

Globalizing Europe

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In 2010, the historian Denis Crouzet discovered a remarkable unpublished manuscript inside a dusty suitcase in the storeroom of a sixth-floor fin-de-siècle Paris apartment. Written in 1950, under the impression of the horrors of the Second World War, by two of France's greatest historians of the twentieth century, Lucien Febvre, patron of the Annales school and professor at the Collège de France, and his junior colleague François Crouzet, a scholar of economic history at the Sorbonne (and Denis Crouzet's father), it challenged the established narratives of national (and European) history. Entitled *Origines internationales d'une civilisation. Éléments d'une histoire de France*, the book offered a breathtaking survey of centuries of global influences on the Hexagon.¹

First, its authors looked at the country's inhabitants. Dismissing the idea of a “pure race,” they argued that the French had always been a mixture of peoples, including Turks, Arabs, and Africans. The same was true for France's flora and fauna. The trees considered to be the most French, they explained, came from Asia: the plane tree was imported in the sixteenth century, the chestnut arrived in the early seventeenth, the cedar had not put down roots in the country before the end of the eighteenth, and so on. Next, they turned to cuisine, reminding their readers that some of the most classic French foods originated abroad: oranges, mandarins, and lemons from the Far East; tomatoes and potatoes from America; coffee from Africa. Not even the tobacco in Gauloises was French. In a sweeping tour de force, they demonstrated that the history

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¹ Lucien Febvre and François Crouzet, *Nous sommes des sang-mêlés. Manuel d'histoire de la civilisation française*, ed. Denis Crouzet and Elisabeth Crouzet (Paris, 2012); for the context and information on the book's background, see Denis Crouzet and Élisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, “Avant-propos,” and “Postface,” respectively pp. 7-15 and 295-392.

of France was one of constant “borrowings” from all parts of the world, with these adoptions, adaptations, and appropriations making the French “heirs of diverse pasts.”²

The book had been commissioned by the newly created, Paris-based United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to overcome the narrow narratives of national and European history. By providing an example of a more open history, showing how much every country and continent owed to the outside world, some functionaries in the organization wished to encourage “international understanding.”³ Their hope that this example would encourage historians of other countries to engage in similar work remained unfulfilled. The publication was blocked by those in the organization who perceived it as an assault on the idea of the nation and Europe’s global supremacy. Rejected by UNESCO, the manuscript was abandoned by its authors.⁴ It was only published in 2012, following its rediscovery in Crouzet’s suitcase.

Times have changed. But even today, as they continue to write local-, nation-, and continent-centered histories, some scholars of the European past still feel uneasy about attempts to open up the continent’s history. This became most evident in 2017, when a group of historians around Patrick Boucheron, following in the footsteps of Febvre and Crouzet, produced an eight-hundred-page *Histoire mondiale de la France*, seeking to understand French

² Ibid., 289.

³ Crouzet and Crouzet-Pavan, “Postface,” 335. On the UNESCO project, see Paul Betts, “Humanity’s New Heritage: Unesco and the Rewriting of World History,” *Past and Present* 228, no. 1 (2015): 249-85; and Gabriela Goldin Marcovich and Rahul Markovits, “Editing the first Journal of World History: Global History from Inside the Kitchen,” *Journal of Global History* 14, no. 2 (2019): 157-178.

⁴ An abridged version was published in German in 1953, see Lucien Febvre and François Crouzet, “Der internationale Ursprung einer Kultur: Grundgedanken zu einer Geschichte Frankreichs,” *Internationales Jahrbuch für Geschichtsunterricht* 2 (1953): 5-31. Unpublished thirty-two-page French and English copies of this abridged version are stored in the UNESCO archives, see Lucien Febvre and François Crouzet, “Origines internationales d’une civilisation. Eléments d’une histoire de France,” December 18, 1951; and Febvre and Crouzet, “International Origins of a National Culture: Experimental Materials for a History of France,” December 28, 1951, UNESCO Archives, UNESCO/ED/TB/10; WS/031.101 REV.

history as a dimension of global history.⁵ In the ensuing controversy, Pierre Nora rejected the work as “the end of common truth,” while Alain Finkielkraut declared its authors the “gravediggers of the great French heritage.”⁶ Denouncing it as an attempt to destroy France’s “national narrative” (*roman national*), the country’s conservative enfant terrible Éric Zemmour went as far as to speak of “the war of history.”⁷ A bestseller was born. “After several decades of somnolence, academic history is a hit,” commented Robert Darnton in the *New York Review of Books*.⁸ A similar volume, *Storia mondiale dell’Italia*, was published shortly after in Italy.⁹ Dutch, Spanish, Sicilian, and Flemish equivalents followed within a year, German and Portuguese versions a bit later.¹⁰ And yet, such works are still the exception.¹¹

Although European history is one of the vastest fields of historical scholarship, encompassing research on local, national, regional, and continental spaces, the continent’s global entanglements have long remained marginalized.¹² This is particularly true for national

⁵ Patrick Boucheron, ed., *Histoire mondiale de la France* (Paris, 2017). A more recent and equally important book on the subject is the more focused volume by Quentin Deluermoz, ed., *D’ici et d’ailleurs. Histoires globales de la France contemporaine* (Paris, 2021).

⁶ Pierre Nora, “Histoire mondiale de la France,” *L’Obs* 2734, March 30, 2017; Alain Finkielkraut, “La charge d’Alain Finkielkraut contre ‘les fossoyeurs du grand héritage français’,” *Le Figaro*, January 26, 2017.

⁷ Éric Zemmour, “Dissoudre la France en 800 pages,” *Le Figaro*, January 19, 2017. More serious conceptual criticism was voiced by Sanjay Subrahmanyam in an interview with Gilles Wullus and Pouria Amirshahi, “Sanjay Subrahmanyam: ‘L’histoire nationale tyrannise les historiens’,” *Politis*, July 25, 2018; and in another interview with Charles Jaigu, “Colère d’un historien contre Mme Taubira,” *Le Figaro*, September 19, 2019.

⁸ Robert Darnton, “A Buffet of French History,” *New York Review of Books* 64, no 8 (May 11, 2017).

⁹ Andrea Giardina, ed., *Storia mondiale dell’Italia* (Rome, 2017), which patriotically celebrates a global Italy.

¹⁰ Lex Heerma van Voss et al., eds., *Wereldgeschiedenis van Nederland* (Amsterdam, 2018); Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, ed., *Historia Mundial de España* (Madrid, 2018); Giuseppe Barone, ed., *Storia mondiale della Sicilia* (Rome, 2018); Marnix Beyen et al., eds., *Wereldgeschiedenis van Vlaanderen* (Antwerp, 2018); Andreas Fahrmeir, ed., *Deutschland: Globalgeschichte einer Nation* (Munich, 2020); and Carlos Fiolhais, José Eduardo Franco, and José Pedro Paiva, eds., *História Global de Portugal* (Lisbon, 2020). A pioneering project that should also be mentioned here is Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Das Kaiserreich Transnational: Deutschland in der Welt, 1871-1914* (Göttingen, 2004).

¹¹ Similar attempts have not been made for other countries, notably Great Britain, Austria, Russia, and Poland, though noteworthy works in this respect are Martin Aust, ed., *Globalisierung Imperial und Sozialistisch: Russland und die Sowjetunion in der Globalgeschichte, 1851-1991* (Frankfurt, 2013); and Niall Whelehan, ed., *Transnational Perspectives on Modern Irish History* (New York, 2015). Tehila Sasson, et al. “Britain and the World: A New Field?” *Journal of British Studies* 57 (2018): 677-708, offers thoughts on the global history of Great Britain.

¹² Dominic Sachsenmaier, “Recent Trends in European History: The World beyond Europe and Alternative Historical Spaces,” *Journal of Modern European History* 7, no. 1 (2009): 5-25, was one

history, so closely connected with the birth of history as an academic discipline, which remains the dominant approach to European history. The classic surveys in the field, from Hans-Ulrich Wehler's history of Germany to Christophe Charle's history of France, present their nations as almost hermetically closed spaces.¹³ Popular national histories, such as Robert Tombs's *The English and their History* (2014), which consciously aim to uphold the notion of historically closed national communities in the public imagination, continue to top our bestseller lists.¹⁴

European continental history, which as a genre of historical writing originated in the early modern period, has traditionally been no more open.¹⁵ Classical histories of Europe often presented self-asserting grand narratives of Western civilization reaching back to antiquity.¹⁶ In the twentieth century, particularly in the aftermath of the world wars, scholars eager to overcome nationalism made copious efforts to create European histories that would reconcile Europeans.¹⁷ Towards the end of the century, as European integration accelerated, an

of the first to discuss this problem. Other important interventions are Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria, "Geteilte Geschichten: Europa in einer postkolonialen Welt," in *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus: Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. Sebastian Conrad, Shalini Randeria, and Regina Römhild (Frankfurt, 2002), 31-70; Andreas Eckert, "Europäische Zeitgeschichte und der Rest der Welt," *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 1 (2004): 416-21; and Christof Dejung and Martin Lenwiler, introduction to *Ränder der Moderne: Neue Perspektiven auf die Europäische Geschichte (1800-1930)*, ed. Christof Dejung and Martin Lenwiler (Cologne, 2016), 7-35.

¹³ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 5 vols. (Munich, 1987-2008); and Christophe Charle, *Histoire sociale de la France au XIX^e siècle* (Paris, 1991).

¹⁴ Robert Tombs, *The English and their History* (London, 2014), which is reminiscent of Germany's far-right leader Alexander Gauland, *Die Deutschen und ihre Geschichte: Eine nationale Erzählung* (Berlin, 2009); and Pierre Nora, *Présent, nation, mémoire* (Paris, 2011) which follows in the footsteps of Fernand Braudel's notorious *L'identité de la France*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1986) and its promotion of the idea of *la France profonde*.

¹⁵ Richard J. Evans, "What is European History? Reflections of a Cosmopolitan Islander," *European History Quarterly* 40 (2010): 593-605, provides an excellent brief overview of European history writing in Europe. William Robertson, *The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*, 3 vols. (London, 1769) was arguably the first European history, surpassing patchier earlier works, such as Pier Francesco Giambullari, *Historia dell'Europa* (Venice, 1566).

¹⁶ Leopold Ranke, *Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1514* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1824); Gabriel Monod and Charles Bémont, *Histoire de l'Europe et en particulier de la France de 395 à 1270* (Paris, 1891); and John Emerich Edward, First Baron Acton, *Lectures on Modern History* (London, 1906), are examples of European histories which are more reflective. At the turn of the century, Lord Acton, a cosmopolitan who distrusted nationalism, made a powerful call for a common European history in his outline of the *Cambridge Modern History*; see Roland Hill, *Lord Acton* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 394.

¹⁷ Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de l'Europe. Des invasions au XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1936), written in 1917/1918; G. P. Gooch, *History of Modern Europe 1878-1919* (London, 1923); A. J. Grant and H. W. V. Temperley, *Europe in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1927); and Arnold Toynbee, *A Study*

unprecedented number of books (and new journals) appeared which aimed to Europeanize the continent's national histories.¹⁸ These new histories highlighted similarities and differences using comparative approaches, as well as transnational connections.¹⁹ And yet, despite these efforts, European history writing remained fixated on the nation-state. Equally problematic, some European histories have overcome the national only to revive, consciously or unconsciously, older civilizational narratives of the “West,” the “Occident,” or even “Christendom.” Most strikingly, general works of European history are often remarkably inward-looking.

of History, 12 vols. (Oxford, 1934-1961), were written under the impression of the First World War. Volumes that appeared following the Second World War included Lucien Febvre, *L'Europe. Genèse d'une civilisation* (Paris, 1944); John Bowle, *The Unity of European History: A Political and Cultural Survey* (London, 1948); Oskar Halecki, *The Limits and Divisions of European History* (London, 1950), Albert Murgeler, *Geschichte Europas* (Freiburg, 1953); Christopher Dawson, *Understanding Europe* (London, 1956), Denis Hay, *Europe: The Emergence of an Idea* (Edinburgh, 1957); Carlo Curcio, *Europa: Storia di un' Idea* (Florence, 1958); and Geoffrey Barraclough, *European Unity in Thought and Practice* (Oxford, 1963).

¹⁸ Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (Oxford, 1996); John Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York, 1996); Asa Briggs and Patricia Clavin, *Modern Europe 1789-1989* (London, 1997); Hagen Schulze, *Phoenix Europa: Die Moderne, von 1740 bis heute* (Berlin, 1998); Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London, 1998); Wolfgang Schmale, *Geschichte Europas* (Stuttgart, 2001); Richard Vinen, *A History in Fragments: Europe in the Twentieth Century* (London 2002); Harold James, *Europe Reborn: A History, 1914-2000* (New York, 2003); Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York, 2005); Konrad Jarausch, *Out of the Ashes: A New History of Europe in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); and Pío Moa, *Europa: Una introducción a su historia* (Madrid, 2016), are among the most impressive accounts of modern European history produced since the 1990s. Other important examples of this wave were Jacques Le Goff's series “The Making of Europe” (published simultaneously in five languages by publishers in Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain) which includes volumes by Le Goff, Peter Burke, Umberto Eco, Jack Goody, and Charles Tilly, and David Cannadine's “Penguin History of Europe” series, which includes volumes by Chris Wickham, William Chester Jordan, Tim Blanning, Richard J. Evans, and Ian Kershaw. The most important European history journals created during this momentum were the *European History Quarterly* (1984), *Contemporary European History* (1990), the *European Review of History (Review of European History)* (1994), *Jahrbuch für Europäische Geschichte* (2000), and the *Journal of Modern European History* (2003).

¹⁹ Michael Geyer, “Historical Fictions of Autonomy and the Europeanization of National History,” *Central European History* 22 (1989): 316-42, provides a brilliant overview of the Europeanization of European history. Johannes Paulmann, “Internationaler Vergleich und interkultureller Transfer: Zwei Forschungsansätze zur europäischen Geschichte des 18. bis 20. Jahrhunderts,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 267, no. 3 (1998): 649-85, also discusses some practical implications. The contributions to Deborah Cohen and Maura O’Connor, eds., *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (New York, 2004); Konrad H. Jarausch and Thomas Lindenberger, eds., *Conflicted Memories: Europeanizing Contemporary Histories* (New York, 2007); Martin Conway and Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., *Europeanization in the Twentieth Century: Historical Approaches* (New York, 2010), provide more detailed discussions of the Europeanization of the continent’s history. For a programmatic article advocating this historiographical shift from the perspective of German history, see Ute Frevert and David Blackbourn, “Europeanizing German History,” *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 36 (2005): 9-31.

None of the major surveys of modern European continental history on our course reading lists—including the brilliant magna opera by Mark Mazower, Tony Judt, and Ian Kershaw—consider global entanglements seriously.²⁰ Most of these works tend to treat the continent as a closed historical space, almost completely ignoring exchanges of goods, people, and ideas with the outside world. Even Eric Hobsbawm’s classic history of the modern age concentrates on Europe and America while showing little interest in these regions’ (non-imperial) global connections.²¹ If these works consider the world at all, they mainly focus on Europe’s global impact, rather than global influences on Europe itself.

The rise of global history over recent years has affected almost every field of historical study. Historians of Europe, however, have seldom played a central role in these debates. The major works in the field have been written by historians of the non-European world—Jürgen Osterhammel, a scholar of modern China, Christopher Bayly, a scholar of modern India, and so on.²² Some see global history by definition as non-European history. Indeed, certain advocates of the global turn, determined to decenter world history from Europe, have been quite critical of the intellectual dominance of the field of European history. At the same time, some Europeanists have reacted defensively to the global turn. Anxious about the marginalization of their field, both intellectually and professionally (for example in departmental battles over new faculty hires), they consider calls to provincialize Europe a threat.

Methods of Writing the Global History of Europe

²⁰ Mazower, *Dark Continent*; Judt, *Postwar*; Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back: Europe, 1914-1949* (London, 2015); and Kershaw, *Roller-Coaster: Europe, 1950-2017* (London, 2018). The same holds true for most of the great surveys listed in note 16 above.

²¹ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1948* (London, 1962); Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875* (London, 1975); Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (London, 1987); and Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes, 1914-1991* (London, 1994).

²² C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914* (London, 2004); Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 2009).

Yet European and global history do not, of course, contradict each other. Global history should not only be defined by the geographical location of its subject. Its aim should not be to examine far-flung regions, as distant from Europe as possible. Instead, global history provides a conceptual approach, namely the study of global interrelations as well as parallel and divergent developments and transformations in different parts of the world. For us Europeanists, the global turn is not only a challenge but also a huge opportunity—an opportunity to open up modern European history, to look at modern Europe as part of a globalizing world, to globalize modern European history. Indeed, one of the most significant developments in our field at the moment is the attempt to interweave European and world history. This will ultimately help us to look at European history from entirely new angles—and to redefine the field.

In concrete terms, global history opens various new avenues of research for scholars of European (urban, local, national, regional, and continental) history. First, it allows us to see similarities and differences (as well as convergences and divergences over time) through comparison between historical phenomena in different parts of the world, and to contextualize developments in Europe globally. This also means that we need to rethink assumptions about European uniqueness.²³ Where, in the past, historians of Europe have tended to use global comparisons selectively to underline the continent's alleged historical singularity (and indeed superiority), we now need to pay attention to both differences *and* similarities.²⁴ Second, global

²³ Some pioneering historians have compared, for example, labor service in Germany and America, postwar memory cultures in Japan and Germany, or revolutionary activism in Russia and China, see Sebastian Conrad, *Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Nation: Geschichtsschreibung in Westdeutschland und Japan, 1945-1960* (Göttingen, 1999); Kiran Klaus Patel, *Soldiers of Labor: Labor Service in Nazi Germany and New Deal America, 1933-1945* (Cambridge, 2005); and S. A. Smith, *Revolution and the People in Russia and China: A Comparative History* (Cambridge, 2008).

²⁴ Jack Goody, *The East in the West* (Cambridge, 1996); Goody, *The Theft of History* (Cambridge, 2007); and Goody, *Renaissances: The One or the Many?* (Cambridge, 2010), offer an insightful critique of Eurocentric exceptionalism. The exceptionalist literature, depicting, based on selective comparison, the uniqueness of European historical developments, is vast, and includes E. L. Jones, *The European Miracle: Environments, Economies, and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia* (Cambridge, 1981); Henri Mendras, *L'Europe des Européens. Sociologie de L'Europe occidentale* (Paris, 1997), which focuses on western Europe; Michael Mitterauer, *Warum Europa? Mittelalterliche Grundlagen eines Sonderwegs* (Munich, 2004); and, most recently, Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (London, 2011). Eurocentric exceptionalism, based on selective comparisons, is also widespread in the social sciences, going back to its founders; classical examples

history allows us to explore Europe's direct and indirect connections with the wider world. This also means that we need to question traditional historical narratives, which have almost exclusively focused on a one-way diffusion from a European center to a non-European periphery (Europeanization, Westernization, and, more universally, modernization), an approach which all too often assumes European superiority and reduces the non-European regions of the world to mere imitators.²⁵ The continent has always been not only an engine but also a product of global transformations.

This essay—and the contributions to this forum—will discuss how European history can be integrated into global history. It will examine the ways in which historians of Europe have responded to the “global turn,” providing a broad historiographical overview. It will also demonstrate that individual scholars have shown an increasing interest in Europe’s entanglements with the wider world. Although their studies remain fragmented (and have not yet fully entered the historiographical canon), taken together they will inevitably reshape our understanding of European history.

Historiographies of Global Europe

In terms of physical borders, it is practically impossible to draw clear lines between Europe and the outside world. The continent’s natural boundaries are indistinct, and in all cases highly permeable. As early as 1949, Fernand Braudel described the Mediterranean as a space of

are, culturally, the “Protestant ethic” of Max Weber, “Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus,” *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 20, no. 1 (1904): 1-54; and 21, no. 1 (1905): 1-110; and, economically, the “Asiatic mode of production” of Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie* (Berlin, 1859), vi, and his later works, including *Das Kapital*; and, politically, following on from Montesquieu and Marx, the “Oriental despotism” of Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957).

²⁵ James M. Blaut, *The Colonizer’s Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History* (New York, 1993), 1-49, offers a compelling critique of Eurocentric diffusionism. The diffusionist literature, depicting a triumphant Europeanization (Westernization) of the world, is also vast and includes Frank C. Darling, *The Westernization of Asia: A Comparative Political Analysis* (Boston, Mass., 1979); Theodore H. von Laue, *World Revolution of Westernization: The Twentieth Century in Global Perspective* (New York, 1987); and, to some extent, Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How the Planet is Both Falling Apart and Coming Together - and What This Means for Democracy* (New York, 1995).

exchange, not a strict continental barrier, noting, tongue in cheek, that “from the Black Sea to the Straits of Gibraltar, the Mediterranean’s northern waters wash the shores of Europe. Here again, if he wants to establish boundaries, the historian will have more hesitation than the geographer.”²⁶ Scholars of Atlantic history and, to a lesser extent, historians of Europe’s northern shores have explored similar connections.²⁷ Their studies have shown that these oceans can hardly be seen as boundaries, but instead constitute spaces in which all seabords form integral parts. Even scholars of Europe’s eastern and southeastern borderlands have pointed to the close-knit routes of exchange across borders.²⁸ In terms of climate history, too, as Sam White has shown, it is virtually impossible to divide the Balkans from Asia Minor.²⁹ Indeed, the division between Europe and Asia seems particularly arbitrary; topographically, Europe is “a western peninsula of Asia,” as Alexander von Humboldt once observed.³⁰

The physical, geographic concept of Europe has thus changed throughout history. There have been age-old controversies over whether Russia is part of the continent or not; yet most now consider the Ural mountains as the border between Asia and Europe, following the eighteenth-century Swedish cartographer Philipp Johann von Strahlenberg.³¹ Still, Leopold von

²⁶ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* [1949], trans Siân Reynolds, , 2 vols. (1972-1973; repr. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995-1996), vol. 1, p. 188.

²⁷ Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (London, 2000); Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); and the classic C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York, 1938), are key works on Atlantic history. On Europe’s northern oceanic history, see Jørgen Ole Bærenholdt, *Coping with Distances: Producing Nordic Atlantic Societies* (Oxford, 2007); John McCannon, *A History of the Arctic: Nature, Exploration and Exploitation* (London, 2012); and the contributions to Michael Bravo and Sverker Sörlin, eds., *A Cultural History of Nordic Scientific Practices* (Canton, Mass., 2002).

²⁸ Alfred J. Rieber, *The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: From the Rise of Early Modern Empires to the End of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

²⁹ Sam White, *The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and, more generally, Geoffrey Parker, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

³⁰ Alexander von Humboldt, *Kosmos: Entwurf einer physischen Weltbeschreibung*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 1847), 150.

³¹ Philipp Johann von Strahlenberg, *Das Nord- und Ostliche Theil von Europa und Asia* (Stockholm, 1730).

Ranke famously claimed that “New York and Lima” were closer to “us” than “Kiev and Smolensk.”³² The German historian Karl Krüger in the 1950s argued that North Africa and the Middle East were part of a “greater Europe,” united by the Mediterranean as a Hellenistic-European cultural space.³³ The British scholar Oscar Halecki, in contrast, claimed that the Ottoman Empire was not part of Europe because of its Islamic-majority population, whereas Russia, with its Christian majority, had been part of Europe up until the Bolshevik Revolution.³⁴ Acknowledging the changing conceptions of the continent’s borders, Norman Davies spoke about a “tidal Europe.”³⁵ A. J. P. Taylor concluded that “European history is whatever the historian wants it to be.”³⁶

Too difficult to demarcate physically, Europe was often defined abstractly, as a sociocultural space.³⁷ “Europe,” Peter Burke observed, “is not so much a place as an idea.”³⁸ This is not the place to discuss the different traits that have been ascribed to this space, though it is noteworthy that Europe has routinely been defined in relation to an exterior Other, often the “Orient,” usually portrayed as inferior.³⁹ (Outside Europe, particularly in the colonial and

³² Leopold Ranke, *Geschichte der Romanischen und Germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1535* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1824), xxxix.

³³ Karl Krüger, *Weltpolitische Länderkunde* (Berlin, 1953), 119-21.

³⁴ Halecki, *The Limits and Divisions of European History*.

³⁵ Davies, *Europe*, 9.

³⁶ A. J. P. Taylor, contribution to “What is European History?” *History Today* 36, no. 1 (1986): 46-50, here p. 46.

³⁷ On (physical and sociocultural) concepts of Europe, see the contributions to Kevin Wilson and Jan van der Dussen, eds., *The History of the Idea of Europe* (London, 1993); Bo Stråth, ed., *Europe and the Other and Europe as the Other* (New York, 2000); Anthony Pagden, ed., *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (Cambridge, 2002); and Hans-Åke Persson and Bo Stråth, eds., *Reflections on Europe: Defining a Political Order in Time and Space* (New York, 2007). Susan Rößner, *Die Geschichte Europas schreiben: Europäische Historiker und ihr Europabild im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt, 2009), discusses ideas of Europe among European historians. Concise overviews are Jan Nederveen Pieterse, “Fictions of Europe,” *Race and Class* 32, no. 3 (1991): 1-10; Gerald Stourzh, “Europa, aber wo liegt es?” in *Annäherungen an eine europäische Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. Gerald Stourzh (Vienna, 2002), ix-xx; and Paul Stock, “Towards a Language of ‘Europe’: History, Rhetoric, Community,” *European Legacy* 22, no. 6 (2017): 647-666. The chapters in Michael Wintle, ed., *Imagining Europe: Europe and European Civilisation as seen from its Margins and by the Rest of the World, in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Brussels, 2008), provide a view from the outside.

³⁸ Peter Burke, “Did Europe Exist Before 1700?” *History of European Ideas* 1 (1980): 21-29, here p. 21.

³⁹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978); and, tracing this image back to antiquity, Hans-Joachim Gehrke, “Gegenbild und Selbstbild: Das europäische Iran-Bild zwischen Griechen und

postcolonial world, images of Europe could be quite different, of course). In the end, sociocultural notions of Europe have been just as contested as physical ones. “Numerous attempts to define the cultural or social peculiarities of Europe suffer from the juxtaposition of such phantoms and from the untested claim that salient European virtues are absent in other parts of the world,” Osterhammel observed: “In the worst case, the clichés about Europe itself are no less crude than those about Indian or Chinese society.”⁴⁰ *Homo europaeus* never existed.⁴¹ And in any case, however we define Europe, there are always links transcending its borders, influencing its local, national, regional, and continental spaces.

From the perspective of environmental history, flora and fauna from far-flung continents have always impacted Europe’s natural life. These influences could also be directly connected to Europe’s imperial enterprise.⁴² This became most obvious in places like London’s Kew Gardens, a global microcosm of nature and empire, examined in Richard Drayton’s *Nature’s Government* (2000).⁴³ Germs, too, have never known borders.⁴⁴ The Asiatic cholera came to Europe from Bengal through trade after the British conquest of North India. Later outbreaks, studied in Richard J. Evans’s work on the Hamburg cholera epidemic, spread from India via Persia and Russia to western Europe.⁴⁵ “Gentlemen, I forget that I am in Europe,” Robert Koch remarked to his colleagues at the time, expressing not only a sentiment of European civilizational superiority but also a sense of global interconnectedness.⁴⁶ The same is true for

Mullahs,” in *Gegenwelten zu den Kulturen Griechenlands und Roms in der Antike*, ed. Tonio Hölscher (Munich, 2000), 85-109.

⁴⁰ Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt*, 1058.

⁴¹ Kiran Klaus Patel, “The Making of *Homo Europaeus*: Problems, Approaches and Perspectives,” *Comparativ* 25 (2015): 15-31; and the contributions to Lorraine Bluche, Veronika Lipphardt, and Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., *Der Europäer, ein Konstrukt: Wissenbestände Diskurse, Praktiken* (Göttingen, 2009).

⁴² Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, Conn., 1972); and, conversely, Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe 900-1900* (Cambridge, 1986), are classics.

⁴³ Richard Drayton, *Nature’s Government: Science, Imperial Britain and the “Improvement” of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

⁴⁴ William H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (Oxford, 1977).

⁴⁵ Richard J. Evans, *Death in Hamburg: Society and Politics in the Cholera Years 1830-1910* (Oxford, 1987).

⁴⁶ Cited in *ibid.*, 312-313.

Europe's ecological crises, as, for example, experienced in 1815, the "year without a summer," when the eruption of the Mount Tambora volcano near Java blocked solar energy and cooled the climate globally, leading to crop failures and Europe's last subsistence crisis.⁴⁷

Human mobility, too, has changed Europe's population over the centuries. A fast-growing literature on migrations and minorities in European history now traces these movements, ranging from African settlers in the Renaissance to twentieth-century postcolonial and labor migrants from Asia, Africa, and the Americas.⁴⁸ There is now a substantial body of literature on the history of Afropeans, for example.⁴⁹ Empire, of course, is an important part of this history. At the same time, Europeans, too, spread across the globe, building vast settler communities.⁵⁰ Global family and community networks connected these European migrant communities to their home communities in Europe, just as non-European migrant groups in Europe maintained links beyond the continent's borders. Heightened mobility was accompanied by the creation of new mechanisms to bureaucratically control movement across borders, whether national or, more recently, European, with passports, identity cards, and visas. Ultimately, encounters with "foreigners" both overseas and at home would shape the ways in

⁴⁷ Gillen D'Arcy Wood, *Tambora: The Eruption that changed the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

⁴⁸ Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, "The Mobility Transition Revisited, 1500-1900: What the Case of Europe Can Offer to Global History," *Journal of Global History* 4, no. 3 (2009): 347-77, provides an overview. P. C. Emmer and M. Mörner, eds., *European Expansion and Migration: Essays on the Intercontinental Migration from Africa, Asia, and Europe* (New York, 1992); and Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (London, 1993), are more detailed accounts.

⁴⁹ Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London, 1984); Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015); David Olusoga, *Black and British: A Forgotten History* (London, 2016); Miranda Kaufmann, *Black Tudors* (London, 2017); Tiffany N. Florvil, *Mobilizing Black Germany: Afro-German Women and the Making of a Transnational Movement* (Urbana, IL, 2020); Olivette Otele, *African European: An Untold History* (London, 2020); and Johny Pitts, *Afropean: Notes from Black Europe* (London, 2020), as well as the contributions in Ulrich van der Heyden, ed., *Unbekannte Biographien: Afrikaner im deutschsprachigen Europa* (Berlin, 2008); and Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst and Reinhard Klein-Arendt, eds., *AfrikanerInnen in Deutschland und schwarze Deutsche* (Münster, 2004).

⁵⁰ James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford, 2009); and the contributions in Dirk Hoerder and Leslie Page Moch, eds., *European Migrants: Global and Local Perspectives* (Boston, 1996), provide insights from different perspectives.

which Europeans saw themselves and mapped the world's populations. A large body of research now stresses the importance of colonial environments in the history of modern racial and racist theories, theories which, in turn, directly influenced human interactions in Europe and the wider world.⁵¹ To claim, as one historian has done, that racism did not shape thought in an imperial hub like mid-Victorian Britain is bizarre.⁵² As global mobility accelerated, Europeans increasingly tried to segregate humans inside and outside Europe according to their racial categorizations.

Historians have also long pointed out that modern Europe's economy can only be fully understood in its global context. One of the most prominent examples is the Industrial Revolution, which, as Hobsbawm argued in *Industry and Empire* as early as 1968, was directly connected to European imperialism.⁵³ Similarly, Europe's major economic crises, from the crash of tulipmania to the Great Depression, originated beyond its borders.⁵⁴ Modern Europe has always been integrated into the global economy, shaped by the movement of raw materials, goods, and labor—albeit unevenly and to different degrees at different times. Today, many decades after the publication of Eric Williams's pioneering *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), historians are still debating the connection between the global slave trade and the rise of European capitalism.⁵⁵ The global commodity trade, from cotton, silver, and gold to sugar, salt,

⁵¹ George M. Frederick, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), which provides a concise overview; and George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York, 1978), which remains one of the best intellectual histories of racism.

⁵² Peter Mandler, "Race and Nation in Mid-Victorian Thought," in *History, Religion, and Culture: British Intellectual History 1750-1950*, ed. Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore, and Brian Young (Cambridge, 2000), 224-44, makes this odd claim.

⁵³ Eric Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: From 1750 to the Present Day* (London, 1968); and, for a (European and global) comparative perspective, Robert C. Allen, *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective* (Cambridge, 2009). Paul Bairoch, *Economics and World History: Myths and Paradoxes* (New York, 1993), part II, argues that imperialism was not crucial for European industrialization.

⁵⁴ Anne Goldgar, *Tulipmania: Money, Honor, and Knowledge in the Dutch Golden Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); and Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

⁵⁵ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944). Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nişancıoğlu, *How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism* (London, 2015), offers a more general non-Eurocentric history of the rise of capitalism. Patrick Karl O'Brien, "The Deconstruction of Myths and Reconstruction of Metanarratives in Global

and oil, had a dramatic impact on Europe, as shown by a rapidly growing body of literature.⁵⁶

A particularly fascinating study on the subject is Sarah Stein's work on African ostrich feathers, which decorated the hats of Europe's bourgeois ladies in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁵⁷ Cacao, as William Clarence-Smith, Marcy Norton, and others have shown, had been shipped since the seventeenth century from the Americas to Europe, where consumers quickly developed a taste for it.⁵⁸ The same holds true for tobacco, coffee, and tea, all of which transformed European consumption cultures. Worldwide commodity trade shaped fashion, interior design, and culinary taste even in the remotest corners of the continent.

Modern Europe's global political relations have been comparatively well studied, although most of the literature on the subject deals with imperialism. Older generations of historians were often quick to explain Europe's global imperial hegemony as a result of the continent's inherent qualities, a "European miracle," as Eric Jones put it.⁵⁹ The story is not as simple, of course. Some scholars have pointed out that it was non-European political crises (and subsequent colonial exploitation) that enabled Europe's rise and imperial expansion.⁶⁰ And imperialism was, of course, never a one-way exchange, but impacted Europe almost as much

"Histories of Material Progress," in *Writing World History, 1800-2000*, ed. Benedikt Stuchtey and Eckhardt Fuchs (Oxford, 2003), 67-90, provides a critical assessment.

⁵⁶ Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York, 2014), is an outstanding example.

⁵⁷ Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Plumes: Ostrich Feathers, Jews, and a Lost World of Global Commerce* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

⁵⁸ William Gervase Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa and Chocolate, 1765-1914* (London, 2000); and Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); for a good popular history, see Sophie D. Coe and Michael D. Coe, *The True History of Chocolate* (London, 1996).

⁵⁹ Jones, *The European Miracle*, and the other literature on European exceptionalism referred to in note 22. More balanced accounts, also considering the role of global interconnections and non-European crises in enabling Europe's imperial expansion, are William H. McNeill, *The Rise of the West* (Chicago, IL, 1963); Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Ian Morris, *Why the West Rules – for Now* (London: Profile, 2010); Prasannan Partha Sarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not: Global Economic Divergence, 1600-1850* (Cambridge, 2011); and, to a lesser extent, Philip T. Hoffman, *Why Did Europe Conquer the World?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

⁶⁰ Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350* (Oxford, 1989); K. N. Chaudhuri, *Asia before Europe: Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean, from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge, 1990); Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World*, 50-213; and John N. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization* (Cambridge, 2004), elaborate further on these observations.

as the colonial world, if in very different ways. Some, most notably Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, have even suggested that Europe's imperial powers and their overseas possessions should be considered a contiguous space without a clear center.⁶¹ Works on anti-colonial radicals in European metropolises, such as Michael Goebel's *Anti-Imperial Metropolis* (2015), have shown that struggles between colonizers and colonized could take place at the very heart of Europe.⁶² And imperialism was not the only form of modern Europe's global power relations. In the heyday of empire, European powers had multifaceted relations with independent countries of the non-European world—Abyssinia, China, Japan, the Ottoman Empire, Persia, and Siam. Europe's nobility was part of a global aristocratic caste, most spectacularly displayed during visits of Persian, Siamese, and Ottoman royalty to European capitals.⁶³ After decolonization, twentieth-century Europe's political entanglements with the wider world became even more multifaceted. Today, the European Union includes territories as far away as Martinique in the Caribbean and Mayotte in the Indian Ocean.

Yet internal European politics was also continuously shaped by the world. The history of the emergence of Europe's liberal and democratic movements cannot be written without taking into account the Atlantic world, as has been explored by scholars since R. R. Palmer and Jacques Godechot.⁶⁴ Nationalism, too, was often greatly influenced by global encounters, a process described to great effect in Sebastian Conrad's *Globalisierung und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (2006).⁶⁵ The movements in western Europe that culminated in the events of 1968 drew on the ideas of distant revolutionary thinkers such as Mao Zedong, Ho Chi

⁶¹ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1-56.

⁶² Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁶³ David Motadel, "Qajar Shahs in Imperial Germany," *Past and Present* 213, no. 1 (2010): 191-235.

⁶⁴ R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959 and 1964); and Jacques Godechot, *Les Révolutions, 1770-1799* (Paris, 1963), translated as *France and the Atlantic Revolution of the Eighteenth Century, 1770-1799* (New York, 1965).

⁶⁵ Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Munich, 2006).

Minh, and Che Guevara.⁶⁶ Modern ideologies (even if predominantly studied within national and at times European frameworks) spanned the globe.⁶⁷ Moreover, global comparative history has also put political developments in Europe into perspective: Europe's great revolutions, for example, were almost all part of global revolutionary moments – 1789, 1848, 1917, 1989.⁶⁸

Finally, transcontinental entanglements were equally important in shaping social and cultural life in many parts of Europe. This is most evident in the history of the emergence of modern class structures. The rise of Europe's middle classes and bourgeois cultures was profoundly shaped by global transformations, as discussed in *The Global Bourgeoisie* (2019).⁶⁹ The same can be said for other social groups, from the working classes to the aristocracy. European cultures, like all cultures, developed through complex processes of appropriation, adaptation, and hybridization. Western, northern, eastern, and southern Europe's cultural landscapes were profoundly shaped by the colonial world, as Catherine Hall, David Ciarlo, and others have shown.⁷⁰ Similarly, the history of Europe in the second half of the twentieth century,

⁶⁶ Quinn Slobodian, *Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Timothy Scott Brown, *West Germany and the Global Sixties* (Cambridge, 2013); and Christoph Kalter, *Die Entdeckung der Dritten Welt: Dekolonialisierung und neue radikale Linke in Frankreich* (Frankfurt, 2011).

⁶⁷ Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Zeit der Ideologien: Eine Geschichte politischen Denkens im 20. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt, 1982); Mazower, *Dark Continent*; and Jan-Werner Müller, *Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

⁶⁸ Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*; Jacques Godechot, *Les institutions de la France sous la Révolution et l'empire* (Paris, 1951); David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, eds., *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760-1840* (New York, 2010); Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max Nelson, eds., *The French Revolution in Global Perspective* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), on the Atlantic evolutions. Miles Taylor, "The 1848 Revolutions and the British Empire," *Past and Present* 166 (2000): 146-80; and Kurt Weyland, "The Diffusion of Revolution: '1848' in Europe and Latin America," *International Organization* 63, no. 3 (2009): 391-423, on the impact of 1848 beyond Europe. Silvio Pons, *The Global Revolution: A History of International Communism 1917-1991* (Oxford, 2014), 7-42, on 1917 beyond Europe. A general account is provided in David Motadel, ed., *Revolutionary World: Global Upheaval in the Modern Age* (Cambridge, 2021).

⁶⁹ Christof Dejung, David Motadel, and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *The Global Bourgeoisie: The Rise of the Middle Classes in the Age of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019) provides chapters on this entangled history.

⁷⁰ Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Chicago, 2002); and the contributions to Catherine Hall, ed., *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the 19th and 20th Centuries: A Reader* (New York, 2000); and Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, eds., *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge, 2011), on Great Britain. On France, see Pascal Blanchard, Sandrine Lemaire, Nicolas Bancel, and Dominic Thomas, eds., *Culture colonial: La France conquise par son Empire, 1871-1931* (Paris, 2002). On the Netherlands, see Susan Legêne, *Spiegelreflex: Culturele sporen van de koloniale ervaring* (Amsterdam, 2010). On Belgium, see Guy Vanthemsche, *La Belgique et le*

as explored in Elizabeth Buettner's *Europe after Empire* (2016), is impossible to write without taking into account postcolonial cultural influences.⁷¹ Even the history of gender relations and sexuality in Europe, as traced by Todd Shepard, is inextricably connected to their postcolonial environments.⁷² To be sure, global influences on Europe's social and cultural life went beyond empire. The continent's high culture in particular has always been shaped from the outside. Jack Goody famously argued that Europe's Renaissance owed much to the Arab, Indian, and Chinese renaissances.⁷³ Similarly, any history of Europe's Enlightenment will be incomplete without consideration of the global context in which it evolved.⁷⁴ European scholars were increasingly part of a global republic of letters stretching from Harvard to Kolkata and beyond.⁷⁵ Some of the continent's greatest twentieth-century thinkers had biographies that linked them to lands beyond Europe—Thomas Mann to his Brazilian ancestry, George Orwell to his birthplace in India, and so on. Braudel's history, Albert Camus's philosophy, Pierre

Congo: L'impact de la colonie sur la métropole (Brussels, 2007); and Vincent Viaene, David Van Reybrouck, and Bambi Ceuppens, eds., *Congo in België: Koloniale Cultuur in de Metropool* (Leuven, 2009). On Germany, see Markus Seemann, *Kolonialismus in der Heimat: Kolonialbewegung, Kolonialpolitik und Kolonialkultur in Bayern 1882-1943* (Berlin, 2011); David Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011). On Italy, see the contributions in Patrizia Palumbo, ed., *A Place in the Sun: Africa in Italian Colonial Culture from Post-Unification to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). On Portugal, see Margarida Calafate Ribeiro and Ana Paula Ferreira, eds., *Fantomas e Fantasias Imperiais no Imaginário Português Contemporâneo* (Porto, 2003). The chapters in John M. MacKenzie, ed., *European Empires and the People: Popular Responses to Imperialism in France, Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Italy* (Manchester, 2011), provide a comparative perspective.

⁷¹ Elizabeth Buettner, *Europe after Empire: Decolonization, Society, and Culture* (Cambridge, 2016); and, for individual countries, Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Gert Oostindie, *Postkolonial Nederland: Vijfenzestig jaar vergeten, herdenken, verdringen* (Amsterdam, 2010); the contributions in Elleke Boehmer and Sarah De Mul, eds., *The Postcolonial Low Countries: Literature, Colonialism, and Multiculturalism* (Lanham, MD, 2012); Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); and Britta Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany: Memories of Empire in a Decolonized Nation* (Oxford, 2014); as well as the literature cited in the previous note.

⁷² Todd Shepard, *Sex, France, and Arab Men, 1962-1979* (Chicago, 2017).

⁷³ Goody, *Renaissances*.

⁷⁴ Sebastian Conrad, "The Enlightenment in Global History: A Historiographical Critique," *American Historical Review* 117, no. 4 (2012): 999-1027.

⁷⁵ Kapil Raj, *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650-1900* (New York, 2007); and, more generally, the contributions in Kapil Raj et al., eds., *The Brokered World: Go-betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770-1820* (Sagamore Beach, Mass., 2009); as well as Kris Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement: German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

Bourdieu's anthropology, Jacques Derrida's linguistics, and Yves Saint Laurent's haute couture all were influenced by their creators' ties to Algeria.⁷⁶ Even more marked was the world's impact on Europe's popular cultures. The most important twentieth-century example is cultural Americanization, from jazz in the interwar years to postwar Hollywood, so forcefully described in Victoria de Grazia's *Irresistible Empire* (2005).⁷⁷ Historians have also shown an increasing interest in the global influences on European culinary culture, from Indian curries to Turkish kebabs.⁷⁸ Likewise, Europe's religious landscapes have for centuries been influenced by global exchange. In western Europe, Muslim communities became institutionalized in the early twentieth century.⁷⁹ Buddhist, Sikh, and other groups followed. Spiritualism, as brilliantly shown in Ruth Harris's work, was a global phenomenon.⁸⁰ Most importantly perhaps, modern Europe's public sphere, which emerged in the eighteenth century and soon reached even the smallest village, became global.⁸¹

Taken together, this growing literature, although still fragmented, compellingly demonstrates that Europe has always been an arena of transcontinental interactions, as much a recipient of outside influences as a force transforming the world. To be sure, Europe's interconnections with the world were never static, but changed over time. Their impact was—and still is—uneven, affecting some parts of the continent, such as port cities, university towns, and capitals, more (and in different ways) than others.

⁷⁶ Sandra Ponzanesi and Adriano José Habed, eds., *Postcolonial Intellectuals in Europe: Critics, Artists, Movements, and their Publics* (London, 2018), provides a good overview.

⁷⁷ Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); see also Nicholas Hewitt, "Black Montmartre: American Jazz and Music Hall in Paris in the Interwar Years," *Journal of Romance Studies* 5, no. 3 (2005): 25-31.

⁷⁸ Panikos Panayi, *Spicing Up Britain: The Multicultural History of British Food* (London, 2008).

⁷⁹ David Motadel, "The Making of Muslim Communities in Western Europe, 1914-1939," in *Transnational Islam in Interwar Europe: Muslim Activists and Thinkers*, Umar Ryad and Götz Nordbruch (London, 2014), 13-43.

⁸⁰ Ruth Harris, "Rolland, Gandhi and Madeleine Slade: Spiritual Politics, France and the Wider World," *French History* 27, no. 4 (2013): 579-99.

⁸¹ Valeska Huber and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Global Publics: Their Power and their Limits* (Oxford, 2020) provides important contributions about this phenomenon. Heidi J. S. Tworek, *News from Germany: The Competition to Control World Communications, 1900-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019) is an insightful case study.

Concepts in European and Global History

Apart from allowing us to see Europe's deep entanglements with the wider world, global history forces us to rethink our epistemological parameters when studying the continent's history. It prompts us to question some of the major concepts of modern European history, such as class, nation, revolution, public and private, industrialization, urbanization, and secularization. And it enables us to critically reflect on some of our field's fundamental paradigms—most prominently, perhaps, modernity—and periodizations. It forces us to question the universality of our analytic weights and measures. Noting that the categories of European history are neither objective nor universal, Dipesh Chakrabarty and his disciples have compellingly warned against imposing them on the history of the non-European world.⁸² Indeed, such categories offer lenses that can distort as much as they allow us to see. What is more, they impose European standards on the world, making non-European history appear to be deficient. Some have even questioned whether societies around the world share the most basic cognitive ground, an assumption made by those who use European concepts to study the world.

Yet radical relativism cannot be the answer, as Chakrabarty himself has acknowledged. There is a tension between the need to sufficiently consider the uniqueness of every smaller geographic space we study and the need to have some basic (ecumenical) consensus on major historical concepts when writing world history.⁸³ Besides, it is not unproblematic to brand all concepts of modernity, from urbanization to secularization, as European (or Western), as to do so assumes that these phenomena are essentially European when in fact they often were not: they were neither embraced universally in all parts of Europe (which we should be careful not

⁸² Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Hajimr Nakamura, *Parallel Developments: A Comparative History of Ideas* (New York, 1975), argues that some concepts are similar across the world.

⁸³ Dominic Sachsenmaier, "World History as Ecumenical History?" *Journal of World History* 18, no. 4 (2007): 465-489, convincingly stresses this need for consensus.

to essentialize), nor completely absent in other parts of the world, and were themselves shaped by global entanglements. These debates can help historians of modern Europe be more critical when using allegedly universal concepts, paradigms, and periodizations. At the same time, when studying European history, and particularly the history of Europe's global connections, we may find it useful to adopt concepts developed in the field of world history that stress hybridity, syncretism, and interconnectedness.

Continents in Global History

Overall, the growing body of literature on the global history of the continent may come to critically reshape our notion of Europe (and European history) and its boundaries. Although Europe is, as we have seen, almost impossible to define either as a physical concept or a sociocultural idea, historians all too often treat it as a monolithic entity, ignoring its inherent diversity and permeability.⁸⁴ A truly global history of Europe, which takes into account not only the continent's internal heterogeneity but also its connections to the outside world, would counter essentialist notions of Europe.

Such reflections on Europe also shed light on broader questions about continents as ontological categories.⁸⁵ The concept of continents (from *terra continens*), commonly defined as large, continuous landmasses usually separated from one another by water, has been used to map the world since antiquity, when the threefold continental scheme of Europe, Asia, and

⁸⁴ Celia Applegate, "A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times," *American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (1999): 1157-1182, on diversity within Europe and within European nation-states.

⁸⁵ Important reflections on the relationship between continental and global history have also been provided by historians of Africa, see Frederick Cooper, "What is the Concept of Globalization Good For? An African Historian's Perspective," *African Affairs* 100 (2001): 189-213; Leslie Witz, "Africa (Not) in World History: A Review from the South," *Journal of World History* 27, no. 1 (2016): 103-120; and Witz, "Surveying Africa in World History: A View from the South," *Journal of World History* 27, no. 4 (2016): 669-685. See Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann, "Global History and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization," *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 1 (2010): 149-70, for some insights into the relationship between regional and global history; and, more generally, Birgit Schäbler, ed., *Area Studies und die Welt: Weltregionen und neue Globalgeschichte* (Vienna, 2007).

Africa was invented. Although historians are generally cautious about the use of generalizing geographies, references to continents are, curiously, seldom questioned. In their 1997 book *The Myth of Continents*, Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen issued a powerful warning about the continental taxonomy: “Otherwise sophisticated and self-critical works habitually essentialize continents, adopting their boundaries as frameworks for analyzing and classifying phenomena to which they simply do not apply.”⁸⁶ “Dividing the world into a handful of fundamental units in this way may be convenient,” they noted, “but it does injustice to the complexities of global geography, and it leads to faulty comparisons.”⁸⁷ This does not mean that the epistemological distinctions between continents—or, indeed, “European history” as a disciplinary category—are useless in historical research. It does mean, however, that we need to be conscious of different spatial layers that allow us to consider internal diversity and external relations.

Spatial categories will remain important units of analysis in historical studies.⁸⁸ We constantly, consciously or unconsciously, map the world using local and urban, national and imperial, regional and continental, and other spatial taxonomies, and at times make even simpler distinctions, be they civilizational or cultural (East and West), economic (North and South), or political (First, Second, and Third World). Indeed, such broad essentialist

⁸⁶ Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), here p. 1., is a path-breaking work, although I do not share the authors’ enthusiasm for area studies and the history of world regions, which also includes “Europe” as a category. On the construction of (sub-continental) “regions” as categories of study, see the contributions in Diana Mishkova and Balázs Trencsényi, eds., *European Regions and Boundaries: A Conceptual History* (New York, 2017).

⁸⁷ Lewis and Wigen, *The Myth of Continents*, 1.

⁸⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (London, 1991) remains one of the most thoughtful reflections on physical, social, and mental spaces. The chapters in Phil Hubbard, Rob Kitchin, and Gill Valentine, eds., *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* (London, 2004) provide a good overview of the works of major intellectuals on space. On more general reflections about space in historical studies, following the spatial turn, see Jürgen Osterhammel, “Die Wiederkehr des Raumes: Geopolitik, Geohistorie und historische Geographie,” *Neue Politische Literatur* 43 (1998): 374-397; Reinhart Koselleck, *Zeitschichten: Studien zur Historik* (Frankfurt, 2000), 78-96; Iris Schröder and Sabine Höhler, “Welt-Räume: Annährungen an eine Geschichte der Globalität im 20. Jahrhundert,” in Schröder and Höhler, *Welt-Räume*, 9-47; and, more generally, Sebouh David Aslanian et al., “AHR Conversation: How Size Matters: The Question of Scale in History,” *American Historical Review* 118, no. 5 (2013): 1431-1472.

geographies can be found at the heart of works by intellectuals as diverse as Oswald Spengler, Samuel Huntington, Niall Ferguson, Chakrabarty, and Edward Said.⁸⁹

Yet the use of spatial categories in general is not unproblematic. It is not just that they can obscure the internal heterogeneity of a discrete space and its connections to (and similarities with) the outside world. Spatial divisions also all too often conflate physical and sociocultural criteria. The spatial units we use, from the local to the continental, are usually understood to be not only coherent physical entities (physical geography) but also coherent cultural, social, economic, and political entities (human geography). In reality, however, there is no necessary congruence between physical and human spaces. Human life cannot always be meaningfully divided according to physical geographies. The use of spatial categories may thus mislead us into making false generalizations about the inhabitants of a particular territory. Indeed, ascribing distinctive social, cultural, political, or economic features (and histories) to the peoples living in a specific physical territory is a form of environmental determinism. Physical maps cannot simply be superimposed onto sociocultural human maps. Moreover, physical spaces are usually difficult to define along clear lines in terms of natural topography, tectonic plates, climate, or flora and fauna. Human spaces are fragile constructs created through human interaction (and imagination), which are constantly evolving and are not naturally determined. In any case, any geographical space we might use in our studies is no more than an abstract construct based on a mental map.⁹⁰ Finally, we must of course also be aware that the spatial division of the world can (and often does) imply hierarchies of and value statements about spatial units.

⁸⁹ Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes: Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*, 2 vols. (Vienna and Munich, 1918-1922); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, 1996); Ferguson, *Civilization*; Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*; and Said, *Orientalism*.

⁹⁰ Elspeth Graham, "What is a Mental Map?" *Area* 8, no. 4 (1976): 259-262.

In short, we need to bear in mind that spatial units are imprecise categories of analysis. We also need to be mindful that physical space and human (sociocultural, economic, or political-legal) space do not necessarily correspond. Moreover, to take into account internal heterogeneity and external connections (and similarities), we must consider multiple scales when studying the past, interweaving different spaces in our analysis.⁹¹ There is no contradiction between local, national, regional, continental, and global history, as humans almost always act in multiple spaces simultaneously. Although different spaces have varying degrees of importance depending on the historian's topic, any serious work of historical scholarship will be multi-layered, considering different spatial levels. Ultimately, spatial categories are important units of analysis, which—along with thematic and temporal concepts—will in all likelihood remain, not least for pragmatic reasons, crucial in organizing historical knowledge (and structuring our discipline).

[conclusion] It seems almost impossible to write a modern world history without Europe, which has shaped global interactions over the last centuries more than any other continent. Conversely, a history of modern Europe that ignores the wider world will inevitably remain incomplete. Global history is not the tombstone of European history. It is a necessary impulse that will enrich the field and prompt us to question its most fundamental assumptions. This will mean rethinking the continent's political, social, cultural, and economic histories from a global angle, taking into account sources in languages and archives not previously considered, and crossing intradisciplinary boundaries. This will ultimately help reshape our understanding of the boundaries of modern Europe—and the field of modern European history.

In the end, the idea of Europe as a closed entity has always been an illusion. Europe and the world are not as far apart as some of us might like to believe. Europa herself, after all, as

⁹¹ Richard Drayton and David Motadel, "The Futures of Global History," *Journal of Global History* 13, no. 1 (2018): 1-21.

any student of her mythological past will confirm, was non-European, a Phoenician beauty abducted from the shores of Asia. Europe *per se* was constituted from the outside. In short, it is time to deprovincialize Europe.

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