fostering internal trade and, most importantly, a lot of coastlands connecting Europe to the world. Again he compared Europe favorably to the Orient: "*Europa ist, zumal in Vergleichung mit dem nördlichen Asien, ein milderer Land voll Ströme, Küsten, Krümmen und Buchten: schon dadurch entschied sich das Schicksal der Völker vor jenen auf eine vorteilhafte Weise*" (SWS XIV, p.286).<sup>63</sup> Still in the "Ideen...", Herder took the praise even further, by comparing Europe favorably to India, Africa, America and Tartary in the same breath: "*Wäre Europa reich wie Indien, undurchschnitten wie die Tatarei, heiss wie Afrika, abgetrennt wie Amerika gewesen, es wäre, was in ihm geworden ist, nicht entstanden. Jetzt half ihm auch in der tiefsten Barbarei seine Weltlage wieder zum Licht; am meisten aber nutzten ihm seine Ströme und Meere. Nehmet den Dnieper, den Don und die Düna, das schwarze, mittelländische, adriatische und atlantische Meer, die Nord- und Ostsee mit ihren Küsten, Inseln und Strömen hinweg; und der grosse Handelsverein, durch welchen Europa in seine bessere Tätigkeit gesetzt ward, wäre nicht erfolgt...Das Klima in Europa, die Reste der alten Griechen und Römerwelt kamen dem Allen zu Hülfe; mithin ist auf Tätigkeit und Erfindung, auf Wissenschaften und ein gemeinschaftliches, wetteiferndes Bestreben die Herrlichkeit Europas gegründet*" (SWS XIV, p.492; quoted in Birkenhauer 1985, p.127).

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<sup>62</sup> After all that we have just observed, Reszler's (1976, p.19) following passage becomes all the more baffling: "*Les propos de Herder débouchent nécessairement sur le concept anti-européen de l'"engagement" qui unifie, selon le mode d'organisation "asiatique", les cultures monolithiques immobiles et parasitaires.*"

<sup>63</sup> On the importance for Europe of being well connected to the seas see also SWS (XIV, pp.448-9) and SWS (XIV, p.93). In the latter passage Herder argues that island-cultures, as well as coastland countries such as France and Italy, develop more activity and produce freer cultures than do landlocked countries such as Russia or Hungary.

Europe's fruitful competition, commerce and innovations were thus all stemming from a beneficial climatic<sup>64</sup> and geographical base<sup>65</sup>.

Talking of the European state-system in the eighteenth-century inevitably raises the question of Europe's territorial borders<sup>66</sup>, of inclusion and exclusion. Although the eastern frontier has, for the sake of simplicity and convenience, traditionally been placed either at the river Don or the mountains of the Ural<sup>67</sup>, it remains, even today, a pervasively blurred frontier, which, because of its enduring continuous back and forth movements, has to be redefined continuously (Liebich 2001, pp.196-7). As Pocock (2002, p.58) points out, this incertitude about Europe's eastern frontiers was already present at the time of Münster's allegorical representations of Europe in the Renaissance: "*The skirts of her robe floated freely over vast and indeterminate regions between the Black Sea and the Baltic, to which the draftsman affixed such names as Scythia, Muscovy, and Tartary.*"

In the eighteenth-century, Europe timidly set out to recover those lost spaces, as the Ottoman Empire entered a period of serious decline and Russia imposed itself as a player in the European state-system.<sup>68</sup> Vienna and the "Landstrasse" were not going to remain Europe's ultimate frontier for long, as new spaces were opening up in the East. Chaunu (1982, p.42) can therefore observe "three Europes" at the time of the Enlightenment, namely the "old Europe of the South", "the dense Europe of the successes" and "the Europe of the margins".<sup>69</sup> By recovering these margins, Europe passed from what

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<sup>64</sup> For Herder's relation to climatic determinism see Fink (1987) and Kamenetsky (1973, p.25). Herder did not, in fact, subscribe to simplistic climatic determinism. He rather defended a causal theory involving a complex cocktail of geography, climate, heredity, historical transmission, intercultural communication and, as always, human will. Fink (1987) despairingly called this amalgam of causes: "*eine Art stammesgeschichtlicher, historisch-klimatologischen Atlas*" (p.173) and "*ein Chaos von Ursachen*" (p.174) that was finally of so little explicative value that Herder ended by leaving it aside altogether (p.175).

<sup>65</sup> For Herder's intensive relation to geography see Birkenhauer (1985).

<sup>66</sup> "*Europe is a discourse about a territorium, the demarcation of which is contested, as are the extent and content of its institutions*" (Strath 2000. p.24).

<sup>67</sup> Liebich (2001, p.194) shows the irrelevance of this artificial separation by defining a much wider "border-space" ("*espace-frontière*") that goes from the Ukrainian steppes to the Pacific.

<sup>68</sup> Not the least by inflicting heavy losses precisely to the Ottoman Empire during most of the eighteenth century. The Russian advances were confirmed by the treaties of Pruth (1711), Belgrade (1739), Kuchuk Kainarji (1774) and Jassy (1792).

<sup>69</sup> Three Europes that, according to Chaunu (1982), were also to be found at the level of population density: center (40 inhabitants km<sup>2</sup>), Mediterranean space (20 inhabitants km<sup>2</sup>) and Europe of the margins (less than 10 inhabitants km<sup>2</sup>).

Chaunu (1982, p.52) calls a "small Europe"<sup>70</sup> to a "big Europe", thanks to the: "*prodigieuse mutation d'une nouvelle "frontière": Est polonais, Nord scandinave, Poméranie, Prusse orientale, Hongrie, Russie du tchernoziom, Oural, Sibérie*". Delanty calls this phenomenon an eastward process of colonization of a core over a periphery that, paradoxically: "*accelerated a process by which Europe became the mystique of the West*" (1995, p.48).<sup>71</sup>

Russia was of outmost importance for any eighteenth-century student of the European state-system (Gollwitzer 1951, p.79). Traditionally relegated to the realm of barbarism, the land of the czars was suddenly discussed by the *philosophes* in terms of Christianity, civility and regime type (Neumann 1999, p.69). For Confino (1994 p.519), Russia, as most of Europe's eighteenth century others, had become a device for criticism at home or a space of projection for utopias abroad<sup>72</sup>. The *philosophes* were using Russia, and especially Peter the Great, to confirm their theoretical models of civilizational progress by change instilled from above, so as to incite the "enlightened despots" at home to fasten the pace of reforms. Nevertheless, the overall attitude towards Russia remained one of ambiguity and skepticism (Woolf 1992, p.91), which was not to change before the definitive integration of Russia into the European Concert at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 (Chabod 1963, p.141). This schizophrenic disposition of Europe towards the East was reinforced by a persistent "*lack of congruence between Europe as an idea and Europe as a geopolitical unity*" (Delanty 1995, p.64).

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<sup>70</sup> "*Une petite Europe dense au centre flotte au milieu d'une immense Europe mesurée en distance-temps*" (Chaunu 1982, p.56).

<sup>71</sup> Europe underwent in fact a "western turn" much earlier, crystallizing with the Schism of 1054 during which the pope and the patriarch of Constantinople excommunicated each other (Jordan, 2002, p.75). The Gothic chronicler Jordanes described the Huns as wounds in the *western* community (Burke 1980, p.23). The "West" or the "Occident" were of course rival concepts of Europe, just as was the notion of "Mediterranean space". Whereas the independence and rise of the United States have rendered the terms Occident or West too vague to describe Europe (Delanty 1995, p.65), the term Mediterranean, although inappropriate for Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire (Joll 1980, p.9), has been re-actualized by Braudel (1949) in his "Philippe II et la Méditerranée".

<sup>72</sup> And Herder was no exception in this respect as the following passage from the "Adrastea" attests: "*...denke dir, dass wir nach einigen Jahrhunderten niederkämen. Russland hätte seinen Mittelpunkt am schwarzen Meer gefunden; seine Asiatischen sowohl als Europäischen Provinzen hätte es fruchtbar, nutzbar, urbar gemacht, und alle seine Völker, jedes nach seinem Maas, in seinen Sitten cultiviret*" (SWS XXIII, p.449).

Herder's position towards Russia was also one of ambivalence<sup>73</sup> and therefore not very different from the one of the French *philosophes* (Keller 1987, p.389; Gollwitzer 1951, p.109). Just like them, he liked to toy around with Russian political daydreams, but when it came to include it into the European political system he got cold feet. In the end, he preferred to ascribe to Russia a status of hybridity as in this dialogue of the "Adrastea" between E and D: E: "*Siehe die Weltkarte an: wohin gehört Russland? zu Europa oder zu Asien?*" D: "*Zu beiden. Dem grössten Erdstrich nach zwar zu Asien; sein Herz aber liegt in Europa*" (SWS XXIII, p.447).

The Ottoman Empire, however, was clearly not part of Europe for Herder: "*Die Türken, ein Volk aus Turkestan, ist Trotz seines mehr als dreihundertjährigen Aufenthalts in Europa diesem Welttheil noch immer fremde*" (SWS XIV, p.283). This was not the case of the "*dacisch-illyrisch-thracischer Erdstrich*", or what we would today call the Balkan, which, although at the time largely occupied by the Ottoman Empire, was clearly considered European by Herder: "*Noch weniger dürfen wir uns auf jene Reste der alten Illyrier, Thracier und Macedonier, die Albaner, Wlachen, Arnauten einlassen. Sie sind keine Fremdlinge, sondern ein alt-Europäischer Völkerstamm; einst waren sie Hauptnationen, jetzt sind sie unter einander geworfene Trümmer mehrerer Völker und Sprachen*" (SWS XIV, pp.281-2).

With regards to the Slavs, Herder claimed that they inhabited "den schönsten Erdstrich Europas" (SWS XIV, p.280; Bittner 1953, p.56), but historically he depicted them as a victimized people playing the role of a buffer zone between invading Tartars in the East and brutal Teutonic Knights in the West (Bittner 1953, p.63; Wolff 1994, p.312). Although his chapter on the Slavs in the "Ideen" has been enthusiastically received and

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<sup>73</sup> Bittner (1953, p.45), author of an article on Herder and Russia, suggests Herder secretly feared an invasion of barbarian Russians. That is why, according to Bittner, Herder developed all those projects for Russia turning it southwards towards the Ukraine (SWS IV p.402; XIV p.449; XXIII pp.439, 449 and 450) and therefore against its Turkish rival. Herder could indeed not really understand why Peter the Great chose to focus so much on the Baltic, rather than installing the center of gravity of his Empire on the Black Sea: "...*Azons...nach dessen Eroberung dort bevestigt, und von dortaus seine Plane zu See und zu Lande angelegt hätte; welch eine andre Gestalt hätte Russland erhalten! Eine Residenz im schönsten Klima, am Ausflusse des Don, in der glücklichsten Mitte des Reichs, von da der Monarch seine Europäischen und Asiatischen Provinzen wie die rechte und linke Hand gebrauchen, dem Türkischen Reich hätte Trotz bieten, dem Handel der drei alten Welttheile, mithin auch des vierten, im Schoß seyn mögen*" (SWS XXIII, p.439). From there, Russia would have been beneficial to Europe without ever becoming threatening to it: "*Von hieraus hätte das ungeheure Reich Europa genutzt, ohne ihm je beschwerlich zu werden; und welche Mühe mit dem Zwange der Nation, mit dem Bau Petersburgs, nach und unter wie blutigen Kriegen und Siegen, hätte Peter sich damit erspart!*" (SWS XXIII, 440).

generously commented, Herder did, in fact, neither have a solid knowledge of the Slavic peoples nor of their languages (Bittner 1953, p.61; Namowicz 1994, p.351).

Herder thus used the Slavs in the same way as he used Russia, namely as a philosophical construct and a space of projection. In his "Journal meiner Reise im Jahr 1769" he merged all the Slavic nations and ascribed to them a brilliant cultural future with Ukraine at their center, from where a palingenesis of Europe might take place: "*Was für ein Blick überhaupt auf diese Gegenden von West-Norden, wenn einmal der Geist der Kultur sie besuchen wird! Die Ukraine wird ein neues Griechenland werden... aus so vielen kleinen wilden Völkern, wie es die Griechen vormals auch waren, wird eine gesittete Nation werden: ihre Grenzen werden sich bis zum schwarzen Meer hin erstrecken und von dabinaus durch die Welt. Ungarn, diese Nationen und ein Strich von Polen und Russland werden Teilnehmerinnen dieser neuen Kultur werden; von Nordwest wird dieser Geist über Europa gehen, das im Schlafe liegt, und dasselbe dem Geiste nach dienstbar machen. Das alles liegt vor, das muss einmal geschehen; aber wie? wenn? durch wen?*" (SWS IV, p.402). In the words of Gollwitzer (1951, p.115): "*Herders Europabild gravitiert nach Osten*" and Wolff (1994, p.307) even saw him as the inventor of Eastern Europe.<sup>74</sup> Politically, however, Herder tended to perceive the Slavs either as a Russian sphere of influence or at best a buffer zone protecting Europe from barbarian attacks. Whether Herder really initiated a European shift from a predominantly North-South worldview to an East-West one<sup>75</sup>, remains thus doubtful, attached as he was to the former conception.

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<sup>74</sup> Although Eastern Europe was, in fact, not part of eighteenth century's geographical vocabulary (Confino 1994, p.514). The regions we today call Scandinavia and Eastern Europe were simply subsumed under the headings "northern countries" or "the North" (Confino 1994, p.514). Poland and Russia were part of the "Northern Tour", the war between Peter I and Charles XII was called the "Northern War" (1700-1721) and Catherine was variously entitled the "Cleopatra of the North", the "Star of the North" or the "Empress of the North" (Confino 1994, p.515). In 1771 Schlözer wrote an "Allgemeine Nordische Geschichte" in which the rulers of Petersburg, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Berlin and Warsaw were part of the "Northern Courts" (Okey 1992, p.110). One year earlier, Pierre Antoine de la Place wrote: "Anecdotes du Nord, Comprenant la Suède, le Danemarck, la Pologne & la Russie depuis l'origine de ces monarchies jusqu'à présent" (Confino 1994, p.515) and in 1815 Alexander I was welcomed as the liberator coming from the North (Okey 1992, p.110). Herder was no exception to this rule, as in the "Adrastea" he called Charles XII, the new Prussian crown and Peter the Great "prächtige Gestirne...am nordischen Himmel" (SWS XXIII, p.415). In a letter to his friend Gleim dated May 1793 he talked of Catherine as "die grosse Frau im Norden" (B VII, p.40). Namowicz (1994, p.347) also insists that Herder did not know the term "Eastern Europe".

<sup>75</sup> A shift that was prepared by the eighteenth century, but clearly materialized only in the first half of the nineteenth century (see Lemberg 1985). Gollwitzer (1951, p.71) argues that a "*christlich-antike Ausrichtung zum Mittelmeer wurde von einer Ost-West Folge verdrängt*". Chaunu (1982, p.43) talks of a process of "reincorporation" in the seventeenth and eighteenth century of the old oriental Christianity. This became possible because earlier obstacles had been eliminated: the Turks had been beaten at the Kahlenberg,

Herder saw the origin of Europe's North-South<sup>76</sup> divide in the great Asiatic mountain ranges oriented east-west and extending right into the European heartland: "*Da es also unlängbar ist, dass in der alten Welt das grosse Asiatische Gebürge mit seinen Fortgängen in Europa das Klima und den Charakter der Nord- und Südwelt wunderbar scheidet: so lasset Nordwärts der Alpen uns über unser Vaterland in Europa wenigstens dadurch trösten, dass wir in Sitten und Verfassungen nur zur verlängerten Europäischen, und nicht gar zur ursprünglichen Asiatischen Tatarei gehören*" (SWS XIV, p.286). The Alps were thus the dividing line between a Northern Europe characterized by a tougher climate and a Southern Europe that was already "*ein Garten, als ein grosser Theil von Europa noch Weide und Wald war*" (SWS XIV, p.455). In a passage of the "Humanitätsbriefe", Herder further elaborated on that point: "*...wie sich die Welt diesseit und jenseit der Alpen unterscheidet. In Norden hat die Natur die Menschen mehr zusammengedrückt, und indem sie ihnen eine härtere Rinde, dazu mehrere Mühe von aussen gab, in ihrer Brust vielleicht die tiefere Quelle des sittlichen Gefühls aus dem Felsen gebohret. In den südlichen, wärmeren Gegenden breitete sich die Natur mehr aus; lockerer gehet die Menschheit auseinander und theilt sich allem, was um sie ist, leichter und lebendiger mit*" (SWS XVIII, p.456).

The different peoples that came to occupy Southern and Northern Europe reinforced this physical divide. Herder was indeed convinced that there existed an immense geological slope from the Tatar heights down towards Europe. A slope that prompted, in Herder's view, almost by following the law of gravitation, the *Völkerwanderungen* from Central Asia to Europe. Herder saw two different streams of people, with different characteristics north and south of his imaginary Tartarian

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Russia had been weakened by the "times of trouble", Poland was exhausted by wars of conquest, Austria had some 300'000 km<sup>2</sup> to integrate and the Empire was weakened by the Thirty Years War (1982, p.43).

<sup>76</sup> The decline of Southern Europe was clearly corroborated by the breakdown of Spain at the end of the seventeenth century and the minor contribution of Italy to the Enlightenment (Chaunu 1982, p.37). The European South was thus in danger of becoming estranged with regard to Europe and of being treated as an "internal other", which emerges from Kotzebue's 1805 statement: "*Wenn ich von einem Volke, ohne es zu nennen, erzählte: es sey faul, unreinlich, sinnlich, abergläubisch, auf Hazardspiel mit Wuth erpicht, völlig gleichgültig gegen Künste und Wissenschaften, bloss Flitterstaat liebend, der ehelichen Treue fremd – würde man nicht glauben, ich spräche von Irokesen oder Hottentotten? – nun ja, die vornehmen Neapolitaner sind die Wilden von Europa*" (quoted in Richter 1992, p.124). The same can, of course, not be said of Herder, who was an unconditional admirer of Naples. Herder was thus certainly closer to German classicists rehabilitating Greece and the European South, such as Winckelmann (although Herder was always an enemy of mechanic imitation) and Goethe, who married Faust, the curious, industrious and inventive representative of the modern North to Helene, the beautiful and aesthetic representative of classical Greece, giving them a son: Euphorion (Chabannes, 1978, p.204). This is the encounter between Herder's "*südlicher Behendigkeit und Wohlgelegenheit*" and "*nordischer Emsigkeit*" (SWS XIV, 451).

mountains, flow towards Europe: "...so sehe ich zwei Ströme, von denen der Eine aus Orient über Griechenland und Italien sich ins südliche Europa sanft senkt, und auch eine sanfte, südliche Religion, eine Poesie der Einbildungskraft, eine Musik, Kunst, Sittsamkeit, Wissenschaft des östlichen Südens erfunden hat. Der zweite Strom geht über Norden von Asien nach Europa; von da überströmt er jenen" (SWS IV, p.352; quoted in Gollwitzer 1951, pp.109-10).<sup>77</sup> Barbarians thus populated the European North, whereas the South produced Greek and Roman civilization. Herder sees the birth of a European system already at the moment of the fall of the Roman Empire as this Northern and Southern streams interpenetrated each other.<sup>78</sup>

To conclude this section we can thus say that Herder fully recognized the specificity of the European state-system hailed by his contemporaries as pluralistic, dynamic and competitive. Like them, Herder attributed Europe's alleged superiority in the realm of political organization to a winning combination of division and connection rooted in geographical and climatic particularities. Herder however located the origins of the European state-system much earlier than in the Westphalian Treaties, which he never depicted as a turning point in European international relations. If Herder at times flirted with the perception, still nascent in the eighteenth century, of an East-West pattern in the European system, he nonetheless generally clung on to the earlier North-South paradigm. As for the question of the "Eastern Frontier", Herder shared the hesitations and ambiguities of his Enlightenment colleagues.

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<sup>77</sup> See also Fink (1987, p.171) and Kamenetsky (1973, p.27).

<sup>78</sup> "Und als dies Nordische Meer von Völkern mit allen Wogen in Bewegung gerieth, Wogen drängten auf Wogen, Völker auf andere Völker, Mauer und Damm um Rom war zerrissen...endlich da alles brach, welche Überschwemmungen des Süds durch den Nord! und nach allen Ummwälzungen und Abscheulichkeiten, welche neue Nord-Suedliche Welt!" (quoted in Kamenetsky 1973, p.37). See also the following passage from the "Adrastea": "Völker aus diesen Gegenden haben die Südwelt bezwungen, und mit dem Römischen Reich Europa umgebildet" (SWS XXIII, p.465; Kantzenbach 1980, p.107). This idea of a Europe born of the encounter between Germanic freedom of the woods and Roman law and organization was to become a highly successful narrative in the nineteenth century, notably with Ranke and Guizot (Nurdin 1980, pp.37-8).



## 2.2 The problem of war, or how to reconcile plurality and peace<sup>79</sup>

### a) The balance of power

The problem with a multi-polar state-system is its natural inclination towards conflict and war (Arcidiacono 2003). To limit these undesirable consequences the realist tradition generally appeals to the balance of power, whereas the idealist tradition appeals to moral norms and inter-societal cooperation: "*La réalisation effective, foncièrement politique, de l'unité d'abord spirituelle à travers laquelle l'Europe prend conscience d'elle-même, se réfléchit dans les deux courants politico-historiques opposés que sont, d'une part, le courant réaliste – la politique se faisant philosophie – de l'équilibre ou de la "balance" d'un système européen, d'autre part le courant idéaliste – la philosophie se faisant politique – de la paix perpétuelle que divers projets veulent instaurer sur le continent*" (Bourgeois 2000, p.206).

In this section we will concentrate on the notion of balance of power and Herder's perception of it. The balance of power is a much-decried concept often accused of obscurity (Bull 1995, p.102). In part, this is due to the ambiguous<sup>80</sup> nature of the concept and the multiple interpretations that have been given to it. Therefore, we shall start with an effort of conceptual clarification. One can broadly distinguish between an anti-hegemonic and a pacificatory balance of power (Arcidiacono 2003). The former is directed against a potential hegemon, whereas the latter emerges between actors that are of approximately equal power and requires a certain number of conditions to be fulfilled.<sup>81</sup> The pacificatory variant of the balance of power is supposed to be beneficial for the middle and smaller powers by guaranteeing their very existence, or in the words of Maletke (1995, p.79): "*...neuen europäischen Staatenordnung, die politische und territoriale Verschiebungen zwar nicht grundsätzlich mit dem Bannfluch belegte, sie aber doch von einem breiten*

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<sup>79</sup> For the structure of this section we are indebted to Arcidiacono (2003).

<sup>80</sup> See Schröder's critique for example: "*Students of international politics do not need to be told of the unsatisfactory state of balance of power theory. The problems are well known: the ambiguous nature of the concept and the numerous ways it has been defined, the various distinct and partly contradictory meanings given to it in practice and the divergent purposes it serves (description, analysis, prescription and propaganda);...*" (quoted in Shehaan 1996, p.1).

<sup>81</sup> Fluidity of alliances, a preference for long term common interest over immediate short term benefit, non-interference of ideology, a system of reciprocal surveillance and the shared conviction that a possible attack would prove too costly (Arcidiacono 2003). The ultimate test of such a "pacificatory" balance of power is indeed to know whether a strong state always allies with the weaker of two possible states (Luard 1992, p.1).

*Konsens der Grossmächte abhängig machte und damit den politischen Freiraum und das Existenzrecht gerade der mittleren und kleineren Staaten indirekt ganz wesentlich stärkte."*

Bull (1995, p.103) is no friend of this second definition, which he calls "idealistic" and "legalistic". For him, such a pacificatory conception of the balance of power might even prove counterproductive, as by focusing too much on peace the balance of power might be diverted from its primary purpose: maintaining multiplicity in the state-system. Furthermore, Bull argues that it is normal for certain states to disappear, if the system, which does not tolerate power vacua, requires it. To illustrate this point, Bull refers to the impressive reduction of the number of states in the European system between 1648 and 1914. A third definition of the balance of power, in fact an extension of the second one, holds that one power, traditionally Great-Britain, has to play the role of the holder of the balance and thus guarantee peace on the continent (Bull 1995, p.101).

Further confusion around the concept has stemmed from the fact that the balance of power can be both analytic and normative/dogmatic, that there are subjective judgments of relative power involved and that the balance can be both fortuitous<sup>82</sup> or actively pursued (Bull 1995, pp.99-101). In addition, every balance of power requires a system of common norms, for example a "*continuous and universal system of diplomacy*" (Bull 1995, p.101) and has a general tendency towards the maintenance of the status quo (Malettke 1995, p.88). The thorniest issue with the balance of power remains the one of preventive war, namely the right to attack a state that grows too powerful but shows no sign of aggressiveness (Arcidiacono 2003).<sup>83</sup>

The eighteenth-century is often hailed as ideal-typical with regards to the balance of power.<sup>84</sup> Durchhardt (1992, pp.125-6) argues that the eighteenth century did not conceive

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<sup>82</sup> Bull (1995, p.100) refers, for example, to Toynbee and Rousseau who "*view the balance of power as consequence of some historical law of challenge and response.*"

<sup>83</sup> This issue was of course intimately linked to the just as problematic "right of mutual inspection" defended by Brougham in his "Balance of Power" of 1803 (Luard 1992, p.20).

<sup>84</sup> Wars in the eighteenth century are usually described as mechanical (Malettke 1995, p.79), competitive, zero-sum game (Fontana 2002), limited (Wolf 1962, p.514) and civilized Kiernan (1980, p.43), all of which fits rather well with the definition of balance of power. The high cost of the professional, standing armies prevailing in the eighteenth century, did indeed force the monarchs to keep their wars limited in time and space. In the first half of the eighteenth century it was fashionable for the public to attend the battles as spectators (Pomeau 1991, p.249). Another theoretical condition of the functioning of the balance of power, the flexibility of alliances, was observed quite well all through the eighteenth century, most notably,

of Europe as such and only understood it in terms of balance of power and the problematic of peace.<sup>85</sup> It is frequently advanced that the balance of power was the most salient characteristic of the Westphalian system (Bull 1995, p.101; Durchhardt 1997, p.312). Malettke (1995, p.79), for example, argues that in the eighteenth century: "*Die theologisch-christlich geprägte Konzeption von der korporativen Struktur Europas wurde mehr und mehr durch die wertneutrale mechanistische Vorstellung vom Gleichgewicht verdrängt*" and goes as far as suggesting that the balance of power was, at the time, almost a "europäische Konstitution" (p.88). Pocock (2002, p.64) even claims that in the eighteenth century: "*The balance of power was "Europe" and "Europe" was the balance of power*". Furthermore, the idea of balance was, in the eighteenth century, not just very much discussed in the field of international politics but also in such diverse disciplines as economics, medicine and art (Durchhardt 1997, p.13). Aside from being a very common concept, the balance of power was also largely applied, or at least rhetorically referred to, by politicians and statesmen (Durchhardt 1997, p.18).

The treaties of Utrecht are often considered a turning point away from the anti-hegemonic definition towards the pacificatory definition of the balance of power. It is true that after the War of Spanish Succession the danger of universal monarchy in Europe seemed sharply reduced (Luard 1992, p.20). With a tick-box system Luard (1992, pp.25-8) checks the conditions of the pacificatory balance and finds them all satisfied for the eighteenth-century: continuous changes of partners, no account of ideology (Great-Britain and Holland at war three times with each other; Spain fighting Austria), actors ready to settle for less than total victory, constant need for watchfulness, all the wars evolving into wars of substantial alliances, issue linking (notably France and Great-Britain with their colonies) and settlements in which victors try to prevent their allies from getting too much. Durchhardt (1997, p.8) thinks that after the treaties of Utrecht Europe passed from a bipolar system (France vs. Austria) to a pentarchy<sup>86</sup>, in which the big

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between the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748) and the Seven Year Wars (1756-63) during which occurred the "diplomatic revolution", an almost complete reversal of alliances, including notably an alliance between the archenemies France and Austria (Wolf 1962, p.526).

<sup>85</sup> "*Für die Autoren des 18. Jahrhunderts war Europa noch kein Selbstwert an sich, sie beschäftigten sich mit dem Gesamttabelleau der europäischen Staatenwelt vorrangig aus Anlass und im Rahmen von Reflexionen über die Balance oder die Schaffung von dauerhaften Friedensordnungen für den alten Kontinent*" (Durchhardt 1992, pp.125-26).

<sup>86</sup> "*...fünf stärksten Staaten des Kontinents, die einander und den Rest der Staatenfamilie in irgendeiner Weise kontrollierten, zugleich aber in der Entschlossenheit verbunden waren, den Pluralismus des Systems aufrechtzuerhalten*" (Durchhardt 1997, p.8).

players were running the game. By arrogating to themselves a right of "convenience" they carved up and shifted around territories by mutual consent and compensations (Durchhardt 1997, p.8). Those who had to pay the price of the game were the regions with less "political density", such as Italy and Poland (Durchhardt 1997, p.8).

The writings of many eighteenth-century authors tend to confirm the claims of their twentieth-century counterparts that the "Europabild" of the time was largely dominated by the concept of balance of power. Of course, the concept has not been invented in the eighteenth-century, as already in the seventeenth century the Duc of Rohan, serving under Richelieu, claimed France was to be the guarantor of the balance of Europe against Hapsburg claims to hegemony (Luard 1992, p.9).<sup>87</sup> In a recommendation of 1584 to the French king Henri III one could read: "*Tous Etats ne sont estimés forts et foibles, qu'en comparaison de la force ou foiblesse de leurs Voisins; et pourtant les sages Princes entretiennent le contrepoids tant qu'ils peuvent; tant qu'il y demeure, ils peuvent demeurer en paix et en amitié ensemble; comme il vient à faillir, aussi-tôt la paix et l'amitié se dissolvent, n'étant icelles fondées entr'eux, que sur une mutuelle crainte ou estime l'un de l'autre*" (quoted in Schulze 1997, p.54).

The principle of the balance of power was also inscribed in the preamble to the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, whose ambition was to: "...confirm the peace and tranquility of the Christian world through a just equilibrium of power (which is the best and most secure foundation of mutual friendship and lasting agreement in every quarter)" (quoted in Luard 1992, p.12). Defoe in "A Review of the state of the English nation", dated 1706, justified the English participation in the coalition formed against French claims over Spain by referring to the balance of power: "*Europe being divided into a great Variety of separate Governments and Constitutions; the Safety of the whole consists in a due Distribution of Power, so shared to every Part or Branch of Government, that no one may be able to oppress and destroy the rest. And 'tis evident from Experience, that whenever it has been otherwise, the Consequence has been, potent Confederacies among*

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<sup>87</sup> To go even further back in time, one could quote sixteenth century Guiccardini in his 1561 "History of Italy": "*Full of emulation and jealousy among themselves, they (the princes) did not cease to observe assiduously what the others were doing, each of them reciprocally aborting all the plans whereby any of the others might become more powerful or renowned. This did not result in rendering the peace less stable; on the contrary it aroused greater vigilance in all of them to stamp out any sparks which might be the cause of a new conflagration... . Such were the foundations of the tranquility of Italy, disposed and counter-posed in such a way that not only was there no fear of any present change, but neither could anyone easily conceive of any policies or situations or wars that might disrupt such peace*" (quoted in Luard 1992, p.3).

*the weaker Powers by Joint Assistance to reduce the encroaching growing Part to such Terms of Reason, and preserve and secure the Tranquility of the rest"* (excerpt from Wright 1975, pp.48-9).

Montesquieu spoke of an "équilibre de la terreur"<sup>88</sup> in the eighteenth century: "*Sitôt qu'un Etat augmente ce qu'il appelle ses forces, les autres soudain augmentent les leurs, de façon qu'on ne gagne rien par là que la ruine commune*"<sup>89</sup> (quoted in Pomian 1991, p.25) and Voltaire wrote in his "Remarques sur l'histoire": "*L'Europe change de face. (...) L'Europe chrétienne devient une espèce de république immense, où la balance du pouvoir est établie mieux qu'elle ne fut en Grèce*" (quoted in Coutel 1996, p.93). Hume in his "Of the Balance of Power" published in 1752, recognized that: "*In short, the maxim of preserving the balance of power is founded so much on common sense and obvious reasoning... . If it was (in Antiquity) not so generally known and acknowledged as at present, it had at least an influence on all the wiser and more experienced princes and politicians*" (in Wright 1975, pp.62-3). Hume was also convinced that Great-Britain played a central role in maintaining the balance<sup>90</sup>, but that unfortunately it had not fulfilled its task with enough prudence in the past.

In Germany too the notion of balance of power was attracting a lot of interest in the eighteenth century. Von Martens, in his "Das christliche Europa als ungleiche Staatengemeinschaft", wrote for example: "*Auf dem bekannten System des europäischen Gleichgewichts, wie sehr ideell dieses System auch ist und was man auch immer dagegen sagen mag, beruht die politische Existenz aller Staaten*" (quoted in Dietze 1989, p.241). Jacob Schmauss wrote in 1741 a "Historie der Balance von Europa" and Martin Kahle 1744 in Göttingen a book called "Die Balance von Europa" (Durchhardt 1992, p.126). The high priest of the balance of power remained Friedrich Gentz<sup>91</sup>, here with a "legalistic" definition of it, taken from his "Gestörtes Gleichgewicht durch Revolutionskriege": "*Das was man gewöhnlich politisches Gleichgewicht (balance du pouvoir) nennt, ist diejenige Verfassung nebeneinander bestehender und mehr oder weniger miteinander verbundner Staaten, vermöge deren keiner unter ihnen die*

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<sup>88</sup> Pomian's term.

<sup>89</sup> Montesquieu's version of the balance of power here is of course the pacificatory one. He saw four reasons for the prevalence of the balance of power in his own time: increased military technology, faster information circulation rendering the powers more equal, European geography continually frustrating potential hegemonies and finally commerce, the new basis of power which was to make it ever more fluctuating (Goldzink 1994, p.147).

<sup>90</sup> At the end of the seventeenth century there clearly emerged a link between Europe, Protestant religion as defending freedom, and England as the holder of the balance of power (Schmidt 1966, p.174).

<sup>91</sup> For the relation between Gentz and Herder see Günter (1992).

*Unabhängigkeit oder die wesentlichen Rechte eines andern – ohne wirksamen Widerstand von irgendeiner Seite und folglich ohne Gefahr für sich selbst – zu beschädigen"* (in Dietze 1989, p.489). For Gentz, it was clear that the European state-system could not exist without the balance of power at its very foundations.

Critics of the balance of power have been many already in the eighteenth-century. The most current charges made to the theory were that it was just a rhetorical tool for great powers to camouflage their real interests and its disregard for the nascent notion of international public law<sup>92</sup> (Luard 1992, p.1; Bull 1995, p.103). There were illustrious voices deriding the balance of power, among them Frederick II allegedly having called it "l'équilibre des sottises" (Schulze 1997, p.59) and Kant for whom the balance of power was such a complex construction that it was sufficient for a sparrow to take place on top of it for the whole system to crumble (Raulet 1996, p.117).<sup>93</sup> The toughest critic of the balance of power in the eighteenth century was, however, Johan von Justi, who in 1758 wrote a book with the title "Die Chimära des Gleichgewichts", in which he derided the balance as "*a recipe for war rather than peace*", as ever greater wars implying ever larger alliances were fought for ever more futile reasons and ever more disappointing results (Luard 1992, p.15).<sup>94</sup>

Herder was very well informed about the balance of power. He had read Hume's "Discours politiques" (Günther 1980, p.413)<sup>95</sup>, in his "Adrastea" he quoted Fenelon, of whom he was an unconditional admirer<sup>96</sup>, at length on the balance of power<sup>97</sup>, also in the

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<sup>92</sup> Of course Bull (1995, p.104) cannot agree with this criticism, as for him the balance of power is the necessary precondition and foundation of all international law.

<sup>93</sup> The eighteenth century was not missing such sparrows, as Prussia and Russia through their successful wars were pressing themselves onto the international scene to rejoin France, Austria and Great-Britain in the select circle of great powers. But equilibrium politics works best in *ceteris paribus* conditions and is usually at pain integrating internal and external change.

<sup>94</sup> Von Justi also criticized the subjective aspects of the balance of power theory as for him "*Macht ist gar nicht berechenbar*" (quoted in Durchhardt 1997, p.13). Bolingbroke made a similar critique in his 1735-6 "Letters on the study and use of history", in which he bemoaned that the actors of the balance of power were always one step late in their assessment of relative power and thus systematically misperceived changing distributions of power (Wright 1975, pp.57-8).

<sup>95</sup> See Günther (1980) for an analysis of Herder's loans in Weimar's library.

<sup>96</sup> "*Dies sind einige der sechs- und dreißig Artikel Fenelons, die allen Vätern des Volkes Morgen – und Abendlektion seyn sollten. Zu gleichem Zweck sind seine Gespräche, sein Telemach, ja alle seine Schriften geschrieben; der Genius der Menschlichkeit spricht in ihnen ohne Künstelei und Zierrath*" (SWS XVIII, p.241). What Herder really admired about Fenelon was the "Telemach" with its pedagogical agenda, much more so than the writings about the balance of power.

"Adrastea" he praised the achievements of the treaties of Utrecht (SWS XXIII, p.195) and in the "Journal..." he described Holland's decline in the "Waage Europens" (SWS IV, p.409). Herder detected the balance of power as early as in the Greek state-system and already painted it in a rather negative light: "*Auch sie (die Griechen) wussten, was Gleichgewicht der Republiken und Stände gegen einander, was geheime und öffentliche Conföderationen, was Kriegslüst, Zuworkommen, im Stich lassen u. dgl. heisse*" (SWS XIV, p.136).

Herder was indeed no friend of the balance of power at all and hardly missed an occasion to throw his sarcasm at it (Caisson 1991, p.23; Dreitzel 1987, pp.276, 284, 288).<sup>98</sup> In "Auch..." he wrote a passage reminiscent of Kant's critique: "*Waage Europa's! Glückseligkeit Europa's! Auf der Waage und in der Glückseligkeit bedeutet jedes einzelne Sandkorn ohne Zweifel viel!*" (SWS V, p.550). In an unpublished passage from the "Humanitätsbriefe" he talked of "*der fruchtbaren Dichtung eines Gleichgewichts, das nie existiert hat noch ohne Sklaverei existieren kann und wird*" and wondered whether revolutionary France might be ejected from the European state-system: "*Wird Europa ohne Feindseligkeit und Blutvergiessen es aus seiner sogenannten Waagschale, die eben nicht die Waagschale des Rechts, sondern der Eroberungssucht und alter Familienrechte ist, fallen lassen?*" (SWS XVIII, p.318).

Let us thus give a closer look at the reasons behind this harsh rebuttal. First of all, Herder could not agree with the hypothesis at the base of the balance of power theory, namely the anarchical nature of the state-system. In his "Christliche Schriften", he equated the anarchical society to the teachings of a demon: "*Dass Völker gegen einander in einem ausserrechtlichen Zustande leben, ist eine Lehre der Dämonen, für den Tartarus und das Chaos, in die menschliche Gesellschaft nicht gehörig; ein Rest des Wahns toller Barbaren*" (SWS, XX, p.93). In a similar way, he could simply not accept Hobbes' assumptions about man's condition in the state of nature: "*Schreckliches System, das uns vor unsrem eignen Geschlecht Schauder und Furcht*

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<sup>97</sup> See SWS (XXIII, pp.29-33), where Herder quoted notably the following passage from Fenelon: "*Alle nachbarliche Nationen sind durch ihr Interesse so enge an einander und ans Ganze Europa's gebunden, dass die kleinsten Fortschritte im Besondern das allgemeine System ändern können, das ein Gleichgewicht macht und dadurch allein öffentliche Sicherheit machen kann. Nehmt diesem Gemölde einen Stein, so fällt das ganze Gebäude...*" (p.31).

<sup>98</sup> The only one who seemed to be convinced of the contrary was de Rougemont (1961a, p.191), for whom Herder celebrated "*l'équilibre européen en précurseur de la Sainte-Alliance!*"

*einjagt, indem wir nach ihm Jedem ins Angesicht, auf seinen Gang und auf seine Hände sehen müssen, ob er ein Fleisch oder Grassfressendes Thier sei?"* (SWS XVIII, p.268).<sup>99</sup>

Peace and not war was the state of nature between human beings, Herder further argued in a passage of the "Ideen...": "*Nicht Krieg also, sondern Friede ist der Natur-Zustand des unbedrängten menschlichen Geschlechts: denn Krieg ist Stand der Noth, nicht des ursprüngliches Genusses*" (SWS XIII, p.322).<sup>100</sup> Mankind had thus not, as with Rousseau, fallen from an idyllic state of nature into a corrupted state of society, since human beings are inherently social for Herder. War could, however, in a way undeniably characteristic of German Idealism, also be a tool of Providence for Herder: "*In den Händen der Natur ist er (der Krieg), (die Menschenfresserei selbst eingerechnet) nie Zweck sondern hie und da ein hartes, trauriges Mittel, dem die Mutter aller Dinge selbst nicht allenthalben entweichen konnte, das sie aber zum Ersatz dafür auf desto höhere, reichere, vielfachere Zwecke anwandte*" (SWS XIII, p.322).

Furthermore, Herder was outspokenly suspicious of everything mechanical. The *Stürmer und Dränger* in him could simply not imagine that everything should be calculated according to a few abstract laws and that human passions and feelings were to be overlooked so easily.<sup>101</sup> He was thus "...gegen die Mechanik der Zeit... es ward Maschine und Maschine regiert nur Einer...dafür schlafen auch wie viel Kräfte" (SWS V, p.534; quoted in Dobbeck) and could not imagine that nations and peoples could be forced into a

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<sup>99</sup> Herder reiterated this critique aimed at one of the most fundamental assumptions of the materialist-realist political theory many times, for example in this passage of "Haben wir jetzt noch das Publikum und Vaterland der Alten?", in which he did not hesitate to throw Helvetius, Mandeville, Hobbes and Machiavelli into the same lot: "...ein Helvetius, der blos eigennützig Triebe im Menschen finden will; ein Mandeville, der uns blos in Bienen verwandelt, ein Hobbes, der für jedes Menschen Stirm Feindschaft schreibt, ein Machiavell, der jenes Ungeheur des Despoten schafft, das durch Zöllner, Vampyren und Igel das Blut aussaugt...diese niedrige und kalte Misanthropen..." (SWS, I, p.24). In the "Ideen" too he attacked Hobbes' basic assumptions: "Es ist gegen die Wahrheit der Geschichte, wenn man den böartigen, widersinnigen Charakter zusammengedrängter Menschen, wetteifernder Künstler, streitender Politiker, neidiger Gelehrten zu allgemeinen Eigenschaften des menschlichen Geschlechts macht; der grösste Theil der Menschen auf der Erde weiss von diesen ritzenden Stacheln und ihren blutigen Wunden nichts..." (SWS XIII, p.321); see also SWS (XVIII, p.295). In an unpublished passage of the "Ideen...", Herder argued that human beings, as creatures whose specificity was culture and artifice, were fundamentally different from animals and this both in their propensity to do good and evil: "Kein Thier frisst seines Gleichen aus Leckerei, und mordet einander auf den Befehl eines Dritten mit kaltem Blut" (SWS XIII, p.447). The very nature of human beings was thus to be perfectible which is, of course, a fundamentally idealist stance.

<sup>100</sup> Biedermann and Lange (1985, p.25) remind us that Herder was indeed not alone with this opinion: "Nicht im Krieg sondern im Frieden sahen die bedeutesten Vertreter des klassischen bürgerlichen Humanismus – Kant, Herder, Fichte, Bünge, Schiller und viele andere Denker, - die natürliche Bestimmung des Menschengeschlechts."

<sup>101</sup> See for example Heise's (1980, p.85) comment on the issue: "...(das) mechanistische Modell der Weltinterpretation schien ihm – analog der absolutistisch-bürokratischen Staatsmaschine – als Vergewaltigung und Repression des Subjektiven, des Lebens der Individuen und Völker, als Egalisierung des Mannigfaltigen, als lebensferne und – tötende Konstruktion... ."



mathematical matrix to be: "...aus dem Stegreif nach dem Ein Mal Eins der Politik in zwei Augenblicken berechnet..." (SWS V, p.536). In the real world things turned out to be much more complex, as: "Auf dem Schauplatz der Erde, selbst in ihren engsten Winkeln läuft so Vieles durch einander; gegenseitige Kräfte stören einander; und in alles mischen sich Umstände, Zeit, Glück, der tausendarmige Zufall" (SWS XVIII, p.281; quoted in Koepke 1990a, p.89).

Herder was no friend either of theories proposing to combat evil with evil or suggesting that harmony might emerge out of competition between unmoral actors.<sup>102</sup> He devoted an important section in his "Adrastea" (SWS XXIV, pp.103-9) to ridicule Mandeville's republic of bees by calling it "ein Nest voll Spinnen", "ein Staat auf Schelmerei aufgebaut" and "ein Konzert von Missklängen": "Wird man ein Konzert nennen, wo nicht nur jede Stimme falsch spielt, sondern wo auf dies falsche Spiel jeder Stimme die Wirkung des Ganzen berechnet seyn soll? Eben so wenig kann eine Zusammensetzung von Missformen, politisch und philosophisch, je ein System heissen. Eine fata Morgana ist, ein hässlicher Traum!" (p.106)

Herder thus refused to consider a system based on a series of state-machines and their obscure interests positively. Despots aiming to maintain themselves in power would instrumentalize balance of power theory for their sole self-interest: "Endlich kam man darauf, dass eine Menge dieser Maschienen, in denen wie im Trojanischen Pferde die Helden der Welt stecken und dafür kämpfen, sich einander gegenseitig stützen und wiewohl sie leblos sind, einander dennoch unsterbliche Dauer erhalten sollen, wovon Europa jetzt das grössste Beispiel ist, das je die Geschichte aufzeigte. Aber auch gegen diese Maschienen-Ewigkeit ist die alte Mutter, Zeit, mit ihren Blättern der Vorwelt ein starker Zeuge" (SWS XIII, p.455; unpublished passage).<sup>103</sup>

The balance of power was thus regarded by Herder as a sort of solidarity of crime between despots, established on the back of the European peoples: "Gleichgewicht von Europa! Du grosse Erfindung, von der kein Zeitalter vorher wusste! wie sich jetzt diese grossen Staatskörper, in denen ohne Zweifel die Menschheit am besten gepflegt werden kann, an einander reiben, ohne sich zu zerstören, und je zerstören zu können,... . Arme Stadt? gequältes Dorf? – Heil uns! zu Aufrechterhaltung des Gehorsams, des Friedens und der Sicherheit, aller Kardinaltugenden und

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<sup>102</sup> Liberals hold that the new rivalry and competition between states described in the sections above, was to secrete norms auto-regulating the system (Pomian 1992, p.109).

<sup>103</sup> See also Dobbeck (1959, p.326).

*Glückseligkeiten, Söldner! Verbündete! Gleichgewicht Europas! Es wird und muss, heil uns! ewige Ruhe, Friede, Sicherheit und Gehorsam in Europa bleiben*" (SWS V, p.548). With his biting irony Herder thus indicted those, who in the name of balance of power, wanted to maintain the social status quo and, incidentally, themselves on the throne. The rulers of the state-machines were the usurpers of the nations: "*Es ist ein bekannter, und trauriger Spruch, dass das menschliche Geschlecht wie weniger liebenswerth erscheine, als wenn es Nationen-weise aufeinander wirkt. Sind aber auch die Maschienen, die so aufeinander wirken, Nationen? oder missbraucht man ihren Namen?*" (SWS XVIII, p.235). Out of diplomatic negotiations he could not derive much hope either, as he called them in a letter to Gleim of 1792 "*das Pauken und Trommelgetöse der öffentlichen Verhandlungen*" (B VI, p.271). Nor was Herder any more positive about alliances between princes: "*Was ist ein Fürstenbund? Ein Bund geschmiedeter Pfeile, Habgier schmiedete sie? Eitelkeit oder Gefahr.*" *Treffen zum Ziele sie? "Selten."* *Warum nicht? Leider, es bricht sie im Unglücke die Furcht, oder im Glücke der Neid*" (SWS XXIX, p.671).

Balance of power was hence, in Herder's view, a chess-game played by monarchs with armies who had become toys<sup>104</sup> and soldiers that were sent to die like insects: "*Man hört von dreissigtausend um nichts auf dem Platz gebliebenen Menschen, wie man von herabgeschüttelten Maikäfern, von einem verbagelten Fruchtfelde hört, und wird den letzten Unfall vielleicht mehr als jene bedauern*" (SWS XVIII, p.235). For Herder, the balance of power principle was infested by what he hated most in political theory: Machiavellian *ragione di stato* and thus utterly immoral: "*Die kligste Geschichte dieser Art ist die kälteste, etwa wie Machiavell sie trieb und ansah. Auch sie vergisst Recht und Unrecht, Laster und Tugend, indem sie, rein wie ein Geometer, den Erfolg gegebener Kräfte ausmisst und fortgehend einen Plan berechnet. ... Entsetzlich ist, die Menschheit nur als eine Linie zu betrachten, die man nach Gefallen zu einem Zweck krümmen, schneiden, verlängern und verkürzen darf, damit man ein Plan erreicht, damit die Aufgabe nur gelöst werde*" (SWS XVIII, pp.280-1). Just such an immoral and condemnable act was for Herder the partition of Poland, a prime example of the well-functioning of the balance of power (at least in Bull's view). For Herder it was "...*offenbar das alles letzte feste Natur und Völkerrecht dem erbärmlichsten droit de convenance und Willkühr eines gebietenden Kopfes aufgeopfert werden...*" (quoted in Dreitzel 1987, p.288).

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<sup>104</sup> "*Das Heer ist eine gedungte, Gedanken-Kraft-Willenlose Maschine geworden, die ein Mann in seinem Haupte lenkt, und die er nur als Pantin der Bewegung, als lebendige Mauer bezahlt, Kugeln zu werfen und Kugeln aufzufangen*" (SWS V, p.534). Herder was of course no friend of mercenaries...

Herder was convinced that rulers would use balance of power rhetoric to hide their real hideous intentions of personal glory, dreams of grandeur, commercial ambitions and obscure state interests. That is why in the "Humanitätsbriefe", after the passages on Fenelon, he made immediately follow an appraisal of Swift's story of "John Bull": "*Gemählde der Wahrheit, wo den Begebenheiten ihr falscher Firniss still weggestrichen, dem Kriegs-Staats- oder Weisheitshelden sein falsches Haar hinterrücks, vorwärts der Kothurnstiefel leise weggezogen wird, so dass von Kopf zu Fuss der Heros, wie er ist, erscheint;...*" (SWS XXIII, p.37). In this story Klaas Frog (Holland) and John Bull (England) wanted to get better deals from Lord Strutt (Spain) but the problem was the old Baboon (Louis XIV). Even though Great-Britain and Holland claimed to be engaged in the War of Spanish Succession for nothing less than "...*die Freiheit Europa's, des menschlichen Geistes, des menschlichen Geschlechts...*" (SWS XXIII, p.33), in fact they made war only for commercial interests.

It was thus out of question, from Herder's perspective, that Great-Britain would be the tip of the European balance<sup>105</sup>. He was convinced that Albion would only consider the continent as a merchandise and gamble on it: "*Der Kriegrubm, den England bei dem zerrütteten Zustande Frankreichs in den letzten Jahren Ludwigs erbeutete, flösste ihm den Wahn ein, dass es auch zu Lande sieghafte Heere unterhalten, überhaupt aber der Schiedsrichter Europa's seyn könne, wie man die Königin Anna hoch-laut nannte. Ein Wahn, der England nicht nur Summen kostete, sondern auch Anmaassungen Raum gab, die es gleichsam von seiner Stelle zogen und einen andern Wahn erzeugten, die geborene Herrscherin der Meere zu seyn, durch welche es dem vesten Lande geböte*" (SWS XXIII, p.162).<sup>106</sup>

The only exception for which Herder might have looked favorably on the concept of balance of power is the case of a defensive alliance of weaker states. As we shall see later, Herder always conceded the right of self-defense to any nation and even regarded it as a sacred obligation. He thus probably would have responded approvingly to a collective defensive effort of threatened nations, although he was not very explicit about it. In the

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<sup>105</sup> Note also Herder's scathing contempt for Lord Marlborough (SWS XXIII, pp.164-69).

<sup>106</sup> A judgment he reiterated in the following passage directed against Great-Britain as the holder of the European balance: "...*wie könnten Manufacturisten oder Waarenbändler und Wechsler in Verhältnis der Glückseligkeit, der Ruhe, des inneren und äussern Vortheils der Länder je unpartheiische Schiedsrichter Europa's werden?*" (SWS XXIII, p.103).

"Adrastea", he quoted a passage of Fenelon that probably reflects his own opinion on the issue: "*Alle Vertheidigungsbündnisse sind also gerecht und nothwendig, wenn es wirklich darauf ankommt, einer zu grossen Macht zuvorzukommen, die im Stande wäre, Alles anzufallen*" (XXIII, p.32).

After the outbreak of the French Revolution, Herder even referred to a possible alliance between the Hapsburgs and Prussia to preserve the German people from the turbulences of the end of the eighteenth century and from the sad fate of Poland. With France having gone wild in the West and Russia growing ever more powerful in the East, those existential fears were indeed somehow justified. Many authors have thus seen in Herder a precursor of the notion of *Mittleuropa*, later developed by Naumann and List (Gollwitzer 1951, p.115; Arnold 1981, p.62; Kantzenbach 1980, p.172; Dreitzel 1987, p.284; Haym 1954 [1880], p.839). To underscore this claim about Herder they all base themselves on the same passage in the "Adrastea": "*Nach einem erprobten Jahrhundert ist also wohl niemand, der der Preussischen Krone um so mehr Glück und Glanz wünschte, da sich ringsum, während dessen, die Lage der Dinge so sehr geändert hat. Russland ist zu einer Macht gestiegen, die man damals nicht ahnte; verarmt ist Schweden, Polen verschwunden. Auch die west- und mittägliche Seite Europa's hat sich wie sehr verändert! Dürfen wir da nicht der Vorsehung danken, dass sie, ehe menschliche Augen dessen Bedürfnis vorhersahen, in aller Stille einen Baum pflanzte, der ein Jahrhundert hin und her gewaltsamen Stürmen wachsen, und dann, vereint mit Oesterreich (dessen natürlicher Bundesgenoss Brandenburg ist) ein Theil der Mittelmacht werden sollte, die das veste Land aller Deutschen Völker sowohl, als die nordischen Reiche vor Unterdrückungen fremder Nationen und Sprachen mitbeschützen helfe... . Zu diesem der ganzen Menschheit erspriesslichen Zweck wird jedermann Preussen eine breitere, tiefere Basis gönnen, damit die zum Wohl Europa's nöthige Last seinen Unterthanen nicht zu drückend werde*" (SWS XXIII, pp.462-3).

Of course this is not the mechanical balance of power with a short-lived and unstable equilibrium pursued by enlightened monarchs. It is Providence that planted the strong Prussian tree in the middle of Europe and together with Austria they were supposed to ensure the survival of the German and Nordic peoples. And even though the accent is heavily on self-defense and no longer on the moribund Empire<sup>107</sup>, this passage still very

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<sup>107</sup> Although Dreitzel (1987, pp.276-7) argues the contrary, by claiming that Herder saw in the German Empire a model for the organization of Europe.

much recalls the "natural" equilibrium of Europe based on the German Empire suggested by both Leibniz<sup>108</sup> and Rousseau<sup>109</sup>. Herder was thus not opposed to theories of equilibrium as such, but only to the ones prevalent at his time, focusing on political balancing between dynastic states.

## **b) Alternative solutions: of universal monarchy, international public law and federations**

Philosophically inclined people were thus usually not satisfied with the mechanical and static balance of power as a *faute-de mieux* solution. Therefore jurists and idealists conceived of a Europe overcoming its endemic wars and set out to invent laws, federations and even unions. They proposed alternative solutions to overcome the problem of war in a pluralistic state-system, such as a return to medieval unity (universal monarchy), organization of the multipolarity (integration, federation) or enhancement of the normative environment of the system (international law). The next section will be devoted to Herder's opinion on these different suggestions for the improvement of the European state-system.

As Dante put it in his "de Monarchia" of 1303: "*C'est quand le genre humain est soumis à un seul Prince qu'il ressemble le plus à Dieu*" (quoted in Pomian 1991, p.20). In the eighteenth century many Romantics, such as Schlegel and Novalis, became nostalgic of a medieval Europe, which they imagined as profoundly hierarchical and submitted to the authority of the pope, the emperor or both. Already Leibniz, at the turn of the eighteenth century, had reacted to Louis XIV's ambitions for hegemony by conceiving a loose European union on the model of the German Reich and a reconciliation between papal and imperial power: "*Man wird weder Spanien noch Frankreich mit monarchischen Gedanken weiter verdächtig halten, es werden alle Misstrauen zwischen Haupt und Glieder, ja der Glieder unter sich, so gegenwärtige unsichere, mit Furcht überall angefüllte dissolution ernähret verschwinden. Das alsdenn festgestellte Reich wird sein*

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<sup>108</sup> Leibniz' goals were twofold: oecumenically reuniting Christendom so that it might better fight off the infidels (Malettke 1995, p.69) and avoiding French hegemony on the continent through an equilibrium based on a revived German Reich. See also Hammerstein (1992, p.134), Malettke (1995, p.69) and Droz (1960, p.23).

<sup>109</sup> "*Ce qui fait le vrai soutien du système de l'Europe, c'est bien en partie le jeu des négociations, qui presque toujours se balancent mutuellement; mais ce système a un autre appui plus solide encore; et cet appui c'est le Corps Germanique, placé presque au centre de l'Europe, lequel en tient toutes les autres parties en respect...*" (quoted in Schulze 1997, p.62).

*Interesse mit Italien, Schweiz und Holland vereinigen und Profession machen, wie Holland zu Wasser, also dies zu Land, allen Christen wider unrechte Gewalt beizustehen und die Ruhe Europas erhalten, damit das weltliche Haupt der Christenheit mit dem geistlichen zu einem Zweck vereinigt sei, Titulum Advocati Ecclesiae universalis wirklich exerciere, das allgemeine Beste suche und ohne Schwertstreich die Schwerter in der Scheide behalte"* (quoted in Hammerstein 1992, p.134).

Universal monarchy can be founded either on force or on legitimacy (Arcidiacono 2003). In the first case, the hegemon simply imposes its rules upon vanquished or rallied peoples.<sup>110</sup> In the second case, the authority of the universal monarch stems from divine or cosmological origins (Arcidiacono 2003). Herder was opposed to both forms of universal monarchy, as they endangered one of his most cherished principles, namely diversity (*Mannigfaltigkeit*). He thus condemned the Roman Imperium with outmost vehemence. He called Rome "ein Staats und Kriegsgebäude" (SWS V, p.500) which aimed at "alle Nationalcharaktere zu zerstören" (SWS V; p.501), Rome's history was "eine Räubergeschichte" (SWS XIV, p.172) and Scipio and Caesar's art was "Mörderhandwerk" (SWS XIV, p.175). The mortal sin of Rome was that it had tried to eliminate all differences<sup>111</sup>: "*endlich sollte das ganze Römische Reich gleichsam nur Stadt Rom werden*" (SWS V, p.501), but Rome, that poor head ("das Haupt" SWS XIV, p.181), was unable to carry such a large body and thus resembled a deformed monster: "*Ein zusammengezwungenes Reich von hundert Völkern und hundertzwanzig Provinzen ist ein Ungeheuer, kein Staatskörper*" (SWS XIV, p.139). The Persian Empire fared no better: "*Kaum zweihundert Jahr hat das Persische Reich gewähret und es ist zu verwundern, dass es so lange währte: denn seine Wurzel war so klein, seine Aeste dagegen waren so gross, dass es nothwendig zu Boden stürzen musste*" (SWS XIV, p.52). Not to speak of wretched Alexander who "*trank sich zu Tode*" (SWS XIV, p.52). Herder's preference really went to the Greek city-state system and its multiplicity rather than to colossal and homogenous Empires.

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<sup>110</sup> Those who got closest to dominating Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth century were Charles V and Louis XIV. No wonder then, that their opponents and adversaries on the battlefields, such as William of Orange, presented themselves as the "preservers of liberty in Europe" (Den Boer 1993).

<sup>111</sup> Rome thus plunged half the world into a dark night: "*So machen die Römer, die der Welt Licht bringen wollen, allenthalben zuerst verüstende Nacht; Schätze von Golde und Kunstwerken werden erpresst; Welttheile und Aeonen alter Gedanken sinken in den Abgrund: die Charaktere der Völker steben ausgelöscht da und die Provinzen unter einer Reihe der abscheusslichsten Kaiser werden ausgesogen, beraubt, gemissbandelt*" (SWS XIV, p.175).

The second, legitimistic, version of universal monarchy was equally rejected by Herder. For caesaro-papism, or any kind of papal or imperial rule at the head of a “respublica christiana”, Herder showed indeed little patience.<sup>112</sup> Peace was the last thing such a hierachical system would ensure: *"Zwischen den Europäischen Mächten war damals weniger Friede als je; nebst andern Ursachen auch des falschen Staatsystems halben, das eben der Papst in Europa festhielt"* (SWS XIV, p.411).<sup>113</sup> After all, Herder was an ardent Protestant and unconditional admirer of Luther, so no wonder he had little time for papal secular power. The rivalry between emperor, kings and pope over supremacy only made things worse by adding to confusion: *"Eben diese Doppelherrschaft, ein päpstlicher Staat in allen Staaten, machte, dass kein Reich auf seine Principien kommen konnte; an die man nur dachte, seitdem man von der Oberherrschaft des Papstes frei war"* (SWS XIV, p.411).

In a disdainful way Herder spoke of the "Tibetanischer Kirchenstaat" (SWS XIV, p.493) and could give no credit to Leibniz', an author he otherwise much admired, project for a Christian Republic under the leadership of the emperor: *"Noch mehreres hat im verflorenen Jahrhundert einen so andern Weg genommen, dass kaum jemand der neuesten Mode-Statistiker jetzt an ein göttlich positives Recht der christlichen Nationen in Europa denkt"* (SWS XIII, p.475).<sup>114</sup> Voltaire and a whole colony of anticlerical *Encyclopédistes* had indeed taken up the pen since Leibniz. Herder could thus conceive of the respublica christiana only as the community of crime that had perpetrated the Crusades: *"Als christliche Republik hat sich Europa also nur gegen die Ungläubigen gezeigt, und auch da selten zu seiner Ehre: denn kaum dem epischen Dichter sind die Kreuzzüge ruhmwürdige Thaten"* (SWS XIV, p.411).<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> On this point, Herder fully agreed with Montesquieu, for whom, as he wrote in his "Réflexion sur la monarchie universelle en Europe", it was clear that the popes and the emperors: *"ont fait l'histoire désastreuse d'une Europe impossible"* (quoted in Pomian 1991, p.19). See also Montesquieu's comment on Louis XIV: *"...les ennemis d'un grand prince qui a régné de nos jours l'ont mille fois accusé, plutôt sur leurs craintes que sur leurs raisons, d'avoir formé et conduit le projet de la Monarchie Universelle. S'il y avait réussi, rien aurait été plus fatal à l'EUROPE..."* (quoted in Pomian 1991, p.21).

<sup>113</sup> The following passage in the "Humanitätsbriefe" is also of interest in this respect: *"Man giebt ihr (papacy) Schuld, dass sie, statt ihr Friedens-Amt zu verwalten, oft selbst Kriege zwischen den Männern erregt und angefacht habe,..."* (SWS XVIII, p.264).

<sup>114</sup> How secular Herder's vision of Europe's future was, emerges from the following passage in the "Ideen...": *"Es wird eine Zeit kommen, da man in Europa nicht mehr fragen wird, wer Jude oder Christ sei: denn auch der Jude wird nach Europäischen Gesetzen leben, und zum Besten des Staats beitragen"* (SWS XIV, p.284).

<sup>115</sup> In the same passage Herder argues that during the attempts to convert the infidels "das Kreuz Christi" was used as a "Mordzeichen".

The seventeenth century, with Pufendorf and Grotius, also saw the birth of international public law. In 1625 Grotius wrote "De iure belli ac pacis", which regulated the recourse to war and behavior during war. In the words of Kant such laws were, of course, only "consolations", but for Vattel the European states were now tied together by binding obligations and customary rules: "*Europe forms a political system in which the Nations inhabiting this part of the world are bound together by their relations and various interests into a single body. It is no longer, as in former times, a confused heap of detached parts ... (Diplomatic practices) make modern Europe a sort of republic, whose members ... unite for the maintenance of order and the preservation of liberty*" (quoted in Heater 1992, p.65). Durchhardt (1992, pp.123-4) argues that for the European public, at least since 1720, it was "... *absolut geläufig und selbstverständlich, dass die europäischen Staaten durch ein dichtes Netzwerk von Rechten und Verbindlichkeiten miteinander verknüpft waren... .*"

Herder's position with regards to international law was rather ambivalent<sup>116</sup>. On the one hand he repeatedly denounced especially natural law for its sophism, lack of clarity and propensity to be abused. In the "Älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts", one of his early works more suspicious of universalism, Herder wrote: "*Naturgesetze wollet ihr, und das die Einzige Moral "des Menschen!" Wohl! aber welches sind sie? von wem gegeben? wann angenommen? bekannt gemacht? und von wem gebraucht? von wem autorisiret? – Sehet ihr nicht, dass alle auf Ungrunde beruhen; mit Hirngespinnsten, Zweifeleien und Muthmassungen befangen; die am herrlichsten bewiesenen und anerkannten, am schnödesten übertretenen, missgeföhlt, und missbraucht! die klügsten Völker und Philosophen am meisten hingeeben, zu thun was nicht taugt – alles, so wie es ist, System ohne Anfang und Ende!*" (SWS VI, p.311).<sup>117</sup> And on the following page Herder was even harsher: "...*blasses, scheussliches, unflätiges Ungeheuer auf Eurem Naturrechtsthron: das Haupt eine blosser Spekulations-Maste... . Tummelt euch nun, wie ihr wollt, unter Völkern, Weisen, Heiden und Affen umher, um Gesetze und Naturrechte zu finden – sehet ihr nicht, dass ihr nichts als Wahn finden könnet?*"<sup>118</sup>

For Herder law could indeed be no abstract speculation, as, above all, it had to be rooted in the minds and hearts of the people; it had to be based on "Sitten" and this only

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<sup>116</sup> For Rathmann (1984, p.15), it is even clear that Herder glaringly neglected law in his anthropology to focus exclusively on language.

<sup>117</sup> "*Gesetze ergeben für Herder nur Sinn wenn sie auch Ausdruck von Sitten sind*" (Dreitzel 1987, p.15).

<sup>118</sup> In "Auch..." Herder even called public law ("Völkerrecht") simply "Kram".



time and education ("Bildung") could bring about. Herder was no more a friend of "positive" or "contractual" law, as they were always historically based on the law of the strongest and thus immoral: "*Gewaltsame Eroberungen vertraten also die Stelle des Rechts, das nachher durch Verjährung oder wie unsre Staatslehrer sagen, durch den schweigenden Contract Recht ward; der schweigende Contract aber ist in diesem Fall nichts anders, als dass der Stärkere nimmt, was er will und der Schwächere giebt oder leidet, was er nicht ändern kann*" (SWS XIII, p.378).

On the other hand, Herder often defended international law, even though mostly as a temporary solution that treats the symptoms but not the causes of war. In "Auch..." he praised the Phoenicians for having been the first nation to develop "eine Art Völkerliebe, Völkerbekanntschaft, Völkerrecht" (SWS V, p.493) and in the "Ideen..." he insisted that human beings are capable of loyalty in their commitments: "*Treue bei einem Bunde hat alles Menschen, Völker und Thierrecht gestiftet...Menschen, die durch List oder Stärke davon weichen, sind die inhumanen Geschöpfe*" (SWS XIII, p.160). Herder also praised Grotius: "...*Grundsätze der Menschen hast du vereinigt, und auch Völker<sup>119</sup> werden sich einst zu ihnen binden*" and called him his "*Anti-Machiavell*" (SWS XVII, p.325). Herder repeatedly defended the *jus in bello*<sup>120</sup> and even wrote a poem on "das Kriegsrecht" and another one on "Das Seerecht" (SWS XVIII, p.259-60). In the "Adrastea", Herder chastized Louis XIV for not respecting: "*Wahre Grundsätze der Billigkeit, des Rechts der Völker, der Gerechtigkeit selbst in Haltung der Verträge...*" (SWS XXIII, p.42) and in a letter to prince Holstein-Gottorp dated November 1772 he bemoaned that: "...*offenbar alle letzte feste Natur und Völkerrecht dem erbärmlichsten droit de convenance und Willkühr Eines gebietenden Kopfes aufgeopfert werden, und Alles zutrifft und zusammentrifft, die Fesseln des Despotismus über Europa zu ziehen*" (B VIII, p.264).

Herder himself conceived of an "Erbfolgedex" to eliminate one of the most frequent sources of war in the eighteenth century: the rights of succession. Such futile causes of war aroused much incomprehension in him: "*Wie? müssen einer Erbfolge wegen blutige Kriege geführt werden? Wird durch den Krieg ein Recht gegründet, das man nicht hatte? oder in ihm ein dunkles Recht klärer? Umgekehrt die Partheien erhitzen sich; der Sieger ist verblendet*" (SWS

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<sup>119</sup> Note that Herder, in this context, refers to "Völker" and not "Staaten"!

<sup>120</sup> Consider the following passage in the "Humanitätsbriefe": "*Erkennt man Plündern, Verstümmeln, Schänden, Vergiften der Brunnen und der Waffen für ehrlose Mittel des Krieges;... . Wer Grundsätze wegdrängt, auf denen einzig noch der Rest von Ehre und gutem Namen der Völker im Kriege beruht, vergiftet die Quellen der Geschichte und des Rechts der Völker bis auf den letzten Tropfen*" (SWS XVIII, p.256).

XXIII, p.25). Not only could war never replace law<sup>121</sup> but also the ensuing peace settlements always bred anger and frustration in the hearts of the nations, thus engaging them into a vicious circle.<sup>122</sup> In his own project for an "Erbfolgecodex", Herder suggested that die "Grossen Pairs von Europa" would form "ein höchstes Gericht", "ein vollziehender Richterstuhl des Rechts und der Wahrheit", which would solve the litigious cases of succession impartially (SWS XXIII, p.29). To produce the "Erbfolgecodex" Herder promised not to fall into the "liebenswürdige Thorheit eines St-Pierre's" by setting himself the rules the princes were to follow. Rather should "ein grosser Regent" take up this sacred mission "dem Recht und der Vernunft zu ehren" (SWS XXIII, p.27).

This codex comes rather as a surprise, suspicious as Herder usually was of enlightened monarchs. A tension runs indeed through all of Herder's work between traditional Enlightenment appeals to monarchs and a cruel disillusionment with them. His real faith for change towards the better Herder always placed into the hands of Providence ("Vorsehung"). If Herder was often torn between Romanticism and Enlightenment, notably with respect to historical relativism, he was, with regard to theories of social change, torn between Enlightenment and Idealism. One can thus read Herder on two levels: a first, superficial one, that pays, and not the least for reasons of censorship, lip service to enlightened despotism and a second one, that has faith in the natural and historical laws of "Billigkeit" and "Vernunft".<sup>123</sup> On the first level, Herder constantly wavered between enflamed enthusiasm (one thinks of his projects to reform Riga and his hope to become a counselor to Catherine on his sea-trip from Riga to Nantes)<sup>124</sup> and utter disappointment (notably in his later years after the French

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<sup>121</sup> "Eben weil der gewaltsame Krieg alles Recht, weil er Vernunft und gemeinsame Convenienz, wie das Wohl der Staaten selbst aufhebt. Wer sein Recht nicht anders als durch die Faust beweisen kann, hat gewiss Unrecht. Wer den Ausspruch der Vernunft aus Mörsern erwartet, trägt in seinem obern Runde wenig Vernunft mit sich" (SWS XXIII, p.27).

<sup>122</sup> "...der Hass der Nationen erbt sich fort" (SWS XXIII, p.28).

<sup>123</sup> Herder's faith in the gradual unfolding of "Humanität" runs like a red thread through his work. This was no different with the "Völkerrecht", that would deploy its full potential only with the progress of "Humanität": "Lehrt das Christenthum etwas Anders als reine Humanität? Erkannt und ausgeübt, muss es auf diese auch seinen Codex des Völkerrechts gründen. Durch erlebte grobe Missgriffe und Widersprüche hierüber lasse sich niemand irre machen; Vernunft und Billigkeit geben doch ihren Weg fort. Klar in die Augen fällt, dass was Eine Nation von der andern fodert oder wünscht, sie solcher auch erzeugen müsse; Gewaltthätigkeiten, Treulosigkeit, freche Arroganz Einer gegen die andere empören alle Nationen. Dieser Codex des Völkerrechts ist Allem, was Mensch ist, in die Brust geschrieben" (SWS XXIII, p.476). Note also the leanings towards collective security at the end of the passage.

<sup>124</sup> For a deeper analysis of these projects and Herder's "Journal meiner Reise..." see Bittner (1953). War seemed so unsupportable to Herder that he was ready to place faith in almost anyone to bring it to an end. So he did with general Dumouriez, the later traitor, in a letter to Gleim dated April 1793: "Dumouriez, hoffe ich, wenn die Österreicher ihm nicht ein Bein unterschlagen, wird in wenigen Wochen mehr in Frankreich, zu dieses

Revolution), resentment and *Zeitkritik*. On the second level he is much more consistent, as it is the backbone of his work, the light that sustained his faith even in his most pessimistic and melancholic moments.

Whereas on the first level Herder was always ready to make concessions and even to agree with and hope for "homeopathic measures", on the second level, Herder was much more uncompromising and drove a much more consistent line. This is also what could explain the paradox outlined by Craig in his article on Herder's legacy (1990, pp.23-24): "*In all of his fleeing against the balance of power and the works of the chief Prussian Aufklärer Frederick the Great, he never seems to have stopped to reflect that the most promising way of controlling, and perhaps even eliminating, the international ills that he hated and constantly railed against, was by way of enlightened government, efficient and equitable institutions, the modalities of diplomacy, legal limitations on the usages of war, and international systems, like balance of power and concert of Europe, all of which were the goals of the Aufklärung.*" But to read Herder only on the level of "Aufklärung" would be a profound mistake. It would be to ignore the Herder of the depth, Herder the idealist...

Depending on the degree of censorship, the audience or the interlocutor, Herder could thus easily switch from one level to the other. On the issue of the French Revolution he wrote fundamentally different letters to Gleim, the conservative, (bemoaning with him the disorder of the time) and Klopstock, the enthusiast, (consoling him that Providence would turn things for the better). Herder was undoubtedly situating himself on the first level when he encouraged Gerning in a letter of June 1797 to participate in the Congress discussing the alliance against the French forces: "*Ein solcher Congress wird glücklicher Weise nur alle 1000 Jahr gehalten, u. ich hoffe dass er für ein Jahrtausend dienen werde. O grosse Geburt der Zeiten!*" (BVII, p.111).

In the following passage of the "Adrastea" we can observe Herder wavering between the two levels: "*Ausröten lassen sich Kriege nicht oder schwerlich... .*" On the first level he tells us that wars cannot be eliminated but only circumscribed and controlled, whereas on the

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*unglücklichen Reichs Ruhe u. Europens Frieden thun, als feindliche Heere auf die niedrigste, gewaltthätigste Weise in Jahren thun könnten*" (B VII, p.35). Or even with Napoleon, in a letter to Böttiger of December 1799: "*Indessen ist die Zeit des Falls in seiner höchsten Beschleunigung. Bonaparte spielt das höchste Spiel; möge es für Europa heilbringend werden*" (B VIII, p.111).

second level he tells us that wars might well one day be eradicated.<sup>125</sup> He continues the passage by arguing that the number of wars can be diminished by law (first level) and that eventually offenders would be put under a moral ban of international society (second level): "...*vermindert (Kriege) aber werden sie unwidertreiblich, wenn man die Ursachen zu ihnen mindert. Nicht anders als durch Gesetze, durch Statuten der Vernunft, durch anerkannte Verträge zum gesamten Wohl aller Nationen kann dies geschehen; wer sie aufheben oder durchlöchern wollte, würde als ein Gesamtfeind nicht nur der Europäischen Republik, sondern der Menschenvernunft handeln*" (XXIII, p.28). Empty a priori laws were thus of no use for Herder, but laws guaranteed by the historical evolution of Providence and the development of "Humanität" through "Bildung" were a basic element of his thinking: "*Heil den Predigern der Menschenrechte, sagt ein neuerer Lehrer des Staatsrechts (Schlözer); aber versäumen sie ja nicht, vorher Menschenpflichten zu lehren*" (SWS XVII, p.326).

The same that we have just observed for Herder's perception of international law can also be said for his thoughts about federations and peace plans. The eighteenth century, from which bloody conflicts were not absent, witnessed a profusion of such projects for European peace and federations<sup>126</sup> (Arcidiacono 2003; Foerster 1967). The most discussed of these projects was Abbé St-Pierre's, who had conceived of federal institutions to which the princes of Europe's eighteen most important<sup>127</sup> states were to adhere (Von Plessen 2003, p.145). His project<sup>128</sup> included a military force and a European Diet to handle current affairs and sort out disputes. St-Pierre, inveterate reformer and believer in the perfectibility of mankind, was convinced that it would suffice to appeal to the reason of European princes to realize his project (Heater 1992, p72.). Once they would all have signed the project, a perpetual alliance on the basis of federal institutions

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<sup>125</sup> Buschmann (1985, p.90) thus accused Herder of having succumbed to the early bourgeois illusion: "*dass mit dem Ausreifen bürgerlicher Lebensverhältnisse der Krieg mit seinen verheerenden Wirkungen auf das naturgesetzliche gesellschaftliche Zusammenleben aufgehoben werden könne.*"

<sup>126</sup> In Germany too, there was a lot of activity in the field of peace projects, essentially towards the end of the eighteenth century. For a complete overview see Dietze (1989). Wieland, a close friend of Herder, wrote, for example: "Eine neue Idee zu einem ewigen Frieden in Europa". The main opus had indeed been Kant's "Zum Ewigen Frieden" of 1795.

<sup>127</sup> Heater (1992, p.71) remarks that the list of countries changed between 1713 and 1738.

<sup>128</sup> As most peace projects of the eighteenth century, Saint-Pierre's too was heavily indebted to Sully's peace plan of the early seventeenth century. Apart from the radical idea of creating fifteen states of equal strength to facilitate the balance of power and thus eliminating friction (Von Plessen 2003, p.125), Sully's plan was most innovative in his conviction that Europe could be unified in a Christian Republic without the necessity of a hegemon (Delanty 1995, p.76). Note Sully's use of republic instead of empire as with Dante or Leibniz.

would then ensure peace for Europe, as members would have definitely renounced the use of force in their relations. Writing at the time of the treaties of Utrecht (1713), St-Pierre's was of course a Europe of princes (Crampe-Casnabet 1994, p.152).

Herder, ever suspicious of centralization, bureaucratization and regulation (Craig 1990, p.24), could hardly subscribe to European diplomatic unions and supranational integration (Barnard 1964, p.131). In a dialogue of the "Humanitätsbriefe", he thus clearly rejected any possibility of a "Weltstaat", even if it were endowed with a "perfect constitution"<sup>129</sup>: *Er: "Wir nehmen also die beste Staatsverfassung für erfunden an; wir nehmen an, dass alle Menschen in der Welt in dieser besten Staatsverfassung leben; würden deswegen alle Menschen in der Welt nur einen Staat ausmachen?" Ich: "Wohl schwerlich. Ein so ungeheurer Staat würde keiner Verwaltung fähig seyn. Er müsste sich also in mehrere kleine Staaten vertheilen, die alle nach den nämlichen Gesetzen verwaltet würden"* (SWS XVII, pp.124-5).

Herder had shown a keen interest in St.-Pierre's ideas and works<sup>130</sup>. Nonetheless he could not but participate in one of eighteenth's century major pastimes, namely deriding and belittling St.-Pierre by castigating him a dreamer and, a romantic "Schwärmer". Therefore Herder claimed to be generally opposed to "*Spekulationen in den Mond*" (quoted in Keyser 1953, p.4) and in an unpublished passage of the "Ideen..." he wrote: "*Träumet glücklich, ihr menschenfreundlichen Träumer, St-Pierre, Rousseau, Mirabeau u.f.; die Staatsmaschinen geben ihren Weg fort*" (SWS XIII, p.468; quoted in Dobbeck 1959, p.382). Even more harshly he decried (of course in his most polemical, early work, "Auch...") the lack of practical sense of philosophers, in a way truly surprising for such a philosophically inclined mind as Herder: "*Ein Geschäft auf der Welt, wollt ihrs übel besorgt haben, so gebts dem Philosophen! Auf dem Papier wie rein! wie sanft! wie schön und gross; heillos im Ausführen! bei jedem Schritte staunend und starrend vor ungesehenen Hindernissen und Folgen*" (SWS V, pp.535-6). A few pages later Herder again emphasized the futility of pure speculation: "*Siehe wer die Menschenfreundschaft, Völkerliebe und Vatertreue am schönsten besingen kann, hat vielleicht im Sinne, ihr auf Jahrhunderte den tiefsten Dolchstoß zu geben?*" (SWS, V, p.545).

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<sup>129</sup> As Koepke (1990a, p.93) tells us: "*Es gibt ohnehin für Herder keine beste Regierungsform*". It all depended on the historical evolution and other particularities of the nation in question.

<sup>130</sup> Günther (1980, p.414) ensures us that St-Pierre's "Œuvres politiques" were Herders "ständiger Begleiter". Haym (1954[1880], p.552) and Dreitzel (1987, p.270) are thus not entirely right to claim that Herder only concerned himself with the problematic of peace since 1797, the year of Campo Formio and Reichstadt.

Herder indeed showed a life-long preference for concrete action ("Thätigkeit") and experience over abstract speculation.<sup>131</sup> This is the main cause of his estrangement from his mentor Kant and at the origin of most of his critiques of Enlightenment. To fight abstractly would be as useless as Quixote's charges against the windmills: "*Mein Zweck ist nichts weniger, als in irgendeinem Streben nach mehrerer Vollkommenheit einen meiner Brüder muthlos zu machen und ihn im Kampf der Tugend zu entwaffnen; vielmehr führe ich ihn auf das Feld wo einzig zu kämpfen ist, damit er nicht in die Luft fechte. Er vergesse nämlich alle Träume der Menschheit in abstracto, nehme sich aber der Menschheit in concreto an, so weit seine Arme reichen... . Weder mit Klagen, noch mit utopischen Phantasien ist unserm Geschlecht gedient, sondern mit thätiger menschlicher Hilfe*" (SWS XIII, p.469, unpublished passage; quoted in Knoll 1982, p.12). Herder insisted that William Penn, having fought against slavery and incidentally also drafted a project for European peace, belonged precisely to this species of practical men "...*die zum Besten unsres Geschlechts mehr gethan haben, als tausend Helden und pomphafte Weltverbesserer*" (SWS XVIII, p.244).

Be that as it may, Herder certainly agreed fundamentally with St-Pierre's aims<sup>132</sup>, even though he did not agree with the means suggested by the Abbé to attain peace in Europe. In the "Adrastea" we find a quote from the Abbé, which could have stemmed from Herder's own pen: "*Das Unternehmen, Europa Frieden, einen dauerhaften Frieden zu geben, die schrecklichen Unglücksfolgen des Kriegs zu verbannen und nicht seinen Unterthanen allein, sondern allen Familien aller christlichen Nationen die Summe ihres Glücks durch ruhige Bewerbsamkeit fortgehend zu vermehren, das sei das edelste Motiv der Menschheit*" (SWS XXIII, p.169). As we will see, Herder could not believe that this blissful state would be attained through the goodwill of princes alone. To achieve such "Humanität" more profound changes would have to sweep throughout Europe. Nonetheless, and here we can again observe Herder's idealist credentials, he was convinced that men like St-Pierre were planting the seeds that would bring about just those profound changes he hoped for: "*St-Pierre hat durch seine Schriften, die, als sie erschienen, Wenige lasen, Mehrere ungelesen verlachten, Andre auf eine schale Art widerlegten, ja*

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<sup>131</sup> In the words of Freitag (1994a, p.41), Herder wanted to put "Feuer und Holz" together.

<sup>132</sup> Herder admitted that the tenth collection of the "Humanitätsbriefe", concerned with the problematic of universal peace, constituted: "*das Lieblingsfeld meiner geheimen Wünsche*" (SWS XVIII, p.579).

*deren offenbarste Wahrheit ihm sogar Verdruss zuzog, in der Folge mehr Gutes gewirkt, als manche blendende Schriftsteller seines Zeitalters, die ihn aus der Akademie verwiesen" (SWS XVII, p.276).*

In the meantime, Herder had recourse to one of Europe's favorite others in the eighteenth century, namely the American Indians, to show the Abbe's project's inapplicability to Enlightenment Europe.<sup>133</sup> Herder indeed took up the story of the "Friedensfrau", reported by missionaries (Dietze, 1989, p.554), according to which three warring tribes, the Cherokees, the Delawares and the Iroquois had set an end to their incessant feuds by electing one amongst them (the Delawares) to be the "Friedensfrau". The integrity of this "Friedensfrau" was to be secured by collective security, as in case someone harmed her: "*Dann sollen alle Männer über den herfallen, der die Frau geschlagen hat*" (SWS XVIII, p.262). The other tribes, the men, should respect the "Friedensfrau" and listen to her. The "Friedensfrau" contributed to peace by a special oil that would clean the men's ears (prevention)<sup>134</sup>, a special medicine (arbitrage) to be used "*bei solchen Völkern die schon thörichte Wege gegangen sind*", by a "Welschkornstengel" that would incite the men to concentrate their energies on agriculture rather than war and, finally, by guarding the chain of friendship between the peoples (SWS XVIII, pp.262-4).<sup>135</sup>

Many of the characteristics of the "Friedensfrau" referred directly to St-Pierre's project. The problem was, however, that in a Europe composed of state-machines and not nations (as in the Indian case) this plan would never work. How could there be a "Friedensfrau", Herder wondered, among states that were ready to fight for a few furs, the caprice of a lover or the wretched belief-system of a minister: "*Wie könnte sie ("Friedensfrau") aber verwalten, da oft über einige Pelze an der Hudsonsbai, über einige Flecken am Paraguaistrom, in deren Lage bisweilen die Kriegsführenden selbst sich geirrt haben, über einen Hafenplatz im stillen Meer, über Neckereien der Gouverneurs gegen einander Weltverwüstende Kriege geführt werden? Ja wie oft entsprangen diese aus einer Grille des Monarchen, aus einer niedrigen Kabale des Ministers! Eine Geschichte vom wahren Ursprunge der Kriege in Europa seit den Kreuzzügen wäre*

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<sup>133</sup> Many, like Gollwitzer (1951, p.115), claimed that Herder's "Friedensfrau" (SWS XVIII, pp.263-5) was an "*Umriss einer verfassenden Organisation Europas*". Dobbeck (1959, p.385) even likened the "Friedensfrau" to Kant's "Zum ewigen Frieden." We will maintain that Herder used the "Friedensfrau" mainly as a critical device against St-Pierre's own project and did not, in fact, develop an institutional project for Europe.

<sup>134</sup> The "Friedensfrau" would, for example, warn the men: "*Wollt ihr euch denn selbst vom Erdboden vertilgen?*". And the men, much as Saint-Pierre's princes, would listen to the "Friedensfrau" and obey (SWS XVIII, p.263).

<sup>135</sup> The system crumbled, surprise, with the interference of the Europeans (SWS XVIII, p.264).

*ein siebenfacher Hudibras, das niedrigste Spottgedicht, das geschrieben werden könnte. In einer Welt, in der dunkle Kabinette Kriege anspinnen und fortleiten, wäre alle Mühe der Friedensfrau verlohren"* (SWS XVIII, p.264).

Herder thus remained utterly pessimistic for any prospects of peace in Europe as long as "dunkle Kabinette" were pursuing their immoral goals. Beneficial change would hardly come from above: "*Hoffen Sie viel, sehr viel von aufgeklärten, guten Fürsten; das Unmögliche aber hoffen Sie nie. Auch sie sind Menschen; und nach ihrer gewöhnlichen Erziehung ists oft zu bewundern, dass sie es noch blieben*" (SWS XVII, p.95). In a passage of "Auch..." Herder insisted on that point: "*Alle eure grossen Kirchenversammlungen, ihr Kaiser! Könige! Kardinäle und Herren der Welt! Werden nimmermehr nicht ändern, aber dieser unfeine, unwissende Mönch, Luther solls ausrichten!*" (SWS V, p.531). In an unpublished passage from the "Ideen", Herder even went much further, by claiming that change would include society as a whole and by directly encouraging people to engage in action: "*...da es die heilsamsten Veränderungen der Welt selten von den Thronen herab bewirkt; so lasset uns die Arme desselben seyn und ausführen, was jene versäumten, nämlich Erzieher der Menschen zu seyn und der fortgehenden Kette der Tradition nichts als Edles und Gutes einzuknüpfen*" (SWS XIII, pp.456-7). The last to change in this social metamorphosis for the better might indeed be the prince: "*Wer seine Aufklärung vom Publicum, seine Glückseligkeit vom Regenten und vom Staat seine Lebensweise begehrt; der ist übel daran. Er kläre das Publicum auf, er handle tugendhaft, wie der Staat auch handeln möge und seinethalb möge der Regent der letzte seyn, der glücklich werde*" (SWS XIII, p.469; unpublished passage).

In conclusion of this section, it can be said that whereas Herder was unconditionally opposed to any concept of universal monarchy as it was detrimental to diversity, he was not, in principle, against international law and plans for peace. However, neither law nor peace could be conceived of *in abstracto* and created *ex nihilo*. Herder's historicism taught him that these transformations would emerge only out of an evolutionary process, which could not be forced from above: "*Verbreiter guter Gesinnungen, schadet ihnen, schadet euch selbst nicht durch Bezeichnung eines Aeussern, das blos von der Zeit und von Umständen bestimmt werden kann! Pflanz den Baum; er wird von selbst wachsen;...*" (SWS XVIII, p.275). Seeds could be planted to achieve these goals and that is why, after all, he liked St-Pierre so much, even though the Abbé placed way too much hope in monarchs, from whom little was in fact to be expected. Peace had to grow from inside the nations, and for this to happen Herder



claimed to know another "Friedensfrau". A "Friedensfrau" that "*hat nur Einen Namen: sie heisst allgemeine Billigkeit, Menschlichkeit, thätige Vernunft*" (SWS XVIII, p.265). Herder's own solution for Europe to overcome the riddle of peace and multiplicity shall thus be further explored in the next section.

### **2.3 Herder's solution: "Bildung" of the nations and "Providenz"**

Herder, truly no friend of authoritarian rule<sup>136</sup>, rhetorically asked in his "Journal meiner Reise...": "*Und was ist nun ärger als ein Aristokratischer Despotism?*" To his Swiss friend Johannes von Müller he sighed in a letter of 1776: "*Ach wenn wir Deutsche doch nur etwas ausmachten, und unsere Fürsten nicht!*" (quoted in Arnold 1981, p.61). Enlightened despotism did not seem to fare much better, as Herder observed about Joseph II: "*Er wollte das Beste. Aber er wollte es als Despot*" (B VIII, p.111). In "Auch..." he even declared enlightened despotism to be "eine schleichende Krankheit". A sickness that was terribly dangerous because it nagged its way secretly "bis Mark und Bein" (SWS V, p.557; quoted in Malsch 1990, p.70). For Herder despotism was the true cause of war as it allowed every "gekrönter Thor" (SWS XIV, p.340), such as Louis XIV who set up a monstrous "Ehrendampfmonarchie" (SWS XIV, p.52),<sup>137</sup> to pursue his/her own "gloriole" and "Rühmchen" (SWS XXIII, p.110). "Der Raubgeist" (SWS XXIII, p.28) that thus developed also overwhelmed such purportedly enlightened despots as Frederick II: "*was ist denn sein Schlesien?...Dass er Machiavell folgt, ob er ihn gleich widerlegt hat?*" (SWS IV, pp.405-6). Charles XII Herder called a "Don Quixote" and a "toller Ritter aus dem Norden", wondering "*woher dem Rasenden solche Macht?*" (SWS XXIII, p.417).

"Gelüste der Mächte" and "Leidenschaften der Regenten" (SWS XXIII, p.110) were thus the main causes of European wars, not to talk of "Betrug", "Doppelsinn" and

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<sup>136</sup> See also Keyser (1993, p.8).

<sup>137</sup> On this issue Herder could not resist to give Montesquieu a little sidekick: "*Soll ein Principium der Ehre d.i. der Eitelkeit, die sich selbst zum Götzen macht und mit despotischem Egoismus nach und aus sich selbst alles bildet, soll dies Principium, wie es Ludwig im Herzen trug und in jedem seiner Worte, in jeder seiner Handlung und Gebehrde and den Tag legte, Grundveste der Monarchie seyn, wofür Montesquieu sie noch erkennt: o sei Ludwig 14. der letzte Monarch Europa's gewesen, wie er sein grössester war*" (SWS XXIII, pp.42-3).

"Treulosigkeit", that Herder considered as usual tools of diplomacy (SWS XVII, p.39).<sup>138</sup> Even the "Gedankenänderung einer Königin", "ein paar Handschuh" or "ein verschüttetes Glas Wasser" could have the most dire consequences (SWS XXIII, p.35).<sup>139</sup> Of course it was always the peoples that had to pay the price for such extravagances: "*Die schweren Folgen davon fielen grösstentheils auf den zahlreichsten, den arbeitenden Theil der Nationen. Er musste leiden und darben, indess wenige im Glanz der Ehre oder im Ueberfluss üppiger Freude lebten*" (SWS XXIII, p.210; quoted in Maurer 1990, p.52).<sup>140</sup> Why, Herder exclaimed about the Great Northern War (1700-21), should "*Für die Rechte oder Unrechte des Liefländischen Adels ... der ganze Norden, Polen und ein grosser Theil von Deutschland bluten?*" (SWS XXIII, p.417) and why, he asked, should the nations pay for the ambitions of despotic rulers? (SWS XXIII, p.45)

Herder's solution to solve the problem of multiplicity and war in the European state-system was thus to come from inside the states.<sup>141</sup> "L'ordre des rois" had to be replaced by "l'ordre des peuples" (Bois 1999, p.161). This did not in fact mean, as we will see, that Herder wanted to overthrow monarchies at all cost, but the foreign policies of the states had to be brought into line with the true interests of the nations: "*Würde einmal die Linie rein gezogen: Interesse der Nationen, so wäre man längst auf dem Reinen. Aber das Interesse der Stände und der Meinungen hat das dumme Deutschland mit andern Nationen in eine solche Verwirrung gebracht, dass es jetzt ein Ball der Kabinette und jeder übermächtigen Politik geworden ist*" (letter of May 1801; quoted in Arnold 1981, p.61). From Herder's perspective, despotism had to progressively disappear, or in the words of Caisson: "*l'histoire ne peut-être que celle des peuples*" (Caisson 1991, p.18).<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Peace settlements based on such immoral principles could simply not be taken seriously by Herder. On the issue he quoted a passage from Fenelon: "*Friedensschlüsse sind nichtig, nicht nur wenn in ihnen die Uebermacht Ungerechtigkeiten erpresst hat, sondern auch wenn sie mit Hinterlist zweideutig abgefasst werden, um eine günstige Zweideutigkeit gelegentlich geltend zu machen*" (SWS XVIII, p.240).

<sup>139</sup> Even twentieth century author Black (1983, p.56) admits that the state-system had become unpredictable in the eighteenth century. For Bilongi (2000, p.25): "*...le XVIIIe reste une époque des guerres de rois.*"

<sup>140</sup> See also the following passage of the "Ideen...": "*In grossen Staaten müssen Hunderte hungern, damit Einer prasse und schmelze: Zehntausende werden gedrückt und in den Tod gejaget, damit ein gekrönter Thor oder Weiser seine Phantasie ausführe*" (SWS XIII, p.340).

<sup>141</sup> As he put it in his "Zerstreute Blätter": "*Unter einer guten Gesetzgebung und Staatseinrichtung, die wie alles auch auf andre, ihr ähnliche Staaten wirkt und sich mit ihnen vereint, blühet Sicherheit und Friede...*" (SWS XVI, p.48).

<sup>142</sup> Caisson (1991, p.18) is certainly wrong to talk anachronistically of a "totalitarisme" (sic) monarchy in the eighteenth century.

Herder was convinced that "Vaterländer" would not make war on each other: "*Müsste ein Vaterland nothwendig gegen ein andres, ja gegen jedes andre Vaterland aufstehn, dass ja auch mit denselben Banden seine Glieder verknüpft? hat die Erde nicht für uns alle Raum? liegt ein Land nicht ruhig neben dem andern? Cabinette mögen einander betrügen; politische Maschienen mögen gegen einander gerückt werden, bis Eine die andre zersprengt. Nicht so rücken Vaterländer gegen einander; sie liegen ruhig neben einander, und stehen sich als Familien bei. Vaterländer gegen Vaterländer im Blutkampf ist der ärgste Barbarismus der menschlichen Sprache*" (SWS XVII, p.319).<sup>143</sup> For Koepke (1990a, p.17), Herder believed in "ein Ideal nichtaggressiver Nationen"<sup>144</sup> and Dreitzel (1987, p.294) argues that for Herder, if only they could dispose of themselves, nations would form a "Gesellschaft von Nationalstaaten"<sup>145</sup> contributing to the "allgemeine Humanisierung" of the world. Competitions over might and territories would be banned as: "*Es wird Europa abscheulich vorkommen, für einige Familien, die das Regierungsgeschäft der Länder als einen genealogischen Pachtbesitz ansehen, sich zu verbluten, oder in Hospitälern und Casernen elend zu verwelken*" (SWS XVIII, p.312; unpublished passage). In Herder's view, nations would thus peacefully coexist celebrating equal rights and tolerance between each other (Bräuer 1995, p.54). In Barnard's words they might even form a "Weltorganisation der Nationen", which would of course not be a "Weltregierung" but nonetheless coordinate common interests and "Zwecke" (Barnard 1964, 133). The problem was that the despots were hardly going to leave by themselves. How were the nations thus to emancipate themselves? By a revolution?

Herder of course sensed, even before the French Revolution, that the spirit of his time was defined by an increasing tension between "Fürsten" and "Völker".<sup>146</sup> Many, especially in the former GDR, have been quick to depict Herder as a democrat and an unconditional defender of the French Revolution, thus making him a hero of bourgeois class-thinking.<sup>147</sup> Herder had indeed been criticized by his Weimar contemporaries,

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<sup>143</sup> See also Dann (1994, pp.15-6).

<sup>144</sup> Paine had similar views to Herder on this issue: "*When all the governments of Europe shall be established on the representative system, nations will become acquainted, and the animosities and prejudices fomented by the intrigue and artifice of courts will cease*" (quoted in Thomson 1991, p.144). Likewise Rousseau wrote in "Emile": "*C'est le peuple qui compose le genre humain; ce qui n'est pas peuple est si peu de chose que ce n'est pas la peine de le compter*" (quoted in Baysson 2002, p.138).

<sup>145</sup> See also Dietze (1989, p.55).

<sup>146</sup> Not the least because of the formers' misbehavior: "*Als ob es Fürsten eine Ehre wäre, das Glück der Völker zu stören, deren Väter sie seyn sollen*" (SWS XVIII, p.241).

<sup>147</sup> For non GDR authors with the same opinion see Caisson (1991, p.17), calling him a "critique de gauche", Critchfield (1982, p.192), seeing in the "Humanitätsbriefe" a "cogent and skillful defense of

Goethe and Schiller, for having been too enthusiastic about the French Revolution (Critchfield 1982, p.193). After all, had he not refused to pray publicly for the fate of the French king? (Jäger 1987, p.306). In the "Ideen...", published before the French Revolution, Herder had indicated that despotism could only fall violently: "*Denn nothwendig muss einmal das Pulver nicht nur den Despotismus selbst zersprengen, der jetzt auf seiner Tonne thronet, sondern indem es so viele Menschenkräfte einer gigantischen Tapferkeit entübrigt und gleichsam die Riesen auf der Erde vertilgt hat, muss es einem andern Zustande Platz machen...*" (SWS XIII, 374; quoted in Malsch 1990, p.74).

Was it not also Herder, who had proposed a pact between the philosophers and the plebeians to better the world: "*Du Philosoph und du Plebejer! macht einen Bund um nützlich zu werden*" (SWS XXXII, p.51; quoted in Grosse 1980, p.310) and claimed that once a "Volk" would attain maturity it would no longer need a master: "*Das Volk braucht einen Herrn, solange es keine eigne Vernunft hat: je mehr es diese bekommt und sich selbst zu regieren weiss, desto mehr muss sich die Regierung mildern oder zuletzt verschwinden*" (SWS XIII, p.456, unpublished passage; quoted on Grosse 1980, p.311). Even after the outbreak of the French Revolution, writing in the "Humanitätsbriefe", Herder still maintained that it would be best for France to become a republic, as: "*Je früher dies geschieht, desto besser dünkt mich: denn nur Despotismus oder gemeines Wesen sind die beiden Endpunkte, die Pole, um welche sich die Kugel drehet; gemässigte Monarchie, ist blos das unregelmässige Wanken von Einem zum Andern Pole*" (SWS XVIII, p.317, unpublished passage; quoted in Knoll 1982, p.17).

With the radicalization of the revolution in France and ensuing danger for the German states, Herder, however, grew more skeptical of change by revolutions<sup>148</sup> and the virtues of rule by "Volk". The French Revolution had shown that a people not ready for power could easily be misled and support abusive policies: "*In politischen Sachen ist offenbar ein anderer Fall. Oft sind Rechte und Pflichten, die hier in Streit kommen, ein Knoten, den die raue Hand eines ungebildeten, ungeübten Volks, das so leicht verführbar ist, und meistens nur andern folgt, ihn*

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revolutionary France", Dreitzel (1987, p.269), observing in Herder a "deutlich apologetische Tendenz für die Revolution", and Dobbeck (1959, p.366).

<sup>148</sup> Arnold (1980, p.166) indeed observes that, still in the "Ideen...", Herder had deemed revolutions to be necessary to the progress of the human species: "*Das Maschinenwerk der Revolutionen...ist unserm Geschlecht so nötig, wie dem Strom seine Wogen, damit er nicht ein stehender Sumpf werde*" (SWS XIII, p.353). After the French Revolution, however, Herder preferred to use, as in this passage from the "Adrastea", the term evolution: "*Mein Wahlspruch bleibt also fortgehende, natürliche, vernünftige Evolution der Dinge; keine Revolution*" (SWS, XVIII, p.168; quoted in Arnold 1980, p.168). On the same issue see also Kuznian (1989, p.20).

*schwerlich lösen möchte*" (SWS XVIII, p.331; unpublished passage). His enthusiasm for "Volk" (when speaking negatively of it he rather used "Pöbel" (Grosse 1980, p.311)), had thus been starkly tempered by the abuses of the *Terreur*, which reinforced his life-long conviction that peoples needed education ("Bildung"): "*Aus Volk, wollen wir eber mit Bedauern und Grossmuth, als mit Stolz und Zuversicht denken. Jahrhunderte lang ists unerzogen geblieben; dass es erzogen werde, kann unser einziger Wunsch seyn, nicht das es herrsche...*" (SWS XVII, p.96). Moreover, Herder argued that a republican government would not necessarily be the panacea for all nations. Each "Volk" had to go its own particular path and the German states did thus not necessarily have to follow France's example: "*Wollte Gott, dass es nie täuschte! Die Glückseligkeit Eines Volkes lässt sich dem andern und jedem andern nicht aufdringen, aufschwätzen, aufbürden. Die Rosen zum Kranze der Freiheit müssen von eignen Händen gepflückt werden, und aus eigner Luft und Liebe froh erwachsen*" (SWS XVIII, p.283).

In the "Humanitätsbriefe", Herder clearly indicated that the European state-system was seriously wavering, however, he could not resolve himself, in a way very similar to Rousseau<sup>149</sup>, to wish the outright downfall of it, as, he feared, the consequences might prove too costly: "*Die Staaten Europa's sind auf ein System kriegerischer und religiöser Eroberung gegründet; die Pfeiler dieses Systems wanken; die Zeit nagt an ihnen; stürzen sie, so, fürchte ich, geht unter den Trümmern des Schlechteren auch das Beste mit unter*" (SWS XVII, p.97). Herder, instead of defending revolution at all price, preferred to concentrate on the importance of "Bildung" both of nations and individuals. Herder's was thus a *pari sur l'homme* two centuries before Adorno and Horkheimer (1974) made their own.

If, for Herder, it was in the very nature of nations to be of a warring attitude in their young age and formative years, so that they might satisfy their "Einfältigkeit" and "Natürlichkeit",<sup>150</sup> they also had to submit over time, just as Kant's states, to moral obligations ("sittliche Gebote") (Dobbeck 1959, p.358). After Herder's death, Karoline, his wife, thus wrote to their son August in 1808: "*Der Kampf ist nicht mehr wie ehemals um das*

<sup>149</sup> "No Confederation could ever be established except by a revolution. That being so, which of us would dare to say whether a League of Europe is a thing more to be desired or feared? It would perhaps do more harm in a moment than it would guard against for ages" (quoted in Wahnich 1996, p.82).

<sup>150</sup> "Ein gemeinschaftlicher Stamm kleiner Völker ist nichts als ein also verbündeter Chor von Blutsfreunden, die sich von andern Geschlechtern in Hass oder Liebe scheiden. ... Die blutigsten Kriege zwischen ihnen, die eine Schande der Menschheit scheinen, entsprangen zuerst aus dem edelsten Gefühl derselben, dem Gefühl der beleidigten Stammesehre oder einer gekränkten Stammes-Freundschaft" (SWS XIII, p.332). On the same issue see also Kamenetsky (1973, p.18).

*Gleichgewicht der Staaten – er ist um gleiche Pflichten, gleiche Rechte, für Verdienst und Tugend*" (quoted in Arnold 1981, p.76). Herder hoped for a "Mässigung der Völker" over time (SWS XVIII, p.283), but the problem was that despotism had already deeply perverted many nations. As he wrote in "Haben wir heute noch das Publikum und Vaterland der Alten": *"So sehr hat sich also die Art der Regierung geändert: und ich setze dazu: selbst das Volk ist nicht mehr dasselbe. Dort war dieser Name ehrwürdig: er begriff Bürger, Rath und Priester ausgenommen: jetzt ist er gemeinlich so viel als Pöbel und Canaille"* (SWS I, p.18). The "Volk" thus had to be educated and this task Herder pursued arduously throughout all of his life, notably in his everyday work as pastor<sup>151</sup> and "Konsistorialrath" (Dreitzel 1987, p.291).

It is true that Herder, in a way not unlike Fichte (1979 [1800]) in "Der geschlossene Handelsstaat", sometimes went pretty far in the degree of social control and engineering he was thus willing to concede to governments. In "Vom Einfluss der Regierung auf die Wissenschaften" Herder even suggested state supervision of travels and censorship: *"Da nun die wirksamsten Känntnisse im Guten und Bösen sich durch Reisen einführen; sollten diese der Regierung, zumal bei jungen Leuten gleichgültig seyn? sollte es gleichgültig seyn, welche Schriften übersetzt, welche fremde Muster insonderheit auf der Schaubühne nachgeahmt werden?"*(SWS IX, p.407) These concerns do indeed not really shed a liberal light on Herder, but one should recall, that here as elsewhere, all depended for Herder on the degree of "Bildung" of the nation. The younger a nation, the more closure and control were needed. The older and the more educated, the stronger was the self of a nation and the more open and liberal policies could be applied. Secretly Herder dreamt of "Bildung" for the whole of Europe: *"...an eine durch Erziehung, Gesetze und Constitution der Länder allgemein durchgreifende Bildung aller Stände und Völker war damals noch nicht zu gedenken, und wenn wird daran zu gedenken seyn?"* (SWS XIV, p.493) and indeed for the whole "Menschengeschlecht" (SWS XIV, p.493).<sup>152</sup> The program for this education is furnished by Herder himself in the "Humanitätsbriefe", in which he developed seven points necessary for St-Pierre's "Friedensfrau" to function properly (SWS XVIII, pp.268-73).<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Freitag (1994 a, p.32) even argues that Herder deliberately became a pastor so as to be able: *"die Philosophie zum allgemeinen Besten des Volkes zu machen"*.

<sup>152</sup> See also Maurer (1990, p.56).

<sup>153</sup> Before exposing these seven points, Herder once more listed the alternatives to achieve peace that had all been tried until then to no avail: commerce, total isolation, alliances ("Amphytionen"), "der Grosse Lama" (probably an allusion to papacy) and the installation of buffer zones (SWS XVIII, p.265).

Firstly, Herder wished that there would develop a general sentiment of disgust towards war ("Abscheu gegen den Krieg"). He insisted that the consequences of wars, such as pest, famine, anarchy and the breakdown of agriculture and industry were often worse than the wars themselves. Education should teach people the utter immorality of war: "*Alle edle Menschen sollten diese Gesinnung mit warmem Menschengefühl ausbreiten, Väter und Mütter ihre Erfahrungen darüber den Kindern einflößen, damit das fürchterliche Wort Krieg, das man so leicht ausspricht, den Menschen nicht nur verhasst werde, sondern dass man es mit gleichem Schauer als den St. Peitstanz, Pest, Hungersnoth, Erdbeben, den schwarzen Tod zu nennen oder zu schreiben, kaum wage*" (SWS XVIII, p.269).

Secondly, "Heldenruhm" had to be banned from peoples' minds in the same way. He called heroism "den Würgengel der Menschheit" and complained of the "falschen Schimmer" that accompanied "Marius, Sulla, Attila, Gengischan, Tamerlan". Already in the "Ideen..." he had claimed that "*die berühmtesten Namen der Welt sind Würger des Menschengeschlechts...*" (SWS XIII, p.380) and could not understand how it was possible to write poems in honor of such warmongers: "*Wer aber, der kein Spanier und Portugiese ist, wird sich getrauen, die Thaten dieser Helden, Cortes, Pizarraro's oder des grossen Albuquerque vor Suez, Ormuz, Kalekut, Goa, Malakka, zum Gegenstande eines Heldengedichts zu machen...*" (SWS XVIII, pp.255-6). Those heroes only brought "Verwüstung" (XXIII, p.411) and it needed more than that to be the leader of a people: "*...dass um Vater eines Volkes zu seyn, wenn nicht mehr, so doch edlere Gaben in fortgehender Bemühung und ein Charakter erfordert werde; ein Charakter, der seinen Kampfpfeis weder Einem Tage zu verdanken hat, noch ihn mit dem Zufall oder dem blinden Glück theilet*" (SWS XVIII, p.269). Two centuries before the *Ecole des Annales*, Herder, in this second article, thus implicitly launched an attack on *histoire événementielle*, which he disdainfully called: "*der wüste Ozean der Tatengeschichte*" (SWS IV, p.379; quoted in Metz 1986, p.373). Developing an early hermeneutical paradigm, Herder urged that one should study history by considering "*das Ganze der Menschheit und ihrer Zustände*" as manifested in the "*Religionen..., Denkart, Sprachen, und Künste*" of the nations and not in a "*Reihe von Königen, Schlachten, Kriegen, Gesetzen oder elenden Charakteren*" (SWS IV, p.379; quoted in Metz 1986, p.373).

Thirdly, what Herder called "die falsche Staatskunst" had to be unmasked and rejected. "Die allgemeine Stimme" had to win over Mazarin's and du Terray's clique

hiding their goals behind elusive state interests. There were to be no more "Erhaschung von Provinzen", "willkürliche Macht", "List und Betrug" and "blosser Rang des Staatsranges und seiner Zwecke" (SWS XVIII, p.269). These policies were based on the false assumption that: "*Die Menschheit...bloss für den Staat, d.i. für Könige und Minister lebet*" and he called them "*Geist der Spanisch-Französischen Staatspolitik*" (SWS XVIII, p.282). State-interest, already in Antiquity, could indeed be pulled in any direction and used rhetorically to justify almost anything: "*Die Athener, die Römer - was rechneten sie nicht zum Wohl ihres Vaterlandes, zu ihrem Ruhm, mithin zu ihrem Recht? Was erlaubten sich der Papst, die Clerisei, die christlichen Könige nicht zum angeblichen Wohl ihrer Reiche?*" (SWS XVIII, p.282; quoted in Biedermann 1985, p.145). In the "Zerstreute Blätter", Herder could not but strike once again at one of his favorite whipping boys, namely "Staatsraison": "*der stehe es frei, göttliche und menschliche Rechte zu brechen, weder auf Eid, noch Schaam, noch Gewissen Rücksicht zu nehmen, wenn nur der Staat, dem sie dienen sollte, consolidirt werde*" (SWS XVI, p.146). And, of course, Herder knew whom to blame: "*Diese Politik...o wäre sie für unser Menschengeschlecht endlich begraben! – Was ist ein Principe Machiavells seiner Natur und Gattung nach?*" (SWS XVII, p.325).

Fourthly, Herder insisted on the advent of "Geläuterter Patriotismus". This concept of moderate patriotism has to be understood in a dynamic perspective and is not so far from current theories of cultural dialogism. A young nation first has to establish a solid self and to do so it needs "beneficial prejudices" as well as a certain amount of isolation: "*Das Vorurtheil ist gut, zu seiner Zeit: denn es macht glücklich. Es drängt Völker zu ihrem Mittelpunkte zusammen, macht sie vester auf ihrem Stamme, blühender in ihrer Art, brünstiger und also auch glückseliger*" (SWS V, p.510).<sup>154</sup> But once a nation is firmly rooted it has to open up and engage in dialogue with other nations, as communication is the very core of Herder's philosophy: "*Nationalvorurtheile tastet er (Geist der Menschengeschichte) nicht an: denn in ihnen als Hülsen oder harten Schalen muss manche gute Gesinnung wachsen. Wenn die Frucht reif ist, verdorret die Hülse, die Schale zerspringt*" (SWS XVIII, p.284). Otherwise, a nation living in complete isolation would be limited to a "beschränkter Idiotismus" and fail to develop "nützliche Vielseitigkeit".<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> See also Domdey (1994, p.78) and Schneider (1996, p.219).

<sup>155</sup> "*Ein eingeschränktes Volk, das fern von der Seeküste, und dem Umgange anderer Nationen zwischen Bergen wohnt, ein Volk, das seine Aufklärung nur von Einem Ort her erhielt und je früher es diese annahm, dieselbe durch eberne Gesetze um so vester machte; eine solche Nation mag viel Eigenheit an Charakter erhalten und sich lange darinn bewahren; es fehlt aber*



Herder has thus often falsely been accused of obscure nationalism, which he, in fact, always was the first to detract: "*Die schädlichste Krankheit der Geschichte ist ein epidemischer Zeit- und Nationalwahnsinn...*" (SWS XXIII, p.214) and "*Unter allen Stolzen halte ich den Nationalstolzen, so wie den Geburts- und den Adelsstolzen für den grössesten Narren*" (SWS XVII, p.211).<sup>156</sup> Herder brought his maxim of "geläuterter Patriotismus" to the point, when he wrote: "*Nationalstolz ist ungereimt, lächerlich und schädlich. Aber Liebe zu seiner Nation ist Pflicht eines Jeden*" (SWS, XXXII, p.519). The corollary to this maxim was just as important, as Herder, in this fourth article, also argued in favor of the principle of non-intervention into the internal affairs of other nations. Nations had to be sovereign and could not be forced to submit to any kind of "droit de regard": "*Mit diesem Gefühl muss sich nothwendig Abscheu und Verachtung gegen jedes leere Auslaufen der Ibrigen in fremde Länder, gegen das Nutzlose Einmischen in ausländische Händel... . Lächerlich und verächtlich muss es werden, wenn Einheimische sich über ausländische Angelegenheiten, die sie weder kennen noch verstehen...sich entzweien, hassen, verfolgen, verschwärzen und verlümden. Wie fremde Banditen und Meuchelmörder müssen sie erscheinen, die aus toller Brunst für oder gegen ein fremdes Volk die Ruhe ihrer Mitbrüder untergraben*" (SWS XVIII, pp.270-1).<sup>157</sup>

The fifth article brought Herder very close to Kant as it postulated an "*Allianz aller gebildeten Nationen gegen jede einzelne anmassende Macht*" (SWS XVIII, p.271) based on the principle of collective security.<sup>158</sup> In this "stiller Bund der Völker", and not of princes,<sup>159</sup> solidarity was, in Herder's eyes, based on moral principles. This was indeed radically

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*viel, dass dieser beschränkte Idiotismus ihr jene nützliche Vielseitigkeit gebe, die nur durch thätige Concurrenz mit andern Nationen erlangt werden konnte*" (SWS XIV, p.92; quoted in Schneider 1996, p.222).

<sup>156</sup> See also this highly premonitory remark, which should definitely exonerate Herder from any genealogical "Sonderfall" theses linking him to national-socialism: "*Schrecklich ist, wie vest der Wahn an Worten haftet, sobald er ihnen einmal mit Macht eingepägt wird. Ein gelehrter Jurist hat bemerkt, was an dem Wort Blut, Blutschande, Blutsfreunde, Blutgericht für eine Reihe schädlicher Wahnbilder hange;...*" (SWS XVII, p.230).

<sup>157</sup> See also Arnold (1981, p.41) and the following unpublished passage from the "Humanitätsbriefe": "*...dass keine fremde Macht sich in das freie Experiment einer eignen Nation, die es an sich selbst versucht, mische, oder durch voreilige Weisheit und Zwischenkunst es störe*" (SWS XVIII, p.318). It is interesting to notice that Wieland, Herder's close friend in Weimar, had very similar views on the issue. In his "Über Krieg und Frieden" of 1794 Wieland wrote: "*Und welche Macht auf Erden, wenn sie nicht selbst unmittelbar von uns beleidigt wird, ist berechtigt, uns wegen der Verbrechen, die innerhalb unsrer eignen Grenzen begangen werden, zu bestrafen?*" (quoted in Dietze 1989, p.63).

<sup>158</sup> See also Foerster (1967, p.224).

<sup>159</sup> "*Auf diesen stillen Bund ist gewiss früher zu rechnen, als nach St. Pierre auf ein förmliches Einverständnis der Cabinette und Höfe. Von diesen darf man keine Vorsätze erwarten; aber auch sie müssen endlich ohne Wissen und wider Willen der Stimme der Nationen folgen*" (SWS XVIII, p.271).

different from the balance of power principle, in which intervention only occurred according to self-interest. A feeling of empathy and goodwill should thus develop between nations, whereas unanimous reprobation was to strike those offending the community: "*Dagegen muss jede Nation allgemach es unangenehm empfinden, wenn eine andre Nation beschimpft oder beleidigt wird;... . Hassen wird man den frechen Uebertreter fremder Rechte, den Zerstörer fremder Wohlfahrt, den kecken Beleidiger fremder Sitten und Meinungen, den pralenden Aufdringer seiner eignen Vorzüge an Völker, die diese nicht begehren*" (SWS XVIII, p.271). For Herder, the rule of collective security was even rooted in Christianity as he wrote in his "*Christliche Schriften*": "*Je mehr sich zwischen Menschen und Menschen, zwischen Nationen und Nationen die Regel ihrer Verhältnisse, d.i. die Vernunft aufklärt und generalisiret, desto heller und heller tritt, auch ohne seinen Namen, die Regel des Christenthums an den Tag: "Alle für Alle!"*" (SWS XX, p.339).

Sixthly, Herder believed in the virtues of free trade, and therefore, in a way very close to traditional Scottish political economy, he argued against mercantilism and in favor of the liberty of the seas.<sup>160</sup> Already in the "*Journal meiner Reise...*", Herder deemed protectionism harmful and highly dangerous as it might stir up wars. He illustrated this point with an eventual clash between Great-Britain and Russia for commercial reasons: "*Was wird aber auf den Handelsgeist Hollands folgen? Geist der Partheien, d.i. der Oekonomischen innerlichen Handlung eines jeden Landes? Auf eine Zeitlang glaub ichs, und es lässt sich dazu an in ganz Europa. Oder der Partheien, d.i. der Aufwiegelung? Dies ist auf das eben genannte unvermeidlich. Eines der grossen Völker im oekonomischen Handel z. B. England wird ein andres aufwiegeln, das wild ist, und dabei selbst zu Grunde gehen – könnte dies nicht Russland sein!*" (SWS IV, pp.410-11).<sup>161</sup> In a way very similar to Bentham, Herder thus claimed that the economic interest of the nations would prevent them from going to war with each other. And the following passage on the win-win situation in international trade, where Herder approvingly quotes Pinto, again underscores the peaceful virtues he attributed to commercial exchange: "*...dass die Vortheile der handelnden Mächte einander nicht durchkreuzen, und dass diese Mächte von einem gegenseitigen allgemeinen Wohlstande, und von der Erhaltung eines ununterbrochenen Friedens vielmehr den grössesten Nutzen haben würden*" (SWS XVIII, p.272).

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<sup>160</sup> In the eyes of Herder, the oceans and rivers had been created for the purpose of exchange and trade: "*Dazu ist das Weltmeer da; dazu wehen Winde; dazu fliessen die Ströme*" (SWS XVIII, p.272).

<sup>161</sup> Note again the fear of the hordes in the East.

Seventhly, and lastly, Herder again reiterated the importance of "Thätigkeit". Nations should be concerned foremost with practical activities such as agriculture and thus have no time to think about war: "*Endlich, der Kornstengel in der Hand der Indischen Frau ist selbst eine Waffe gegen das Schwert*" and most importantly: "*Der Apfel und der Palmzweig*" were to replace "*den traurigen Lorbeer*" (SWS XVIII, p.273). War had thus become, in Herder's eyes, a luxury product, a game in the hands of the rich and bored.

Those seven articles Herder hold to be the oil and medicine of the "*Grosse Friedensgöttin Vernunft*" (SWS XVIII, p.273). If, however, human beings were not able to listen to the goddess by themselves, she would impose her ways through historical necessity. The way to "Humanität", was thus to be doubly guaranteed: once by the improvement of human consciousness and moral standards, and once by the laws of Providence. Both levels could, of course, at times function synchronically and were neither antithetic nor exclusive. Herder, especially in his early works, often sounded highly fatalistic, so for example in "Auch...": "*Zuerst muss ich zum überhohen Ruhm des Menschlichen Verstandes sagen, dass immer weniger Er, wenn ich so sagen darf, als ein blindes Schicksal, was die Dinge warf und lenkte, an dieser allgemeinen Weltveränderung wirkte*" (SWS V, p.530). One page later, he even likened human beings to ants: "*...siehst du Ameise nicht, dass du auf dem grossen Rade des Verhängnisses nur kriechest?*" After the French Revolution, Herder wrote in the "Aurora" that: "*Der Strom der Zeit rollt fort; nichts in ihm darf sich seinem Lauf entziehen; was nicht mitwill, wird abgesetzt oder sinkt zu Boden*" (SWS XVI, p.119). Going against the tide and stopping the flow of ideas and unfolding "Kräfte" was to no avail: "*Gedanken zu hemmen; dies Kunststück hat noch keine irdische Politik erfunden; ihr selbst wäre es auch sehr unzutraglich*" (SWS XVII, p.27).

The early Herder put thus a lot of accent on "Vorsehung"<sup>162</sup> and could therefore be accused, for example by Meinecke, of deism or of "christliche Heilplansgedanken" (Düsing 1983, p.35). Over time, however, Herder's work tended to move away from blind

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<sup>162</sup> In "Auch...", for example, Herder wrote about "*die leichten Wege der Vorsehung*" (SWS V, p.489) of, "*die krummenden Schlangenwege der Vorsehung*" (SWS V, p.575) and of "*der Gang Gottes über die Nationen*" (SWS V, p.565; quoted in Düsing 1983, p.47). In "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der Seele" of 1778 Herder declared that: "*Die Vorsehung selbst ist die beste Belehrerin der Völker, sie ändert Zeiten, Denkart, Sitten, wie sie Himmel und Erde, Kreise von Empfindungen und Umständen ändert*" (SWS VIII, p.211).

fatalism and pantheism towards a more secularized<sup>163</sup> vision of transcendence with the human species progressing towards its "telos": "Humanität". Many, such as Koepke (1990b, p.169), have thus described Herder as an idealist who: "...vertraut auf geistige Langzeitwirkung...die er dem aufgeregten hin und her der Staatengeschichte gegenüberstellt."<sup>164</sup> It is true that even in "Auch...", his most relativistic work, Herder still wrote: "*Dass sich die Begriffe von Menschlicher Freiheit, Geselligkeit, Gleichheit und Allglückseligkeit aufklären und verbreiten, ist bekannt*" (SWS V, p.575). The "Ideen...", in which Herder notably argued that "good" would eventually prevail over "evil", remain Herder's most teleological and idealistic work: "*Alle zerstörenden Kräfte in der Natur müssen den erhaltenden Kräften mit der Zeitenfolge nicht nur unterliegen, sondern auch selbst zuletzt zur Ausbildung des Ganzen dienen*" (SWS XIV, p.213). "Humanität" would thus come to terms with the destructive forces as: "*Der Verfolg der Geschichte zeigt, dass mit dem Wachstum wahrer Humanität auch der zerstörenden Dämonen des Menschengeschlechts wirklich weniger geworden sei; und zwar nach innern Naturgesetzen einer sich aufklärenden Vernunft und Staatskunst*" (SWS XIV, p.217). In this same work, Herder also talked of historical progress through "die Kette der Geselligkeit" (SWS XIII, p.345) and "Kette der Bildung" (SWS XIII, p.352), claiming that: "*Indessen geht die menschliche Vernunft im Ganzen des Geschlechts ihren Gang fort*" (SWS XIV, 249; all quoted in Koepke 1996, p.264).

Herder's insistence that "Vernunft und Billigkeit" were the defining characteristics of a human species (SWS XVIII, p.265)<sup>165</sup> able to learn from its mistakes<sup>166</sup>, certainly contributed to his idealistic credence (Maurer 1990, p.62). A lot of authors, especially in the former GDR, thus tried to establish a continuity between Herder and Hegel, by attributing to the former dialectical lines of reasoning. Arnold (1980, p.165), for example, argued that thirty-three years before Hegel, Herder had discovered "*den Gedanken des dialektischen Sprungs*" and Bollacher (1997, p.55) claims that Herder "*préfigure la vision hégélienne de l'histoire*". Dreitzel (1987, p.291), for his part, affirms that Herder had perfectly understood "*...die Kontinuität mit den geistigen Oppositionen und Gegenkräften...die gewissermassen ausserhalb des politisch-sozialen Systems einsetzen und sich gegen Tendenzen durchsetzen.*"

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<sup>163</sup> Heise (1980, p.87) talks of the "Säkularisierung seines theologischen Standpunktes."

<sup>164</sup> See also Düsing (1983, p.49).

<sup>165</sup> "*Gewiss hat uns die Natur an Mitteln nicht entblösst, uns vor dieser zerstörenden Gattung unseres eignen Geschlechts zu sichern; nur sie gab uns diese Mittel als Waffen nicht in die Hände, sondern in Kopf und Herz*" (SWS XVIII, p.268).

<sup>166</sup> "*...die Natur des menschlichen Fehlers, dass er früher oder später sich als solchen zeigen und dem rechnenden Geschöpf offenbar werden musste*" (SWS XIV, p.219).

It is true that many passages in Herder from the "Ideen..." seem to anticipate Hegel's cunning of reason: "*Alle Irrthümer des Menschen sind ein Nebel der Wahrheit; alle Leidenschaften seiner Brust sind wildere Triebe einer Kraft, die sich selbst noch nicht kennet, die ihrer Natur nach aber nicht anders als aufs Bessere wirkt*" (SWS XIV, p.215).<sup>167</sup> Herder also argued that "*auch in den Zügen der scheinbar grössersten Inhumanität dieser Völker (Eskimobs, Grönländer) ist, wenn man sie näher erwägt, Humanität sichtbar*" (SWS XIII, p.211; quoted in Knoll 1982, p.10) and "*...der Gang der Vorsehung geht auch über Millionen Leichname zum Ziel*" (SWS V, 576; quoted in Düsing 1983, p.48).<sup>168</sup> Louis XIV, Herder maintained, was a world-historical tool, acting for the progress of the world without being aware of it: "*Der grosse Zauberer selbst ward vom Schicksal gebraucht, Europa den Vorurtheilen des Kriegsglückes und Heldenwahns in Etwas zu entzaubern*" (SWS XXIV, p.422).

The clashing of state interests forced the members of the European state-system to evolve from despotic states into enlightened monarchies, even though they did not intend so: "*... aber auch der Despotismus rieb sich ab und musste gleichsam wider seinen Willen Monarchie werden, auf Gesetze des Staats gegründet*" (SWS IX, p.374; quoted in Dreitzel 1987, p.294). Finally, even the evolution of the practice of war contributed to its own downfall. By becoming ever more technical and mechanic, wars also tended to become more elitist and passionless, thus provoking people's disinterest: "*...die Kriegskunst erfunden: denn die Erfinder sahen nicht ein, dass damit der Grund des Krieges selbst untergraben würde. Je mehr der Streit eine durchdachte Kunst ward, je mehr insonderheit mancherlei mechanische Erfindungen zu ihm traten; desto mehr ward die Leidenschaft einzelner Personen und ihre wilde Stärke unnütz*" (SWS XIV, pp.221-2).

It would however be a mistake to see in Herder an unproblematic precursor of German idealism. For one part, Herder was always suspicious of Kant's a priori thinking (so too was Hegel, who reconciled Kant's dualism on solid historicist ground). To further nuance the picture, we have to distinguish between an "early", "middle" and "late"

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<sup>167</sup> The similarities between the authors are reinforced if one thinks of the forces that according to Herder move the world: "Wahnsinn" and "Enthusiasmus" (SWS XXIII, p.419 and SWS XXIV, pp.149-64; quoted in Dreitzel 1987, p.290).

<sup>168</sup> See also this passage in a letter to Gräfin Stolberg, dated March 1793: "*Es wird aus dem Kriege ein Drittes herauskommen, woran vielleicht izt keine Parthei denkt. Wie schwach und elend ist die Menschheit, insonderheit wenn sie in corpore handelt. ...nur das innere Gute, hie und da der Geist, bleibt, wirkt und muss fortwirken*" (quoted in Arnold 1981, p.52).

Herder. As we have already observed, the young Herder oscillated between historical pessimism and theodicy. The "middle" Herder of the "Ideen" focused on "Kräfte" and analogies between natural (or genetical) and historical laws.<sup>169</sup> This "middle" Herder was torn between immanence and transcendence (Maurer 1990, p.60; Düsing 1983, p.36) and his philosophy of history could be described as "ein vorwärts gerichteter Naturidealismus" or "genealogisch-organisch" (Gollwitzer 1951, p.106). Finally, there was the older Herder of the "Humanitätsbriefe" and the "Adrastea", that "*Göttin des Maasses und Einhalts...strenge Aufseherin und Bezähmerin der Begierden, eine Feindin alles Uebermuths und Uebermaasses in menschlichen Dingen, die, sobald sie dieses gewahr, das Rad kehret und ein Gleichgewicht herstellt*" (SWS, XV, p.413). This late Herder was thus harking back to Greek mythological laws of catharsis, force and counter-force and even referred to Herodotus (SWS XVI, p.169). Herder's historical narration, however, never became redundant or cyclical but always remained teleological-progressive: "*Entweder ist die Geschichte nichts als eine Vernunftlose Wiedererzählung äusserer Zufälle, oder wenn nichts Zufall, wenn in den Zufällen Geist ist, mit denen Vernunft und Unvernunft, Glück und Unglück ihr Spiel haben, welche andre Göttinn könnte der Geschichte vorstehn, als Nemesis-Adrastea, die Tochter Jupiters, die scharfe Bemerkerin, die strenge Vergelterin, die Höchstbillige, die Hochverehrte*" (SWS XXIV, p.327).<sup>170</sup>

To conclude this discussion of Herder's solution to the problem of multiplicity and war in the European state-system we can say that he focused on three levels. Firstly, despotism had to progressively disappear and be replaced by the rule of peoples organized as nations. Whereas the early Herder was inclined to envisage such change in terms of, if necessary bloody, revolutions, the later Herder, having witnessed the excesses of the *Terreur*, preferred to subscribe to change by gradual evolution and reforms. Secondly, if these nations were to achieve their maturity and to rule, they had to be educated. For this purpose Herder composed a whole program, the seven points, based on collective security within a European alliance of nations, freedom of commerce as well as a generalized moral ban on Machiavellian policy, false heroism and war. Thirdly,

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<sup>169</sup> Irscher (1994, p.29) underscores the importance of Leibniz' preformationist theory for Herder.

<sup>170</sup> In a very relevant passage of the "Zerstreute Blätter", Herder also described Nemesis-Adrastea as the "höhere Staatsraison", that would come to terms with the actual, "frevende Staatsraisons": "*So trieb die Staatsraison ihr Werk fort; ein Tag vernichtete den andern, ein Gesetz, ein Decret das Andre, bis endlich ein des göttlichen Rechts Erfabrner seinen Mitbürgern Muth zusprach: "Jasset Herz, ihr Brüder", sprach er, es giebt noch eine höhere Staatsraison in der Welt, "deren Werk es ist, alle ungerechte, frevelnde Staatsraisons zu ihrer Zeit, mit Schauder zu vernichten"*" (SWS XVI, p.146).

Providence, in one of the many forms in which Herder painted it, was to contribute to and sustain this emergence of a peaceful "Europe of nations", which could then in turn serve, as we will see in the next section, as a model to "Humanität".

### 3. Europe as a civilization

#### 3.1 A "Europe of nations": "concordia discors"

We would not do justice to Herder's "Europabild" by exclusively discussing it in terms of the state-system. Both state and system were indeed terms that Herder was highly suspicious of and there are levels above ("Humanität") and below (nations) the state-system, that have to be taken into consideration if we want to give a complete picture of Herder's conception of Europe. For Herder Europe was not just a state-system but also a civilization endowed with an "Allgemeingeist" (SWS XIV, p.287) and interacting with other continents in warfare, commercial exchanges and spiritual dialogue. De Rougemont (1961a, p.191) likened Herder to Vico<sup>171</sup> as well as Gibbon and called him an author concerned with: "*de vastes méditations sur le destin des civilisations. Son œuvre est l'une des plus riches en jugements et en fécondes hypothèses contradictoires sur le rôle de l'Europe dans l'histoire.*" Berlin (1976, p.147) was of the same opinion and associated Herder with Voltaire, Hume, Montesquieu, Schlözer and Gatterer, for all of whom the "*proper study of the historical sciences*" was the "*life of communities*".

Herder claimed that the true purpose of history was to study the spirit of the nations and their interactions: "*Welch würdige Beschäftigung, dem Menschlichen Geist, Geist der Bildung, Geist der Völker, Geist der Bildung der Völker nachzuspüren! Da liegt Geschichte, Erziehung, Psychologie, Literatur, Altertum, Philosophie, Politik, Sprache, Gesetzgebung, schöne Wissenschaften, Eintritt in die Welt, Gewohnheiten, Künste, Moden, Namen, alles drinn – mehr als Geschichte des Menschlichen Geistes: Geschichte des Fortgangs und Kräfte des Menschlichen Geistes in dem Zusammenfluss ganzer Zeiten und Nationen*" (SWS IV, p.478; quoted in Bittner 1953, p.49). Herder's approach to history was thus to be philosophical<sup>172</sup> and could hence, as we have already observed, hardly concentrate exclusively on politics, princes and battles: "*In dieser Galerie verschiedner Denkart, Anstrengungen und Wünsche lernen wir Zeiten und Nationen gewiss*

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<sup>171</sup> In a letter to Gerning, dated June 1791, Herder explicitly referred to his affinity with Vico: "... meine Liebbaberei für die politisch-menschliche, ich möchte sagen, Vico'sche Philosophie, die, wie Sie auch aus den Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit wissen, mein eigentliches Lieblingsstudium ist, ..." (B VII, p.319).

<sup>172</sup> For Gollwitzer (1951, p.112), Herder tried to depict the "geistisch-politische Gestalt Europas". De Rougemont (1961a, p.192) talks of the "intuitions historico-geo-lyriques" and Birkenhauer (1985, 129) of the "Trias von Raum, Zeit und Kraft" in Herder.



*tiefer kennen als auf dem täuschenden Trostlosen Wege ihrer politischen und Kriegsgeschichte*" (SWS XVIII, p.137; unpublished passage).<sup>173</sup>

Herder discussed European civilization mainly in the "Ideen...", especially in the fourth part, of which he said that: "*Dieser Theil der Ideen ist der schwerste, weil er von Europa handelt u. die Gründe unsrer ganzen Verfassung aufsuchen soll, welches mir unsägliche Mühe kostet*" (letter to Hartknoch; B V, p.260). It is true that Herder had also planned a fifth and sixth part for the "Ideen..." (letter to Gleim, December 1792; B VI, p.272), which he unfortunately never completed. As the fourth part of the "Ideen..." ended with Renaissance Europe, Herder completed the picture of the Europe contemporary to him in the "Humanitätsbriefe" and "Adrastea". He did so in the fragmentary and allusive style that was his own, which made Gollwitzer say: "...*das Bild des modernen Europas wollte ihm nicht mehr recht gelingen*" (1951, p.113). This is a rather harsh critique, as we will try to show in this section.

Herder clearly perceived Europe as a big melting pot<sup>174</sup> that was integrating different civilizational heritages and varying national cultures. In the "Ideen..." Herder argued that: "...; *die ganze Cultur des nord-öst-und westlichen Europa ist ein Gewächs aus Römisch-Griechisch-Arabischen Samen*" (SWS XIV, p.289).<sup>175</sup> Two pages earlier, Herder had maintained that nowhere had nations mixed and mingled so much as in Europe: "*In keinem Welttheil haben sich die Völker so vermischt, wie in Europa: in keinem haben sie so stark und oft ihre Wohnplätze, und mit denselben ihre Lebensart und Sitten verändert. In vielen Ländern würde es jetzt den Einwohnern, zumal einzelnen Familien und Menschen schwer seyn, zu sagen, welches Geschlechtes und Volkes sie sind?*" Their object of study rapidly fading away, he thus encouraged the anthropologists to hurry up, if they still wanted to be able to do some fieldwork in Europe: "*Wie die Erdlagen in unsrem Boden, so folgen in unsrem Welttheil Völkerlagen auf einander, zwar oft durch einander geworfen, in ihrer Urlage indessen noch kenntlich. Die Forscher ihrer Sitten und Sprachen haben*

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<sup>173</sup> See also the following passage from Herder's "Vorrede zu Maiers: Zur Kulturgeschichte der Völker": "*Beschreibungen von Kriegszügen, Helden- und Staatsactionen, das Skelet des Herkommens endlich hinderten uns oft, den Geist der Zeit zu entwickeln, die Menschengeschichte für Menschen sprechen zu lassen, charakteristisch, sittlich*" (SWS XX, p.301).

<sup>174</sup> See also Keyser (1953, p.13), Kantzenbach (1980, p.105) and Gollwitzer (1951, p.112).

<sup>175</sup> Already in "Auch..." Herder had affirmed that in Europe: "*Griechische, Römische, Nordische, Saracenische Begriffe und Neigungen...zusammengeflossen sind*" (SWS V, p.253).

*die Zeit zu benutzen, in der sie sich noch unterscheiden: denn alles neigt sich in Europa zur allmöglichen Auslöschung der Nationalcharaktere"* (SWS XIV, p.288).<sup>176</sup>

As Knoll puts it, Europe in the eighteenth century had become, for Herder, a Europe of "Cultur", which was at the time synonymous with "Aufklärung" and "Enlightenment belief in linear progress" (Knoll 1998, p.131). This Europe, which we have already depicted in the introduction, was cosmopolitan and dominated by French language, arts and manners. Herder was of course highly skeptical of this Enlightenment Europe and called it mockingly "*unsren Philosophischen Welttheil*" (SWS V, p.485) and "*das runde, glatte, artige Ding...was wir sind*" (SWS V, p.527), which was "*unfähig...zu verstehen! zu fühlen! geschweige denn zu geniessen! – so spotten wir, läugnen und missdeuten*" (SWS V, p.485). Rather than superficially and unproblematically celebrating Europe's superiority, Herder preferred to plunge into its past to unmask its ancestors, founding myths and foreign origins.<sup>177</sup> Herder, contrary to Enlightenment philosophy, which tended to consider Europe as an a priori concept, attempted to give a "thick description" of Europe, starting from its historical depth and not overlooking the dark sides and irrationalities inherent to its evolution.<sup>178</sup> Gollwitzer (1951, p.114) thus called Herder's work: "*...wohl das wichtigste deutsche Zeugnis für eine Erneuerung der Geistesverfassung und des Weltgefühls Europas, ihrer Abkehr von den einsinnigen und einschichtigen Konstruktionen der Aufklärung, ihrer Durchdringung mit irrationalen Elementen.*"

Considering Europe as a historical space,<sup>179</sup> Herder thus divided European history into three distinct epochs. The first, lasting five to eight centuries, started with the barbarian invasions of the Roman Empire. Of this period, Herder wrote: "*Sie ist der*

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<sup>176</sup> In "Vom Einfluss der Regierungen auf die Wissenschaften" Herder described Europe as "*ein Gemisch von Völkern und Sprachen*" (SWS IX, p.377), in the "Ideen..." as a "Triebwerk", in which he wanted to study how "*...jedes Rad zum allgemeinen Zweck mitwirkte*" (SWS XIV, p.448) and in the "Adrastea", finally, he again reiterated that: "*Alle Begebenheiten Europas laufen ineinander...*" (SWS XXIII, p.216).

<sup>177</sup> An origin which Herder, as Hegel after him, located in the East (SWS IV, p.351; Gollwitzer 1951, p.109). Herder, as most of the German Romantics, was fascinated by Indian culture. On Herder as the precursor of Indo-German theories see Ruben (1976) and on Herder's "Indienbild" Pranabendra (1979).

<sup>178</sup> That such an effort is above all a narrative and reconstructive one seems evident. And, as all philosophies of history, it is thus vulnerable to postmodern attacks and charges of teleology.

<sup>179</sup> At the end of the eighteenth century, history underwent a paradigmatic revolution in the Kuhnian sense. As Koselleck observed, the radical break with the past engendered by the French Revolution fundamentally changed people's perception of, and relation to, the past (Stammen 1999, p.113). The historical space was more and more defined in terms of closed epochs (classic, Middle Age, modern), a phenomenon that Koselleck termed "Verzeitlichung der Geschichte" (Stammen 1999, p.113) and Gollwitzer (1951, p.66) "die so wichtige Periodisierungsfrage". The end of the eighteenth century also witnessed the "domestication of the past", as the first museums started to appear (Dinzelbacher 1993, p.660) and history was finally recognized as an academic discipline in its own right (Hooek 1996, p.76). The universities of Halle and Göttingen, as well as the historians Schlözer and Gatterer, certainly played a major role in this process of "Verwissenschaftlichung der Geschichte" (Leventhal 1990, p.28; Durchhardt 1992, p.126).

*Einschlag zum Gewebe; die meisten zweifelhaften Fragen der folgenden Zeiten bezogen sich auf die Einrichtung, die damals gemacht ward"* (SWS XVII, p.82).<sup>180</sup> The second was characterized by the "Wiederauflebung der Wissenschaften und die Reformation" and lasted from the eleventh (!) to the sixteenth century (SWS XVII, p.82). Finally, the third and last epoch was his own and he put, with his usual sense for pathos and exaggeration, much hope into it: "Über der dritten brüetet der Weltgeist, und wir wollen ihm wünschen, dass er in sanfter Stille ein glückliches Ei ausbrüten möge. Es ist aber ein gewaltiggrosses Straussen-ei; der glühende Sand und die allmächtige Sonne mögen es ihm ausbrüten helfen" (SWS XVII, p.81).<sup>181</sup>

As Crépon (2003, p.148) tells us, Herder's narrative of Europe was characterized by the "*intelligence empathique des héritages multiples*" and an awareness that all heritage was also a loss and an impoverishment: "*la perte et le manque habitent l'origine de toute culture*". From the Phoenicians, Herder argued, Europe had inherited the spirit of commerce (SWS V; p.494) and from Greece the notion of liberty and of the republic "im griechischen Sinne"<sup>182</sup>. Rome had mainly served as a bridge (SWS V, p.563), not unlike the Arabs, whom Herder, as an early Orientalist in the Saïdian sense, described as a "carrier culture": "*Arabien der under-plot zur Geschichte der Bildung Europas*" (SWS V, p.563), which brought "*die Fackel der Wissenschaft*" into a "*barbarisches Europa*" (SWS XIV, p.282). For Herder, however, the Arabs, through their occupation of the Iberian Peninsula, also endowed Europe with qualities of their own such as "feineren Rittergeist", "Reimgalanterie" and "Einbildungskraft" (Tietz 1994, p.330), and thus broke the "*Despotismus der lateinischen Sprache*" by contributing to the formation of "*Provinzialpoesie*" (SWS XVIII, p.46).<sup>183</sup> Crépon (2003, 148), is thus fully right to observe that, for Herder, Europe was "*une identité du devenir*" and not "*une identité de l'être*".

In his philosophy of history, Herder clearly distinguished the unifying factors behind the European civilization. First there was Christianity, that "übernationale Sittenlehre" and "Band aller Nationen" (quoted in Domdey 1994, p.84), which Herder considered as

<sup>180</sup> Herder characterized the Middle Ages as "*kraftvoller, aber unbehüllicher Körper eines Riesen..., dem nur sein Auge fehlte*" and whose two main errors were "*das Lebewesen und die Hierarchie*" (SWS XIV, p.445; quoted in Gollwitzer 1951, p.113).

<sup>181</sup> The use of "Weltgeist" is indeed striking. For an analysis of the connections among Vico, Herder and Hegel see Rathmann (1984).

<sup>182</sup> Namely a patriotic one, which is: "*mit dem Namen Vaterland umschlungen*" (SWS V, p.495).

<sup>183</sup> Tietz (1994, p.340) calls Herder's "Araberthese", and "Spanienbild" in general, "eine goldene Legende". Something similar could probably be said of Herder's description of the Slavs.

an imported religion that had the advantage of being universal in its aspirations and was not, as all the religions preceding it, "enge National" (SWS V, p.519). By far the most important European unifying factor for Herder was, however, commerce: "...; *vielleicht der wirksamste Bund, der je in der Welt gewesen. Er hat Europa mehr zu einem Gemeinwesen gemacht, als alle Kreuzfahrten und Römische Gebräuche: denn über Religions- und Nationalunterschiede ging er hinaus, und gründete die Verbindung der Staaten auf gegenseitigen Nutz, auf wetteifernden Fleiss, auf Redlichkeit und Ordnung. Städte haben vollführt, was Regenten, Priester und Edle nicht vollführen konnten und mochten: sie schufen ein gemeinschaftlich-wirkendes Europa*" (SWS XIV, p.487).<sup>184</sup> Herder deeply admired the Hanseatic League, which he considered as a past and future model for a commercially integrated Europe: "...*ein weit verbreiteter, aus vielen Gliedern zusammengesetzter Handelsstaat, auf ächte Grundsätze der Sicherheit und Gemeinhülfe gebauet, wahrscheinlich ein Vorbild des künftigen Zustandes aller handelnden Europäischen Völkern*" (SWS XIV, p.450).<sup>185</sup>

Furthermore, Herder believed that the same forces of progress, namely the towns, the heretics and the universities had been acting throughout the whole of the European space (SWS XIV, pp.486-9). He even explicitly referred to Europe as a republic of letters: "*In Europa machen alle Gelehrten Einen eignen Staat aus, der auf die Vorarbeiten vieler Jahrhunderte gebauet, durch gemeinschaftliche Hülfsmittel und durch die Eifersucht der Reiche gegen einander künstlich erhalten wird... Ganz Europa ist ein gelehrtes Reich...*" (SWS XIV, p.36).<sup>186</sup> Europe's attitude towards science and innovations knew, according to Herder, no complexes<sup>187</sup> and it rewarded artists and scientists alike: "...*Schätzung und Ehre des Künstlers ... Durch sie ist Europa die Verarbeiterin aller Erzeugnisse der Welt worden, und hat sich dadurch als der kleinste und ärmste Welttheil die Uebermacht über alle Welttheile erworben*" (SWS XIV, p.487).<sup>188</sup> Competition

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<sup>184</sup> See also Knoll (1998, p.133).

<sup>185</sup> That Herder was not, however, submitting to a purely economic view of European integration, becomes clear from the following passage commenting Holland's decline. Holland's fault had precisely been to concentrate exclusively on commerce: "*Denn wird man sehen, was Handelsgeist, der nichts als solcher ist, für Schwächen gibt: das wird alsdenn kein grübelnder Philosoph, sondern die Reelle Zeit lehren, nicht mit Worten, sondern Thaten: in einem grossen Beispiel, für ganz Europa, an einer ganzen Nation*" (SWS IV, p.410).

<sup>186</sup> See also this passage from a letter to Gleim, dated April 1773: "*Ich bin ein uralter apostolischer Christ, u. glaube, bis zum Aberglauben, an eine Gemeine der Heiligen auf Erden, das ist eine Versammlung von Gemüthern, die im Innern sowohl, als in thätiger Wirkung für u. mit einander Eins sind*" (B VII, p.35).

<sup>187</sup> In this respect Herder especially praised Holland and chastised Spain and Portugal, the latter two having been unable to put their discoveries to good use (SWS IV, p.469).

<sup>188</sup> How Copernicus and Galileo might have thought of this statement is, of course, another issue. Herder seemed to have been inspired for this passage by Adelung's "Wörterbuch", in which Europe was

between the different parts of Europe thus produced an insatiable entrepreneurial restlessness and intellectual effervescence: "*Seinem Fleiss ist es Europa schuldig, dass aus Wolle und Flachs, aus Hanf und Seide, aus Haaren und Häuten, aus Leim und Erden, aus Steinen und Metallen, Pflanzen, Säften und Farben, aus Asche, Salzen, Lumpen und Unrath Wunderdinge hervorgebracht sind, die wiederum als Mittel zu andren Wunderdingen dienen und dienen werden*" (SWS XIV, p.487). This scientific and cultural competition ensured Europe a privileged place under the sun: "...zu dem Range, der ihm damit vor andern Völkern gebühret" and magnificence: "...mithin ist auf Thätigkeit und Erfindung, auf Wissenschaften und ein gemeinschaftliches, wetteiferndes Bestreben die Herrlichkeit Europas gegründet" (SWS XIV, p.492). Indeed a serious blow to the vision of Herder as cultural relativist...

As a civilizational entity, Herder did not hesitate to contrast Europe to other civilizations, as he seemed to be fully aware of the importance of the other for the constitution of the self<sup>189</sup>: "*Das Daseyn eines Reichs kann in sich selbst und gegen andre geschätzt werden; Europa ist in der Nothwendigkeit beiderlei Massstab zu gebrauchen, die Asiatischen Reiche haben nur Einen*" (SWS XIV, p.37)<sup>190</sup>. Herder thus insinuated that Europe having been, by force or by will, more open to outside influences, also developed a higher degree of self-consciousness. Be it as a defensive "Schicksalsgemeinschaft" sticking together in the face of the Arab or Ottoman threat: "*Durch ihre Anfälle auf die Europäischen Mächte haben sie dieselbe (Europa) Jahrhunderte lang in Tapferkeit wachend erhalten*" (SWS XIV, p.283) or as a community of crime in its crusades and colonial enterprises: "*Endlich lernte auf diesem heiligen Tummelplatz (Jerusalem) Europa sich untereinander selbst kennen, obgleich nicht auf die erspriesslichste Weise*" (SWS XIV, p.475), Europe became aware of itself in contacts with its multifaceted others.

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described as: "*Name des kleinsten aber auch aufgeklärtesten und gesittesten Erdteils*" (quoted in Neveux 1993, p.86).

<sup>189</sup> The other is constitutive of the self or in Jonathan Friedman's words: "*Our unity is located in the 'regard de l'autre'*" (quoted in Neumann 1999, p.5). For Delanty (1995, p.84), the most important contribution to the European identity stems not from language, geography, consciousness of shared history or an aesthetic category but from constant confrontation with multiple others: "*So it was in adversity that European identity was born...*" and "...*European consciousness emerged in a clash of world civilization*". Strath (2000) reminds us, that "*xenotypes also become autostereotypes*" (p.15) and that Europe's "...*perceived nature is always dependent upon whatever mirror it is reflected in*" (p.39).

<sup>190</sup> See also Gollwitzer (1951, p.112).

Constructed others were also used by Herder as "inverted mirrors", which contributed to define the European self.<sup>191</sup> If Herder defined the Africans by their lack of rationality and exuberant sensuality, the European character could henceforth be deduced *a contrario* as rational and emotionless (Tiainen-Antilla 1994, p.206).<sup>192</sup> Finally, Herder was fully aware of Europe's "internal others", against which it defined itself by exclusion. In the "Ideen...", Herder wrote a chapter significantly titled "Fremde Völker in Europa", from which we learn, unfortunately, that the Jews were: "*die parasitische Pflanze, die sich beinah allen europäischen Nationen angehängt und mehr oder minder von ihrem Saft an sich gezogen hat*" (SWS XIV, p.283) and that the Gypsies should be assembled and sent overseas<sup>193</sup> as colonial troops (SWS XIV, p.285; Gollwitzer 1951, p.105).

Many of the elements just described concerning Herder's perception of Europe as a civilization could however lead to confusion. Herder's "Europabild" indeed shared, at least superficially, many features with Enlightenment's "Europabild", which he otherwise liked to deride so much, such as commerce, "Cultur", proficiency in science and a republic of letters. Herder was, however, highly critical of a falsely universal, French-led Europe defined by empty philosophy, wigs and *maitres à danser*. This cosmopolitan Europe<sup>194</sup> was clearly a dystopia for Herder and he devoted much of his seemingly inexhaustible energy to preserve Germany from this harmful influence. The imitation of France was a mortal sin for Herder, who could not understand the attitude of the German elite in this respect, notably Frederick II: "*Wir schämen uns schon seit einem halben Jahrhundert Alles, was Vaterländisch ist; tanzen französische Menuetts unerträglich Deutsch...*" (quoted in Buck 1998, p.24). Herder thus sighed: "*Die Gallicomanie oder der falsch-französische Geschmack, worauf hat er sich heut zu Tage fast durch ganz Europa verbreitet?*" (SWS XIV,

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<sup>191</sup> For Herder's perception of Latin America and the "New World" see Gerbi (1973, especially pp.285-6) and Schmitt (1976).

<sup>192</sup> From there it can of course both be argued that "Empfindung" was, in Herder's eyes, just as important to the development of mankind as reason, or, in the opposite direction, that Herder saw Europeans closer to mankind's telos, "Humanität", which he often defined as "Vernunft und Billigkeit" (SWS XX, p.92). Contradictory passages in the early and late works could be found by the handful to prove both theses.

<sup>193</sup> A project which is not totally unlike Hitler's "Madagascar Plan" for the Jews.

<sup>194</sup> Herder was a freemason, as he was a member of the Riga lodge since 1766 (Liebel-Weckowicz 1986, p.7). He became, however, ever more skeptical about freemasonry and insisted that time had come to act in the open: "*Alle solche Symbole mögen einst gut und notwendig gewesen seyn; sie sind aber ... nicht mehr für unsre Zeiten. Für unsre Zeiten ist gerade das Gegenteil ihrer Methode nöthig, reine, helle, offenbare Wahrheit*" (SWS XVII, p.132; quoted in Heise 1980, p.75).

p.152)<sup>195</sup> Herder was of course not alone in his critique of French cultural leadership in an Enlightenment Europe that defined itself as the last step on the way to the universal.<sup>196</sup> Many of his colleagues from the *Deutsche Bewegung*, such as Lessing and Möser, shared the same preoccupation and tried to promote German literature and drama in the face of French competition (Hazard 1963, p.443).<sup>197</sup>

For Herder, in a passage reminiscent of Rousseau, the savage in his hut always reserved a place for the stranger, whereas: "*Das verschwemmte Herz des müßigen Kosmopoliten ist eine Hütte für Niemand...*" (SWS XIII, p.339; quoted in Dobbeck 1959, p.374)<sup>198</sup>. Too much uniformity simply was not good<sup>199</sup>: "(Herder) did not however push for the abolition of sovereign states – "cosmopolitanism" or "world government" was to him "at best a blithe illusion and at worst an invitation to international chaos or enforced uniformity"" (Hallberg 1999, p.294). With respect to this scepticism in front of unproblematic cosmopolitanism Herder certainly played a precursory role for his contemporaries: "*D'une façon générale, de la fin du XVIII à la fin du XIX siècle, la pensée allemande de l'Europe condamne une unité européenne refusant toute variété. ...contre l'universalisme – ou le cosmopolitisme – abstrait cher aux Français,...*" (Bourgeois 2000, p.208).

A Europe without national characters was thus a nightmare for Herder; a nightmare from which he ardently hoped to wake up: "*Bei uns Gottlob! Alle Nationalcharaktere ausgelöscht! wir lieben uns alle, oder vielmehr keiner bedarfs den andern zu lieben; wir geben mit einander*

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<sup>195</sup> This critique did not prevent Herder from being an assiduous reader of French authors. As Stolpe (1966, pp.1014-15) observes, there were three times more French works than English ones in Herder's personal library.

<sup>196</sup> In this respect Herder was close to today's critiques of unproblematic and one-dimensional narratives equating Europe with the universal. For Derrida Europe defined as an "arkhè-idée" (Coutel 1996, p.89) had indeed become a monologue: "*Si de la sorte, parce que l'Europe, comme rationnelle, n'est pas proprement européenne, c'est à dire particularisée, il n'y a pas d'Autre véritable de l'Europe, il n'existe pas d'avantage d'Autre dans l'Europe*" (Bourgeois 2000, p.214).<sup>196</sup> Such a Europe had forsaken all virtues of dialogism as its cosmopolitanism was founded above all "*sur un oubli du reste du monde*" (Chaunu 1982, p.36). And Todorov (2000, p.16) is certainly right to remind us that: "*l'universalisme est trop souvent un ethnocentrisme qui s'ignore.*"

<sup>197</sup> French occupation was then going to intensify and politicize these initial German "élans patriotiques", of which Fichte was going to be the spokesman.

<sup>198</sup> See also Ergang (1931, p.138).

<sup>199</sup> See again Rousseau, close to Herder in these points, in his unmistakable moralizing tone: "*Il n'y a plus aujourd'hui de François, d'Allemands, d'Espagnols, d'Anglois même, quoiqu'on en dise; il n'y a que des Européens. Tous ont les mêmes goûts, les mêmes passions, les mêmes mœurs, parceque aucun n'a reçu de forme nationale par une institution particulière... Que leur importe à quel maître ils obéissent, de quel Etat ils suivent les loix? Pourvu qu'ils trouvent de l'argent à voler et des femmes à corrompre, ils sont partout dans leur pays*" (Rousseau 1964 [1771], p.960; Barnavi 2001, p.28).

*um, sind einander völlig gleich – gesittet, höflich, glücklich! haben zwar kein Vaterland, keine Unsern für die wir leben; aber sind Menschenfreunde und Weltbürger. Schon jetzt alle Regenten Europa's, bald werden wir alle die Französische Sprache reden! – Und denn – Glückseligkeit! es fängt wieder die güldne Zeit an, da hatte aller Welt einerlei Zunge und Sprache! wird Eine Heerde und Ein Hirte werden! Nationalcharaktere, wo seyd ihr?"* (SWS V, p.551) To eliminate linguistic and thus cultural diversity was indeed the ultimate heresy for Herder. The guardians of those precious treasures were the nations<sup>200</sup>, for Herder definitely irreducible units or in Barnard's words (1964, p.125): "*ein wesentlicher und unzerstörbarer Teil der Menschheit.*"<sup>201</sup>

Herder's particularism should not, however, be overdone (Neumann 1999, pp.84-5). Although a great passionate of folk songs, he in no way intended to defend every "Völkchen".<sup>202</sup> A certain degree of national integration seemed necessary to him, as emerges quite clearly from his attitude towards the German Question. Herder wanted to transform the German nation into a "compact group" that cultivated its inner faculties (Ergang 1931, p.134). To favor this process he was even involved in the development of a project for a "Patriotic Institute", that would have contributed to homogenize German language, study German history and develop German culture (SWS XVI, pp.600-19). After the Polish partitions (1772, 1793 and 1795)<sup>203</sup>, Herder warned the Germans that if

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<sup>200</sup> It is commonly hold that Herder used the terms "Nation" and "Volk" synonymously (Dann 1987, p.332; Spencer 1996). Grosse (1980, p.308) agrees with this argument, but nuances it, by suggesting that Herder used "Nation" as a sign of higher maturity ("Reifegrad"). Buck (1998, p.25) reminds us that we should not confound Herder's more genealogic definition of the nation as a "Geburts und schicksalverbundene Stammesbrüderschaft" (Buck's terms) with Rousseau's more voluntaristic definition of the nation (see also Liebel-Weckowicz 1986, p.14). Finally, Dann (1987, p.332) points out how socially progressive Herder's act of equating the "Nation" with the "Volk" was, as the previous understanding of "Volk" was rather the first definition, of the two given by Adelung's "Wörterbuch", namely: "Classe der Nation die von Handarbeit lebt" (quoted in Grosse 1980, p.305). The state was, contrary to later German idealists such as Fichte and Hegel, only of secondary importance to Herder, for whom it was to be neither hereditary nor despotic and disturb as little as possible the "Gleichgewicht der Kräfte" of the nation: "*Die Gesundheit und Dauer eines Staats beruhet nicht auf dem Punkt seiner höchsten Cultur sondern auf einem weisen oder glücklichen Gleichgewicht seiner lebendig-wirkenden Kräfte. Je tiefer bei diesem lebendigen Streben sein Schwerpunkt liegt: desto fester und dauernder ist er*" (SWS XIV, p.149). The form of government had to be adapted to the nation's historical degree of evolution and particularities. In any case, there was, for Herder, no ideal constitution (Koepke 1990a, p.93) and all were always mixed: "*Überhaupt sind die vier Principien Montesquien's jedem Staat unentbehrlich, weil es durchaus keine reine, unvermischte Staatsverfassung giebt*" (SWS XXIII, p.45).

<sup>201</sup> In the Adrastea (SWS XXIII, p.28), Herder was terribly offended by Dutch plans during the War of Spanish Succession to break up Spain and he asked rhetorically: "*Welche edle Nation lässt sich also theilen?*"

<sup>202</sup> For Neumann (1999, p.84-5) this also emerges clearly from the way in which he treated the Slavs. Herder put them all into the same bag, with scant attention for their particularities or even languages. Neumann even suggests that Herder treated the Slavs in this integrative way to use them as a model to emulate for the German nation.

<sup>203</sup> Herder was indeed very upset by the Polish partitions and Catherine's participation in them (Haym [1880] 1954, p.513). He was, however, almost equally upset with the Poles because they used to sell their



they wanted to avoid the same fate, they had better start to integrate more. From such a perspective, there was to be no more space for radical localism: "...dass in Deutschland, wenn wir nicht ein zweites Polen sein wollten, keine Mühe edler angewandt werde, als diese Dissension zu zerstören. Alle Waffen der Überzeugung und Ironie, des guten Herzens und des gesunden Verstandes sollte man gebrauchen, um jene Provinzialgötzen zu Dan und Bethel, den Wahn und Selbstdünkel abzutun, und in Allem das Grosse Gefühl emporzubringen dass wir ein Volk seien. Eines Vaterlandes, Einer Sprache. Dass wir uns in dieser ehren und bestreben müssen, von allen Nationen unpartheiisch zu lernen, in uns selbst aber Nation zu sein" (quoted in Haym 1954 [1880], pp.551-2).

It was thus a duty, a "sittliche Pflicht", for each nation to cultivate its self-esteem. Only a nation with self-respect was worthy of that name: "*Selbstvertheidigung ist die Wurzel alles menschlichen und National-Werthes. Ein Volk, das sich selbst nicht schätzt; wie sollten es andre schätzen können, um auch von ihm geschätzt zu werden? Eine Nation, die sich selbst nicht vertheidigen mag, wird (bald), wie das wehrlose Italien, ein Spott und Spiel aller Nationen*" (SWS XVIII, p.345; unpublished passage). Self-defense was therefore, in Herder's eyes, not only a universal right but also a fundamental moral obligation. Fortunately, here too, nature had shown itself conciliatory and made self-preservation one of the strongest passions at all: "*Die Verschiedenheit der Sprachen, Sitten, Neigungen und Lebensweisen sollte ein Riegel gegen die anmaassende Verkettung der Völker, ein Damm gegen fremde Überschwemmungen werden: denn dem Haushalter der Welt war daran gelegen, dass zur Sicherheit des Ganzen, jedes Volk und Geschlecht sein Gepräge, seinen Charakter erhielt. Völker sollten neben einander, nicht durch und über einander drückend wohnen. Keine Leidenschaften wirken daher in allem Lebendigen so mächtig, als die auf Selbstvertheidigung hinausgehn*" (SWS XVIII, pp.235-6).<sup>204</sup>

Herder thus readily conceded the right of self-defense to revolutionary France (SWS XVIII, p.236) and condemned the coalitions against it<sup>205</sup>, as they were infringing upon the rule of non-intervention into the internal affairs of other nations (SWS XVIII, p.318; unpublished passage). Revolutionary France, however, was not allowed to export its

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monarchy to the highest bidder: "...denn eine Nation, die ihre Krone mehreren Auswärtigen feil bietet, dem Meistbietenden zuschlägt, ist keine Nation mehr" (SWS XXIII, p.429).

<sup>204</sup> See also Arnold (1981, pp.48 and 60), Dobbeck (1959, pp.380 and 385) and Dreitzel (1987, p.285).

<sup>205</sup> "...meines Wissens ist kein Deutscher geborner Franzose, der Verpflichtung und Beruf habe, für die alte Ehre des Königs der Franzosen auch nur einen Atemzug zu verlieren" (quoted in Jäger 1987, p.303). Herder was also highly enthusiastic about Prussia's separate peace with France and ensuing neutrality at the treaty of Basel in 1795 (Arnold 1981, p.68).

subversive principles and the German states were correct to invoke the rule of self-defense in the face of French messianism.<sup>206</sup> There was thus to be no ideological exception to the rule of inviolability of the nations. Herder also insisted that, at least initially, Charles' XII Northern War was just, because it was defensive (SWS XXIII, p.423) and in the "Humanitätsbriefe" he related the story of a nobleman ("Fürst"), who was ready to concede his best horse and his most beautiful slave to his enemy but not his land.<sup>207</sup> There was thus an exception to Herder's general moral condemnation of war, namely self-defense, and he could even talk in this respect of "Kriegstugenden", which were only: *"abwehrende Tugenden; wo sie angreifen, erobern, zudringlich und überlästig werden, hören sie auf Tugenden zu seyn und werden erst andern, dann der Nation selbst zu schrecklichen Dämonen"* (SWS XX, p.341). For Biedermann and Lange (1985, p.26) it was thus only a step from Herder's "Krieg der erzwungenen Selbstvertheidigung" to Fichte's "Bestimmung des Volkskrieges".<sup>208</sup> The most efficient self-defense of any nation was to come, however, not from arms but from words and spiritual values. According to Herder, language was the most central element in the definition of the nation (SWS XVII, pp.318-19). As long as a nation was thus able to cultivate and conserve its language and its national spirit, survival would be ensured, even under foreign occupation (SWS XVIII, p.346).<sup>209</sup>

Would self-defense, based on human passion and moral sentiment, not be sufficient to ensure the maintenance of national diversity in Europe, so, just as with peace, Providence or Adrastea would take charge of the task. Hegemonic pretensions were considered by Herder as excesses that Adrastea would not fail to punish to re-establish diversity and harmony: *"Es ist ein hartes aber gutes Schicksal, dass wie alles Uebel so auch jede Uebermacht sich selbst verzehre"* (SWS XIV, p.53). This rule had been no different for Rome, who had to pay the price of its oversized ambitions with the fall of the Empire: *"Das*

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<sup>206</sup> For Knoll (1982, p.15), Herder only realized the importance of this rule with the French troops already seriously threatening the German states.

<sup>207</sup> "Nein! Sprach der Fürst, so lang' es mich nur galt,  
 Mein Pferd, die Sklavin, gerne gab ichs hin  
 Des Volkes Blut zu schonen; doch mein Land,  
 Des Staaten Eigenthum muss ich als Fürst  
 Verwalten, nicht verschenken. Auf zur Schlacht!" (SWS XVIII, p.257).

<sup>208</sup> Diderot and Rousseau had indeed earlier conceptualized the notion of "soldat-citoyen", of which the first revolutionary wars were to prove the efficiency (Carbonell et al. 1999, p.58).

<sup>209</sup> Rousseau (1964 [1771]) was making a similar argument, notably in his "Considérations sur le Gouvernement de Pologne", in which he recommended that the Polish people forge a solid national spirit to better resist its greedy predators.

*Gesetz der Wiedervergeltung ist eine ewige Naturordnung. Wie bei einer Waage keine Schaafe niedergedrückt werden kann, ohne dass die andre höher steige: so wird auch kein politisches Gleichgewicht gehoben, kein Frevel gegen die Rechte der Völker und der gesamten Menschheit verübt, ohne dass sich derselbe räche und das gehäufte Uebermaas selbst sich einen desto schrecklichern Sturz bewirkte"* (SWS XIV, pp.177-8). Charles XII too, in the end, infuriated the Greek goddess with his restless aggressiveness: "...er war über den Rubikon gegangen; er hatte die Linie der Nemesis überschritten, die ihm bald einen gefährlichen Feind zusandte" (SWS XXIII, p.419). Nemesis/Adrastea in person was thus to be the guardian of a European civilization based on a multitude of irreducible nations ensuring competition and cultural diversity.

### **3.2 Europe's world-historical mission, or why Herder is not a postmodernist after all**

Herder was, as we have already observed earlier, convinced of (and maybe secretly hoped for) the impending collapse of the political state-system to which he saw so many defects.<sup>210</sup> Thus he wrote in the "Journal...": "...seinem Untergang indessen wird der feine politische Geist Europens nicht entgehen" (SWS IV, p.411) and in the "Ideen...": "...und es haben alle Ausschweifungen des Wahnsinns und der Laster, deren freilich kein Thier fähig ist, dazu gehört, unsre Maschine in dem Maas, wie sie in manchen Ständen geschwächt und verdorben ist, zu schwächen und zu verderben" (SWS XIII, p.153). Paradoxically, the French Revolution, especially after the excesses of the *Terreur*, only reinforced Herder's belief that he was living in a time of deep crisis (Kuznian 1989, p.28). For Arnold (1981, p.50) 1793: "bedeutete für sein (Herder's) politisches Denken die grösste Krise seines Lebens."<sup>211</sup> As late as in a letter of June 1798 Herder still talked of the "Zeitkrise, der kochenden, der gärenden, der schäumenden, abschäumenden oder, wie sie still steht, der trüben, der stinkenden..." (quoted in Dobbeck 1959, p.356).<sup>212</sup>

<sup>210</sup> For Koepke (1990a, p.93), Herder sensed the "Fehlentwicklung der modernen Staatengeschichte" and for Heise (1980, p.93) the "...Untergangsreife, des polizierten, von absolutistischen Staatsmaschinen artikulierten Europas."

<sup>211</sup> A crisis probably provoked by the erring of the French people, which contradicted so many of Herder's fundamental assumptions about the peacefulness of nations.

<sup>212</sup> Herder was of course not the only one to talk of a crisis, which at the end of the eighteenth century was not only political but had much deeper roots. The looming anxiety was in fact created by the emerging modernity and industrial revolution, which not only threatened old princes and kings but the whole social structure and traditional way of life. Schiller bemoaned that mankind wanted to put itself on the throne but was morally not yet ripe for it. Fichte characterized his own time as one of absolute license,

Despite his idealist credentials and belief in progress of mankind, Herder thus remained a life-long pessimist.<sup>213</sup> Already in a letter from 1774 to his friend, the philologist Heyne, Herder confessed that "...*der Geist der Zeit...drückt mich gewaltig nieder*" (quoted in Arnold 1981, p.58). Many have thus seen in Herder one of the first representatives in a long series of European "Kulturpessimisten" leading straight up to Müller,<sup>214</sup> Spengler, Dostoyevsky and Valéry (Craig 1990, p.20; Tiliette 1994, p.37), and attributed to him a "*dystopian view of the European present*" (Knoll 1998, p.134), a conviction of "*liv[ing] in an age of historical decline*" (Liebel-Weckowicz 1986, p.5) and the belief that Europe "*sera bientôt endormie*" (Scherrer 1995, p.311). Reszler (1976, p.19) takes the argument even further, by calling Herder an early "fatigué de l'Europe" in a long, this time French, series of cultural critics: "*Européen à rebours et en quelque sorte malgré lui, Herder est un des premiers Européens modernes: le malaise, l'hostilité à fleur de peau qui envahissent ses écrits deviendront le trait dominant de plusieurs génies "anti-européen" asociaux, du marquis de Sade à Rimbaud et à Lautréamont.*" These are indeed bold judgments, and in the rest of this paper we will try to show, that even though Herder was an ardent critique of eurocentrism and abusive European imperialism, he nonetheless believed in a regenerated and redemptive Europe that could serve as an example for the world in its quest for "Humanität".

De Rougemont (1961a, p.193) sees in Herder an early analyst of the world-system and the relations between Europe and the rest of the world.<sup>215</sup> Herder early understood that he lived, in what we would call today a globalized world, a sentiment which is thus not peculiar to our own time: "...*und wenn ein Sturm zwei kleine Zweige schüttelt, wie bebt und blutet die ganze Welt! Wenn ist je die ganze Erde an so wenig vereinigten Fäden so allgemein zusammen gegangen, als jetzt? Wenn hat man mehr Macht und Maschienen gehabt, mit einem Druck, mit einem Fingerregen ganze Nationen zu erschüttern?*" (SWS V, p.546) Herder condemned slavery and

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indifference and sin (völlige Ungebundenheit, Sündhaftigkeit und Gleichgültigkeit) and Goethe talked of "Zeitfieber", a malign and contagious sickness, which no one could escape (Stammen 1999).

<sup>213</sup> Which probably has more to do with his psychology and belief system rather than philosophy.

<sup>214</sup> J. v. Müller, Herder's Swiss friend, was, according to Gollwitzer (1951, p.117) "*erster deutscher Geistesmensch*" with a "*spezifisch Europäisches Dekadenzbewusstsein*". In Great-Britain it was Blake who first developed dystopian views about Europe (Von Plessen 2003, p.166).

<sup>215</sup> "*Ce que Herder, l'un des premiers, a su comprendre, c'est que l'Europe ne peut se concevoir comme entité fermée ou monade autonome. Elle est fonctionnellement liée au monde.*" See also the following passage from "Auch...": "...*sichtbarlich geht alles ins Grosse! Wir umfassen, womit es sey, den Kreis der Erde, und was darauf folgt, kann wahrscheinlich nie mehr seine Grundlage schmälern*" (SWS V, p.579).

colonialism<sup>216</sup> with all the sarcasm of his sharpened pen. In the "Humanitätsbriefe" (SWS XVIII, pp.222-3) he argued that Europe was not "...*der weise, sondern der anmaassende, zudringliche, übervortheilende Theil der Erde...; er hat nicht cultivirt, sondern die Keime eigner Cultur der Völker, wo und wie er nur konnte, zerstört.*" Europeans thus had to be ashamed in front of the whole world for their "*Verbrechen beleidigter Menschheit*". His ire was directed especially at England, "*das neue Karthago*" (SWS XVIII, p.222), whose colonial victims he bemoaned as "*ibr armen Schlachtopfer*".

In a passage from "Auch...", that would delight any contemporary "antiglobalisation-activist", Herder indicted the commercial system of his own time: "*In Europa ist die Sklaverei abgeschafft, weil berechnet ist, wie viel diese Sklaven mehr kosteten und weniger brächten, als freie Leute: nur Eins haben wir uns noch erlaubt, drei Welttheile als Sklaven zu brauchen, zu verhandeln, in Silbergruben und Zuckermühlen zu verbannen – aber das sind nicht Europäer, nicht Christen, und dafür bekommen wir Silber und Edelgesteine, Gewürze, Zucker und – heimliche Krankheit:...*" *"System des Handels"* Das Grosse und Einzige der Anlage ist offenbar! Drei Welttheile durch uns verwüstet und policiret, und wir durch sie entvölkert, entmanned, in Ueppigkeit, Schinderei und Tod versenkt: das ist reich gehandelt und glücklich" (SWS V, p.550). And Herder readily knew whom to blame for this dysfunctioning of international commerce, namely Europe's "Staatskörper", which: "...*sind also Thiere, die unersättlich am Fremden, Gutes und Böses, Gewürze und Gift, Caffee und Thee, Silber und Gold verschlingen und in einem hohen Fieberzustande viel angestrengte Lebhaftigkeit beweisen...*" (SWS XIV, p.37).<sup>217</sup>

Critique of eurocentrism, was, especially in his early works such as "Auch...", one of Herder's most polemical undertakings. The realm of cultural relativism is also the one in which he is today, apart from nationalism, most remembered and discussed (Adler 1994, p.57).<sup>218</sup> Herder indeed liked to use the artifice of the "noble savage", very common in his time, to critique European politics and society.<sup>219</sup> Thus in a discussion of the "Adrastea"

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<sup>216</sup> Herder had met Diderot, another outspoken critic of slavery and of the European colonial system, after his sea travel to Nantes (Juraneck 1994, p.53).

<sup>217</sup> For Herder and his relation to colonialism see also: Knoll (1982, pp.14-5), Knoll (1998, p.132) and Koepke (1990a, pp.89 and 94).

<sup>218</sup> For a postmodernist reading of Herder see Tully (2002, p.344) and Chirot (1996).

<sup>219</sup> The "noble savage" had indeed become a favorite tool of criticism in the hands of the *philosophes*. One thinks, of course, of Diderot's *Ourou*, of Montesquieu's *Uzbek*, of La Hontan's *Adario* and of Ange Goudar's "*Espion chinois, ou l'envoyé secret de la Cour de Pékin, pour examiner l'état présent de l'Europe*" (Chaunu 1982, p.36). Their favorite topics of conversation betray the European preoccupations

between an "Asiat" and a "Europäer" we hear the former's horrified answer to the latter's suggestion that Asians could know the privilege of entering the Christian paradise: "*Dabin wollen sie auch nicht, dafür schaudert sie, wenn sie es in sanfter Bescheidenheit auch nicht sagen. Mit Menschen, die in allen Lastern leben, die fluchen, zanken, Wein trinken, Schweine essen, die Haare mit Thierfett salben u.f.f. mit solchem wollen sie in keinen gemeinschaftlichen Himmel*" (SWS XXIII, p.499).

In a similar vein, in a passage from "Auch...", Herder warned the European philosopher not to succumb to any ethnocentrism: "*Wehe aber auch dem, ..., dem seine Scene die Einzige ist, und der die Erste, immer auch als die Schlechteste, verkennet!*" (SWS V, p.168) and in the "Ideen..." he argued that the Otabite was just as clever and skillful as the European: "*Wenn du dem Otabiten dein Kriegsschiff zulenkst und auf den Hebriden eine Kanone donnerst, so bist du wahrlich weder klüger noch geschickter, als der Hebride und der Otabite, der sein Boot künstlich lenkt und sich dasselbe mit eigener Hand erbaute*" (SWS XIII, 371; quoted in Malsch 1990, pp.78-9). Although anthropologically defending, like Voltaire, polygenetic theses<sup>220</sup>, Herder also maintained a life-long conviction in the unity of the human race and thus excluded any racial thinking: "*So haben einige, z.B. vier oder fünf Abtheilungen desselben (Menschengeschlechts), die ursprünglich nach Gegenden oder gar nach Farben gemacht waren, Racen zu nennen gewaget; ich sehe keine Ursache dieser Benennung. (...) Kurz, weder vier oder fünf Racen, noch ausschliessende Varietäten giebt es auf der Erde. Die Farben verlieren sich in einander: die Bildungen dienen dem genetischen Charakter; und im Ganzen wird zuletzt alles nur Schattierung eines und desselben grossen Gemäldes, das sich durch alle Räume und Zeiten der Erde verbreitet*" (SWS XIII, pp.257-8; quoted in Gilli 1982, p.270).<sup>221</sup> An author so suspicious of categories and a priori thinking, for whom the notion of unity in diversity was absolutely essential, could of course not conceive of mutually exclusive human races.

Herder, however, was much more than a "Kulturpessimist", cultural relativist and ardent denunciator of European colonialism. He was also an idealist who believed in the

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of their creators: private property, forms of government, free love and so on. More than a simple device, the noble savage often became a space of projection, a blank sheet onto which the *philosophes* and later romantics could imprint their utopias, desires and repressed urges.

<sup>220</sup> For studies on Herder's relation to polygenesis see Fink (1982), Mondot (2003) and Leuser (1996).

<sup>221</sup> See also Jäger (1986, p.187). Linné, to the contrary, had proclaimed the existence of four different human races corresponding to the four continents known at the time. One of them was of course to be the "homo Europeus": "*Weiss, sanguinisch, fleißig, mit gelblichen Haaren, blänlichen Augen. Leicht beweglich, scharfsinnig, erfinderisch; bedeckt mit anliegenden Kleidern; regiert durch Gesetze*" (quoted in Gollwitzer 1951, p.55).

unfolding of "Humanität" in world history and thus foresaw two possibilities for the further evolution of European civilization. Either it would wander off to some other area to be regenerated in a process of hybridization through contact with some alien culture and environment, or the renewal and rejuvenation would come from inside, through a process of palingenesis. Both ways would eventually lead to the furthering of "Humanität" through a transformed European civilization having been rendered beneficial, instead of detrimental, to the rest of the world.

Let us first consider the possibility of the continuation of European civilization in some other environment, or as Herder himself put it in the "Humanitätsbriefe": "*Je mehr ihre Kräfte und Staaten in Europa altern, je mehr unglückliche Europäer einst diesen Welttheil verlassen, um dort und hier mit den Unterdrückten gemeinschaftliche Sache zu machen; so können intellectuelle und animalische Kräfte sich in einer Weise verbinden, die wir jetzt kaum vermuthen*" (SWS XVIII, pp.288-9). This is indeed speculative thinking at its highest and Herder warned us: "*Dass also niemand aus dem Ergrauen Europa's den Verfall und Tod unsres ganzen Geschlechts augurire!*" (SWS XVIII, p.290). Such a renewal might indeed come from Europe's geographical East, as we have already shown earlier, or even from a newly emerging West.<sup>222</sup> As Scherrer (1995, p.317) put it, for Herder, Europe's "*centre de gravité va peut-être se déplacer vers l'Est ou l'Ouest*". For Craig (1990, p.20), however, Herder's main focus remained on the East from where he expected: "*...a general renewal of mankind ... . Ex Oriente lux.*" Again the regions centered around the Ukraine and the Black Sea were central to Herder, as he suggested they might become a new Greece: "*Blicke noch einmal auf diese idealische Traumcharte des schönsten Winkels der Erde, der Küstenscheide zwischen Asien und Europa; denke Dir diese Küsten, wie ehemals durch die Ionischen Colonieen, alle cultivirt, Griechenland und seine Inseln blühend,*"

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<sup>222</sup> The United States were to become, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the land of the future. How, indeed could America still be regarded as vile and degenerate, after its victory in the War of Independence (Sebastiani 2000, p.211). For Paine, America was the land of hope, contrasting with tyrannical and corrupted Europe, where monarchs were quarreling over petty trade interests (Thomson 1991, p.142). Gibbon was convinced that, would Europe, like the Roman Empire, fall under the thrusts of barbarians, a hundred thousand ships would be ready, waiting to sail off for America with Europe's civilized society on board (Gollwitzer 1951, p.80). In 1784 Sébastien Mercier published his "Etats-Unis d'Europe" (Pomeau 1991, p.254) and Goethe, at times showing signs of fatigue over "Old Europe", was weaving melancholic dreams of emigration to America. Since 1776, as Delanty puts it, Europe was standing between America and Russia. Herder, however, seemed still to subscribe to the Buffonian/de Pauwian thesis of a degenerate America inferior in fauna and animals, as well as stricken by unhealthy climate: "*For Herder...America is raw nature, not organized society*" (Gerbi 1973, p.285).

*Constantinopel und die ganze Levante ein Freihafen Europäisch-Asiatisch-Afrikanischer Völker, das unwirthbare Schwarze Meer ... zum zweitemal gastfreundlich, pontus euxinus*" (SWS XXIII, p.450).

Herder's preference, however, went to a renewal from inside of Europe, a palingenesis or process of rebirth (Heise 1980, p.83; Koepke 1990a, p.94). As he wrote in "Titan und Aurora": "...Palingenesie! Nicht Revolution, aber eine glückliche Evolution der in uns schlummernden, uns neu verjüngenden Kräfte" (SWS XVI, p.122). For Kamenetsky (1973, p.29), it is clear that this process of regeneration had to come from Europe's roots and thus included a process of recollection, of *prise de conscience*, so important for Herder. Only through such introspection could Europe appear in her new dress: "*Der Frühling wird kommen, der alte Baum wird aufgrünen mit einer desto schönern Krone, mit desto süßern Früchten. Es wird uns nicht gereuen, dass wir so spät kamen*" (SWS XVIII, p.337, unpublished passage; quoted in Dobbeck 1959, p.386). Such a transformed Europe would progress towards "Humanität", as we learn from Herder's "Zerstreute Blätter": "*Es muss also eine grosse Palingenesie der Gesinnungen unsres Geschlechts vorgehen, dass unser Reich der Macht und Klugheit auch ein Reich der Vernunft, Billigkeit und Güte werde*" (SWS XVI, p.356).<sup>223</sup>

For Europe there thus existed a chance of redemption. It could make good its past sins and become a benefactor for the whole world: "*Europa wird gut machen, was es im Taumel der Leidenschaft, unter den Hüllen des Aberglaubens und der Barbarei, unter dem Joch der Vorurtheile und des Despotismus böse gemacht hat; und die ganze Menschheit wird sich seiner kläreren Vernunft, seiner gesetzteren Billigkeit, seines richtigern Calculs freuen*" (SWS XVII, p.108)<sup>224</sup>. On this way of redemption, Adrastea would indeed help Europe to learn from its mistakes. With the assistance of the Greek goddess, the gap between European immoral deeds and spiritual achievements would be closed: "*Wie weit schreitet der Geist der Europäer vorwärts! wie fern zurück bleibt ihre Handlungsweise! Ein böser Genius hat sie erfaßt, indem sie andern Völkern Verderben bringen, sich selbst Verderben zu bereiten; stehet ein guter Geist hinter ihm, der unsichtbar dies Gift in Arznei verwandelt? Kein Zweifel, nur Generationen gehen darüber zu Grunde*" (SWS XXIV, pp.360-1; quoted in Knoll 1998, p.134).

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<sup>223</sup> See also Koepke (1990a, p.93).

<sup>224</sup> See also the following passage from the "Humanitätsbriefe": "*Europa muss ersetzen was es verschuldet, gutmachen was es verbraucht hat; nicht aus Belieben, sondern nach der Natur der Dinge selbst: denn übel wäre es mit der Vernunft bestellt, wenn sie nicht allenthalben Vernunft, und das Allgemeingute nicht auch das Allgemeinnützlichste wäre*" (SWS XVIII, p.289).



Koepke (1990b, p.170) is indeed right to observe that logically Adrastea should have punished Europe severely for all its misdeeds, but that Herder finally refrained from painting such a gloomy picture. Rather he preferred to insist that the pendulum was searching for the middle, as in this letter to Heyne of March 1793: "*Ob es gleich trüb ist von allen Seiten, hinter diesen Wolken und Bergen ist heiterer Himmel; das will ich glauben. Der Pendul sucht beide Extreme, bis er die Mitte findet*" (B VII, p.30). Herder's unshakeable hope for the future<sup>225</sup> thus always succeeded in overcoming his sorrow and pessimism about contemporary events: "*Doch von dieser Welt kein Wort mehr! Im jetzigen Moment dünkt sie mir wie dem Hamlet abscheulich. Auch hieraus aber, aus dieser Verwirrung der Töne muss sich etwas Grosses u. Gutes ergeben; u. auch wir werden es noch erleben!*" (B VII, p.38; letter to Gleim of May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1793). After all, as Herder himself put it, Europe was an archive filled with many spiritual treasures that only waited to be shared: "*Niemand wirds läugnen, dass Europa das Archiv der Kunst und des aussinnenden menschlichen Verstandes sei: das Schicksal der Zeitenfolge hat in ihm seine Schätze niedergelegt: sie sind in ihm vermehrt worden und werden gebraucht*" (SWS XIII, p.372).<sup>226</sup>

According to Gollwitzer, Europe, in Herder's comparative analysis, thus turned out to have "einen kulturell-zivilisatorischen Vossprung" (Gollwitzer 1951, p.107). Even though in the tree the roots are just as important as the branches and leaves, and Herder did not miss an occasion to insist on this point, he still admitted that: "*Eben an Baumes höchsten Zweigen blühen und spriessen die Früchte...*" (SWS V, p.573). If childhood was just as rewarding and intense, if not more so than adulthood, the adult still had, like the top of the tree, the advantage of a wider outlook and broader horizon: "*Ist dem also, ist der höhere Standort, ein weiterer Horizont, eine aus mehreren Ereignissen gewonnene Belehrung, der Neueren Vorzug: so folgt zugleich daraus, dass dieser Vorzug keiner Nation ausschliessend angehöre; denn alle sind wir die Später-Gekommenen, die vom Schicksal oft und viel Belehrten, die Neueren*" (SWS XXIII, p.73). As for Herder most nations of the planet were still "in Kindheit" (SWS V, p.566), Europe clearly had a moral obligation to share its findings with them.<sup>227</sup> For all his

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<sup>225</sup> See, for example, the following passage: "*Was hast du kleiner Nordischer Welttheil, einst Abgrund von Hainen und Eisinseln, auf dem Balle werden müssen! – was wirst du noch werden!*" (SWS V, p.564).

<sup>226</sup> See also Malsch (1990, p.80).

<sup>227</sup> Herder talked of the "*keimende Saat der Humanität in Europa*" (SWS XVII, p.68; quoted in Knoll 1982, p.17).

critique of Enlightenment triumphalism, Herder thus turned out to have his own "program of civilization" and "developmental scale" (Wolff 1994, p.307).<sup>228</sup>

For the Socrates of his own time, Herder argued, the audience was no longer the little city-state but the whole world: "*Du kannst, Sokrates unsrer Zeit! nicht mehr, wie Sokrates wirken: denn dir fehlt der kleine, enge, starkeregsame, zusammengedrängte Schauplatz! ...Welt und Nachwelt ist dein Athen! rede!*" (SWS V, p.568)<sup>229</sup> The undertaking of "Humanität" was to be clearly a global issue transcending all borders: "*Kein Athen oder Sparta, Europa soll hier gebildet werden; nicht zur Kalaogathie eines griechischen Weisen und Künstlers, sondern zu einer Humanität und Vernunft, die mit der Zeit den Erdball umfasste*" (SWS XIV, p.486). A Europe that would thus have found its way to "Vernunft" and "Menschengüte", had then to play an important role in the world-wide maieutic of "Humanität": "*Sollte in Europa auf Wegen, die wir zu bestimmen nicht vermögen, die Vernunft einmal so viel Werth gewinnen, dass sie sich mit "Menschengüte" vereinigte: welch eine schöne Jahreszeit für die Glieder der Gesellschaft unsres ganzen Geschlechtes! Alle Nationen würden daran Theil nehmen und sich dieses Herbstes der Besonnenheit freuen. Sobald im Handel und Wandel das Gesetz der Billigkeit allenthalben auf Erden herrschet, sind alle Nationen Brüder; der jüngere wird älteren, das Kind dem verständigen Greise mit dem was es hat und kann, willig dienen*" (SWS XVIII, p.289).<sup>230</sup>

Even missionaries, according to Herder, could eventually play a positive role, if only they were acting under the right principles: "*Ists ihre (the missionaries) Absicht, Völker aufzuklären, das Wohl der Reiche nicht zu untergraben, sondern Wissenschaften und Sitten auf dem Grundstein echter Menschlichkeit zu sichern, welchen Namen können sie edler führen, welch' Amt Ehrenvoller verwalten, als das Amt gelehrter, sittlicher Mandarin*" (SWS XXIV, p.10). From there to think that it was possible to leapfrog across stages of development was of course an error. If they were to be concluded successfully, time had to be given to these processes: "*...aber vom Stande der Einfalt, in dem die meisten dieser Völker leben, zu einer Jesuitenschule war der Sprung zu gross*" (SWS XXIV, p.10). The Europeans thus had to stand up to their

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<sup>228</sup> Gollwitzer (1951, p.107) too perceives this paradox and argues that Herder was at pain to solve the relation between the universal and Europe: "*Der Kritik des Eurozentrismus kann Herder kaum entgehen.*"

<sup>229</sup> See also Malsch (1990, p.82) and Knoll (1998, p.133).

<sup>230</sup> See also Bittner (1953, p.63). The following passage from the "Zerstreute Blätter" goes exactly in the same direction: "*Unlängbar ist, dass Europa durch seine vereinte Macht, durch Erfindungen, Anstalten, Aemsigkeit und Klugheit sich Mittel erworben hat, auf alle Völker der Erde, so wie auf die fernste Nachwelt mächtig zu wirken; welch eine Zukunft schlösse sich auf, wenn diese ungeheure Macht und Klugheit einst Weisheit und Güte würde*" (SWS XVI, p.48).

responsibilities and start to work for the bettering of the world.<sup>231</sup> As the "Europäer" argues in a dialogue of the *Adrastea*: "*Der Knäuel der Adriane, Menschen-Errettung und Völker-Vereinigung ist in unsrer Hand.*" The "Asiat" replies approvingly, though not without skepticism: "*Wohl Euch und Jenen, wenn Ihr ihn anwendet. Alle Nationen der Welt werden Euch danken. Vergesst aber nicht, dass dieser hohe Beruf keine Ostindische Compagnie sei*" (SWS XXIII, p.505).

Herder was convinced that technological and spiritual achievements could be transmitted through inter-cultural communication: "*Da sich der Geist aller Nationen allen Nationen, die mit einander sprechen und handeln, unhintertreiblich mittheilt...*" (SWS XXIII, p.84). As communication was fundamental to the development of the individual, so it was for the blossoming of cultures. Complete isolation would lead any nation into an impasse as: "*...wie wir in allen kleinen so genannten Barbarischen Nationen sehen. Mit ihren Notwendigkeiten abgetheilt können sie Jahrhunderte lang in der sonderbarsten Unwissenheit bleiben, wie jene Inseln ohne Feuer...*" (SWS V, p.141). Many, such as Caisson (1991, p.21), have thus seen in Herder the apostle of cultural dialogism. Leventhal (1990, p.38) argues that, according to Herder, there had to be a "*...necessary historical progression through reflexive linguistic communication.*" The teleological approach in Herder's philosophy of history would thus receive a dominantly linguistic coloring. Homann and Albrecht (1993, p.79) agree with this view by asserting that: "*...ist es für den späteren Europagedanken wichtig, dass Herder die Rolle des modern gesprochen, Kulturkontakts und –Transfers sowie des Kulturvergleichs für die eigentlichen Triebfedern der Geschichte hält... .*"

But not only did Herder believe in the virtues of cultural dialogue, he also was convinced that international trade, based on a sound basis, could contribute to the advancement of "Humanität". Just as trade had been the very basis of the European civilization, it could also become the foundation of a positive cooperation between nations on a world-wide basis: "*Nur durch freie Concurrenz mit andern lernen wir unsre Kräfte kennen und gebrauchen; nur in werthätiger, gegenseitiger Gemeinschaft lebt und gedeihet das Menschengeschlecht*" (SWS XVIII, p.310; unpublished passage).<sup>232</sup> Of course, Herder never

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<sup>231</sup> For a critical attitude towards an eventual Herderian world-historical mission for Europe, see Barnard (1964, p.126).

<sup>232</sup> See also Dobbeck (1959, p.93).

meant that all inhabitants of the planet should become Europeans: "*Unsinnig-stolz wäre die Anmaassung, dass die Bewohner aller Welttheile Europäer seyn müssten, um glücklich zu leben: denn wären wir selbst, was wir sind, ausser Europa worden?*" (SWS XIII, p.333). To learn from Europe would thus not imply to become exactly like Europe. For the way towards "Humanität" could only be taken in respecting the principle of diversity. Every nation would thus interpret and assimilate the European cultural heritage differently. Hybridity was thus a general law for Herder, Europe not excluded. The desert of ignorance, and barbarism, however, would shrink ever more: "*Je mehr die Cultur der Länder zunimmt, desto enger wird die Wüste; desto seltner ihre wilden Bewohner*" (SWS XIV, p.216). Herder thus remained all his life attached to the Enlightenment principles he liked to deride so much: "*Ich sehe alles Grosse, Schöne, und Einzige unsres Jahrhunderts ein, und habe es bei allem Tadel immer zum Grunde behalten*" (SWS V, p.545).

Even though Herder has certainly contributed a lot to cultural relativism, notably by insisting on the idea of, in Juranek's words, "Unvermittelbarkeit der lebendigen Begriffe" (Juranek 1994a) and such statements as: "...*wer bin ich, das ich urtheile, da ich eben nur den grossen Saal durchgehe, und einen Seitenwinkel des grossen verdeckten Gemäldes im dunkelsten Schimmer beäuge?*" (SWS V, p.585), it is certainly going much too far to speak, as Tully (2002, p.344) has done, of "*Herder's billiard ball picture of cultures*" and to argue that Herder's cultural pluralism defended "...*the idea that each nation has one culture that is independent, separate and internally uniform.*" Seeing Herder as a radical cultural relativist is indeed wrong, for, as Nisbet (1973, p.105) has pointed out: "*Sein (Herder's) historischer Relativismus war übrigens alles andere als konsequent.*"<sup>233</sup> Cultural communication and commercial exchange were fundamental to Herder and, as Liebel-Weckowicz (1986, p.14) rightly argues, judgmental relativism, which was of course Herder's, is certainly not the same as "*relativism of the historical events under consideration*". Maurer (1990, p.58) even goes to the extreme of arguing that those who see in Herder the father of historicism are "verirrt" and that the "Adrastea" was a "*verkleidete Abwehr romantischer Tendenzen zur Autonomsetzung des Subjekts.*" It is certain, however, that Herder believed in one universal reason: "*Verstand ist der Gemeinchatz des menschlichen Geschlechts*" (SWS XVIII, p.298) as well as in aesthetic and epistemological standards valid for all human beings: "*Gäbe es aber auch einen Massstab des*

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<sup>233</sup> See also Nisbet (1973, p.116).

*Wahren, Schönen, Guten für alle Völker, für alle Zeiten? Daran lasset uns nie zweifeln"* (SWS XXIII, p.212).

For all his existential angst and pessimism, Herder thus firmly believed in the advancement of "Humanität", a process in which Europe, or at least European culture, was to play an important role. For all this to happen, Europe, however, first had to become conscious of its world-wide responsibilities and undergo a process of self-criticism. Herder's vision of Europe was thus a bet on the future, as we learn from this dialogue of the "Humanitätsbriefe": *Asiat: "Brächten es z.B. die Europäer dahin, das keine Frauen ihren Männern sich weiterhin im Feuer aufopfern müssten, dahin, dass keine Unterdrücker und sie selbst nicht mehr unterdrückten, vervortheilten, beraubten, quälten; gesegnet wäre die Religion der Christen, auch ohne dass Ein Indier sie formularisch-historisch annähme. Alle genössen die Frucht derselben, echte Humanität reiner Beziehungen in einer glücklichen Völkerverbindung! Einmal hat den Europäern die Vorsehung Waage und Maas in die Hand gegeben; sie sollen messen, sie sollen wägen. Messen sie aber mit dem falschen Maas allein zu ihrem Vortheil, was wird in ihrer Hand die entscheidende Schicksalswaage, die zu Beförderung des Glücks der Völker ihnen anvertrauet ward?"* *Europäer: "Daran denkt in Europa niemand"* (SWS XXIII, p.503).

#### 4. Conclusion

As Gentz put it in his "Gestörtes Gleichgewicht durch Revolutionskriege", the age of the "old Europe" based on dynasties, elite culture and balance of power politics, had been profoundly shaken, if not destroyed, by the French Revolution and the ensuing international instability: "*Die Geschichte der französischen Revolutionskriege ist, fast aus jeglichem Standpunkte betrachtet, ein düstres, schauererregendes Gemälde. ...ist nichts in diesem Gemälde so schrecklich, als jenes gänzliche und hoffnungslose Verschwinden aller Grundsätze, Gesinnungen und Maximen, ...; jene gewaltsame, tödliche Auflösung aller alten gemeinschaftlichen Bande, aller wechselseitigen Zuneigung und Treue, aller Freundschaft und Nachbarschaft und natürlichen und politischen Blutsverwandschaft und alles Gemeingeistes und Nationalgeistes und europäischen Familiengefühls unter den Regenten dieses Erdteils*" (in Dietze, 1989, p.492). With the French Revolution, the paradigm of "old Europe" was thus seriously challenged, both, by a first wave of centripetal forces, in the form of revolutionary cosmopolitanism and, in reaction, a second wave of centrifugal forces, in the form of nationalist movements (Thompson 1994, p.38).<sup>234</sup>

As far as the idea of Europe is concerned, the period lasting from the French Revolution to the Congress of Vienna in 1815 was one of intense effervescence and epistemological turmoil. In the search of itself, Europe had arrived at a crossroads: "*Il n'y a pas, probablement, d'autres moments historiques aussi importants, pour la naissance et la définition de l'Europe, en tant qu'entité culturelle et géopolitique, aussi décisifs que la période à cheval entre le XVIIIe et le XIXe siècle*" (Codignola 1996, p.124). Thompson (1994, p.38) agrees with this analysis and does not hesitate to talk about a "European moment" taking place at the end of the eighteenth century: "*Indeed, it is not far-fetched to regard this earlier period as the modern "European moment", the moment when contemporary ideas of Europe were first crystalized out of an enormously complex historical inheritance and when they began their contemporary careers in political and intellectual history.*"<sup>235</sup> Stammen (1999) talks of a "sense-making crisis", as the past Europe was undone and a new one was yet to be defined.

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<sup>234</sup> Both movements, however, had, as we will see, no difficulties to reconcile themselves with the idea of Europe: "*both revolutionary cosmopolitanism and nationalist particularism seem to have had no difficulties in reconciling their ideas to a concept of Europe and of Europe's historical mission*" (Thompson 1994, p.38).

<sup>235</sup> Woolf (1992, p.74) also perceives the end of the eighteenth century as crucial to European self-consciousness, insisting on the growing importance of a new concept: the nation-state: "*...a distinctive*

A discursive competition over what Europe was or should be was thus taking place throughout this period. Den Boer (1993, p.13) sees the French Revolution as *the* "watershed" in European consciousness, that opened up a new space of political debate. Rival interest groups took part in a European public dialogue and confronted each other in a battle of discourses over the definition of "episteme Europe" (Den Boer 1993, p.13; Wahnich 1996, p.22).<sup>236</sup> For de Rougemont (1961a, p.199), Europe, at the time, was clearly undergoing a process of redefinition, as: "*Toute l'Europe se mit donc à parler de l'Europe, contre Napoléon qui avait voulu la faire.*" Herder was clearly aware of this process and deemed it beneficial: "*Unter grossem Elende ist also wenigstens eine allgemeine Schule der Vernunft und Redekunst der ganzen Nation praktisch eröffnet worden; wer sprechen kann, spricht und wird von Europa gehört*" (SWS XVIII, pp.319-20; unpublished passage). This turmoil also gave birth to less political definitions of Europe and sometimes, as with Novalis or Blake, to "imaginative flights" into the realm of utopia (Thompson, 1994, p.38).

Let us thus take a closer look at these competing visions of Europe, appearing at the end of Herder's life. The revolutionaries were dreaming of a unitary European nation that was to be republican, democratic, pacific and homogenous (Neugebauer-Wölk 1991, p.107; Wahnich 1996, pp.16-7). Forster, significantly a German who felt himself so much French that he used "we" to talk of France, argued that it had been the princes who insisted on and developed national differences, so as to better divide the European people (Gilli 1994, p.88)<sup>237</sup>. How far the initial enthusiasm for such a "European nation" went, and how much the French Revolution was permeated by Enlightenment cosmopolitanism, is illustrated by the exuberance of Cloots, another German enthusiast of the French Revolution: "*There are to be no more provinces, armies, victors, or vanquished... The Ocean is to be covered from shore to shore with ships forming one superb bridge of communication, and the highways of France are to be extended to the borders of China. We shall travel by stagecoach from Paris to Peking, as we do now from Bordeaux to Strasbourg, without anything to stop us, without customs,*

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*conviction was forged of what constituted the essence of Europe's superiority, based on the division of its land mass into nation-states and the role of the state in furthering progress.*"

<sup>236</sup> This corresponds indeed to a "constructivist" approach to the idea of Europe, such as defended by Strath (2000, p.14 and 22), for whom identities are always "*constructed in cultural and political processes by means of language, emotions and symbols*" and "*Europe must be seen in the plural*", always "*contested and contradictory*".

<sup>237</sup> Paine's comment can also be retained in this respect: "*When all the governments of Europe shall be established on the representative system, nations will become acquainted, and the animosities and prejudices fomented by the intrigue and artifice of courts will cease*" (quoted in Thomson 1991, p.144). See also Dietze (1989, p.50).

*barriers, stone walls, officials, or hunting gentry. There will be no more deserts; the entire earth will have become a garden. The East and the West will embrace the field of Federation. A body does not make war upon itself, and mankind will live in peace when it forms a single body, one Nation, single and unique... . The commune of Paris will be the central rallying point, the beacon of universal community"* (quoted in de Rougemont 1966b).

The direct reaction to such enflamed rhetoric was indeed to term the French Revolution illegitimate and to hope with nostalgia for a return to the earlier model of Europe. This is exactly what Burke did in his "Reflections on the Revolution in France", in which he dismissed the French Revolution as devoid of any organic legitimacy and historical continuity. Burke was bemoaning a gentlemanly Europe held together by political tradition, religious bonds and high culture: "*The secret, unseen, but irrefragable bond of habitual intercourse holds them together, even when their perverse and litigious nature sets them to equivocate, scuffle, and fight, about the terms of their written obligations... . The writers on public law have often called this aggregate of nations<sup>238</sup> a commonwealth. They had reason"* (quoted in Thompson 1994, pp.40-1).

But all conservatives did not simply yearn for a nostalgic return to a Europe defined by dynastic equilibrium politics, which the French Revolution had just so seriously shaken. Many started to dream about a revival of an earlier Europe, hierarchically ordered on the principle of universal monarchy. In Germany, F. Schlegel edited a review called "Europa", in which he defended the project of a corporatist and catholic Europe under the leadership of a revived Holy Empire (Calvié 1991, p.135).<sup>239</sup> Novalis, in his "Europa oder Christenheit", subscribed to a similar theocratic and medieval vision of Europe, even though he did so in a more poetic and transcendental way.<sup>240</sup> In France, Bonald and Joseph de Maïstre were the defenders of a hierarchically structured Europe with a medieval flavor. If Bonald argued in favor of French hegemony, de Maïstre favored a Europe under the rule of papacy (Gengembre 1996, pp.36-37). In "Du Pape", published in 1818, de Maïstre wrote: "*Toute souveraineté dont le doigt efficace du grand pontife n'a pas touché le front, demeurera toujours inférieure... . il reste démontré que les papes furent les instituteurs, les tuteurs,*

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<sup>238</sup> Burke's vision of the nation was, of course, not endowed with the progressive meanings Herder and Rousseau, although in different ways, attached to it.

<sup>239</sup> See also Nurdin (1980, p.31).

<sup>240</sup> For Novalis' vision of Europe see Hiebel (1972) and Nurdin (1980).



*les sauveurs et les véritables génies constituants de l'Europe*" (in Hersant and Bogaert 2000, p.125). These visions of an organic Europe submitting to religious and imperial authority were, of course, largely an epidermic reaction to the emancipating tendencies of Enlightenment philosophy and modernization as such.

A fourth and last discourse about Europe, prominent at the end of the eighteenth century, was a German one. In response to the threat posed by French cosmopolitanism to their nation, many German authors started to acclaim the cultural and spiritual superiority of a German nation destined to regenerate Europe. Germany was thus hailed to be endowed with the transcendental mission of leading Europe into a better future. Schiller, in his "An die deutsche Grösse", of 1801, brought the moral, pedagogic and aesthetic messianism of the German nation to its paroxysm: "*Dem, der den Geist bildet, beherrscht, muss zuletzt die Herrschaft werden, denn endlich an dem Ziel der Zeit, wenn anders die Welt einen Plan, wenn des Menschen Leben irgendeine Bedeutung hat, endlich muss die Sitte und die Vernunft siegen, die rohe Gewalt der Form erliegen - und das langsamste Volk wird alle schnellen Flüchtigen einholen. Die anderen Völker waren dann die Blume, die abfällt. Wenn die Blume abgefallen, bleibt die goldne Frucht übrig, bildet sich, schwillt die Frucht der Erde zu ... Die Briten streben nach Schätzen, die Franzosen nach Ruhm, doch den Deutschen erwartet das höchste Schicksal: Nach dem Höchsten soll er streben ... Er verkehrt mit dem Geist der Welten ... Jedes Volk hat seinen Tag in der Geschichte, doch der Tag des Deutschen ist die Ernte der ganzen Zeit*" (quoted in Chabod 1963, p.112). As Germany would find its own identity and unity, so would Europe emerge in a new dress: "*face au discours volontiers directement universaliste, cosmopolite, d'une France dont l'agir est souvent dénoncé comme l'absolutisation impérialiste d'un pur particularisme ou nationalisme, l'Allemagne se pense, à travers la liaison qu'elle veut réelle de l'universalité et de la particularité, dans le culte identique de l'Europe et d'elle même*" (Bourgeois 2000, p.208).<sup>241</sup> This was of course the idealist vision of Europe, a vision also defended by Fichte<sup>242</sup>, who wrote in his "Reden an die Deutsche Nation" in 1806: "*Der wahrhaft gebildete Europäer betrachtet ganz unabhängig von seiner Herkunft*

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<sup>241</sup> See also the following passage: "*En développant, dans son discours sur l'Europe, la présentation de celle-ci et, de façon plus précise, de l'Allemagne, comme le pays de cette rationalité, dont la pleine affirmation, elle-même rationnelle, constitue la philosophie, la philosophie allemande se célèbre elle-même comme philosophie, et comme philosophie achevée, dans son lieu d'élection*" (Bourgeois 2000, p.213). Madame de Staël wrote in 1813 in the preface of her "de l'Allemagne": "*L'Allemagne par sa situation géographique, peut être considérée comme le cœur de l'Europe, et la grande association continentale ne saurait retrouver son indépendance que par celle de ce pays*" (quoted in Bourgeois 2000, p.210).

<sup>242</sup> See also Thompson (1994, p.213).

*als Heimat unverweigerlich dasjenige Land Europas, das auf der Höhe der Kultur steht*" (quoted in Foerster 1967, p.228). And this country was, surprise, to be Germany.

Herder did not subscribe to any of the four alternatives presented above. Of course, he could not hope, as Burke did, for a return to pre-revolutionary Europe, having himself spent so much ink to condemn this old Europe of dynastic power politics and illusionary balance of power principles. Neither could Herder wish for a return to universal monarchy, as we have seen, such a hierarchical vision of Europe would endanger far too much the principles of competition and diversity so dear to him. For the same reasons, he could not defend the revolutionary model of a unique European nation, which would again eliminate the, for him all-important, artistic and intellectual rivalry among a multiplicity of culturally specific nations. Finally, he could not be supportive of the transcendental model of a Europe rejuvenated by the German nation, since he repeatedly condemned the idea of any "Favoritenvolk": "*So darf ich auch kein Volk Europa's vom andern abschliessen, und thöricht sagen: "bei mir allein, bei mir wohnt alle Weisheit"*" (SWS XVII, p.212).<sup>243</sup>

This paper has tried to argue that Herder devised his own original discourse about Europe and thus contributed to the cacophony around the concept at the end of the century. Herder's Europe was a "Europe of nations", which can be distinguished ideologically from a "territorial-staatliches Strukturmodell" of Europe (Homann and Albrecht 1993, p.80). What counted, for Herder, was cultural and intellectual rivalry between idiosyncratic nations. Balance of power was of no use to him, since it was destined to become redundant with the disappearance of the hereditary and despotic state-machines pursuing Machiavellian policies. In the words of Raulet (1996, p.116): "*C'est le passage à l'Europe des peuples et c'est, potentiellement, la fin de l'Europe des Princes...*" For Gollwitzer (1951, p.109) too, with Herder, who also used the term "Menschen-Nationen" (SWS

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<sup>243</sup> See also the following passage from the "Humanitätsbriefe": "*Vor allem sei man unparteiisch wie der Genius der Menschheit selbst; man habe keinen Lieblingsstamm, kein Favoritvolk auf der Erde*" (SWS XVIII, p.247), as well as SWS (XIV, p.288) and Barnard (1964, p.126). Dreitzel (1987, p.297), however, argues that the later Herder was more and more favorable to Prussia and that with growing French expansionism, his nationalism became more politicized. See, for example, the following passage from the "Adrastea": "*hat Preussen durchs Jahrhundert hin zum allgemeineren Licht Europa's nicht mehr als jeder andre Staat seiner Grösse beigetragen?*" (SWS XXIII, p.459). For a description of how Herder's initially negative perception of Frederick II gave way more and more to praise and approval, see Rieck (1994).

XVIII, p.238), we pass from a "*Gesellschaft von Staaten-Personen*" to a "*Gemeinschaft nationaler Persönlichkeiten*".<sup>244</sup>

If Keyser (1953, p.9) then argues that Herder's goal was "*das geordnete Nebeneinander nationaler Staaten*", this is only half the truth, since Herder was especially interested in the communication and exchanges among these nations<sup>245</sup>. This dialogue was fundamental to the self-awareness and development of the European nations or, in the words of Homann and Albrecht (1993, p.80): "*Indem Nationen sich vergleichen, Einfluss aufeinander ausüben, erkennen sie sich selbst, indem sie sehen, was sie nicht sind. Daraus nun folgt für Herder, dass nur Kulturvergleich und Kulturtransfer die Geschichte vorantreiben... .*"<sup>246</sup> The competition between nations was thus to be cultural and intellectual, as Herder repeatedly insisted: "*Alle Völker Europa's, (andere Welttheile nicht ausgeschlossen), sind jetzt im Wettstreit, nicht der körperlichen sondern der Geistes- und Kunstkräfte mit einander. Wenn Eine oder zwei Nationen in weniger Zeit Vorschnitte thun, zu denen sonst Jahrhunderte gehörten: so können, so dürfen andre Nationen sich nicht Jahrhunderte zurücksetzen wollen... . in unsern Zeiten lässt sich nicht mehr Barbar seyn; man wird als Barbar hintergangen, untertreten, verachtet, misshandelt*" (SWS XVII, p.318; quoted in Schneider 1996).<sup>247</sup> Homann and Albrecht (1993, p.79) see in this "*Zusammenhang von Kultur, Nation und Europa*", a fundamentally new conception of Europe, "*eine Perspektive die das gesamte folgende Jahrhundert bestimmen wird*".<sup>248</sup> To achieve their full cultural and intellectual faculties, these nations had, however, to be integrated to a certain degree and that is why Herder favored the unification of Italy, Germany and the Slavs: "*Als entscheidende Zukunftsaufgabe Europas erscheint ihm daher die Durchsetzung der nationalen und kulturellen Selbstbestimmung der europäischen Völker. Ein Prozess, der Deutschland, Italien und die slawischen Völker zu Nationen machen sollte*" (Homann and Albrecht 1993, p.81).

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<sup>244</sup> With Gollwitzer using Tönnies' distinction between "Gesellschaft" and "Gemeinschaft" in a very subtle way.

<sup>245</sup> We prefer to use simply nations, rather than nation-states, as Herder remained highly ambivalent with regards to the necessity of states.

<sup>246</sup> Chabod (1963, p.141) is thus wrong to accuse Herder of having defended the principle of "spiritual autarchy" for nations: "*Schon in ihren Anfängen verriet diese Idee der Nation auf deutschem Boden, wie wir gesehen haben, gefährliche Tendenzen in Richtung auf eine "geistige Autarkie" (so bei Möser, ab und zu auch bei Herder).*" The only case in which such autarchy would be favorable to a nation is, according to Herder, in its young age, when it is still not developed enough to engage in cultural dialogues.

<sup>247</sup> See also Haym (1954[1880], p.544) and Dann (1994, p.15).

<sup>248</sup> For Homann and Albrecht (1993, p.79), the relation between culture, the nation and Europe was "*eine vollständig neue Auffassung Europas*" and "*das Schlüsselprinzip zur Interpretation der europäischen Geschichte*" in Herder's thought.

Moreover, Herder's Europe was to be more than an amalgam of nations.<sup>249</sup> As we have tried to show, Herder also conceived of Europe as a civilization with its own "Allgemeingeist" transcending the individual nations. Herder's genius *coup de force* was thus to reconcile both the unity of European civilization with the diversity of its nations. Europe was to be a "concert"<sup>250</sup> in which each nation had to contribute its own little voice. In the words of Keller: *"Jede Nation hat ihren eigentümlichen, allein ihr gemässen Charakter; jedes Volk hat – wie jeder einzelne Mensch – seinen unveräusserlichen Wert und besitzt seine Stimme im Konzert der Völker"* (Keller 1987, p.237).<sup>251</sup> For Gengembre (1996, p.35), European civilization was thus defined *"comme un principe d'homogénéité qui ne contredit en rien la diversité. Elle se constitue d'une somme de patriotismes,..."* Gengembre is however not completely right as the whole, according to Herder, was to be more than the sum of the parts. Delanty (1995, p.85), although not explicitly referring to Herder, shows quite well how the circle created by the problem of the whole and the part was seemingly squared: *"Europe has solved the age-old problem of the universal versus the particular by consigning the sphere of the particular to the relativism of national cultures while the idea of Europe was designated to be the realm of the universal. Culture was seen to be relative and embodied in national histories, while civilization was universal and transfixed the crucible of Europe. Europeans thus evolved the capacity to hold two kinds of identity: one national and the other European."*

Herder found inspiration for the principle of unity in diversity in Leibniz' monadology (Dobbeck 1959, p.375). Berlin (1976, p.150) defines Leibniz' principle of "concordia discors" as: *"...a single great cosmic force of Nature, embodied in finite, dynamic centers."* In his "Idee zum ersten patriotischen Institut für den Allgemeingeist Deutschlands", Herder explicitly referred to this principle: *"Da Einbeit und Mannichfaltigkeit die Vollkommenheiten sind, die alle daurenden Werke der Natur und ihrer Nachahmerin, der Kunst, bezeichnen:..."* (SWS XVI, p.600). One page later, Herder also used the analogy of the human body: *"...dessen sämtlichen Glieder nur eine gemeinschaftliche Seele bildet"*. Thanks to the concept of "concordia discors", Herder was able to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable,

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<sup>249</sup> In this respect, although Herder always defended himself from using ideal-types, he certainly considered ancient Greece as a model: *"Jetzt die sonderbaren Anlässe ihrer Theilung und Vereinigungen von den frühesten Zeiten her: ihre Abtrennung in Völker, Republiken, Kolonien, und doch der gemeinschaftliche Geist derselben; Gefühl einer Nation, eines Vaterlandes, einer Sprache!"* (SWS V, p.497). On the same issue see also SWS (XIV, pp.117-21).

<sup>250</sup> Not, of course, the diplomatic "concert".

<sup>251</sup> For the same analogy see Pomeau (1991, p.85).

which was of course very useful for such a tormented and paradoxical author. Thus he could combine patriotism and Enlightenment, which he described as the two poles around which everything gravitates: "...*Patriotismus und Aufklärung die beiden Pole..., um welche sich alle Sittencultur der Menschheit bewegt...*" (SWS XIV, p.121). For Rinner (1994, p.57), Herder even seemingly reconciled Romanticism and Enlightenment: "*Zwischen diesen beiden nationalen Wiedergeburten, der aufgeklärten und der romantischen, gab es wohl auch Brücken. Herder hatte dies am genialsten und einflussreichsten vorausgesehen...*"

With a "Europe of nations" based on the principle of "concordia discors", Herder was also convinced of having found a solution to the problem of multiplicity and war that was inherent to the European state-system. For Arcidiacono (2003), there are those authors who think that multiplicity and peace cannot be reconciled and those who think that these notions do not oppose each other. The first category of thinkers tries either to sacrifice one principle to the other (universal monarchy or anarchy), or to limit the harmful consequences of their coexistence (balance of power, international law, federations). Herder is a member of the second category of thinkers, although, as we have seen, he always has to be considered on two levels. On the immediate level, although fundamentally opposed to universal monarchy and the balance of power, he did not exclude international law and peace plans as prophylaxes against the evil of war. In the long run, however, and this is where Herder the idealist comes to the fore, the dynastic state-system was to crumble. The new Europe thus emerging was to be based exclusively on the interests of nations, which would have no reasons any longer to go to war with each other. Multiplicity and peace could hence coexist without any problems. That Herder underestimated the problem of wars driven by "citoyen-soldats" and national passions, with all the abuses they could provoke, seems doubtless. After the French Revolution, better aware of this problem, Herder insisted much more on the amount of "Bildung" the nations had to acquire before they could coexist in such a blissful state. Of federal institutions, however, he never conceived, as politically the nations had to preserve their full autonomy.

As a civilizational unit, as we have tried to show in this paper, Europe was to play an important role for the advancement of the human species towards "Humanität". Herder insisted strongly that "Humanität" should not be confused with "Menschlichkeit": "*Das*

*schöne Wort Menschenliebe ist so trivial worden, dass man meistens die Menschen liebt, um keinen unter den Menschen wirksam zu lieben*" (SWS XVII, p.138).<sup>252</sup> "Humanität", to the contrary, was the telos of mankind: "*Humanität ist der Charakter unsres Geschlechts; er ist uns aber nur in Anlagen angebobren, und muss uns eigentlich angebildet werden. Wir bringen ihn nicht fertig auf die Welt mit; auf der Welt aber soll er das Ziel unsres Bestrebens, die Summe unsrer Uebungen, unser Werth sein,...*" (SWS XVII, p.137; quoted in Bräuer 1995, p.50).<sup>253</sup> Herder's "Humanität" is both a "spirit of nature"<sup>254</sup> and a "law of reason": "*...der Geist, der Menschen an Menschen, Völker an Völker bindet, d. i. das grosse Gesetz der Gerechtigkeit, Billigkeit und Liebe ist Geist der Natur, Regel der Vernunft, offenbare Tendenz aller Menschengesellschaft*" (SWS XX, p.92). "Humanität", in Herder's eyes, was thus not just the unfolding of Reason in time but "*die optimale Ausbildung der menschlichen Fähigkeiten*" (Streisand 1980, p.137)<sup>255</sup> according to the "*principle of differentiation...which designates that which is unique to human beings alone*" (Adler 1994, p.64).

If the nation was the level below Europe, "Humanität" was to be the level above it. Europe could thus act as a mediator between those two levels, or in the words of Gollwitzer (1951, p.115): "*...spiegelt Herders Europabild die besondere Situation des deutschen Geistes zwischen Ost und West. In dieser Lage hat Herders nie zum System verfestigter Europagedanke, beruhend auf der Verbindung von Humanität und Volkstumsbewusstsein, eine eigentümlich deutsche Lösung geboten.*" Caisson (1991, p.21) also sees in Herder the potential for a "*patriotisme qui s'ouvre sur l'universel*" and for Dobbeck (1959, p.375) Herder had developed a concentric circle model ranging from the individual to the nation and from there to mankind: "*...mit dem Gedanken vom Ineinander konzentrischer Kreise, die , in- und miteinander verschränkt, Mensch – Volk – Menschheit bilden. Wie die Menschheit immer nur so weit existent ist, als sie aus Völkern besteht, so gewinnt Volkstum nur so weit Bedeutung, als es im Dienst der Menschheit steht.*" Bräuer (1995, p.44) suggests the same model based on the individual, the nation and the universal: "*Nur die bewusste dialektische Verschränkung individuell-humanistischer, nationaler und*

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<sup>252</sup> See also the following excerpt from a letter to Gerning dated March 1801: "*Der Menschlichkeiten bin ich satt u. müde. Ich habe Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität nicht aber der Menschlichkeiten geschrieben*" (B VIII, p.205).

<sup>253</sup> See also Kamenetsky (1973, p.164) and the following passage: "*...in dem wir eigentlich Menschen noch nicht sind, sondern täglich werden*" (SWS XIII, pp.351-2).

<sup>254</sup> Note again the mingling of nature and idealism.

<sup>255</sup> Reason being certainly not the only human quality for Herder, as emotions and artistic creativity were just as important to him.

*universaler Aspekte vermag eine optimale kulturelle Entwicklung... .*"<sup>256</sup> As we have tried to show in this paper, Europe could play, for Herder, an important, even exemplary role in the mediation between "Volk" and "Humanität". We are thus tempted, at least in the European case, to add this fourth, civilizational, level and to make the model four-dimensional: individual, nation, civilization (Europe) and "Humanität". Having accomplished unity in diversity, Europe could then serve as an example for the rest of the world, which should be organized on the same model and aspire to the same goal: "*auf ein Reich des Geistes, auf die Gesamtglückheit aller Glieder durch ihrer aller eigne Gesinnungen in einer thätigen Gemeinschaft*" (SWS XX, p.90).

Finally, we should not forget that the ultimate objective of all of Herder's thinking always was the aesthetic and cultural blossoming of individual faculties. "Humanität" was, in the end, the free deployment of every individual's intellectual and artistic gifts. Caisson (1991, p.18) is certainly right to observe that: "*Herder est au fond...un individualiste.*" A statement which Herder himself confirmed: "*In gewissem Betracht ist also jede menschliche Vollkommenheit national, säkular und am genauesten betrachtet individuell*" (quoted in Keyser 1953, p.10). Of course, this was not the atomistic individualism (Caisson 1991, p.18) of a Mandeville or a Smith. Herder's individualism was an embedded or "situated" one, as individuals could only fully express their potential in a rich national culture. The same could be said of nations, as they too had to engage in dialogue with other nations, at best, at least initially, in the context of a common civilization, such as Europe. We can thus agree with Gollwitzer (1951, p.106) that Herder was highly impressed by "*das grosse geistesgeschichtliche Ergebnis des Zeitalters*", namely "*Individualität*", a concept, which he did not hesitate to apply to nations and Europe alike.

"*Sprache und Kultur*" were the tools that the individualistic "*aufsteigende bürgerlichen Schichten*", of which Herder was a member, used for their self-identification with the nation (Homann and Albrecht 1993, p.81). "*Künstlerische Entfaltung*" and "*charakteristische ästhetische Selbstverwirklichung*" through the medium of national culture (Bräuer 1995, p.50),

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<sup>256</sup> Bräuer (1995, p.46) indeed drives the argument pretty far, when he argues that "*Der neue europäische Mensch wird sich gerade dadurch auszeichnen müssen, dass er grundsätzlich bikulturell und bilingual sein wird, nationalkulturell und nationalsprachlich gebildet auf der einen Seite, europakulturell und universell orientiert...auf der anderen Seite...*" and even suggests to found, in the name of Herder, a "*Europäische Gesellschaft zur Beförderung der Humanität*"!

was also the way in which, for Herder, individuals progressed on their way to "Humanität". That the means to attain "Humanität" were the same as those of bourgeois self-assertion is indeed ironic, and would please all those seeing in Herder foremost a bourgeois author. To guarantee this cultural diversity, political unification of Europe, as for all of German idealism, Kant included, remained a non-sense to Herder: "*L'Europe doit être politiquement telle qu'elle puisse témoigner de la vérité méta-politique ou, au sens large du mot: culturelle, de l'existence, et cela interdit, selon l'idéalisme allemand, son unification proprement politique*" (Bourgeois 2000, p.233). For a return to universalism with less regard to cultural content, one would indeed have to wait for Marxism.

With the Congress of Vienna, the epistemological turmoil around the notion of Europe finally calmed down. The grand European schemes, both the one of a unique European nation, pursued by the French revolutionaries and later by Napoleon, and the Romantic one of a return to medieval hierarchy, had faded away. Russia, not Germany, was the new savior of Europe and claims to a European regeneration through German philosophy thus lost their attractiveness too. What remained, was a return to more traditional dynastic politics based on the principles of balance of power, or in the words of Thompson (1994, p.55): "*Metternich and the representatives of the old European states were far too Burkean in their politics to engage in another round of system-mongering. They were concerned above all to establish a balance of power between the restored and reorganized states of Europe.*"

Everything was, however, not that simple, as it is by now largely agreed that the Congress of Vienna was not an unequivocal restoration of eighteenth-century politics. New forces, above all political and economic liberalism, as well as a mounting, at the time still highly progressive, nationalism,<sup>257</sup> were acting underground to undermine the Gentzian-Metternichean system. Fontana (2002, p.128) can thus talk of a "point of no return" in European politics after 1815 and Durchhardt (1992, p.130) of a "Sozialgemeinschaft der europäischen Völker" sapping the restored Europe of monarchs from the roots. Old Europe had thus only found a temporary reprieve as in the first half of the nineteenth century new nationalist and liberal intellectuals, such as Constant and

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<sup>257</sup> Nationalism and liberalism became conservative forces only after their defeats of 1848, as they were progressively co-opted by the new conservative consensus based on the nation-state, built by such statesmen as Cavour and Bismarck.



Mazzini, were taking up Herder's paradigm of a "Europe of nations" based on the principle of unity in diversity. Let us thus leave the last word to Constant, in a passage from "De l'esprit de conquête et de l'usurpation dans leurs rapports avec la civilisation européenne" that illustrates well how much the seeds planted by Herder in the second half of the eighteenth century were blossoming a generation later: "*La variété, c'est de l'organisation; l'uniformité, c'est du mécanisme. La variété, c'est la vie; l'uniformité c'est la mort*" (quoted in Hersant and Durand-Bogaert 2000, p.931).

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Eggel investigates Herder's idea of Europe by contrasting it with eighteenth's century dominant discourses on Europe based on balance of power theory and French cosmopolitanism. In doing so, Eggel shows to what extent Herder was ready to consider Europe, rather than other collective entities such as the nation or the German Reich, as an entity mediating between German Classicism's extremes of atomistic individuality and all-encompassing *Humanität*. Special emphasis is put on Herder's perception of Europe's geographical (question of frontiers, climate, subzones), civilizational (historical roots, issues of identity and relation to the rest of the world) and political (organization of the European state-system) dimensions. Herder's *Europabild* is set in the context of the geopolitical and cultural background of the German territories, as well as the wider paradigmatic uncertainties of the European *Sattelzeit*. The author convincingly argues that Herder devised an original discourse about Europe by reconciling the unity of European civilization with the cultural and political diversity of its nations. Such a "Europe of nations", based on Leibniz' principle of *concordia discors*, was later to inspire Mazzini and Constant. Through this brilliant *coup de force* Herder hoped to have found a solution to the problem of multiplicity and war inherent to the European state-system and contributed a compelling alternative in the debates over the re-definition of Europe after the French Revolution.

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