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## European plurilingualism.

On the *convergence herméneutique* of different styles of Europeanization.

A neo-phenomenological approach.

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## Summary<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to functional plurilingualism as a subject of linguistics and sociology, plurilingualism as discussed here refers to subjective experiences with European languages that have a corporeal and atmospheric effect. This differentiation is a result of the phenomenological rethinking of Europe, which refutes the arguments for the general introduction of global English and one-sided quantitative thinking. The new concept of *affective* plurilingualism invalidates the policies of EU elites who, in order to maintain power, are willing to sacrifice the developed European languages and the styles of Europeanization that embed them. Thanks to the insights of New Phenomenology, an understanding with the critical plurilingualism of the *global South* emerges. The concept of the *inter-European speaker* is formulated in opposition to the ideological *intercultural speaker*: this abandons the exaggerated global claim in favor of the normative implications of the European type of civilization, which can be discovered by sensing atmospheres. Finally, it is outlined how, within the framework of the MONTAIGNE program, the corporeal and atmospheric integration into an unknown European language and the settling into the respective style of Europeanization paves the way for *secondary epigenesis* as a European. The entanglement in the intrusive experience: *This is part of me!* proves to be a case of an *indivisible relation* (Hermann Schmitz) between language and speaker.

## Foreword

The initial German text was first published in August 2025. It was revised for the first time in October 2025. In the course of the French translation (published in November 2025), I revised the text again. The English translation, published in February 2025, has prompted me to revise and supplement it once more. The back-and-forth between certain formulations and their translation repeatedly let me to reflect on whether I had expressed myself clearly enough. This applies to the translation of terms as well as complex expressions. I hope that the changes have not only corrected errors, but also achieved improvements (especially in chapters 5, 6 and 7). I have introduced current application examples to counter the impression that the MONTAIGNE program ignores the challenges of the present.

This translation is paradoxical: it criticizes the social and, in particular, linguistic hegemony of global English in Europe, but at the same time makes use of global English itself. A distinction must be made between the current communicative benefits and the questionable cultural and language policy of English only. In other words, it is a matter of recognizing that, under certain circumstances, it is necessary to use global or British English; but for academic communication between Europeans, it must be expected that researchers and their readers are able and willing to understand another European ausbau language (or languages). This resolves the paradox.

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<sup>1</sup> With regard to the neo-phenomenological terms, two different texts of Hermann Schmitz translated into English (2011; 2019) are available as references. In particular, for the terms *leiblich* and *Einleibung*, I follow the translation of 2011 with *corporeal* and *encorporation* (transl. Owen Müllan/Slaby). – Readers of the present translation have to live with the paradox that they are faced with a text written in clumsy global English, which is at the same time the target of fundamental criticism. But it is not possible for me to present a text written in British English.

## 0. An initial look at the issue

### 0.1 Considerations on the research method

The present text brings together perspectives that are usually dealt with by different scientific disciplines: plurilingualism in Europe, the internal connection between different styles of civilization, phenomenological considerations on language(s) and surroundings. However, it is not intended to be a transdisciplinary or interdisciplinary overview. Rather, the guiding intention of the text is to establish a relation of foundation: based on the findings of New Phenomenology, the investigation of European plurilingualism that is subjectively significant for Europeans has to begin *before* the methodological foundations of linguistics are formulated; similarly, the prerequisites for a hermeneutic convergence of different styles of Europeanization that are subjectively significant for Europeans have to be cleared up *before* the methodological foundations of the social and cultural sciences. What is significant for the involuntary life experience<sup>2</sup> of individual Europeans are *subjective*, poignant circumstances, e.g., emotions and atmospheres, as well as perceived programs and problems that elude objectification by the positive sciences. This (affective) state of mind gives rise to the critical appraisal regarding the theses of linguistics and socio-cultural sciences: *What significance do these theses have for me?*

The focus on the first person is not uncommon in linguistics. Brigitta Busch, for example, titles the first chapter of her widely circulated book on plurilingualism (<sup>3</sup>2021): *Das Sprachrepertoire - eine Subjektperspektive* ('The Language Repertoire - A Subject Perspective'). She goes on to explain the importance of 'biographical approaches to plurilingualism':

Kapitel 1 nähert sich Fragen der Mehrsprachigkeit aus der Perspektive des Sprechenden und Erlebenden Subjekts, eines Subjekts, das nicht allein dasteht, sondern durch sprachliche und andere soziale Interaktion a priori in intersubjektive, dialogische Beziehungen mit anderen eingebunden ist. (Busch 2017, 14)

Der biografische Blick auf sprachliche Repertoires ist nicht nur dazu geeignet, eine Sprecher\*innen-orientierte Perspektive einzunehmen, sondern rückt auch bisher weniger beachtete Aspekte in den Vordergrund wie beispielsweise den Einfluss von Sprachideologien darauf, wie Sprecher\*innen sich und andere

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<sup>2</sup> This is a key concept. It means: not prepared for the collection of data and statistical analysis .

diskursiv positionieren, oder die Rolle von Emotionen, Imaginationen und Begehren in Bezug auf das sprachliche Repertoire. (Op. cit., 18)<sup>3</sup>

The question now arises as to how the first person used in biographical accounts relates to the subjective significance mentioned above. The immediacy to oneself that intuitively results from biographical first-person narration can be traced back to the ability of the individual developing into a person to project themselves beyond their current state onto new possibilities: I can be this or that or something else. In philosophical terms, these are cases of relative identity. But how do I know anything about this self to which these attributes refer? It cannot be found at the level of relative identity because it can always be different. Hermann Schmitz (2016, 210-218; cf. chap. 4.4) has demonstrated that the absolute identity sought is affective involvement: that I am struck by a blow, that I am overcome by shame, that I feel loved, are examples where the person affected does not have to ask whether he or she is meant: the evidence is given with the affective involvement. This contemporary answer to the relationship between relative and absolute identity was unknown to ancient philosophy. Instead, it settled on a by no means intuitive anthropological construct that Europe has adopted (cf. Chapters 1.4 and 6.1). The contraintuitive concept that the world consists of things ('thing ontology') has led to the implicit assumption, taken for granted for over 2500 years, that the self is an entity (object) with consciousness. According to the findings of modern phenomenology, consciousness is a late descendant of the psyche (soul, mind, conscience). Democritus and, above all, Plato divided the phenomenal environment into an external world of objectively determinable things and an internal world; in parallel, the division of humans into a material part (body) and a "spiritual" part became the basis of the philosophical can. The ego was supposed to gain control over involuntary aspirations, poignant emotions, and corporeal movements. In modern times, this opposition became questionable; alternatives were experimented with.

However, Busch's recourse to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's "corps-sujet" does not touch on this conflict, because this author himself adheres to it: According to him, the unity of the soul and

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<sup>3</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' Chapter 1 approaches questions of plurilingualism from the perspective of the speaking and experiencing subject, a subject that does not stand alone, but is a priori involved in intersubjective, dialogical relationships with others through linguistic and other social interaction. The biographical view of linguistic repertoires is not only suitable for adopting a speaker-oriented perspective, but also brings previously less noticed aspects to the fore, such as the influence of language ideologies on how speakers position themselves and others discursively, or the role of emotions, imaginations, and desires in relation to linguistic repertoire. '

the body<sup>4</sup> takes place at every moment in the movement of existence. This vague assumption of a corporal-spiritual self may have made it easier for Busch to skip the pre-reflexive and pre-linguistic experience and to begin her considerations with the speaking subject and its linguistic awareness. Starting at this high level of personal development leads the author to the following apodictic statement: "Mit dem Begriff der Subjektivierung wird ausgedrückt, dass es kein prä-diskursives Subjekt geben kann. Subjektivität wird durch Diskurse konstituiert und geformt [...]." (Op. cit., 101)<sup>5</sup> The present text will contradict this assertion (cf. chapter 6). At the same time, I would like to take up Bruno Maurer's cautious formulation: "c'est par le langage que le sujet s'institue." (2025, 20)<sup>6</sup> The verb "s'instituer" leaves room for interpretation. Therefore, I believe it is useful to discuss later how, according to Schmitz, the process of becoming a person should be understood, i.e., the personal emancipation from prepersonal experience in situations. But already here, the misunderstanding that subjectivity is something like the characteristic of an individual must be corrected.<sup>7</sup> In New Phenomenology, prepersonal, corporeal, affective, i.e. subjective experience becomes the basis for the systematic overcoming of the traditional split of the world (external – internal) and that of human beings (reasonable control – irrational emotions).

As a result, the frequency and usefulness of biographical statements to which B. Busch refers are, however, not suitable for establishing a viable concept of the subject.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Busch renders this as "Leib" without further explanation. However, this has very little to do with Schmitz's concept of *Leib*.

<sup>5</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'The concept of subjectification expresses the idea that there can be no pre-discursive subject. Subjectivity is constituted and shaped by discourse [...].'

<sup>6</sup> I would like to thank Ms. Ann-Christel Zeiter-Grau, University of Lausanne, for bringing Mr. Maurer's work to my attention. In a future discussion of Maurer's new publication (2025), I would also like to discuss the term "fait saillant" (32) and the division between "Dimensions essentielles" and "non-essentielles" (103).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the quote from Schmitz (2010, 366 f.) in chapter 6.4. As a preview of what is to come, here is another quote from Schmitz (<sup>2</sup>1995 a, 201): "Der Sitz der Subjektivität ist die Leiblichkeit durch ihr mitschwingendes Empfangen von Anregungen und impulsives Einsetzen von Initiative, doch so, daß der Spielraum der Ansprechbarkeit und Äußerungsfähigkeit des Subjekts durch die Entfaltung der Gegenwart ungeheuer bereichert wird." Transl. W.M.-P.: 'The seat of subjectivity is corporeally through its resonant reception of stimuli and impulsive initiation of initiative, but in such a way that the scope of the subject's responsiveness and expressiveness is immensely enriched by the unfolding of the present.' - B. Busch also refers to Hilge Landweer's and Christoph Demmerling's analyses of emotions. However, the poignant emotions these authors refer to do not relate to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the body, but presuppose the findings of New Phenomenology and its entirely different concept of corporeality.

<sup>8</sup> This must be emphasized because, according to the 'artificial isolation of the phenomenon of language' (D. Busch 2022, 83-85), new aspects (culture, social life, context, discourse, identity construction, ethnomethodological categories, etc.) have gradually come into focus in linguistic discussions. However, despite these shifts in attention,

The quote concerning a *convergence herméneutique* of different styles of Europeanization used in the title of this text comes from the social and cultural scientist Gérard Bouchard. The use of this term must also be examined in its implicit methodological assumptions. Pascal Lamy (2018) prefaced the study with a concise summary:

Cette Étude vise à démontrer que l'UE doit redéfinir ses relations avec les nations (en tant que configurations de culture, à ne pas confondre avec les États), en partant du principe que toute forme de lien social, si ténue qu'il soit, doit reposer sur certains fondements symboliques communs. [...]

L'Étude examine ensuite les tentatives infructueuses de l'UE au cours des dernières décennies pour créer de nouveaux mythes et une identité européenne. Elle évoque enfin de nouveaux moyens de créer de futurs mythes, essentiellement dans le cadre de ce que l'auteur appelle une « européanisation » des mythes nationaux. L'objectif est de bâtir des mythes qui trouveront une résonance à la fois aux niveaux national et européen. En d'autres termes de créer une véritable voix européenne avec de solides échos nationaux.<sup>9</sup>

Bouchard leaves no doubt about his position: ' This book is intended as an unequivocal plea in favor of the European Union.' (2017, 11; transl. W.M.-P.) At the same time, he presents a detailed critique of the EU elites' failure to establish the political union on a solid foundation ("symbolique ou culturel") on which a European sense of belonging could develop. Bouchard's goal is clearly expressed in the subtitle of his book: "Pour un nouveau rapport entre Bruxelles et les nations." (Transl. W.M.-P.: ' For a new relation between Brussels and the Nations ') In fact, he sees the blanket condemnation of European nations, which have been blamed for the excesses of nationalism and worse, as the reason for the failure of the EU as a project of its citizens. The denial of nations as enduring anchors of orientation in a globalized environment implies at the same time that all the concepts of identity proposed over the decades were doomed to failure: they came top-down in two senses: they were the product of the intellectual elites of the EU, and they operated with concepts on a high level of abstraction. Bouchard therefore calls for a radical reversal in Brussels, not least in order to undermine the growing

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plurilingualism remains a methodologically prepared, objective state of affairs. This is drawn into the social debate where competing social objectives clash with each other, for example, whether plurilingualism is desirable (prestigious, useful) or not (in connection with multiculturalism, weakening identity, threatening identity, less useful, etc.).

<sup>9</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' This study aims to demonstrate that the EU must redefine its relations with nations (as configurations of culture, not to be confused with states), based on the principle that any form of social bond, however tenuous, must be based on certain common symbolic foundations. [...] The study then examines the EU's unsuccessful attempts over the past decades to create new myths and a European identity. Finally, it discusses new ways of creating future myths, essentially within the framework of what the author calls a <Europeanization> of national myths. The aim is to build myths that will resonate at both the national and European levels. In other words, to create a true European voice with strong national echoes. '

nationalism in the individual member states. In this respect, Bouchard's reform program is similar to the proposals that Jacques Delors made on several occasions after his term as President of the European Commission. The tenor was always to involve citizens and not treat them like naughty children.<sup>10</sup>

Instead of 'capping' undesirable or incomprehensible aspirations, Bouchard's plea for patient mutual understanding in Europe may indeed be the only way to initiate European convergence. However, the necessary conditions for this are not in place: Bouchard's envisaged 'Europeanization' of national myths and symbols with a view to a fundamentally changed EU is doomed to failure because these efforts are also to take place in the arena of political public life, where power is at stake. The question arises as to where nations are to derive their independence from states in order to work out a convergence among themselves open to results. The interference of powerful interest groups, which Bouchard criticized earlier, cannot be ruled out, especially since the at least partial revision of national myths and symbols is bound to clash with the politically 'useful' self-representation of states. On the other hand, a lowest common denominator that 'doesn't hurt anyone' is unlikely to achieve a deep affective bond among Europeans. Finally, given the diachronic and synchronic complexity of Europeanization styles, reconciling conflicting ideas top-down would demand the participation of historians, social scientists, cultural scientists, linguists, and philosophers.<sup>11</sup> How ordinary Europeans can be involved in this process remains open.

From a phenomenological point of view, the fundamental error lies in Bouchard's decision to set the bar too high, i.e., at the level of established cultural and political structures that are immunized to questioning. Rather, a bottom-up approach should be pursued, starting from involuntary experiences. What Europe means to me on an affective level is anchored in pre-reflective, prepersonal, and pre-verbal experience. Thanks to human language, contact between people who are emancipating themselves from predetermined situations can then succeed. This striving for hermeneutic convergence is, in a sense, 'self-sufficient': the temptations of power

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<sup>10</sup> Delors (2004, 492) said to EU technocrats: "Qu'ils cessent de traiter les citoyens comme des enfants refusant toute prescription médicale et ne cédant que sous menace de ce qu'ils leur arrivera de fâcheux s'ils s'abstiennent dans leur refus." (Transl. W.M.-P.: 'They should stop treating citizens like children who refuse to follow medical advice and only give in when threatened with unpleasant consequences if they continue to refuse.')

<sup>11</sup> Just how slim the chances of this are can be gauged from the (failed) project of the Franco-German history book *Histoire/Geschichte* for upper secondary schools (germ. *Gymnasien*) and *Lycées*.

do not come into play here. When reference is made to *convergence herméneutique* in the following, this always refers to the phenomenological understanding that starts bottom-up. Phenomenological attention is thus directed toward the entire prepersonal and personal experience.

## 0.2 European plurilingualism: a brief overview

With regard to the categories introduced, this text focuses on one aspect of *individual* plurilingualism, namely the acquisition of an unfamiliar European language as experienced by *adult Europeans*, in this case students. Unlike usual, this language acquisition is not designed as an accompanying activity to a degree program, but rather as the sole purpose of a semester abroad. *No prior achievements* are necessary to be admitted to the European semester at a European university, nor are *any formalized examinations* required during the semester. What can such a European semester offer students?

First of all, traditional ideas should be kept at bay. Plurilingualism certainly expands a speaker's ability to discuss and interact with their environment. In addition to this practical activity, another language opens up the scope for interpretations of how a European finds themselves in an environment consisting of neighboring Europeanization styles. What *a* language is capable of expressing is not always possible in other languages; what is associated with Europe in a particular culture only corresponds more or less to how it is felt in another culture. For this reason, it has been suggested that we speak of different linguistic approaches or perspectives. What is less often taken into account is that this distinction between perspectives implies the (objectivist) assumption that the surrounding world is one and the same, albeit viewed from different angles. Roughly speaking, this is *objective* plurilingualism. This is always the case when other languages are used as a tool for specific practical purposes: *functional* plurilingualism, which accompanies us at every turn, implicitly assumes an objective world for everyone.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The German term 'Mehrsprachigkeit' does not distinguish between plurilingualism and multilingualism. This text does not deal with the social fact that several languages are spoken in one country; rather, it focuses on the perspective of the speakers. When discussing plurilingualism, I introduce the new distinction between functional plurilingualism and affective plurilingualism. The latter term is explained below. It is derived from the neo-phenomenological approach.

However, the term *subjective* plurilingualism, which is the topic of this text, refers to something fundamentally different. It refers to the way people experience languages, i.e., what they can feel in their own sensing bodies. Languages can touch people deeply if they are moved by something meaningful; in contrast to instrumental plurilingualism, this is referred to as *affective* plurilingualism. The mother tongue is a particularly striking example of this, where affective language contact can be felt in contrast to any other language. This can also apply to people who grew up bilingual. However, a similar affective *more* is also possible when encountering an unknown language. In Europe, subjective plurilingualism is favored by the European type of civilization, which has developed into several styles of Europeanization; in Chapter 5 the term<sup>13</sup> will be explained.

It should not be forgotten that affective European plurilingualism has a history. The development<sup>14</sup> of several European languages was not solely a linguistic phenomenon, but took place in competition with Greek and Latin as *languages of a specific cultural type and image of humanity*. Beginning with Humanism and the Renaissance, Greek and Latin were not understood as means of communication, but as a medium of self-education based on a view of humanity that was (initially) considered exemplary (cf. Trabant 2014, 94 f., 110-112). It can therefore be argued that the languages that emerged fully developed from the different styles of Europeanization were initially to be understood as the rehabilitation and further development of a human ideal that referred to the Occidental type of civilization. In this way, languages became mediators of continuity, renewal, and criticism. The implicit programs of humanization in the Occidental and then European type of civilization are, as it were, the civilizational sediments that have been filtered through historical circumstances, recipied and developed in different ways. This made it possible for very different cultures to emerge on the common basis of the European type of civilization. Historians reconstruct these changes and transformations (cf. François & Serrier 2009). However, for methodological reasons, they cannot grasp the implicit

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<sup>13</sup> The common expression *European civilization* is a non-specific collective term with ingredients that are difficult to define completely: historical, cultural, legal, governmental, linguistic, ideological, religious, etc. On the contrary, the term *European type of civilization* used here comes from comparative cultural anthropology and was used incidentally by Hermann Schmitz (1997, 23-33) as the background for his program of 'rehabilitating life experience'. The term refers to 'European intellectual culture, the specific European style of the particular discipline belonging to high culture' (op. cit., 33). For further information, see section 5.2 below. Hermann Schmitz (1928-2021) is the founder of New Phenomenology: *System der Philosophie* (2005 a). See [www.gnp-online.de](http://www.gnp-online.de)

<sup>14</sup> Fully developed languages are languages in which all cultural areas and concerns can be dealt with linguistically, from private everyday communication to technology, economic theory, law, literature, philosophy, etc.

programs (norms). They can be sensed as the floating sediments of the European type of civilization, but cannot be grasped as clearly distinguishable facts and linked to constellations. As will be explained (cf. Chapters 1.3 and 5), it is corporeal-atmospheric sensitivity that will be necessary for sensing normative offers and requests. It is the organ that makes us unpredictably receptive to impulses when encountering an unknown European language.

New Phenomenology provides an explanation: being touched at every turn is based on corporeal 'bridging qualities' (Schmitz 2005 b, 137; 2011, 29-30), e.g., a sense of what is aesthetically appropriate; on the other hand, background emotions are discovered, e.g., emotions of rightness and permissibility (cf. chapters 5 and 6), which enable sudden affect: *This belongs to me!* Growing into an unfamiliar language, following this impulse, develops an *affective* plurilingualism that must be distinguished from the functional (practical) plurilingualism that occurs in parallel.

A practical objective suggests focusing on the symbolic nature of language and asserting communication as its 'essence'. From an analytical and detached perspective, which also determines school teaching, languages, and thus also a language to be acquired, can be made manageable as an instrument: the relevant states of affairs are described according to the state of linguistics (e.g., through grammatical and syntactic structures, word fields and collocations; linguistic repertoires and their implications); methodological procedures with learning objectives (listening and reading comprehension, speech comprehension and production, recognition and assessment of cultural and discursive differences, etc.) as well as competencies and progression levels can then be defined for language acquisition. In contrast, discovering the affective closeness of an unknown European language is more about feeling an emotion. As useful as the description of an inventory and the formulation of a methodically regulated approach to acquisition may be, it is certain that subjectively striking phenomena of stumbling upon an unknown European language and culture come first in involuntary life experience. This includes, for example, the experience that human contact feels different, more intense, more promising, and possibly more exciting, but also more demanding and risky than usual interaction. One is touched by characteristic impressions, for example phonology, without their content being tangible and clearly identifiable. One could best speak of atmospheres that are felt to be striking and, overall, of an unfamiliar attitude toward life that appeals to those affected.

Based on these meaningful impressions and those emanating from the respective style of Europeanization, a connection with the phenomenological approach emerges. In stark contrast to traditional philosophy, which operates at a high level of abstraction in its conceptualization, contemporary phenomenology starts from what the individual experiences firsthand. New Phenomenology in particular specifies that attitudes towards life can be understood as collective atmospheres that are suspended in a (static common) situation (cf. Schmitz 2014, 50-64). Großheim et al. (2014 a, 9; emphasis in the original text) summarize:

Atmosphären sind Ausdrucksphänomene, genauer Phänomene, bei denen der *Ausdruck* einer Gestalt leiblich beeindruckt, d.h. das Fühlen anspricht und Impulse zum Mitschwingen setzt. [...] Das Fühlen als leibliches Spüren ist [...] eine Art Resonanzraum für Ausdrucksphänomene.<sup>15</sup>

This understanding of the 'feeling of life' (germ. *Lebensgefühl*) is a leitmotif of New Phenomenology: 'It ties in with people's everyday, pre-theoretical life experience in order to reveal its contents unadulterated by scientific theories or models.' (Demmerling 2018, 359; transl. W.M.-P.)

In fact, in the philosophical tradition that has prevailed since Plato, central areas of reality have been distorted (e.g., emotions and atmospheres) or completely discarded (the felt body, germ. *Leib*), corporeal communication, situations, subjectivity). This gives rise to the need for New Phenomenology to treat the 'rehabilitation of life experience' as the main task of contemporary philosophy (Schmitz 1997, 23-33). After conducting relevant historical-critical research, Schmitz came to the conclusion that Occidental and, subsequently, European philosophy should be held accountable for serious "Verfehlungen" (transl. W.M.-P.: 'transgressions'), disregarding the epoch-making achievement of a 'culture for the sake of freedom', as Christian Meier (2012) described it. New Phenomenology has therefore set itself the goal of moving closer to a new and flexible conceptualization of life experience.

In addition to the ambivalent philosophical tradition, it is the current political situation that hinders and often prevents a rapprochement with a European attitude towards life. The equation 'Europe = European Union', driven by power interests, has led to irritation and, beyond that, to

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<sup>15</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'Atmospheres are phenomena of expression, more precisely phenomena in which the expression of a form makes a corporeal impression, i.e., appeals to the senses and triggers impulses to resonate. [...] Emotion as a corporeal sensation is [...] a kind of resonance chamber for phenomena of expression.'

experiences of discrepancy among some contemporaries, so that even in political science the urgency of the questions has been underlined: " 'what kind of Europe do we want to create? ' and 'what kind of Europeans do we want to be? ' " (Stock 2017, 28). These fundamental questions can be understood as an invitation to ' reflect on how human beings find themselves in their environment ', which Schmitz (<sup>2</sup>1992, 5) identified as the original motive for philosophizing. Since the reliability of subjective experiences depends on finding confirmation or criticism in conversation with other Europeans, a phenomenologically understood individual *convergence herméneutique* is the goal of intersubjective understanding, right up to the demanding *convergence herméneutique* of different styles of Europeanization.

To view Europe merely as a favorite topic of the historically, literarily, artistically, philosophically, etc., educated elites neglects the European type of civilization that underlies cultural achievements. These presuppose the spontaneous self-image of having the *right to orient oneself independently in life and in one's surroundings*. The planned MONTAIGNE exchange program for European students also ties in with this self-image (cf. chap. 5; Müller-Pelzer 2024, 75-82). Independence means relying solely on one's own experience, i.e., rejecting preconceived concepts, regardless of where they come from. One method of extricating oneself from the tumult of theories, opinions, promises, and whisperings is to place oneself in an unfamiliar European environment in order to start afresh, as it were, at the zero point of European self-determination. With the perspective of a child, but equipped with a critical eye, students can discover Europe as an affective atmosphere by growing into an unfamiliar language and settling into an unfamiliar style of Europeanization. The different styles of Europeanization, according to the simplified thesis, have retained a common emotional background that goes back to the European type of civilization. Being affected by this atmosphere while acquiring a language and feel compelled to make something new of themselves allows those affected to become Europeans. This avoids one-sided intellectual construction (e.g., in cultural studies), allowing corporeal sensation, emotion, and corporeal communication to come into their own. The affective European plurilingualism that students achieve during their European semester can be called a prefiguration of a European attitude to life that stems from the European type of civilization.

In Europe, no attempt has yet been made to conceive of the acquisition of a neighboring language *eo ipso* as a revision of the prevailing experience of the world and of oneself; and it was certainly unthinkable to implement this program in practice within the framework of a semester abroad in a neighboring European country (and, if possible, beyond this phase). There is no denying that a program that combines the acquisition of an unknown European language without the promise of practical benefits – be it financial gain, social prestige, or better career opportunities – seems outdated at first glance. However, it should be borne in mind that the coming together of European students in implanting common situations (cf. section 6.3) can help to consolidate a collective European atmosphere. This allows a decoupling from the hustle and bustle of civilizational acceleration, which has been diagnosed (and criticized) by sociologists and philosophers as a sign of contemporary postmodern societies (cf. Rosa 2005; Rosa 2013; Großheim 2013; Reckwitz <sup>3</sup>2020). Growing into European languages and at the same time settling into common ways of life also avoids fashionable ("commodified") forms of deceleration. Students unsettled by experiences of discrepancy are invited to emancipate themselves from the political guardianship of socially influential groups who claim to know exactly what Europe is, that everything has already been decided and that further discussion is superfluous. In this way, the concrete life experience that Europeans have in the different styles of Europeanization is overlooked and corrupted by the leveling *winner-loser* ideology that it is supposedly necessary to keep up in global competition.

This text and previously published works (see list of publications) argue that the MONTAIGNE program<sup>16</sup> can sensitize students to other styles of Europeanization, to the point of realizing: *This is part of who I am. This is where I belong.*

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<sup>16</sup> The author has the following qualifications for this undertaking: several years living in other European countries, French and Spanish literary and cultural studies, familiar with New Phenomenology, doctorate from University of Bonn on self-awareness in Montaigne's *Essais*, 25 years as head of German-French and German-Spanish branches of an international, integrated business administration program (with double degree), teaching in business French, business Spanish, and intercultural communication, experience in international student exchange, familiar with different academic cultures, publications, editor of an e-journal since 2005. See <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3517-8342>

## 1 The research question in context

Given that plurilingualism is still an emerging field of research, it is advisable to begin by explaining how the topic discussed here and the resulting program came about.

### 1.1 Against the compulsion to abstraction: Europe and its languages

If we understand Europe as a geographical, cultural-historical, or political entity, this could refer to any part of the globe. In this text, however, Europe is not discussed as a collection of objective facts, but as a bundle of situations in which collective atmospheres affect the people concerned to such an extent that they begin to consider themselves as Europeans. Besides artistic, philosophical, and literary experiences, this primarily includes affective plurilingualism.<sup>17</sup> Or to put it another way: feeling oneself European is not confined to the active or passive use of several European languages; rather, it is essential to be affected<sup>18</sup> by corporeally perceptible emotional atmospheres. Without the affective tone that makes European languages resonate, the concept of 'Europe' would become a pale (e.g., geopolitical) abstraction. The issues that are addressed are *subjective* issues (by no means always facts). To the prevailing self-image of the political and intellectual elites, who are fixated on efficiency and gaining power, the significance of being touched corporeally remains incomprehensible. They do not even take offense at the fact that Europe is only alive if Europeans are affected by addressed atmospheres and emotions. From this perspective, approaching the topic from the pre-reflexive experience (bottom-up) seems bizarre and unrealistic.

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<sup>17</sup> Based on the formulation by Großheim et al. (2014 b, 6), the working hypothesis is that plurilingualism, as a collectively responsible emotional phenomenon, is highly relevant to the lives of Europeans, whether in terms of their self-image or in terms of external control (e.g., through politics).

<sup>18</sup> The term 'affective involvement' is explained in detail in note 127 and 128. This is to prevent any misunderstanding that it refers to something like pleasant affection. Affective involvement can be accompanied by moving emotions, but these can also be awe-inspiring, solemn, astonishing, etc. An extreme example of this is the pair *tremendum* (chap. 4) and *fascinans* (chap. 6) developed by Rudolf Otto (*Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen*. Rostock: Biederstein, 1947) in 1917 in relation to encounters with a numinous power.

No doubt, as a nesting of countless situations, collective atmospheres, and deontological emotions, Europe does not belong in the political arena. The EU elites seem just interested in establishing their interpretative hegemony by forcing together contradicting Occidental and European schools of thought, religions, and worldviews, as well as cultural and civilizational achievements, in a reductive manner. The resulting construct of 'European values' has long since become common currency in political discourse.<sup>19</sup> This 'EU Europe' created top-down can be seen as a defiant response to the findings of historians such as Wolfgang Schmale (2009), who argue that no objectively determinable European identity that has persisted over the centuries can be identified.

The political arena is clearly unsuitable for discussing European plurilingualism. This is all the more true given that political science, sociological, legal, cultural studies, and other proposals are circulating in the public sphere that treat Europe as an objective state of affairs (germ. *Sachverhalt*) or fact, from which a particular section is analyzed, problems are discussed, and programs are debated according to the interests of the respective discipline. These specialist contributions are brought into the political arena and used for 'narratives' that serve political power interests (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2024, 16-30; 43-49; Bouchard 2018, 50). This proves that Europe, to quote Reinhard Koselleck (2006, 82), has become a 'concept in motion' (germ. *Bewegungsbegriff*): using the example of the concept of democracy, Koselleck (2006, 81-82) has shown the shifting significance of political concepts during the Enlightenment.

Neu ist nämlich, daß mit dem Begriff der Demokratie seit dem Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts ein neuer Erwartungshorizont erschlossen wird, der sich nicht mehr aus der Vergangenheit ableiten oder begründen lässt. [...] Hoffnung und Aktion werden in der verzeitlichten Demokratie zusammengedacht. Und für die Vollzugsweise im kommenden Verlauf der Geschichte wird zugleich der entsprechende Bewegungsbegriff mitgeschaffen: *Demokratismus*.

Damit stoßen wir auf eine der zahlreichen *-ismus-Prägungen*, die die Verzeitlichung der kategorialen Bedeutungen in das gesamte politisch-soziale Vokabular einbringen. Ich erinnere an *Patriotismus*, *Liberalismus*, *Republikanismus*, *Sozialismus*, *Kommunismus* und auch *Konservativismus*, die alle eine gemeinsame temporale Struktur haben. Immer handelt es sich um *Bewegungsbegriffe*, die in der Praxis dazu dienen, die sich auflösende Ständegesellschaft unter neuen Zielsetzungen sozial und politisch neu zu formieren. Gemeinsam ist diesen Ausdrücken, daß sie nicht auf einer vorgegebenen und gemeinsamen Erfahrung beruhen. Vielmehr *kompensieren sie ein Defizit an Erfahrung durch einen Zukunftsentwurf, der erst einzulösen sein wird.*“ (emphasis in original text)<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Hans Joas (2012) spoke of the 'self-sacralization of Europe' by the EU elites. With the help of this idealizing 'narrative', the EU elites attempt to evade criticism (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2021, 39-46).

<sup>20</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'What is new is that, since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of democracy has opened up a new horizon of expectations that can no longer be derived or justified from the past. [...] Hope and action are conceived together in temporalized democracy. And for the implementation in the course of history to come, the corresponding concept of movement is created at the same time: *democratism*.

Or to put it another way: in the case of the European Union, since 2000, a *state of affairs* tailored in various ways has been transformed by the changing demands of influential interest groups. Confronted with the challenge of becoming a global economic policy actor and at once advocate of universal values, the EU has increasingly taken on the characteristics of a (contradictory) *program* for the future of society. The conflicting social expectations have led to *problems* to which citizens, but also scientists, are responding.

While historians can analyze social trends in relative independence, the Europeans affected are caught up in the political arena, where power is being fought over. Although democratic principles dictate that there should be a free exchange of arguments, interested social groups are attempting to restrict the political public sphere in line with their own power interests. To this end, they currently have at their disposal an arsenal of accusations of discrimination that can lead to exclusion from the debate, e.g., racism, misogyny, homophobia, anti-Semitism, fascism, xenophobia, denial of reality, conspiracy theory, populism, and others. These are poor conditions for achieving a deeper understanding of Europe's plurilingualism. This is all the more serious given that attempts are also being made to influence affective repertoires and registers (cf. Slaby 2023 a, 72 f.) in order to change perceptions of what should and should not be considered outrageous, tolerable, or criminally relevant. If this leads to the subliminal transition from *facts* (actual or not) to *norms* becoming habitual, the public sphere splits into an ideologically determined media sphere dependent on the ruling interest groups and a critical public sphere.<sup>21</sup> From a socio-philosophical and historical perspective, Europe is as well a blueprint for the future, the content of which has yet to be realized by Europeans who seriously consider Paul Stock's questions. By excluding them, public discussion of the blueprint for the future runs the risk of reaching an impasse: the EU elites are indeed unaffected by Stock's questions cited above, arguing that these have been conclusively answered with the construction of the democratically constituted EU as a political union. Europeans however, seriously affected by these questions,

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This brings us to one of the numerous *-ism* coinages that introduce the temporalization of categorical meanings into the entire political and social vocabulary. I recall *patriotism*, *liberalism*, *republicanism*, *socialism*, *communism*, and also *conservatism*, all of which have a common temporal structure. These are always *movement concepts* that serve in practice to socially and politically reform the disintegrating class society under new objectives. What these expressions have in common is that they are not based on a predetermined and shared experience. Rather, *they compensate for a deficit of experience with a blueprint for the future that has yet to be realized.* ' (emphasis in the original text)

<sup>21</sup> On the enforcement of emotional repertoires in the German public sphere (e.g., on the occasion of the 'Russian war of aggression' and the 'culture of remembrance'), cf. Chapter 7.

are thus left with no choice but to seek a free space for discussion and to constitute a critical public<sup>22</sup> in which their own life practices can be questioned in terms of what kind of Europeans they want to be and how they want to live together in the future. This brings their own, unadulterated life experience to the center of attention: in contrast to the "*compulsion to abstraction*" ("*Zwang zur Abstraktion*", Koselleck 2006, 84; emphasis in the original text) brought about by the advance of 'concepts in motion', complete empiricism, which also encompasses the pre-reflexive, prepersonal, pre-linguistic realm, becomes an indispensable resource. The MONTAIGNE program outlined in Müller-Pelzer (2021; 2024) is intended to contribute to this.

The *compulsion to abstraction* is no less problematic in the scientific study of language(s). The affective concern that occurs at the pre-reflexive level, which is paramount in the discussion of European plurilingualism, cannot be addressed by linguistics for methodological reasons: It is not possible to objectify affectivity for the purpose of detached investigation. For this reason, the 'materiality' of human speech, i.e., its embedding in situations of life experience, could not be given any attention from a mentalistic (e.g., generative grammar) or a constructivist perspective.<sup>23</sup>

However, a reorientation was in the works: as early as 1974, sociolinguist Louis-Jean Calvet had examined the effects of French colonialism on the colonized languages of the Maghreb. In recent decades, numerous linguists have spoken out on the basis of extensive field studies (cf. B. Busch 2021, chap. 4; see also D. Busch 2022). The second edition of the *Handbook of Plurilingualism* (2024) edited by McKinney/Makoe/Zavala, which documents the current debate on the appropriate handling of postcolonial plurilingualism in the "global South"<sup>24</sup>, marks a turning point that is visible to a wider audience. Without a fundamental review of the implicit assumptions of (colonial) European scientific methodology on the topic of plurilingualism, colonial language policy would continue, which for centuries has deformed and suppressed indigenous idioms in their communal life. But beyond that, the insight has prevailed that it is not enough

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<sup>22</sup> The first sociological analyses date from the 2000s. Cf. Rosanvallon (2006).

<sup>23</sup> Examples of theoretical approaches at a high level of abstraction include: (1) language as a sign system; (2) language as a construct; (3) language as cognition; (4) language as a brain physiological function; (5) language as information transmission; (6) speaking language as an action; (7) language as an unavoidable basis of thought. – Strictly separate from this is the acquisition of a European 'brother language' according to Trabant (2014, 33 f.), who refers to Humboldt's 'world views'.

<sup>24</sup> This term has now become established in the literature. It is used to summarize the different societies subjugated by colonial regimes. See Makoni/Pennycook (2024, 17-30).

to deal with a linguistically definable problem; rather, it is a complex theoretical and practical problem that goes far beyond the revision of a single science. Ultimately, it is an existential question of what kind of life the different regions of the "global South" want to create for themselves in the future. Added to this are practical challenges that are difficult to grasp: as colonial languages, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, and English would have to be taken into account first and foremost. In addition, the number of linguistic phenomena is immense in geographical, ethnographic, and developmental terms. Another factor is the heterogeneous language policies of the current American, African, and Asian states, as well as Australia, which have an impact on plurilingualism, which is only partially officially recorded. Finally, this schematic recording is fundamentally revolutionized by the realization that the changing assessment of reality alters and, in many cases, shatters the self-perception of speakers. The linguistic methodology shaped by colonial interests cannot therefore be used uncritically, including the *termini technici* such as language, mother tongue and plurilingualism.

From this we conclude that a singular definition of plurilingualism is no longer possible, if it ever was. (McKinney / Zavala / Makoe 2024, XXV) Plurilingualism from such a perspective is not [...] a universal category; indeed, the very idea that plurilingualism could refer to the same thing in diverse contexts of communication is revealed as an absurdity. (Makoni / Pennycook 2024, 18)<sup>25</sup>

The experiences gathered in the "global South" sharpen our view of European plurilingualism. The political debate in Europe about how to deal with plurilingualism is hardly less heated than it is there. Here, too, Europeans' perception of the world and of themselves is shifting, as can be seen in the dispute over what is meant by the term 'Europe'.

In the sphere of scholarship, however, till now these upheavals are hardly noticeable, as can be seen in the example of Peter Sloterdijk (2024). As a 'continent without characteristics' as he laconically puts it, Europe lacks an objectifiable identity. But after the above explanation of subjective facts as opposed to objective ones, it should be clear that this is not a shortcoming. For him, Europe becomes a book of almost unlimited possibilities, inviting educated readers to insert 'bookmarks' according to their subjective affections. However, although Sloterdijk's

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<sup>25</sup> The difference between multilingualism and plurilingualism, or the variants, would have to be taken into account.

contribution to the chair at the Collège de France is entitled "L'invention de l'Europe par les langues et les cultures" (2024), the problem of European plurilingualism is left aside.<sup>26</sup>

New Phenomenology, which takes subjective, i.e., corporeal experience, as the starting point for reflection, has, on the other hand, created conditions that allow European plurilingualism to be embedded in an 'aura of significance' (germ. *Hof der Bedeutsamkeit*, Schmitz 2002, 26) of the life experience of Europeans, which usually goes unnoticed. In concrete terms, this means that speaking, like running, singing, walking, etc., is initially viewed as a corporeal act (cf. chapter 3), which during an initial phase becomes *human* speaking, running, singing, walking, etc. In human speech, there is a transition from preformation (corporeal communication) to epigenesis (sentence-like speech), through which something new can emerge (cf. Schmitz 2017, 9). In analogy to growing into one's mother tongue, the acquisition of another European language can be understood as growing into it; accordingly, settling into an unfamiliar Europeanization style should also be understood in reference to a child integrating into situations in its environment (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2021, 350-365; 2024, 113-122).

This unusual approach requires explanation. The question arises as to what extent young adults who lead their lives in a transition from one level of personal emancipation to another can benefit from insights into the language acquisition process in early childhood. Based on findings from corporeal phenomenology (germ. *Leibphänomenologie*), it can be assumed that growing into an unfamiliar language, like growing into one's mother tongue, cannot be constructed top-down as if it were an intellectual process; rather, growing into a language must be viewed bottom-up as corporeo-atmospheric, pre-reflexive experience (cf. chapter 6). The young adults in question here are certainly skilled at freeing themselves from corporeal and atmospheric stamped situations of their youth and shaping their lives through interconnectable constellations.

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<sup>26</sup> The program of convergence of different styles of Europeanization explained in this text should not be confused with the historiographical reconstruction of the diverse filiations (cf. François & Serrier 2019) through which European cultures are linked to the originally Occidental, then European heritage. Certain topics have thus remained permanent points of reference for mutual scholarly exchange, e.g., questions of legitimate rule (the *translatio imperii*, sovereignty, the right to resist, structures of rule), overlapping cultural references (e.g., Roman law, philosophical traditions, artistic styles as an engagement with the inhabited space), ideological orientations and organizations (e.g., different directions and forms of Christianity, heresies, freethinking), values (e.g., human dignity, personal freedom, the unity of duties and rights), but also scrupulous self-examination (e.g., Petrarch, Gracián, the French moralists) and the paths of (Christian) faith. See also 'Founding myths of Europe in literature, music, and art.' <https://www.gruendungsmythen-europas.uni-bonn.de/de/buchreihe>

However, even at the level of reflection on personal emancipation, students cannot do without anchoring themselves in corporeal emotion and communication. The aforementioned experiences of discrepancy in the face of the discourse of the EU elites, study problems, disappointed love, etc., are occasions for personal regression that confront those affected with their corporeality:

[...] der Leib ist keine abgesonderte Provinz, sondern der universale Resonanzboden, wo alles Betroffensein des Menschen seinen Sitz hat und in die Initiative des eigenen Verhaltens umgeformt wird; nur im Verhältnis zu seiner Leiblichkeit bestimmt sich der Mensch als Person. (Schmitz <sup>2</sup>1995, 116)<sup>27</sup>

Schmitz treats the return to pre-reflexive experience, as envisaged by the MONTAIGNE program, under the anthropological heading of *playful identification* as a variation of *personal design* (germ. *Entwurf*, cf. Schmitz <sup>2</sup>1992, 174-178; all following translations in this paragraph by W.M.-P.). However, the personal design serves the purpose of personal emancipation: the personal design 'is normally a distanceless objectification of oneself in playful identification' (op. cit., 181). Nevertheless, in the present case there can be no question of a distance-less adoption of the child's perspective: for the young adult, it is rather a matter of 'gaining distance from one's own unbiased point of view' and 'reflecting on one's own point of view from the foreign point of view adopted through playful identification' (ibid.). In this case, Schmitz speaks of the 'playful identification of oneself with distance'.<sup>28</sup> Rediscovering the abilities available to children, i.e., gaining situational competence through corporeal sensation and openness to atmospheres (cf. chapter 6), requires students to become more flexible in their composure. Earlier generations, who lived in highly hierarchical societies, would have found this approach to language learning unreasonable. Today, however, techniques for corporeal ('mental') relaxation have become commonplace in many areas of activity and continuing education, because rigid adherence to a rigid personal composure has been recognized as an obstacle to

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<sup>27</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: '[...] the feeling and felt body is not a separate province, but the universal sounding board where all human affections have their seat and are transformed into the initiative of one's own behavior; only in relation to their corporeality do humans define themselves as persons.'

<sup>28</sup> For practical reasons the original sentences follow here: "Der Entwurf 'ist normalerweise distanzloses Sichobjektivieren in spielerischer Identifizierung' (a.a.O., 181). Im vorliegenden Fall kann aber keine Rede von einer distanzlosen Übernahme der kindlichen Perspektive sein: Beim jungen Erwachsenen geht es vielmehr darum, 'vom unbefangenen eigenen Standpunkt Abstand' zu gewinnen und 'von dem durch spielerische Identifizierung eingenommenen fremden Standpunkt aus auf den eigenen zu reflektieren' (ebda.). In diesem Fall spricht Schmitz von der 'Abstand nehmenden spielerischen Identifizierung seiner selbst.' "

interacting with other people. In the European semester of the MONTAIGNE program, pre-linguistic relaxation exercises (inspired by acting lessons, improvisational games, choral singing without words, improvisational theater) are therefore used at the beginning (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2024, chap. 2.6). This allows a first step to be taken towards sensitization of corporeal sensations, emotions and atmospheres, as well as a holistic understanding of situations (cf. chap. 6). This *sensitivity* is the organ that will later enable us to perceive appeals and offers emanating from the *nomos* (programmatic meanings) of the common European type of civilization.

The phenomenological approach outlined above for a deeper understanding of European plurilingualism is situated in contemporary history and philosophy. First, a few observations on the real political situation will follow; then, an outline will be given of how the themes of Europe and subjectivity intersected with the emergence of phenomenology in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 1.2 The current political situation

Academic foreign language teaching is predominantly geared towards foreign language teaching in schools. This results in a dependence on the national school and education policies of the respective country, which are integrated into the education policies of the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe (CoE). Since 1990, the motto of the expanding Common Market, "ever closer union", has been given priority in foreign language teaching, with the promotion of plurilingualism becoming a central focus (cf. initiating CEFR and RePA). At the same time, however, the conflict with the opposing program of global English became apparent: Meanwhile, economic, technological, and political interests have ensured that global English is now poised to become the first language of communication in the socially relevant areas of European societies<sup>29</sup> – not only in the Scandinavian countries, the Baltic countries, and the Netherlands, but above all in Germany - rather than a second language.

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<sup>29</sup> Thielmann (2022, 534) has shown that, significantly, even on the subject of plurilingualism, the authors of the CEFR themselves propagated the Anglophone conception of science in Europe: 'The Common European Framework of Reference is a product of British colonial history.'

However, the conceptless immigration from non-European countries,<sup>30</sup> which began in 2010, culminated in 2015, and then continued unabated, displaced attention from European diversity. The school and education policies of European countries had to respond increasingly poorly to the global, multicultural challenge by taking non-European languages of origin into account. Today, not only has the handling of migrant languages become a separate field of research, but the topic of global multiculturalism has also reached the curricula. Nonetheless, the EU's involvement in the war in Ukraine has simultaneously led to increased transnational military and arms cooperation with NATO and the US, reinforcing global English as the means of communication for the 'really important issues' (European Council 2025).<sup>31</sup> In addition, Anglo-American publication and citation cartels have long since achieved a global monopoly in scientific research (cf. Gehrman 2022; Georget 2016, 15); in the academic teaching of certain subjects, the proportion of Anglo-American teaching programs is steadily increasing. The triumph of artificial intelligence originating in Silicon Valley also makes use of global English. Finally, the electronic mass media (especially in the language of advertising) and other areas of application have created a massive Anglophone pull.

This sketch of some relevant circumstances of the present time suggests why there is no longer an open-ended discussion: But is it right that socially dominant interests should determine the objectives and associated concepts for foreign language teaching? The official answer is well known: Globalization<sup>32</sup> in economics, technology, research, teaching, and politics leaves no other choice. This creates the impression of a practical constraint.<sup>33</sup> Here are a few stages in the development: In 2001, the CoE described the experience of language learners with other languages and cultures as an important contribution to the development of personality and identity ("Common European Framework of Reference for Languages", CEFR); in 2018 and 2020, the EU agreed in the "Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture" (RFCDC) that the goal of "intercultural communicative competence" was optimal for the

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<sup>30</sup> Pascouau (2018): ' [...] despite numerous reports from actors in the field describing the migration situation between 2013 and 2015, the member states did not take the measure of the phenomenon. ' Collier (2027; 2026) adds with regard to Angela Merkel: against her better judgment.

<sup>31</sup> " SAFE forms the first pillar of the European Commission's 'ReArm Europe'/Readiness 2030 plan. "

<sup>32</sup> This term is used here and in the following in the same way as it is used in public discourse, namely in the sense of "Hayekianism" (according to Streeck 2015, 15, note 10), although globalization could also be conceived differently.

<sup>33</sup> This is a standard procedure used by dominant groups to assert their interests or defend their achievements, whether in industry, agriculture, healthcare, etc.

development of "IDC (intercultural and democratic competences)" (European Centre of Modern Languages, ECML; cf. Nemouchi/Byram 2025, 46). Some foreign language educators ultimately adopt the goal of "intercultural citizenship" (Byram). Overall, this is a struggle for a current *concept of education* that is geared towards the comprehensive globalization of all areas of life by powerful educational economic interest groups (in addition to the CoE, e.g., OECD/PISA, UNESCO, and relevant German private corporate foundations). In Germany, the criticism that was voiced early on in France (Maurer 2011) met with little response. For Germany, the 'model European' pupil, it was apparently too far-fetched to accuse the EU and the CoE of having an ideological interest using plurilingualism (not *European* plurilingualism) in schools as a political instrument.

### 1.3 The philosophical starting point

Instead of the historically ambiguous term "education" (germ. *Bildung*), the term "episteme"—following Michel Foucault – has been used for some time. Foucault emphasizes that this does not refer to scientific knowledge (*epistémè*) as in Greek philosophy. Rather, it refers to the patterns of perception, concepts, discourses, and hierarchy of values of a given time that are taken for granted. ' Episteme is the dispositif that allows us to distinguish not between the true and the false, but between what is scientifically qualifiable and what is not. ' (Foucault 1978, 124; transl. W.M.-P.) What is meant here is an upstream filter that highlights what is generally considered debatable, but rejects what is considered non-debatable. It is useful to juxtapose this characterization with Gerhart Schmidt's evolving description:

Das [...] in seiner gesellschaftlichen Bedeutung anerkannte Wissen ist die B i l d u n g. Die Bildung umfasst das Wissen nicht nur, sie ordnet es auch. Die Ordnung der Wissensgehalte ist sozial bedingt und darf nicht für ihre wissenschaftliche Ordnung gehalten werden; es kann allerdings sein, daß die Bildung eine wissenschaftliche Ordnung fordert. [...]

Die Bildung nimmt das Wissen in sich auf wie ein Gehäuse. Sie verleiht ihm Festigkeit und Bestimmtheit gegen die menschliche Unwissenheit. Das Wissen paßt sich dem Gehäuse irgendwie an, und man beobachtet, daß das Bildungsgehäuse dem Wissen mit der Zeit zu eng wird. Die Bildungsbelange hemmen die freie Entfaltung des Wissens. Aber es muss auch anerkannt werden, daß ohne die Bildung das Wissen jene straffe Organisationsform nicht gewänne, welche einen Wissensfortschritt erst möglich macht. Die Bildung schafft die Möglichkeit, daß einzelne

ihr Wissensstreben aufeinander abstimmen. Der Bildungsinstitution geht es dabei nicht um das Wissen als solches (von seltenen Ausnahmen und Utopien abgesehen), sondern um dessen gesellschaftlichen Zweck. [...]

Einschneidender als die didaktische Verknüpfung der Wissensgebiete ist die mit der Bildung einhergehende Feststellung einer Rangordnung. Die Bildung stellt den Rang der Wissensinhalte fest. Die Wissensinhalte, welche in das Bildungswissen übernommen werden, sind dadurch als gesellschaftlich bedeutsam anerkannt. [Den Rang der Wissensinhalte zu kennen, wird als sekundäres Wissen bezeichnet.]

Mit der Zeit kann sich freilich das gesunde Verhältnis umkehren. Das sekundäre Wissen überwuchert dann das primäre Wissen, dieses wird in der Bildung erstickt. Die Bildung selbst erstarrt, sie fördert nur mehr eine traditional bestimmte Geistigkeit. Das Wissen gerät in Gegensatz zur Bildung und feindet sie an; es wird zur *A u f k l ä r u n g*. (Schmidt 1963, 13-14; emphasis in the original text)<sup>34</sup>

Today, it should be added that primary knowledge is stifled above all by the excessive, mostly unsecured, preformatted electronic information available, so that the opportunity to acquire primary knowledge must first be uncovered (see chapter 6).

These ideas are encountered in abstract, condensed form in Hermann Schmitz's explanation of his three-level model: he distinguishes between involuntary life experience<sup>35</sup> (1) and the level of theories and evaluations (3). In between lies the *basis of abstraction* (2),

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<sup>34</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' Knowledge that is recognized in its social significance is *e d u c a t i o n*. Education not only encompasses knowledge, it also organizes it. The organization of knowledge is socially conditioned and should not be considered scientific; However, it may be that education demands a scientific order. [...]

Education absorbs knowledge like a shell. It gives it strength and certainty against human ignorance. Knowledge somehow adapts to the shell, and one observes that the shell of education becomes too narrow for knowledge over time. Educational concerns inhibit the free development of knowledge. But it must also be recognized that without education, knowledge would not acquire the strict form of organization that makes progress in knowledge possible in the first place. Education creates the possibility for individuals to coordinate their pursuit of knowledge. Educational institutions are not concerned with knowledge as such (apart from rare exceptions and utopias), but with its social purpose. [...]

More decisive than the didactic linking of fields of knowledge is the establishment of a hierarchy that accompanies education. Education determines the rank of knowledge content. The knowledge content that is incorporated into educational knowledge is thereby recognized as socially significant. [Knowing the rank of knowledge content is referred to as secondary knowledge.]

Over time, of course, this healthy relationship can be reversed. Secondary knowledge then overwhelms primary knowledge, which is stifled in education. Education itself becomes rigid, promoting only a traditionally defined intellectuality. Knowledge comes into conflict with education and antagonizes it; it becomes *e n l i g h t e n m e n t*. ' (emphasis in the original text)

<sup>35</sup> ' The involuntary experience of life, understood as the epitome of everything that happens to people without them having deliberately planned it, is the only reliable source of knowledge for all sciences that do not operate solely with formal logic. ' (Schmitz (2007, 2, 820; transl. W.M.-P.)

[...] die zäh prägende Schicht vermeintlicher Selbstverständlichkeiten, die [...] den Filter bildet. Die Abstraktionsbasis entscheidet darüber, was so wichtig genommen wird, daß es durch Worte und Begriffe Eingang in Theorien und Bewertungen findet. Deshalb sind gegensätzliche Theorien und Bewertungen auf derselben Abstraktionsbasis möglich. (Schmitz 1989, 7)<sup>36</sup>

Foucault's definition of episteme and Schmidt's definition of education converge with the concept of the basis of abstraction introduced by Schmitz. This makes it easier to understand why Hermann Schmitz asserts that the untested, traditionally overestimated abstraction basis of European sciences must be reduced in order to avoid adopting the supposed self-evident truths offered by tradition as predetermined questions and implicit assumptions (cf. chapter 1.4). This applies to the widespread self-image of modern science: the public clings to the belief that it should be regarded as the unsurpassable key to solving all of humanity's problems. This view must be countered in the spirit of the three philosophers cited above: positive sciences, which search for objective facts, have no access to subjective facts, such as those encountered when coming in contact with an unfamiliar European language that can affect you deeply, make inescapable demands on you, and challenge you. However, subjective and objective facts are so intertwined in life experience that those affected are faced with the question of how the two fit together (cf. Schmitz <sup>2</sup>1995 a, 5-10). Therefore, the foundations of positive sciences ('episteme', 'rigid education', 'level of abstraction') that are taken for granted must be questioned, in the case of European plurilingualism, their relationship to involuntary life experience. As a result, this topic will provide sufficient opportunities to demonstrate the usefulness of phenomenologically informed terminology that is more closely aligned with spontaneous experience.

Scientific models that seek to explain perception, speech, etc. on a chemical-neurophysiological basis can be disregarded because they adhere to the traditional division between an inner world and an outer world. Based on this, it would be necessary for an object in the external world of a human being to have a representative in their internal world in order for them to become aware of it. This questionable construct has not yet been definitively dispensed with.<sup>37</sup> Almost all known language acquisition theories refer to the reified psyche (or consciousness): the

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<sup>36</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' [...] the tenacious layer of supposed self-evident truths that [...] forms the filter. The basis of abstraction determines what is considered so important that it finds its way into theories and evaluations through words and concepts. This is why contradictory theories and evaluations are possible on the same basis of abstraction. '

<sup>37</sup> In paradoxical competition, the soul is also presented as a house inhabited on the lower floor by irrational drives, on the middle floor by controllable emotions, and on the upper floor by reason exercising its control (cf. Schmitz <sup>2</sup>2016, 19-27).

stimulus-response model of behaviorism, nativist-mentalist constructivism, cognitivism (which mostly uses neurophysiological arguments), and interactionism, which combines these hypotheses, namely nativist and cognitivist factors with the mental disposition for sociality. For some contemporary language theories, the subject learning a language is a being whose functioning is often presented in analogy to a computer.<sup>38</sup>

If we trace the emergence of the contemporary subject problem, we find that it overlaps with the theme of Europe: the crisis of the subject cannot be separated from the crisis of Europe in its historical origins.

#### 1.4 Subjectivity and Europe as a topic in phenomenology

Foreign language teaching is a specialized discipline within language teaching, which in turn is part of general teaching methodology belonging itself to applied linguistics; together with theoretical linguistics, it forms the scientific discipline of linguistics. Foreign language teaching has different strands that have developed through contact with other scientific disciplines: psychology, sociology, pragmatics, communication science, and political science. Since these disciplines themselves are highly differentiated, this diversity is also reflected in foreign language teaching concepts. This rough classification is trivial and is only mentioned here because it reflects the general tendency of the sciences to increasingly break down human experience into discrete portions that have only a very tenuous connection, if any, with involuntary life experience. This is also well known and has led to various attempts to overcome this 'portioning'. In the past, renowned scholars have presented remarkable syntheses. However, this does not solve the fundamental problem that, for methodological reasons, the sciences have no access to pre-

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<sup>38</sup> In constructivist and cognitivist language theories, 'brain narratives' are the rule. Cognitivist-oriented language teaching aims to 'understand how language is created and continues to change in the heads of learners' (Roche/Suñer 2017). The constellationist and intellectualist assumption is the prerequisite for talking about 'cognitive hardware' and a 'suitable processing apparatus in the brain' (Roche 2020, 51-98). See also the handbook by Gogolin/Hansen/McMonagle/Rauch (2020, 8), which is based on Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic approach. Here, too, we find a combination of cognitivist-constructivist and action-oriented-interactionist motives.

linguistic, pre-reflexive, and prepersonal experience, which is also part of the whole, involuntary life experience.

As a result, since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when modern, increasingly differentiated sciences emerged, a division has arisen: philosophy and the relevant sciences addressed human experience, but meant something different by it. This is why communication initially broke down.<sup>39</sup> In didactic literature, for example, it's all about the importance of language acquisition for the formation of identity, and in some cases also of plural identities, but this is generally based on psychological and sociological theories. The philosophical dimension of identity has been neglected.

Among other approaches, cognitive psychology and social interactionism (L. Vygotsky, J. Piaget, J. Bruner) have emerged since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continue to shape our view of the linguistic development of children and adolescents and their identity formation. In response to behaviorism, which spread from the USA in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, psychological approaches emerged that focused on the individual's search for orientation in their personal and social environment, e.g., humanistic psychology, understanding psychology, critical psychology, and praxeology (C. Rogers, K. Jaspers, K. Holzkamp, P. Bourdieu). In the latter two research areas in particular, attempts have been made to address everyday experience contrary to its methodological exclusion.

The contemporary endeavor to go back *beyond* the conceptual foundations of the individual sciences in order to arrive at a renewed relationship to oneself and the world resulted in a new edition of the European cultural crisis around 1900, which, from a philosophical point of view, had its origin in the crisis of the subject.<sup>40</sup> This crisis is unique to Europe. With the Enlightenment and modern natural sciences, the subject had lost the special position claimed by

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<sup>39</sup> In current discourse, interdisciplinary collaboration between psychological and philosophical approaches is regaining importance. Over the past two decades, for example, philosophical psychology has established itself as an independent field of research and is increasingly proving to be an interface between philosophy and empirical psychology. See the presentation of the Philosophical Psychology Lab at the Clinic for General Psychiatry, Center for Psychosocial Medicine, University of Heidelberg: <https://www.klinikum.uni-heidelberg.de/zentrum-fuer-psycho-soziale-medizin-zpm/klinik-fuer-allgemeine-psychiatrie/ueber-uns/sektionen/phaenomenologie/forschung/philosophical-psychology-lab>

<sup>40</sup> The following literature was used for the summary presentation: Großheim 2002; 2018; 1991; Großheim/Kluck 2010; Kluck 2018; Großheim/Kluck/Nörenberg 2014 a; Nörenberg 2014; Sommer 2021; Schmitz 1996; 1995. The following summary is intended for non-specialists.

Descartes. In a world of objective facts, it had become placeless and had to retreat to the radical consequence of Romantic irony (Friedrich Schlegel), according to which the ego was imagined as floating freely above the world of things. In this sense, a motif originating with Goethe found its philosophical echo in Schopenhauer and Stirner: "Ich hab' mein Sach' auf nichts gestellt." (' I have placed my trust in nothing. ') In his writings, Kierkegaard illuminated the other side, the vertigo in the face of one's own groundlessness, from which those affected hope to save themselves by leaping into faith. The still unresolved issue of subjectivity led to a radical return to the origins of European philosophy at the beginning of the 20th century. Probably the most significant philosophical consequence was Edmund Husserl's founding of phenomenology. "Phänomenologie sollte nicht nur Erneuerung der Philosophie, sondern immer auch *Erneuerung der Kultur* sein."<sup>41</sup> (Großheim & Kluck 2010, 9; emphasis in the original) As the main contributing factors to this problem Husserl cited the juggling of vague and untested concepts, bold constructions, and the uncritical adoption of intellectual traditions. Hence his famous motto: "Zurück zu den Sachen!" (' Back to the things! ') However, even Husserl left the subject problem unresolved: the fundamental turn to phenomena did not ultimately prevent the abrupt division of the subject into the ' natural ' human being and the ' phenomenological ego. ' According to Husserl, everyday experience should be overcome with the help of a strictly scientific method (cf. Großheim 2018, 309). From the perspective of the present study, however, the "Heroismus der Vernunft" (Husserl 1954, 348; ' heroism of reason ') which transcends everyday experience, would assign Europeans without philosophical training the role of extras who, based on their experiences, would be unable to find access to Europe.

At the beginning of his intellectual parcours, Martin Heidegger set himself the goal of revisiting the original questions that had arisen for the philosophers of ancient Greece from their *life experience*. Heidegger turned away from the philosophical tradition, which he perceived as powerless, and formulated a program for a new beginning: To be content with the results of tradition meant to unnoticedly adopt the guiding perspectives and concepts along with the ready-made answers. In contrast, the early Heidegger described the path of wanting to know oneself as "im *abbauenden Rückgang* zu den ursprünglichen Motivquellen der Explikation vorzudringen" (Heidegger, 1985, 368, emphasis in the original text; all transl. W.M.-P.: ' advancing

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<sup>41</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' Phenomenology should not only be a renewal of philosophy, but always also a renewal of culture. '

in the *dismantling return* to the original sources of motivation for explication'). In doing so, he drew on the insight of the early J. G. Fichte that strict subjectivity<sup>42</sup> must be distinguished from positional subjectivity: according to the traditional understanding, the 'soul' is part of the world. However, Heidegger abandoned this project as early as the beginning of the 1920s. When he commented on Europe a good ten years later, he regarded it only as a synonym for the abandonment of being in the sense that being had departed from existence (cf. Heidegger 1993, 31-41). In 1935, his thinking revolved around the task of German philosophy to save Europe from "Asien" and its own "Entwurzlung" (Heidegger 1993, 31; transl. W.M.-P.: 'uprooting'). He was no longer interested in strict subjectivity.

Heidegger's radical questioning of philosophical tradition remains significant because his attitude can encourage Europeans not to rely on specialized mediators, but to draw on their own experience. They themselves are in a position to ask questions about how to live their lives: *What kind of European do I want to be?* This question must be kept open: to rush to a definition of essence at a high level of abstraction would mean skipping over the meaningful impressions of life experience. If, for example, we assume from the outset that intersubjectivity is constituted by interpersonal relationships between mature, articulate people, we would be overlooking the pre-reflexive experience that today manifests itself as a diffuse but pressing uncertainty among many Europeans.

Since the 1960s, a number of authors have shifted the focus of publicly perceived philosophical debates to political theologies in which humans are not discussed as political actors, but as sufferers and victims of self-centered activism. European civilization, striving for power and intellectual superiority, is rejected and found guilty. In contrast to this radical devaluation, the suffering human being is elevated to the status of lord. The result is what can be described as an 'absolutism of the other' (Nörenberg, 2014): in the humiliated human being, the ego encounters a numinous power that exposes it as irretrievably guilty. Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, John D. Caputo, and Giorgio Agamben can be counted among this group committed to messianic thinking.

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<sup>42</sup> This is based on affective involvement, through which discourse about the human being is refracted onto the concrete human being and the richer subjective facts that apply to him or her (cf. Schmitz 2018, 11-60).

In his essay *L'autre cap* (1992), Jacques Derrida programmatically unfolds Europe's guilt. The author has chosen the historical moment of 1990 and the global upheavals that were foreseeable at that time. For him, the new world situation is not only an occasion to reject political expansionism and economic dynamism; Derrida also takes stock of the idea of Europe and European philosophy. His thesis is that Europe, as the epitome of maximum civilizational creativity *and* destruction spanning the globe, has reached its end; from the horizon of its end, it must become aware of the 'other shore', the 'other cape', as something incommensurable. As in other writings, Derrida is keen to make the unexpected counterpart plausible as uncontrollable, as an aporia for logical thinking, as a "*double bind*". The completely other, 'of which I am a hostage'<sup>43</sup>, is seen as the 'cape of the other, to which we must answer' (Derrida, 1992, 16), but cannot. He emphasizes this 'impossibility of possibility' (Derrida, 1992, 33) in order to make a return, reversal, or conventional repentant departure from ancient Greek filiation impossible. Derrida expresses a quasi-prophetic warning about the approaching, monstrous event, 'what remains to come in Europe today, what is still searching for itself in Europe today and promises itself or announces itself as a promise' (Derrida, 1992, 26; all transl. W.M.-P.).<sup>44</sup>

Derrida's essay can also be read as an attempt to respond to Heidegger's diagnosis that Germany – and thus Europe – must face up to its 'own uprooting' and 'homelessness'. At the very least, Derrida's text ends with the idea that Europe is not only being destroyed in its historical form,

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Gesetzeskraft. Der "mystische" Grund der Autorität*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 45, cited in Nörenberg (2014, 185–186).

<sup>44</sup> At the same time, the presence of the Other, heralded by threats, remains strangely worldless, as if the struggle with the numinous absorbed the ability to concretize. The enigmatic 'openness' of the other cape implies for 'us' today the equally irrefutable and impossible duty to accept the Other, the Others, the strangers. This means much more than the state asylum policy in the European Union: if one were to limit oneself to this, it would mean the unreasonableness of demanding, for example, that the numinous fill out forms in a foreign language and present reasons for justification. The task of politics therefore amounts to its self-abandonment, because there should be no examination of the different claims in political reality (Derrida 1992, 56–58). Nörenberg (2014, 214) emphasizes that a decision on who should be admitted therefore has 'absolutely decisionist traits'. However, some sufficiently robust contemporaries see no difficulty in converting the overwhelming power of the numinous into their own power, sanctified by good intentions, and translating it into small, politically practical gains to the applause of social interest groups (see Assmann, <sup>5</sup>2020; critically Müller-Pelzer 2021, 146–165). Europeans who expect enlightenment about Europe in order to orient themselves in their lives are thus unexpectedly confronted by Derrida with the alternative of opening themselves to the intrusion of the numinous or withdrawing from it. Heller (2008, 93–106) had already expressed doubts about the consistency of this thesis.

but that the impending rule of the 'other cape' will also deprive it of the mere possibility of becoming a space for a newly founded homeland.<sup>45</sup>

The experience of being overcome by emotions that reflect affective consternation through a numinous presence is an indication of human corporeality. However, in Derrida's text, this is conspicuously ignored, even though phenomenological thinking had been intensively engaged with it at the same time (cf. Schmitz 2011, 147–173).<sup>46</sup> Husserl had still mingled the felt body in the traditional way with the content of the soul, the store of perceptions, sensations, and acts. Heidegger, too, did not present a new anthropology; in favor of reflecting on the relationship between life and existence, his adherence to the triad of ' body – soul – spirit ' remained in the background. Merleau-Ponty, for his part, saw existence as the common basis of soul and body; the felt body remained a mystery that could not be deciphered. Bernhard Waldenfels goes beyond this in that he understands corporeal being as being claimed by the demanding, even overdemanding other – a clear reference to the ' absolutism of the other ' (Nörenberg). In Waldenfels' view, the subject's own action proves to be fundamentally fractured, a "diastasis" (Sternagel 2012, 116–129).

This (incomplete) digression into 20<sup>th</sup>-century philosophy seems far removed from the topic of European plurilingualism. However, it is justified insofar as the fundamental shift towards corporeality, as advocated by New Phenomenology, which will now be explained, will be decisive for the understanding of European plurilingualism developed in the present text.

### 1.5 The relevance of New Phenomenology for European plurilingualism

After examining different views on the relationship between existence and life, including the misunderstandings that have arisen in recent French phenomenology in the reception of Husserl and Heidegger, Christian Sommer (2021, 39-76) comes to the following conclusion:

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<sup>45</sup> Several philosophical and scientific authors of various backgrounds have opposed this conclusion and devoted extensive research to European values (see, for example, Höffe <sup>2</sup>2023; Hasse, D. N. <sup>2</sup>2022; Joas & Wiegand <sup>4</sup>2006).

<sup>46</sup> In addition, the thesis of a ' prepersonal cogito ' (Sartre 1943), the pre-reflective ' familiarity with oneself ', should be mentioned.

C'est ici, peut-être, que s'ouvre la possibilité de subvertir la dichotomie entre vie et existence et, en transgressant résolument l'« Anthropologieverbot » ou la « Sperrklausel » de Husserl et de Heidegger qui a inhibé certaines possibilités de la phénoménologie, d'affirmer résolument un tournant anthropologique de la phénoménologie, de penser à la fois quelque chose comme une conscience qui se décrit phénoménologiquement elle-même en étant ancrée dans un corps vivant, un *Leib* pensé comme organisme vivant dans son évolution ou anthropogenèse [...]. (Sommer, 2021, 75-76)<sup>47</sup>

The wish list formulated by Sommer in 2021 with regard to France had already been realized in the German-speaking world with the emergence of New Phenomenology as early as 1964: With the *System der Philosophie* (1964–1981) by Hermann Schmitz (1928–2021), human existence as a whole is developed from corporeality, thereby laying the foundation for a new anthropology that can contribute to overcoming the self-alienation of Europeans.<sup>48</sup> Corporeality as the basis of anthropology has since been shown to be compatible with the concept of enactivism ("embodied and situated cognition", Gallagher/Zahavi, 2023; cf. Alloa/Bedorf/Grüny/ Klass 2012). The phenomenological direction, which distances itself from Husserl, has diversified (cf. Böhme 2003; 2019; Gahlings, 2016; Rappe, 2012). Slaby (2022) recently outlined post-phenomenology.

The emergence of New Phenomenology<sup>49</sup> would be inconceivable without a critical and comprehensive review of Western and European philosophy. Hermann Schmitz (2007 a) subjected it, as he explains, to a "Gewissensprüfung" (' examination of conscience ', transl. W.M.-P.) in order to "ein Urteil darüber vorzubereiten, was die europäische Philosophie für die menschliche Kultur geleistet und wo sie geschadet hat." (Schmitz 2007 a, 1, 15) <sup>50</sup> He justifies his approach with serious "Verfehlungen" (' transgressions ') of ancient philosophy, which had lasting

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<sup>47</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' It is here, perhaps, that the possibility opens up to subvert the dichotomy between life and existence and, by resolutely transgressing the <Anthropologieverbot> or <Sperrklausel> of Husserl and Heidegger, which has inhibited certain possibilities of phenomenology, to resolutely affirm an anthropological turn in phenomenology, to think of something like a consciousness that describes itself phenomenologically by being anchored in a living body, a *Leib* thought of as a living organism in its evolution or anthropogenesis [...]. '

<sup>48</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' Schmitz [...] has no reservations about science policy or subject matter, but rather places anthropology within the comprehensive field of his philosophical theory. ' Kluck (2018, 384)

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Gesellschaft für Neue Phänomenologie: <https://www.gnp-online.de/publikationen/gnp-buchreihe.html>

<sup>50</sup> Viewed from the outside, the result is a reorganization and realignment of the philosophical disciplines. In the summary (<sup>2</sup>1995) of his *System der Philosophie*, Schmitz names ontology, anthropology, and epistemology; to which are added new disciplines such as chronology (time) and choriology (space); these are followed by practical philosophy and theology (sic!), and conclude with aesthetics. In the process, topics such as the felt body, emotion, space, and the rediscovery of subjective facts had to be developed as fields of research in the first place. In addition, Schmitz (2007, 1, 16) refers to his so-called 'sister book' on Christian ethics and its consequences for European religious and theological history: *Adolf Hitler in der Geschichte* (1999).

consequences for subsequent European philosophizing: As a result, this led to an alienation from the unadulterated reality of life; what real life consists of has become increasingly incomprehensible to humans.<sup>51</sup> For these reasons, Schmitz argues that the task of contemporary philosophy is primarily the 'rehabilitation of life experience' (Schmitz 1997, 23-33<sup>52</sup>). This overturns the basis of abstraction in traditional philosophy that is presupposed in scientific research:<sup>53</sup> New Phenomenology goes back to the 'halving'<sup>54</sup> of empiricism, which has shaped the methodological approach of the sciences since Greek physics. It should be remembered that even today, different models of language acquisition are still based on the traditional psychophysical dualism found in Plato. This epochal change of course and its success must be understood (in the necessary brevity) in order to comprehend the need of a new beginning.

The archaic worldview, as it had previously appeared in the *Iliad*, had still seen human beings as dependent on surrounding powers:

Sie stehen ohne Hausmacht einer privaten Innenwelt (einer Seele) in einem Konzert halbautonomer Regungsherde, die teils treiben, teils hemmen und kontrollieren, wie uns das Gewissen, ein uns verbleibender Regungsherd vergleichbarer (nur nicht leiblicher lokalisierter) Art. Sie sind der Besessenheit durch Götter und Affekte ausgesetzt [...] (Schmitz <sup>2</sup>2016, 19)<sup>55</sup>

Already in the *Odyssey*, the character of Odysseus exhibits a 'tendency toward self-control' – a development that leads to the conception of humans as being divided into body and soul. The soul becomes "zum Haus seines Erlebens, in dem er Herr über die unwillkürlichen Regungen sein kann und sein soll" (op. cit., 22).<sup>56</sup> The result is a view of human beings as self-controlled, personally emancipated, rational, and autonomous subjects who approach the world with distance and superiority. However, the artificial division of experience into an inner world (soul,

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<sup>51</sup> Schmitz has commented extensively on the diagnoses of Nietzsche (1995) and Heidegger (1996).

<sup>52</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'prepare a judgment on what European philosophy has achieved for human culture and where it has done harm.'

<sup>53</sup> The term 'overturned' is appropriate when one considers that Schmitz subjects the entire history of Western philosophy to radical criticism and, at the same time, introduces a largely new terminology with New Phenomenology. Relevant implementations in individual disciplines to date include Jürgen Hasse's phenomenological spatial research (2014) and Robert Gugutzer's neo-phenomenological sociology (2017).

<sup>54</sup> 'Halving' is an understatement: most of our life experience and corporeal communication takes place in the prepersonal realm.

<sup>55</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'Without the power base of a private inner world (a soul), they stand in a concert of semi-autonomous centers of emotion, which partly drive, partly inhibit and control, like our conscience, a center of emotion of a comparable (but not corporeally localized) kind that remains to us. They are subject to possession by gods and emotions [...].'

<sup>56</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'the home of his experience, in which he can and should be master of his involuntary impulses'

later: mind, consciousness) and an outer world (things, body) fulfills the finding of the 'split of the human being' (Schmitz 2016, 148-162).

[...] die wichtigsten Inhalte der unwillkürlichen Lebenserfahrung [werden] verdrängt oder vergessen [...]: der Leib – zwischen Körper und Seele wie in eine Gletscherspalte gefallen – und die leibliche Kommunikation [z.B. beim Blickwechsel], die Gefühle als Atmosphären, die bedeutsamen Situationen und unter ihnen die vielsagenden Eindrücke [ferner die prädimensionalen Räume des Wetters, der Stille usw. und Halbdinge wie die Stimme, der Wind, der Schmerz u.v.a.]. (Schmitz <sup>2</sup>2016, 22)<sup>57</sup>

That is why New Phenomenology begins with pre-linguistic, pre-reflexive, prepersonal life experience. This primarily refers to the corporeality of human beings and pre-linguistic common life, in which people communicate holistically through *corporeal communication* about the *situations* in which they are embedded, for example through calls (which warn, cheer, or prepare for something), through marching, drinking, and work songs (which spur on), and through rituals (which strengthen community cohesion). Intercultural coexistence is also primarily initiated through modes of corporeal, pre-verbal communication, i.e., through finding oneself in collective atmospheres (emotions, moods, perceived norms) that can achieve a certain consistency in common situations.

With the emergence of sentence-like speech, a fundamental change occurs for humans: state of affairs, programs, and problems can be isolated and linked together in any constellation. However, emancipation from affecting situations does not represent a break, but rather broadens human possibilities through *playful identification* with unreal situations (e.g., imagined roles), in extreme cases – as above in the case of romantic irony – to the point of freedom to float above objective reality. But this detachment from the actual environment is self-deception: The corporeal constitution of life implies an inevitable affective involvement, for example in the case of a (caught) fall, a fright, or being moved by an emotion. Here, there is no need for an identifying attribution that it is me. In contrast to reified consciousness, Schmitz (cf. 2010 b, 19-23; 2016, 216 f.) describes this as involuntary *Sich-bewussthaben* (affective 'self-consciousness').

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<sup>57</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' [...] the most important contents of involuntary life experience [are] repressed or forgotten [...]: the felt body – caught between body and soul as if fallen into a crevasse – and corporeal communication [e.g., when exchanging glances], emotions as atmospheres, significant situations and, among them, meaningful impressions [as well as the pre-dimensional spaces of weather, silence, etc., and semi-things such as the voice, the wind, pain, and much more]. '

This initially inconspicuous phenomenon becomes his model of absolute self-identification – absolute because, given the indisputable subjective fact, there is no need for attribution on the part of the emotionally affected person: ‚I am meant.‘<sup>58</sup> This experience is also encountered in finding oneself in a *European* language, provided it is experienced as an addressed atmosphere.<sup>59</sup> However, theoretical clarification does not in any way remove practical resistance. The following chapter identifies relevant social forces that oppose the emergence of European plurilingualism.

## 2 Resistance to European plurilingualism

### 2.1 The announced end of European "histoire croisée"

The dense network of exchanges between European languages and civilizations is a precarious good. In the context of changing social conditions (forms of settlement, forms of government, social classes, etc.), plurilingualism as a sociological phenomenon can be counted among the manifestations of socialization (social interaction). Different functional styles of plurilingualism can be interpreted as cultural responses to civilizational challenges that arise over time. Trabant (2018, 171) distinguishes, for example, between the social type of the medieval *studiosus*, who is characterized by his knowledge of ancient languages, i.e., his cognitive competence, and the *cortegiano*, who is characterized by his performative skills in high society and his versatile communicative competence. In the first case, the *Sitz im Leben* (' setting in life ') is the monastery or the university, in the second case, life at an Italian princely court of the Renaissance. We can add: Other types are the merchant, the gentleman, the diplomat, the

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<sup>58</sup> Without this absolute identification, there would be a threat of logical infinite regression to ever more relative identifications (cf. Schmitz 2027, 15-17).

<sup>59</sup> Philippe Grosos (Georget & Grosos 2016, 22) refers to the French phenomenologists Michel Henry and Henri Maldinet and speaks of "une communauté parfois souterraine parfois explicite de questions", namely "penser, avec l'expérience vécue involontaire, ce qui relève de phénomènes non-objectivants." Transl. W.M.-P.: ' a community of questions that is sometimes hidden and sometimes explicit ', namely ' thinking, with involuntary lived experience, about what constitutes non-objectifying phenomena. '

honnête homme, the entrepreneur, etc., with a situational location that varies depending on the era.

This indicates that in Occidental and European history, a standard language has played an overarching cultural leadership role in several societies for a certain period of time, but has then been replaced by another leading language. One can think of the sequence Greek – Latin – emerging vernacular languages, and with the beginning of the modern era, the sequence or coexistence of pan-European languages of education such as Italian, Spanish, French, German, and English. This laid the foundation for never-ending processes of cultural transfer and reception (cf. Middell 2016; Espagne & Werner 1988). Compared to the areas of exchange in Central Western, Southern, and Southwestern Europe, the languages of Central Eastern and Southeastern Europe and their independent mediating functions are underrepresented in the public perception (cf. Neumann 2020).<sup>60</sup> The languages summarized schematically here are predominantly linked to the Occidental type of civilization through their filiation with pagan Greco-Roman and Christianized antiquity, as it first developed in the ancient Greek city-states. In competition with medieval Latin, the emerging European vernaculars became, in the course of centuries of exchange, the media through which the rising strata and classes were able to acquire refined manners and cultivated communication and grow into the respective type of civilization. In this process, each country worked to develop its own style of Europeanization, which over time shaped all areas of culture.

With the political and economic globalization that has accelerated in Europe since 1990, this cultural paradigm of intra-European exchange is being called into question. While at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, European artists were still able to integrate unknown forms and modes of design from foreign cultures (Japan, China, Africa, and the Orient), the end of the European colonial empires in 1945 marked the beginning of a process of de-Europeanization, not only in the formerly controlled countries, but also in Europe itself. Political shifts and economic globalization have pushed the European type of civilization and its various cultural manifestations

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<sup>60</sup> "The attraction for civilized conditions gave rise to a cultural infrastructure (monasteries, libraries, archives), often playing the role of 'cultural corridors' (Răzvan Theodorescu) facilitating the 'transfer of information' (Neumann, p. 263, 267). That is why the intercultural, cross-border perspective becomes the very theme of research. These regions are the prototype of a history of convergence (*histoire croisée*).\" (Müller-Pelzer, 2024 e, 2) See the relevant articles in *Handbuch Mehrsprachigkeit* (2022), in particular the articles by Thorsten Roelcke and Brigitta Busch.

to the periphery of the new centers of power: European societies have become dependent on the priorities of 'global actors'.<sup>61</sup> In the Western hemisphere, *global, transcultural* English is rising to become the hegemonic language due to the prepotent USA. For Europe, this implies that standardized world-English is becoming the leading language 'for everything that really matters', i.e., where money and power are concerned: economics, politics, diplomacy, technology, science (research and teaching), culture, and media. This new situation poses an unprecedented challenge to the different cultural styles of Europeanization with their languages. Unlike in the case of previous paradigm shifts from one standard language to another, *global* English is not a language of education that spreads a new style of Europeanization, but an exclusively functional construct, a communicative medium for, primarily, global political and economic purposes. In this case, it is no longer possible to speak of a 'setting in life', but at most of areas of concentration (networks) of Anglo-American economic, financial, political, technical, scientific, and media power. The same applies to the European Union: since 2000, it has pushed global English above the polyphonic but weakened concert of different styles of Europeanization. In the name of a romanticized ideal of unity, the unprecedented political, administrative, economic, and legal concentration process has led to linguistic and cultural leveling. Only in France, it seems, is a faction of the intelligentsia fighting – with some success – for French to be used in all situations;<sup>62</sup> for the other languages, there are only a few isolated defenders.<sup>63</sup> This explains the contradiction that, on the one hand, the European Union, together with the Council of Europe, has adopted a policy of (functional) plurilingualism and provides financial resources for endangered European languages and new language teaching methods. On the other hand, it is accepted that global English has established itself as the leading communication tool of the EU's power and knowledge elites in political, economic, scientific, technical, and media practice. According to this model, language is reduced to communication. If European languages of education (germ. *Bildungssprachen*) accept being reduced to the level of functional, global English, they will sooner or later dry up as developed cultural languages.<sup>64</sup> As experts have long described, European languages as a whole will be thrown back to the state they

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<sup>61</sup> For an explanation of why the term 'global actor' is placed in quotation marks, see chapter 2.2, note 79.

<sup>62</sup> See *Observatoire européen du plurilinguisme* (OEP): <https://www.observatoireplurilinguisme.eu/observatoire/qui-sommes-nous>

<sup>63</sup> See *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutsch als Wissenschaftssprache*: <https://adawis.de/>

<sup>64</sup> When referring to the intra-European colonization of European languages, this refers to the current situation and not to the historical suppression of regional dialects, etc., by nation states.

were in before they developed into standard languages: The styles of Europeanization that are culturally indispensable for Europeans, including specifically *European* plurilingualism, would fall by the wayside (cf. Trabant 2014).<sup>65</sup>

## 2.2 The double colonization of European languages

Defenders of global English point impassively to the 'vote with your feet' argument: it is apparently in the interest of the majority to opt for *Globish*. At the beginning of the century, Calvet (2002, 212) had still pointed out: "Il faut, certes, changer les pratiques internationales, mais il faut aussi responsabiliser les locuteurs plutôt que de les culpabiliser ou de vouloir les protéger malgré eux."<sup>66</sup> For, according to his thesis at the time, people would opt for global English "parce qu'ils considèrent que là est leur intérêt ou celui de leurs enfants" ('because they consider it to be in their own interest or that of their children'). But at that time, people still believed in the EU's "M plus 2" objective, i.e., that every EU citizen should speak two EU languages in addition to their mother tongue. No one wanted to imagine that global English would not only undermine the learning of a second EU language as 'useless', but could also 'wind down' European mother tongues. Today, Calvet's statement would appear to be a capitulation to the power claims of Anglo-American hegemony.

But that is not all. At the turn of the millennium, European politicians were already flirting with the ambivalence of engaging in discourse with the US as a community of values, while at the same time confronting the US as a global challenger in the form of the new EU. This game has now come to an abrupt end: the EU's dependence on the US has never been greater than it is now since the end of the Cold War. Payment is made in cash, but the "silverware", the European languages and cultures, are also going under the hammer. This is nothing new in history: authors from the "global South" have now explained how the suppression of their own language(s) has

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<sup>65</sup> Even elaborate cultural policy measures by the EU, such as the European Capitals of Culture, the founding of orchestras, conferences, the establishment of support associations, youth meetings, etc., are now unthinkable without global English.

<sup>66</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'International practices must certainly be changed, but speakers must also be empowered rather than blamed or protected against their will.'

led to the suppression of their cultural identity and the entire spectrum of its forms of expression.

The task today is therefore to show that *global English*, which claims linguistic hegemony, *should be regarded as hostile to the diverse linguistic and cultural life in Europe and beyond*. Global English and the one-sided, quantifying thinking it conveys are contrary to the interests of today's Europeans and their children, because they are *being cheated of their right* to determine their lives and their common future independently, because they are losing their anchoring in implanting situations of the European type of civilization; in consequence, they are being deprived of the opportunity to contribute to the *convergence herméneutique* of Europeans by growing into another European language or several.

Jürgen Trabant was quick to point out that languages are not merely useful communication tools that are all about efficiency and the widest possible dissemination. He therefore distinguished between 'natural' plurilingualism acquired in everyday life (family, multilingual environment) and plurilingualism 'that educates' ("Mehrsprachigkeit, die bildet": Trabant 2014, 109-12). The latter is about understanding the other, the other person as well as the otherness of their world, in order to learn. The dialogue with eminent literary representatives of Europe is the intellectual horizon Trabant is aiming at:

Du Frankreich. Du Norwegen, Du Russland und Du Cicero, Du Racine, Du Dante, Du Tolstoi [...]. [...] Es ist die Suche nach ‚Befreundung‘ mit dem Anderen. Es geht [...] nicht um den kommunikativen Quickie, sondern um eine verstehende Langzeitbeziehung. (Op. cit., 111) [...] Europa muss ein Netz brüderlicher Sprachen werden. (Trabant 2020 b, 88)<sup>67</sup>

This aspect of *European, culturally formative* plurilingualism, which is close to the hearts of those affected, is dismissed with a shrug by the proponents of global English. The concept of European plurilingualism explained in the present text shares with Trabant's argument the theme of 'friendship', of affective involvement. However, I see the need <sup>68</sup> and the chance to build an alliance with the MONTAIGNE program: It starts from the experience of discrepancy

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<sup>67</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' You France. You Norway, you Russia, and you Cicero, you Racine, you Dante, you Tolstoy [...]. [...] It is the search for <friendship> with the other. It is [...] not about a quickie communication, but about a long-term relationship based on understanding. (Op. cit., 111) [...] Europe must become a network of fraternal languages. '

<sup>68</sup> Trabant had repeatedly warned against abandoning European languages as 'places of European memory' (2012, 269), without achieving any noticeable change in thinking.

among European students, who should be enabled to independently pursue the questions: *What moves me as a European? How do we want to, how should we live together in the future?* In addition to the very ambitious goal of literary education based on cultural dialogue, there is the project of finding oneself, e.g. as a *European* student, in an unfamiliar but related style of Europeanization. During the European semester (and beyond), working through experiences of discrepancy and alienation among like-minded people takes place on the level of related attitudes towards life that refer to the European type of civilization and is accessible to a wider audience. Plurilingualism that educates, in Trabant's sense, is not only retained as an option, but would benefit from a broad affective plurilingualism as a cultural environment.<sup>69</sup>

But global English is only one side of the threat to which European languages are exposed. No less dangerous for them is the progressive opening up to all languages of the world, the misuse of terms such as tolerance, diversity, languages of origin, and global citizenship.

As a rule, as in the case of educational scientist Ingrid Gogolin, the focus is not only on the functional plurilingualism acquired in foreign language teaching, but above all on the 'natural' (everyday) plurilingualism of the student body, who bring with them a second language or their language(s) of origin.<sup>70</sup> Instead of recognizing conceptless immigration as a problem, the 'monolingual habitus' of German schools becomes a bone of contention. In her research, Gogolin is keen to prove that plurilingualism is currently the globalized normality. The conclusion to be drawn from this is presumably that a fundamental reorientation of German schools is necessary. However, deriving norms from facts is a serious logical fallacy (*naturalistic fallacy*).

This error recurs in other authors, too, when, for example, they starkly contrast cultural homogeneity and cultural heterogeneity: The ideological construct of homogeneity, understood as the forced ethnic standardization of a past nationalist policy (see section 4.3), serves as a foil

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<sup>69</sup> Last but not least, the *convergence herméneutique* of different styles of Europeanization should also renew the conditions for reviving the fruitful competition between developed European languages in certain scientific fields that was known in the past. Without broad European plurilingualism among scientists and students, the impoverishment of scientific knowledge (cf. Thielmann 2022; Müller-Pelzer 2024 d) will be almost impossible to avoid. In addition to the global Anglo-American publication hegemony, a teaching hegemony has established itself in numerous academic subjects, displacing all other languages of education. In particular, the hermeneutic sciences (humanities, or sciences humaines, or ciencias humanas) and philosophy are affected in their research and teaching.

<sup>70</sup> From an educational-sociological perspective, Gogolin et al. (2020, 3) choose a different distinction: that between 'lifeworld' and 'foreign language' plurilingualism.

for the propagated, no less ideological heterogeneity, which is surreptitiously transformed from a *fact* into a *program* of linguistic and cultural hybridity.

The question of why heterogeneity is propagated so vehemently in plurilingual and multicultural Europe is easy to answer: it is not European heterogeneity, but global heterogeneity that is to be elevated to the norm. In view of the devaluation of national languages due to the dominance of global English, the revaluation of all languages of origin (as if it were a primary human right) leads to a further undermining of the established European languages and thus of European cultures. Within the framework of so-called "best practices", bearing the ERASMUS logo, students are told elsewhere that multilingual people have great freedom to determine their own lives. 'Translanguaging is what multilingual people normally do (and, incidentally, multilingual people are the norm worldwide).' (De-Sign Bilingual, n.d.; transl. W.M.-P.) This reference to global linguistic hybridization as the norm once again suggests the false conclusion from fact to norm. In addition, it creates the erroneous impression that *translanguaging* can be used context-free.<sup>71</sup> Some authors give this phrase further momentum: new cultural styles and plural identities could develop that would help overcome the 'straightjacket' of monolingual habitus. Global plurilingualism must become the norm so that multicultural identities can flourish. This would free foreign language teaching from outdated national narrow-mindedness and show students the way to global citizenship. "Language teaching is education of world citizens." (Risinger 2009, 52)

Koselleck's characteristics of movement concepts, explained above, are clearly recognizable in this line of thought. Their detachment from personal experience and the excess of wishful thinking on the part of many people from different social classes and ways of life result in

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<sup>71</sup> This is contrary to the intention of Ofelia García, as she has specified in more recent works. The authors McKinney/Zavala/Makoe (2024, in particular XXX ff.) point out that plurilingualism, initially welcomed as a liberation, has also been instrumentalized by political and economic actors of colonialism and used to exercise power once again. In the "global South", the following assessment is being discussed: Since there is no uniform definition of the terms, languaging is described as generalized code switching, i.e., switching between two languages, possibly language levels, socio- or regiolects, in order to verbalize the desired meaning of the statement. In translanguaging, all repertoires of expression and all available languages are activated. However, it is also critically argued that code switching is based on the model of developed major languages, which does not apply to numerous socio- and regional dialects. Alternative affective registers of experience and suffering must be included (Stroud 2024, 155).

[...] die Anfälligkeit für *Ideologien*. [...] Wenn nämlich die Begriffe immer auch Vorgriffe in die Zukunft werden, die nicht mehr wie früher auf der bisherigen Erfahrung aufbauen, dann gibt es keine Kontrollmöglichkeiten mehr, diese Vorgriffe zu widerlegen oder zu bestätigen. [...] Die Parteilichkeit und Ideologieträchtigkeit des modernen Vokabulars ist gleichsam a priori konstitutiv für unsere heutige politisch-soziale Sprache. (Koselleck 2006, 85)<sup>72</sup>

Overall, the rhetorical use of global plurilingualism in political debate highlights the risk that the issue of plurilingualism is being ideologically charged by unclear, vague terms such as "global citizen", "hybridization", "diversity", "new lingua franca", etc., as Fred Dervin (2025, 62 ff.) recently pointed out. However, this is clearly not an obstacle for the EU, which sees itself as a 'global player'. In the arena of power, political expediency is all that counts: the EU elites have no problem actively promoting the global dominance of English (i.e., the weakening of European languages) while at the same time presenting themselves as global champions of human rights, democracy, diversity, uncontrolled immigration to Europe, and global plurilingualism as a quasi-fundamental right. As a result, European languages are challenged by a double linguistic and cultural colonization: powerful interest groups make use of global Anglophonization, but at the same time also of global plurilingualism/multiculturalism.

Researchers from the "global South" deserve credit for having sharpened our awareness of how the transfer of ontological, anthropological, and epistemic foundations by the colonial powers alienated the indigenous populations from their original cultural ways of life,<sup>73</sup> as soon as the unity of prepersonal ways of life (shared myths, rites, customs, corporeal activities such as dancing, singing, and living) and speech is dissolved.<sup>74</sup> The early modern European differentiation of culture into autonomous areas (religion, philosophy, poetry, literature, music, visual arts) blinded people to the fact that music, singing, dance, and speech together evoke atmospheres that allow the current situation to be processed as a whole and contribute to the transformation of personal and collective attitudes toward life. This insight is also useful for Europe. It

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<sup>72</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' [...] the susceptibility to *ideologies*. [...] If concepts always become anticipations of the future that are no longer based on previous experience, as they used to be, then there is no longer any way to control whether these anticipations are refuted or confirmed. [...] The partiality and ideological content of modern vocabulary is, as it were, a priori constitutive of our current political and social language. '

<sup>73</sup> "This scholarship highlights a growing reflection on the colonial legacies of linguistics and how this has affected our theories, practices, conceptual categories, and ways of knowing (Deumert et al. 2020), including those relating to plurilingualism. " (McKinney/Zavala/Makoe (2024, XXV)

<sup>74</sup> It is of secondary importance whether this takes place through brute force or through instruments of a "science of deception". See Michael Pettit (2012): *The Science of Deception. Psychology and Commerce in America*. Chicago: The Chicago University Press.

took the rediscovery of the annual celebrations in honor of the god Dionysos as the setting of life of Greek tragedy to grasp this as Europe's prehistory: music, together with dance and song as forms of expression of a life in community, crowned by a series of plays, was the regularly revitalized foundation of Greek urban culture: "Parler et donc chanter, marcher et donc danser, être au monde et donc, dans la construction, l'habiter: à chaque fois la musique est présente et c'est à elle que revient de rendre possibles de belles manifestations." (Grosos 2008, 20)<sup>75</sup> Music<sup>76</sup> in particular creates atmospheres that facilitate receptivity to stimuli, the responsiveness of vital impulses, and the ability to resonate with a corporeally perceptible impulse.<sup>77</sup>

The EU elites, caught up in the logic of the market and competition, believe that they can ignore the significance of collective atmospheres for living together in Europe. But they are mistaken. The civilizational bankruptcy of the EU elites is evident to the public in the fact that the creation of the EU as a *political* union around the year 2000 was largely driven by the desire to join the circle of 'global players' without having a collective identity or a common 'myth' (cf. Schmale 1997).<sup>78</sup> Jacques Delors' warning and Gérard Bouchard's criticism that citizens must be offered an emotionally meaningful common goal (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2021, chap. 2.2.1.2; 2.2.7) have fallen on deaf ears. Political concepts of identity imposed top-down remained: after the Gaullist 'Europe of fatherlands', attempts were made with the weak 'united in diversity', then with the contradictory 'constitutional patriotism' and the now embarrassing slogans 'the EU as a force for peace' and 'the origin of universal values'.<sup>79</sup> In the practice of power politics, this is no longer a concern; the principle is: *We decide what Europe is!*<sup>80</sup> (Cf. Müller-Pelzer 2024, 43-82) The reductive EU-Europe is thus increasingly transforming itself into an affectively empty shell for an exaggerated claim to power, which believes it can cover up the self-alienation of

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<sup>75</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'To speak and therefore to sing, to walk and therefore to dance, to be in the world and therefore, in its construction, to inhabit it: music is always present and it is up to it to make beautiful manifestations possible.'

<sup>76</sup> In today's Europe, remnants of this practice can be found, for example, in the folk singing culture of Iceland, the Baltic countries, the Balkans, and some Italian regions. However, the connection with today's music requires the mediation work of specialists (cf. Türcke 2025).

<sup>77</sup> The MONTAIGNE program will have recourse to it.

<sup>78</sup> The term 'global actor' which is placed in quotation marks in this text, unlike in my previous publications, refers to the fact that it expresses a power relationship that is embellished with a fabricated narrative of justification by those in power (myth, narration). This obscures the difference between the rulers and the ruled. In all known cases of 'global actors', the rulers' efforts to minimize their accountability to the ruled are evident.

<sup>79</sup> On the current ERASMUS slogan: "Enriching lives. Opening minds." see Müller-Pelzer (2024, 28 f.).

<sup>80</sup> Sloterdijk's changed assessment of the EU (2024, 27-29) is remarkable (compared to <sup>2002=1992</sup>). From warning that Europe has a world-historical mission to fulfill, he has become an apologist for the existing Union. By accusing critics of 'ingratitude', he dismisses the criticism that even Jacques Delors had repeatedly voiced.

Europeans with psychagogical measures (cf. Vigo Pacheco 2024). Bouchard (2018; 2017) emphasizes the aspect of self-alienation with the paradoxical phrase: "L'Europe à la recherche des Européens" (or, in 2017, "en quête de": "Europe's search for Europeans"). In view of the failure of the EU elites, it is the task of Europeans themselves to embark on a *convergence herméneutique* of the different styles of Europeanization.

If the EU elites had been serious about the necessary 'intercomprehension' of Europeans, Article 6 should have been added to Chapter I (Human Dignity) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Under the heading 'Right to the preservation of national languages', one should insert the following text: 'Everyone has the right to the preservation and free development of the national language(s) in its/their full scope.'<sup>81</sup> This would mean that Europeans could establish and demand the equality of languages as a starting point for future development.<sup>82</sup> Instead, however, the EU evades this demand by claiming to be at the forefront of cultural renewal, rejecting the former nationalist abuse of languages and supporting the global program of "race", "class", "ethnicity", and "gender" so that "the identity work of social groups can gain recognition." (Albrecht 2015, 1-2; 40; transl. W.M.-P.).

This reveals that the EU is not only *not legitimized* to rule over Europe (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2024; 2021); it also *cannot be* considered *competent*. Europeans, on the other hand, are *legitimate and competent* because *affective* plurilingualism is their way of life, in whatever form, i.e., it is *their* life. Only they themselves can answer the question of what affects them emotionally. *What kind of European do I want to be? What goal do I want to set for myself?* (cf. Stock 2017, 28)

Nevertheless, Europeans who seriously question Europe are now being denied the competence to decide for themselves on a common, plurilingual way of life. Ontological constellationalism offers its sharpest arguments in favor of this.

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<sup>81</sup> In addition to Art. 22: "The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity", which is subordinate and, due to its careless wording, documents the general lack of interest.

<sup>82</sup> The fact that the German language is not explicitly protected in the Basic Law and has hardly been taken into account by the Federal Constitutional Court is likely to be largely unknown.

### 2.3 Criticism of constellationism

This opposition to plurilingualism refers to a tradition that dates back to Plato and generally suspects language(s) of being responsible for the cognitive confusion of humans (cf. Trabant 2013, 24-53). The ambiguous linguistic expressions in the almost unmanageable number of languages bothered also Aristotle, for whom the only thing that mattered in order to achieve objectively adequate knowledge was the logically correct relationship between thing and idea; language(s) reduced to signs remained secondary. This critical attitude toward multifaceted linguistic expressions was taken up again by Francis Bacon at the beginning of the modern era. His fight against the *idola fori* remained a constant theme throughout his work. Noam Chomsky's nativist proposal to conceive of language as the result of a mental construction (*mentalese*) and analytical philosophy, which sought to eliminate many philosophical problems through disciplined use of language, created a favorable climate in the past for constructivist thinking and optimism about radically reducing communicative "noise".

Today, these arguments are being used politically by two social scientists active in language policy, Philippe van Parijs (2011) and Jürgen Gerhards (2010), to establish global English as the leading European language. They argue: considering the benefits that global English has for most people,<sup>83</sup> the widespread use of English as the leading language is fair and ethically imperative. A clearly coded language could render other languages superfluous in key areas of life. It can be retorted that involuntary life experience does not derive its significance from societies, as projectionism claim (see above and Schmitz 2016 a, 129-131). The example of emotional atmospheres that haunt us alone raises doubts about this: even if, for example, the expression of grief is culturally shaped, grief as a phenomenon is not created by society. Apart from that, the environment does not consist of individual details that are to be made explicit (thesis of ontological singularism): Meaningful impressions of pre-reflexive experience belong rather to the realm of manifold, internally diffuse but significant situations whose content has identity but is not singular (cf. Schmitz 2016 a, 143-244). Corporeal sensations, atmospheres, emotions, shared situations – in other words, everything that affects human beings emotionally

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<sup>83</sup> For the linguistic concept of New Phenomenology, see chapter 3.1 and 6.4.

and determines their attitude toward life – fall by the wayside when one abstracts from everything that cannot be defined as an individual element.

The greatest loss is the dissolution of implanting situations that establish an affective relation between people, with duties and rights implicitly coordinated with one another.<sup>84</sup> The old, widespread ontological error that all thinking begins with the individual constructing a meaningful world shapes anthropology and the social philosophy developed from it. Modern social constructivism, as prominently represented by John Rawls, is based on this singularistic and projectionist prejudice. For his theory of justice, which van Parijs and Gerhards follow, Rawls draws on the constructivism of European social contract thinking. What is new is the idea that the contracting parties should decide on the principles of their just coexistence solely on the basis of a reasonable assessment of their own interests. Rawls believes that every party to the contract can devise a life plan whose achievement, under reasonably favorable circumstances, should make them happy. However, this cannot realistically be assumed, because even the most prudent person is dependent on unpredictable feedback from their environment when making life decisions (cf. Schmitz 1999, 383 f.). This applies in particular to unpredictable experiences, e.g., in contact with unknown languages and cultures. The interplay of prepersonal and reflexive experience and the personality that is formed in this process preclude the formulation of an original life plan, insofar as it encompasses all areas of experience, including future ones.

Since van Parijs and Gerhards ignore these fundamental doubts, they feel justified in preferring global English as the leading language for all socially relevant areas of life. They pass over the orienting, knowledge- and culture-forming achievements of common situations for life,<sup>85</sup> which can arise, for example, when growing into an unfamiliar language and settling into a new style of Europeanization. In a phenomenological approach – as will be explained below (chapter 6) – unknown ways of finding oneself affectively in a different European style of Europeanization

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<sup>84</sup> As a substitute, individuals are offered the pursuit of supposedly higher goals. But topics such as happiness, wealth, progress, etc. can only poorly conceal the affective attachment to power: every individual must fend for themselves. From a historical-philosophical perspective, Schmitz (2007 a, 2, 816 f.; 1999, 55-64) speaks of 'autistic transgression'. The flip side of autistic transgression is 'dynamic transgression' (op. cit. and 1999, 49). Even the common good, international understanding, and other 'values' are readily called into question as soon as influential groups establish new binding requirements such as technological market leadership, control of natural resources, or the dominance of a common currency.

<sup>85</sup> Beginning with a family, a social milieu, a professional culture, religion and general convictions about life.

may reach the momentary evidence: *I belong there*. Due to a one-sided rationalistic and incomplete model of perception, the authors mentioned do not take pre-linguistic empiricism into account.

These are not omissions or errors, but a coherent worldview:

- 1 The starting point is the thesis that European languages are mere instruments of communication that can be replaced by others at will. The assumption that a language is the totality of linguistic signs is the domain-specific implementation of the theory that the world is a pile of raw material to which humans assign meaning.<sup>86</sup>
- 2 According to this theory, only that which can be summarized in the form of symbols into data sets (constellations), connected to global networks, rearranged at will, and processed with the help of algorithms is real. This concept is suitable for use by global economic and political interests.
- 3 The affective, non-arbitrarily deconstructible anchoring in implanted situations of a particular language and a specific style of Europeanization is omitted. Fungible, inclusive situations from which one can withdraw without great difficulty in order to enter into others become the norm. Since these transitions have no absolute, subjective point of reference, socially powerful interests, with the support of the mass media, can influence what 'one' should feel, sense, and think. The "homme mondialisé" ('globalized man') is offered an "identité en archipel" ('archipelago identities', Cloet & Pierre 2018) – an arbitrary collection of relative identities.
- 4 The thesis that the 'essence' of language is communication is directed against the European type of civilization and the "histoire croisée" of the related styles of Europeanization. It is the developed European languages that, among many other things, enable the transfer of the principle of critical reflection (cf. section 5.2), the intellectual and aesthetic diversity of Europeanization styles and lifestyles, and, last but not least, the explanation of facts and the tactful circumvention of hard-to-express feelings and atmospheres. These achievements are currently under attack by the globalist, digital, and AI

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<sup>86</sup> The 'ideology of total connectivity' has been criticized from a phenomenological perspective since early on (cf. Schmitz 2005 b).

revolution, which aims to inaugurate a new image of humanity: market-compliant, i.e., flexible or resilient depending on the economic situation (cf. Slaby 2015).

The 'old' colonialism can be seen as a precedent for this linguistic-cultural expropriation. Van Parijs and Gerhards are in line with the representatives of the colonial scientific attitude. In view of the linguistically and interactively very different way of life of the indigenous peoples of the "global South", the linguists of that time believed they saw only disorder and irrationalism, which it was right and proper to eliminate.

The imported basic assumptions about the 'correct' way of understanding the world include the ways in which linguistics turned complex language practices into bounded objects based on a division between 'linguistic' and 'extralinguistic' phenomena. (McKinney/Zavala/ Makoe (2024, XXV) With the introduction of the term 'coloniality of language', Veronelli describes how colonized people were denied the opportunity to be 'communicative agents' and shows our entrapment within a racialized colonial ontology of language that renders the colonized and racialized voiceless. (McKinney/Zavala/Makoe 2024, XXVI)

An examination of relevant research findings compiled in the *Routledge Handbook* reveals that the controversies surrounding languages do not revolve around arbitrary means of communication, but rather concern the lifeline of communities.

In the "global South", for example, the questions asked are: *Who are we? What do we learn about our situation when we try to understand our cultural forms of expression without colonial filters? How can I escape the dilemma of practicing my newly discovered idiom of origin while at the same time conjuring up my social marginalization or exclusion?*

Europeans, for their part, ask: *What does Europe mean to us? What do we learn about it through our European languages? What does Europe mean to me and my life on an emotional level? What kind of Europe do we want to create?*

Both groups of addressees have the following questions in common: *What is close to my heart? Which traditions must I accept and which are based on errors and transgressions? What can I do to regenerate my culture, and what must I avoid?*

Before going into detail, it is useful to make a brief comment on the use of the term "Eurocentrism" or rather "Europe-centrism". It is used critically in the context of the decolonization

discourse, but is inappropriate in the present context because this term referred to the self-image of European nations as colonialist centers of power. There is an obvious affinity with the EU as a 'global player', even though it does everything it can to create the opposite impression through an ostentatiously self-critical cultural policy (e.g., the return of looted art, research projects, artist exchanges, exhibitions, renaming of streets and institutions, etc.). The present text is directed precisely against the EU's usurpation of European civilizational styles: In the present text, Europe is rather discussed in terms of its affective significance as a civilizational type; thus, the colonial model of power center and periphery (cf. van Laak 2011) is not perpetuated. The experiences gained in the "global South" with colonialism<sup>87</sup> should be instructive for those who are concerned with current cultural neo-colonialism in Europe. Asymmetrical power relations in the linguistic-cultural sphere are also the inevitable starting point for the authors of the *Routledge Handbook*.

### 3. Anthropological Concepts of the "Global South" and New Phenomenology

The editors of the second edition of the *Routledge Handbook* (2024) summarize the latest, rapidly increasing research that has taken a new turn since the first edition in 2012 with a decisive shift in perspective "from the Global South". The terms 'plurilingualism' and 'language' as subjects of linguistic analysis, long considered established, are deconstructed because the epistemological, ontological, and anthropological foundations of plurilingualism research have changed. The relevance of this topic is evident in the editors' programmatic summary: "From this we conclude that a singular definition of plurilingualism is no longer possible, if it ever was." (McKinney/Zavala/Makoe 2024, XXV)

Current research is based on two findings: (1) After the initial phase of colonialism, the power structures and languages of the colonists, including their educational and language policy

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<sup>87</sup> Cf. Osterhammel 2009 (619; 1180-1183) for the historical scope of colonialism/imperialism.

concepts, were transferred to the emerging colonial societies and their institutions. (2) As a result, these linguistic concepts have survived to this day in many places, despite changes in personnel over the centuries. The hierarchies that determined what was valuable or worthless, socially desirable or socially undesirable, did not change. This resulted in a lasting segregation of power, wealth, and values among the populations of the ancient colonies. The devaluation of indigenous ethnic groups and their languages led to an alienation from their own cultural foundations and self-esteem among those affected. Languages of power were described, configured, and taught in a linguistically elaborate manner, and only those who mastered them were and are able to assume positions of national and transnational relevance. Even though indigenous languages are now beginning to be described according to contemporary linguistic criteria, the segregation between the powerful and the powerless and a divided sense of self-esteem remain (cf. Slaby 2022, 37). Today, the global and regional financial oligarchies that make use of neo-liberal economic doctrine employ a neocolonial language regime to achieve their goals. Here, too, neo-colonial global English is superimposed on the national languages and competes with the old colonial languages in business, research, and education. However, what had an emancipatory effect, especially for intellectuals, did not change the low status of indigenous languages. From the perspective of current European plurilingualism, the following can be added: As before the postcolonial states, the global and regional neocolonial financial oligarchies combine their political and economic power with the new dominant language of global English in the fields of research and teaching, culture, and media. One thing has changed, however: European languages have now found themselves in a similar situation of being colonized by global English.

Significant for the future of scientific work are the efforts of numerous researchers from the "South" to no longer allow colonial concepts to obscure their view of the full reality. Representative of others is the essay by Catherine Kell and Gabrielle Budach in the *Handbook*, entitled "Materialities and Ontologies. Thinking Plurilingualism through Language Materiality, Post-Humanism and New Materialism" (2024, 79-95). The authors ask how the ontological and anthropological foundations need to be revised in order to undermine the philosophical mainstream that distorts our perception of the world and ultimately perpetuates the impression of the superiority of "Western culture." In the following, we will attempt to examine the extent to which connections can be made with central statements of New Phenomenology.

The starting point of the two authors has been summarized as follows:

Language has often been viewed as the quintessentially human facility, as ‘what makes us human’ and as what differentiates humans from other forms of life and the material world. In line with this view, language has largely been seen, within the northern episteme and within linguistic theory, as involving the capacity for rational thought and as representational. Recent theoretical developments focusing on the limitations of the symbolic and representational dimensions of language and seeking wider ways of understanding what language is and how it works provide strong challenges to this view. In this chapter, we provide an overview of two main currents of thought on this matter. The first focuses on centering the materiality of language itself as a way of showing up limitations of the symbolic and representational views, while the second focuses on decentering the human by exploring post-humanism and new materialism. Each of these positions the concept of ontology as being central. While the language materiality approach explores language ontologies, the post-human and new materialist approaches explore the position of language and the discursive in relation to other ontological types, like other than human beings, substances, material objects, and natural phenomena. We outline these differences as well as other key concepts and provide examples of research across these fields. (Abstract. Kell & Budach 2024, <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003214908-8/materialities-ontologies-catherine-kell-gabriele-budach>)

### 3.1 " Centering the materiality of language " (80-86)

The authors understand their topic as "as a way of showing up limitations of the symbolic and representational views" (80). The aim is to problematize the intellectual abstraction of Western conceptions of language: language as a system, as a symbol, as an arbitrary sign. As a result, this approach leads to a division of experience into language vs. lifeworld, individual vs. community, rationality vs. irrationality, history vs. myth. This polarization of life experience is one of the consequences of the Western ' division of human being ' (germ. *Menschspaltung*), which entails the arbitrary construction of an external world and an internal world (cf. chapter 1.3).

Kell & Budach (17-30) refer to a case in which – following Schmitz‘ terminology - the denial of the *subjective body* (germ. *Leib*) as the basis of human life and orientation in the respective environment leads to an irremediable lack of understanding. In a language comparison in Chile and Argentina, linguists reported: "He [that is, the interviewee] then comes round to argue that Mapudungun and Spanish are both different versions of the same thing *and* they are different things." The colonial-influenced observers were unable to distinguish between their analytical approach, in which situations are broken down and only objective constellations are skimmed off, and the corporeal-atmospheric, pre-reflexive experience of Mapuche, which involves subjectively affecting impressions. Based on the distinction between objective facts and subjective facts (Schmitz, cf. chapter 6.3), the Mapuche language is *subjectively* significant for its

speakers, i.e., before any attribution is made, it touches them corporeally and atmospherically, and this affective atmosphere transforms the designated things and people into *things and people for them*. It is a *subjective* fact. Spanish, on the other hand, treats the things and people in the Mapuche's life experience from a distance; the identifying attribution through Spanish expressions refers to *objective* facts that anyone can state, but which lack subjective significance and are therefore something else, and from the perspective of the indigenous speakers, also poorer.<sup>88</sup>

Here it is useful to outline Hermann Schmitz's theory of language, which breaks with the assumptions of common European theories. The New Phenomenology starts from experience and therefore begins with the spoken language that everyone uses.

- 1 Human beings are defined by their *corporeality*; they *are* their (felt) bodies (germ. *Leib*), they feel themselves as corporeal beings without resorting to the five senses, and they find themselves in a pre-dimensional corporeal space. Schmitz (2011, 132; transl. W.M.-P.) succinctly states: 'To be corporeal means to be capable of being frightened.' In contrast, humans *have* a (physical) body (germ. *Körper*); this can be assigned to three-dimensional space with surfaces, lines, and measurable distances through the testimony of the five senses.
- 2 Human beings find themselves in *situations* (relative chaotic diversity), i.e., bundles of pre-reflexive, pre-linguistic experience. These are in relief from their surroundings, characteristic, but internally diffuse.
- 3 Humans are exposed to affecting atmospheres, moving emotions, other people, things, and above all, half-things (which can disappear like the wind and the voice). Instead of conceiving perception from the perspective of personal emancipation, as was (and is) customary in traditional philosophy, Schmitz describes perception as 'corporeal communication' (cf. the accessible summary in Schmitz <sup>2</sup>2007, 28-49): Unlike

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<sup>88</sup> Based on the initial affect of meaningful impressions, all facts are initially subjective, i.e., they exist for me (Schmitz 1997, 31-33). The objectification of facts is, as it were, the peeling away of subjective determinations, so that the original subjective richness is reduced to an objective inventory. Every culture has its own instruments for gently explicating the subjectivity of the original situation in repeated paraphrases. In this respect, acquiring an unknown language offers not only the opportunity to learn unknown ways of linguistic explication, but also to approach the situations underlying explanatory speech by incorporating the pre-reflexive experience of those situations. See also Schmitz (2016 a, 49-57).

excorporation (germ. *Ausleibung*; e.g., dozing in the sun, the view stretching out into the distance), the mode of *encorporation* (germ. *Einleibung*) with the encounter allows for an involuntary and holistic orientation in the environment; the *subjective body-related bridging qualities* (germ. *leibnahe Brückenqualitäten*; cf. chapter 6.1) of things or people open up an immediate, corporeally felt expression. They occur in two ways: (a) suggestions of movement: the sensation of lifting or pressing down or pulling, attracting or repelling, constricting or expanding, etc.; (b) the second modality is synesthetic characters: lightness, heaviness, greasiness, agility, flexibility, massiveness, etc. Here there is a point of contact with "multimodality" when Kell & Budach speak of "language materiality" (89). Recall Schmitz's criticism mentioned above: significance is not projected by humans onto crude worldly matter, but comes rather from the significant atmospheres, emotions, norms, people, things which touch human beings holistically, sometimes in excess.

- 4 According to Schmitz, human speech is sentence-like speech (in the semantic sense) that does not necessarily have a grammatical structure. What this means is that states of affairs, programs, and problems are extracted from situations and defined, i.e., made explicit and freely interconnectable.<sup>89</sup> In this way, internally diffuse situations can be brought under control. However, in contrast to a cook who visualizes recipes before cooking, the speaker proceeds randomly; he draws on a stock of already formulated sayings without having them individually in front of him. Schmitz (2012, 214 f.; 216) characterizes this process in a realistic way:

Der geläufige Sprecher lässt sich [...] vom Fluss seiner Rede tragen, er redet „drauf los“, ohne Sorge, den Halt an der Führung der Sätze, die ihm aus der ihn leitenden Sprache zufallen, zu verlieren. Damit gleicht das Sprechen den flüssigen Körperbewegungen [...] Die Körperbewegungen, wie das artikulierende Sprechen mit Zunge und Lippen, das Tanzen und flotte Gehen, haben ihre Flüssigkeit nur dadurch, dass sie nicht Schritt für Schritt, wie beim Kochen nach Rezept, einer vorgeschriebenen Reihenfolge nachstreben, sondern einem spontanen Gesamtimpuls, der aber sozusagen gefüttert ist mit einer subtilen räumlichen

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<sup>89</sup> According to Demmerling, there is a connection here to the idea of John Dewey, who starts from a primary, qualitatively constituted experience of a situation that is manifold, but at the same time even more than that. Demmerling (2018, 7) comments: ' It is said that qualitative experiences open up a horizon of meaning. Qualitative experiences are meaningful because they connect us to the world and orient us within it. They connect us to the world and orient us within it because the world is given structure through meaning, which is why, strictly speaking, no distinction can be made between the qualitative experience of a subject and the facts and objects of the world. ' (Transl. W.M.-P.)

und zeitlichen Regelung [...]. [...] Der Könner beherrscht sie [die Sprache] nicht, er gehorcht ihr, indem er sich von ihr durch ihre Sätze bei der Bildung seiner Sprüche führen lässt.<sup>90</sup>

Speech in general can be characterized as 'work on situations' (Demmerling 2018, 367).

### 3.2 "Decentering the human" (87-89)

The authors mean the following: "[...] the post-human and new materialist approaches explore the position of language and the discursive in relation to other ontological types, such as non-human beings, substances, material objects, and natural phenomena." I understand this program to problematize the image of human being as a self-controlled, personally emancipated, rational, and autonomous subject that approaches the world with distance and superiority, an image that has become predominant in Occidental and European philosophy: corporeality, affectivity, and instability of personality are thereby denied and suppressed as far as possible. Some of the 'postmodern' authors cited emphasize that "all parts – human and non-human – entering assemblages have the potential to become actants (Latour, 2005) and part of co-producing affect and affective relations in an assemblage." (Kell & Budach, 12) I interpret this statement against the backdrop of Schmitz's situation theory (for a detailed description, cf. chapter 5): Situations are not created by humans; they can be places for meaningful impressions, affecting atmospheres, moving emotions, and norms that those affected go along with, but which can also permeate, carry away, or overwhelm them. Unlike other authors, Schmitz distinguishes between two different moments of perception (cf. Chapter 6): The meaningful impression has a pathic moment (the vital ability to absorb the impulse) and an active moment (the processing and resonance to the impulse).

Decentering could then be interpreted as follows: In the prepersonal experience of corporeal communication (mainly as encorporation), felt bodies can arise that holistically encompass things, animals, and persons. In a handshake, for example, the emotion and the being felt merge

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<sup>90</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' The fluent speaker lets himself be carried along by the flow of his speech, he talks <on the fly> without worrying about losing his grip on the sentences that come to him from the language that guides him. In this way, speaking resembles fluid body movements [...] Body movements, such as articulating speech with the tongue and lips, dancing, and walking briskly, are fluid only because they do not follow a prescribed sequence step by step, as in cooking according to a recipe, but rather a spontaneous overall impulse that is, so to speak, fed by a subtle spatial and temporal regulation [...]. [...] The expert does not master it [language], he obeys it by allowing himself to be guided by its sentences in the formation of his sayings. '

into a unity for a moment. Similarly, exchanged glances cannot be neatly divided into a looking subject and a looked-at object.<sup>91</sup> Examples from the field of cultural contacts are also easy to find. The casual hug between people who are fond of each other (French *embrassement*, Spanish *abrazo*, Portuguese *abraço*, Romanian *îmbrățișare*, Italian *abbraccio*), which is customary in Romance and Latin American cultures when greeting and saying goodbye, is carried by a shared, holistic, directed corporeal impulse. This type of embrace flows smoothly when there is a shared situation whose circumstances, agendas, and problems are held together by a diffuse 'aura of significance', i.e., country- and region-specific routines such as starting on the left or right, frequency of change, routines for regulating distance, and situational appropriateness. Otherwise (as in the case of people from northern latitudes), there are moments of hesitation and disruption of the shared simultaneous process, which can lead to stumbling in corporeal communication. Here, there is a 'hiccup' between the felt body (germ. *Leib*) and the motor body schema; incorporation does not happen spontaneously. For success, on the other hand, the following applies: in a situation of corporeal communication, corporeal behavioral routines (practiced and implicit) combine with an *ad hoc* corporeal impulse to incorporate. 'Through incorporation, the felt body is dynamically united with the physical body.' (Schmitz 2019 b, 68; transl. W.M.-P.) At pop concerts, mass panic events, etc., collective felt bodies form for a short time. This is why we can speak of a trans-corporeal phenomenology.

Even persons who emancipate themselves from captivity in situations never completely free themselves from their corporeal condition, because corporeal dynamics only allow for a temporary standstill, not a permanent one.<sup>92</sup> The habitual style of personal emancipation is based on a flexible approach: it should cushion the fluctuations caused by the instability of the personal situation as far as possible. However, shocks such as a disturbing experience, deep grief, or a violent blow or fall can lead to a temporary loss of composure and thus to personal regression. However, this 'sinking' (implication) into a prepersonal, affective state also allows people to integrate the stressful subjective facts into a newly adapted composure and to strive for a

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<sup>91</sup> Schmitz (2016 a, 119; 218) introduced the new term 'indivisible relation' (germ. *unspaltbares Verhältnis*) into philosophy (cf. chap. 7). Germ. *Verhältnis* (relation) has to be clearly distinguished from germ. *Beziehung* (relationship).

<sup>92</sup> For an introduction, cf. Schmitz (2016 a, 143-144) and, for its application, Müller-Pelzer (2024 a, 104-113).

changed individual level of personal emancipation (explication). Schmitz (2017, 15-31) therefore emphasizes that the person is only a person by being prepersonal at the same time.

In my opinion, the motif of "decentering the human" also includes the effort to heal the disastrous breakdown of common situations in the Occident and Europe. Aristotle and the tradition that followed him state – in opposition to Plato's conviction – that practical reason enables people to organize their coexistence themselves. The weakness of Aristotelian teaching lies in its organicist approach: those involved in public life are like corporeal organs that can only function together, each in its assigned place. This amounts to a static, traditionalist order. In contrast, Plato, Hobbes, and some contemporary philosophers hold the conviction that human beings are incapable of spontaneously developing a common understanding; a state is needed to force people together. Although the social contract school of thought opposes this radicalism, it maintains, as Rawls does, that humans are incapable of producing common ways of life based on understanding. According to Rawls, individuals must instead calculate and contractually agree with others on how to achieve the minimum average impairment of others with the maximum average common benefit.

Apart from other objections, it must be emphasized that, according to the critique of Western intellectualism, it is no longer possible to begin thinking about human beings with the rational individual, capable of human speech, and to suppress the pre-reflexive experience of corporeality embedded in the affective environment. In the terminology of New Phenomenology, these are *implanting* situations in which persons and all conceivable contents interact and grow together in such a way that 'detachment is only partially possible or at least causes deep wounds.'<sup>93</sup> According to Schmitz (1999, 32-82), modern capitalist economics takes up the traditional autistic transgression in order to treat individuals through institutions, based on – supposed – 'human nature' as if they lived without interest in their fellow human beings and without knowledge of their historical and social circumstances. This is consistent with *inclusive* situations, which differ from *implanting* situations in that they are characterized by an 'easily resolvable relationship between enclosure and adaptation' (Schmitz 2005 b, 25; cf. Chapter 6.3 on situations).

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<sup>93</sup> Consideration should be given to making cross-cultural comparisons with apparently similar conceptions of communal life. Schmitz himself mentioned the Russian concept of *sobornost* (cf. Schmitz 2007 a, 2, 823; 1999, 400-402). The African *ubuntu*, in which, according to unanimous opinion, the individual and the community are regarded as a unity, should also be included (cf. Makoni/Pennycook 2024, 23).

In the "global South", the revitalization of buried forms of community is being pursued as a countermeasure to this neutralization of affective bonds. The "decentering of the human" called for by Kell & Budach, one can provisionally assert, is directed against a hypertrophic intellectualism. This can be linked to the conclusions of New Phenomenology insofar as humans, due to their corporeality, are anchored in situations but also so entangled in them that they must gradually free themselves from them with the help of sentence-like language in order to then project themselves onto imagined roles and create something new.

The discussion of Kell & Budach's contribution from the "southern" context provides a contrasting background against which the foreign language teaching debate in the "global North" (represented here by Germany) can be distinguished.

#### 4. On neocolonial language policy in the European Union

In Germany, a kind of symbiosis between foreign language teaching research on the one hand and the European Union and the Council of Europe (CoE) on the other can be observed for some time:<sup>94</sup> The generous funding of costly projects is reflected in the widespread recognition by scientists of the EU and CoE as the authoritative political authorities on issues of plurilingual education, training, and research. Thus, foreign language educators are, *willy-nilly*, adopting the ambivalent interpretive monopoly of the EU and the CoE. This can be seen in the handbook *Mehrsprachigkeits- und Multikulturalitätsdidaktik* (Plurilingualism and Multiculturalism Didactics), edited by Christiane Fäcke and Franz-Joseph Meißner.

In the relevant articles, global English and its influence on plurilingualism in Europe do not play the role they deserve. Although the ongoing Anglophonization is criticized from time to time, it is accepted as a given; beyond that, there is no perceived need to review one's own basic assumptions (see above the 'level of abstraction' according to Schmitz and the 'episteme'

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<sup>94</sup> See GER and RePA; also Raasch (2010).

according to Foucault) and to respond to the precarious situation with a program that focuses on *European*, i.e. *affective* plurilingualism. Without sufficiently problematizing the ambivalent concept of plurilingualism, the call to promote European languages more strongly under the prevailing school conditions amounts to benefiting French, Spanish, and Italian. Overall, in the introduction (1-16), the editors take a politically and economically determined globalist perspective that is entirely in line with that of the EU elites. Following the example of political Brussels and Berlin, they succinctly refer to 'Europe growing together in a globalized world' (Fäcke & Meißner 2019, 1). What is euphemistically referred to as 'growing together' means *de facto* the strategic decision of EU members to act as a 'global player' by concluding free trade agreements to secure competitive advantages, promoting intergovernmental treaty structures that circumvent community control bodies, being attractive to international financial markets, cooperating more closely with NATO, etc. Furthermore, the editors of the handbook subscribe to the official interpretation that conceptless immigration from non-European regions of the world is necessary and desirable.<sup>95</sup> The undifferentiated willingness to smooth over the tense situation in line with the EU elites' agenda is very clear: „Ziel ist, Andersheit nicht als Bedrohung für das eigene Selbst und das überkommene kollektive Wir, sondern als Bereicherung erscheinen [sic!] zu lassen.“ (Fäcke & Meißner 2019, 2)<sup>96</sup>

Following ill-considered political action and ignoring its effects must lead to a distorted picture of reality. This begins with the demand to learn the language of the host country as well as possible: by upholding the languages of origin and through the paradigm shift to global (Anglophone) multiculturalism, the incentive to learn German as well as possible is weakened. Traubant (2014, 92; 56 ff.) noted some time ago that Germans are emigrating from their own language, "[da sie] keinen Wert auf die Bewahrung des Deutschen in hohen Diskursen legen und damit den Status des Deutschen kontinuierlich schwächen.“ (Transl. W.M.-P.: '[They] do not

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<sup>95</sup> The official view of the EU elites is the prevailing tenor. The fact that immigration is legally and politically controversial is not mentioned. Cf. the political statement by Fäcke & Meißner (2019, 2): 'Our European countries have long been characterized by both strong immigration and a decline in the native population. A significant increase in the active population through immigration is therefore necessary, if only to finance and maintain social security systems in the long term. The societies concerned, and above all the education system, must adapt to this. Against this background, too, the assessment of immigrants present in Germany, for example, their plurilingualism and their identity construction (↗ Art. 16) is important.' (Transl. W.M.-P.). Thus, migrants are becoming the main triggers for talking about plurilingualism and multiculturalism.

<sup>96</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'The goal is to make otherness appear [sic!] not as a threat to one's own self and the traditional collective 'we', but as an enrichment.'

attach any importance to preserving German in high discourse and are thus continuously weakening the status of German.‘) <sup>97</sup>

As a result, the contributions to the handbook could be of great benefit if they did not argue on a skewed basis: from the outset, the EU's objective is to keep pace with globalization. This program includes global English as a benchmark against which the attractiveness and effectiveness of foreign language teaching is measured. At the same time, however, this means that the significance of language(s) is generally limited to social communication and interaction. It is claimed that learning and speaking languages plays an important role in the identity formation of individuals and groups. However, this merely adopts psychological and sociological doctrines that the EU wants to use to propagate a *political EU identity*. The fact that European languages are indispensable for the *differentiated development of different styles of Europeanization and an affective identity* is not taken into account. The perceived significance of a European way of life (*I belong here!*) includes (moral) conscience and sensitivity to injustice and justice (cf. Schmitz <sup>2</sup>1995, 69-79). What is appropriate and what is not, what is tolerable, offensive, or outrageous, requires a sense of existential background emotions that are conveyed through European languages and the different styles of Europeanization that have developed over time (see chapter 5).

Some essays from the handbook may illustrate the criticized tendencies in detail; in addition, a more recent essay from the *Handbook of Plurilingual and Intercultural Language Learning* (2025) will be consulted.

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<sup>97</sup> Presumably, Fäcke & Meißner were concerned about being associated with the politically instrumentalized 'German Leitkultur' (dominant culture), which has led to the pendulum swinging in the opposite direction. However, the authors must admit that "universalistic value systems" (10) reach their limits when it comes to issues such as "family honor," i.e., controversial "attitudes toward the sexual behavior of daughters", "slaughtering animals", "circumcision of boys or girls in Judaism or Islam", or "Muslim women wearing headscarves." One could also mention child marriages or the abuse of parental rights in the practice of religion. In these cases, Fäcke and Meißner recommend "critical tolerance [...] for the sake of peaceful coexistence and the avoidance of conflict" (Fäcke & Meißner 2019, 11). See Müller-Pelzer (2021, chap. 2.2.4). The fact that this is not sufficient is discussed in chap. 4.5.

#### 4.1 Adelheid Hu: " Sprachlichkeit, Identität, Kulturalität " (18-24)<sup>98</sup>

The author argues as follows: Ideologically misguided European nation states have, in the opinion of broad circles, contributed significantly to the wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The nation state is therefore obsolete and must be overcome in favor of transnational, democratic forms of organization based on the guiding principle of human rights. Cultures, identities, and languages no longer present themselves to the individual as predetermined collective programs; rather, the individual becomes an actor in a shared world:

Sprache [wird gesehen] als Ressource bzw. Mehrsprachigkeit als integratives Repertoire der Lernenden, mit Hilfe dessen sprachlich gehandelt wird. (Op. cit., 17) [...] Kultur bzw. Kulturalität wird als Vermögen zur Sinn- und Bedeutungstiftung und damit auch als gesellschaftliche Praxis verstanden (Gutmann 1998). (Op. cit., 17) [...] Sprache – nun verstanden als soziale Praxis – bildet in dieser Sichtweise die Wirklichkeit nicht ab, sondern erschafft diese. (Op. cit., 23)<sup>99</sup>

Contrary to the older idea of a given state of affairs that is represented, the author sees identity as an ' unfinished aspiration ' (op. cit., 19) and refers to the fact that the individual ' orients his actions toward the horizon of the desired autonomy of his own self. ' (citing Straub 2004, 280). Hu's definition of culture (op. cit., 21) reinforces this tendency: ' Culture is thus seen more as a structuring, expressive-aesthetic, and interpretive practice of individuals, as their ability to give meaning to the world, to create identities, but also to assert power interests. ' (Transl. W.M.-P.) Chapter 2 has already addressed the interactionist error of assuming that meaning must first be given to the environment. If we add up linguistic creativity, the aspiration for an autonomous self, and the ability to give meaning to the environment, this points to a social constructivist bias.<sup>100</sup> It remains unclear where the individual gets the criteria for 'constructing' their autonomy. For Hu, a shared life experience of a mature linguistic and cultural environment is out of the question because she confuses it with 'essentialist notions of identity' (Hu 2019, 17).<sup>101</sup> All

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<sup>98</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'Language, Identity, Culturality'

<sup>99</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'Language [is seen] as a resource or plurilingualism as an integrative repertoire of learners, with the help of which linguistic action is taken. [...] Culture or culturality is understood as the ability to create meaning and significance and thus also as a social practice (Gutmann 1998). (op. cit., 17) [...] Language – now understood as social practice – does not represent reality in this view, but creates it. '

<sup>100</sup> Much, but not everything, is negotiable. *Anything goes?* It quickly becomes clear that this is not the case when it comes to life and death, but by no means only here. When a subject is portrayed who moves in different social milieus, uses several languages professionally, communicates with their changing life partners (and possibly also children) only in global English, and strings together phases of identity according to momentary inspirations and coincidences, the risk of losing oneself in the maelstrom of emergent states should also be addressed. On 'commodified' subjectivity, cf. Reckwitz <sup>3</sup>2020 and below pages 74 and 93.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Wolfgang Streeck (2017).

in all, the antithesis of reflexive-discursive deconstruction (creative self-narration, hybrid identities, etc.) leads to an intellectualistic one-sidedness (cf. op. cit., 23 et seq.), which comes at a price.

The emancipation of the personal subject from natural conditions and surrounding circumstances should not obscure the fact that deconstruction means neutralization in affective terms. Since global English supports this trend, it would have been desirable to know whether the reference to Europe would have changed Hu's global perspective. On this occasion, I quote a passage from my book *Europa regenerieren* (2021, 282-285):

Wenn alles, was Mensch und Welt betrifft, gemacht ist, liegt ein umfassender Konstruktivismus vor; wenn hingegen alles, was Mensch und Welt betrifft, gegeben ist, liegt ein umfassender Naturalismus (auch „Essenzialismus“ genannt) vor. In der Debatte zwischen den sog. Dekonstruktivisten und den sog. Differenztheoretikern geht es darum herauszufinden, inwieweit vermeintlich von Natur aus Gegebenes als tatsächlich kulturell Gemachtes erkannt wird, dekonstruiert und in einem Entwurf neu arrangiert werden kann, bzw. umgekehrt, inwieweit vermeintlich kulturell Gemachtes als tatsächlich von Natur aus Gegebenes erkannt wird und in die Selbstwerdung des Individuums in und aus gemeinsamen Situationen einbezogen werden muss.

Wenn man von der emanzipierten Person als Normalfall der Orientierung in der Welt ausgeht, ist eine Neigung zum Konstruktivismus zu erwarten. Geht man hingegen davon aus, dass das präpersonale, präpersonale Leben in die Beurteilung der menschlichen Person und der Gemeinschaft einbezogen werden muss, so ist zu erwarten, dass bestimmte Phänomene als unverfügbar, als gegeben betrachtet werden. Hier wären zu nennen die leibliche Disposition (Temperament), biologisch-geschlechtliche Bestimmung, Hautfarbe, Eltern und Familie, Sprache und Heimat, allesamt subsumierbar unter dem Begriff der „Geburtlichkeit“ (Böhme 2003, 230). Es handelt sich dabei um Weisen der Selbstgegebenheit, die weder allein objektive Fakten noch beliebig verschiebbare Teile einer Narration sind, sondern Sachverhalte, zu denen man sich als affektiv nahegehende Bestimmungen verhalten muss, die man so oder so modifizierend übernehmen, ablehnen, neutralisieren oder verdrängen kann, mit denen man sich aber auseinanderzusetzen hat „als Natur, die wir selbst sind“ (Böhme 2003, 9). Sich dazu zu verhalten, was der freien Verfügung Grenzen setzt, bringt Reflexionsprozesse in Gang, die in den Leib „eingeschrieben“ werden, d.h. die das Sichspüren und das Spüren der vielsagenden Eindrücke, die Erinnerungen und Erwartungen beeinflussen.

„Da unser ganzes Dasein von Erinnerungen getränkt und geschient ist, die sich im Prozess der Sozialisierung als *mnemonische Dispositionen* in den Leib *einschreiben*, beruht auch unser Denken auf Reflexionsprozessen, die ‚Welt und Leib‘ vorgängig ‚interpretieren‘. Mit Beginn der Reflexion wird der *Leib zum Körper vergegenständlicht*, ohne dass das ‚spätere‘ Ich gefragt würde, ob es damit einverstanden ist. Der *Leib* wird so teilweise in den *Körper* überführt und damit zu etwas, das man *haben* kann, das einem *zugeschrieben* werden kann. Dabei werden die *leiblichen Regungen* reflexiv durchtränkt.“ (Rappe 2008, 19f.; Hervorhebungen im Original)

Gleichwohl bedeutet die vorgängige kulturell-reflexive Geprägtheit menschlicher Gemeinschaften nicht, dass die Welt restlos diskursiv gemacht ist. Ein Beispiel soll dies veranschaulichen: Geht aus einer kulturell-ethnisch gemischten Verbindung von Mann und Frau ein Kind hervor, so ist das eine natürliche kulturell-ethnische Mischung. Die Formulierung *kulturell-ethnisch* drückt aus, dass es nicht in erster Linie auf ein biologisch-ethnisches Kriterium ankommt, sondern dass auch eine durch kulturelle Sedimentierung gebildete Lebensweise als natürliche Differenz erlebt werden kann. Ein Kind aus einer russisch-französischen Verbindung etwa erfährt das Franzose-/ Französinsein bzw. das Russe-/ Russinsein des jeweiligen Elternteils als Natur in dem Sinne, dass jene – abstrakt betrachtet kontingente – Differenz *für es selbst* gegeben, nicht gemacht und nicht beliebig dekonstruierbar ist. Dies betrifft als erstes die Sprachen, aber auch ggf. die unterschiedliche Art affektiver Zuwendung seitens der Eltern, den Umgang mit Problemen und den Lebensstil. Es handelt sich um Gegebenes, zu dem der oder die Betreffende sich verhalten kann bzw. verhalten muss. Die Andersheit der beiden Elternteile und der jeweiligen Sprache, der Haltung und des Lebensstils müssen aber keineswegs als Fremdheit erfahren werden: Im Gegenteil ist zu erwarten, dass dies als vertraute Differenz integriert wird, so wie auch sonstige, in der persönlichen Situation begründete Unterschiede zwischen den Eltern gegeben sind. Andererseits kann es auch sein, dass das Anderssein kaschiert werden muss, z.B. wenn es gesellschaftlich oder politisch nicht opportun oder gar gefährlich ist, die eine oder andere Seite der Herkunft in den eigenen Lebensentwurf aufzunehmen.

„Geboren zu sein ist eines der gewichtigsten Momente, in denen wir unser Natursein erfahren. Als betroffene Selbstgegebenheit enthält es alles, was man sich auf Grund der eigenen Leiblichkeit zuschreiben muss. Die Erfahrung dessen ist aber kein abgeschlossener Vorgang, vielmehr kommen wir immer wieder auf uns selbst zu, erfahren an uns unbekannte Möglichkeiten und Gegebenheiten.“ (Böhme 2003, 233)

Was hier als existenzielle Möglichkeit aufgedeckt wird, kann also begünstigt durch bestimmte Lebensumstände als affektiv nahegehend ergriffen, ausgeblendet, verdeckt oder in reflektierender Einstellung als objektive Tatsache von sich abgerückt (affektiv neutralisiert / objektiviert) werden. Bikulturell aufwachsende Menschen erfahren unter bestimmten Umständen ihr Leben im Zeichen einer Spannung, bei der Herkunft und Zukunft nicht allein als hinzunehmendes Schicksal (Regeldistanz: *Das ist Menschenlos*. (Richard Baerwald, zitiert nach Hermann Schmitz <sup>2</sup>1995, 182) gedeutet werden, sondern als zu enträtselndes Geschick (Subjektivierung; persönliche Distanz). Dies verweist auf die Fähigkeit, unterschiedliche Niveaus personaler Emanzipation einzunehmen, d.h. sich in unterschiedlicher Weise zum affektiven Betroffensein zu verhalten, die eigene Fassung entsprechend zu verändern und spezifische Weisen leiblicher Existenz zu entwickeln. Damit „wird angezeigt, dass unsere Leiblichkeit kein Faktum ist, sondern eine Möglichkeit, über die wir durch unser Selbstverhältnis und unsere Lebenspraxis entscheiden.“ (Böhme 2003, 211) [...]

Das „Sichfinden des Menschen in seiner Umgebung“ (Hermann Schmitz) ist zunächst leiblich und insofern vollständig subjektiv. Erst mit den Entwicklungsphasen des Kindes werden schrittweise oder auch gleitend bestimmte Sachverhalte in die Objektivität entlassen, d.h. sie verlieren ihre Subjektivität und ermöglichen so dem sich langsam emanzipierenden Ich, sich im Zuge des

Erwachsenwerdens eine persönliche Situation des Eigenen zu schaffen und vom Anderen abzugrenzen. Ontogenetisch ist der präpersonal erworbene Lebensstil mit kulturellen Normen vermischt, so dass die nachträgliche reflektierte Objektivierung allenfalls partiell möglich ist. Entsprechend sind der nachträglichen Resubjektivierung (etwa das „Wiederentdecken der eigenen Wurzeln“) Grenzen gesetzt. Sofern die betreffende Sprache hinlänglich intensiv in leiblich-atmosphärisch geprägten Situationen erworben worden ist, bildet sie eine Einheit mit der implanzierenden Situation der Geburtlichkeit, kann also nicht beliebig objektiviert (dekonstruiert, affektiv neutralisiert) werden.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' If everything that concerns humans and the world is made, then we have comprehensive constructivism; if, on the other hand, everything that concerns humans and the world is given, then we have comprehensive naturalism (also called <essentialism>). The debate between the so-called deconstructionists and the so-called difference theorists is about finding out to what extent what is supposedly given by nature can be recognized as actually culturally constructed, deconstructed, and rearranged in a new design, or, conversely, to what extent what is supposedly culturally constructed can be recognized as actually given by nature and must be incorporated into the self-actualization of the individual in and from common situations.

If one assumes that the emancipated person is the normal case for orientation in the world, a tendency toward constructivism is to be expected. If, on the other hand, one assumes that prepersonal, prepersonal life must be included in the assessment of the human person and the community, it is to be expected that certain phenomena will be regarded as unavailable, as given. These include corporeal disposition (temperament), biological gender, skin color, parents and family, language and homeland, all of which can be subsumed under the term <birthness> (Böhme 2003, 230). These are modes of self-giveness that are neither purely objective facts nor arbitrarily shiftable parts of a narrative, but rather facts to which one must relate as affectively close determinations that can be modified, rejected, neutralized, or repressed in one way or another, but which must be dealt with <as nature that we ourselves are> (Böhme 2003, 9). Responding to what limits free disposal sets in motion processes of reflection that are <inscribed> in the body, i.e., that influence the emotion of oneself and the emotion of the meaningful impressions that influence memories and expectations.

<Since our entire existence is saturated and bound by memories that are inscribed in the body as mnemonic dispositions in the process of socialization, our thinking is also based on processes of reflection that 'pre-interpret' the 'world and body'. With the onset of reflection, the body is objectified without the 'later' self being asked whether it agrees with this. The body is thus partially transformed into the body and thus becomes something that one can have, that can be attributed to one. In the process, bodily impulses become reflexively saturated.> (Rappe 2008, 19f.; emphasis in the original)

Nevertheless, the prior cultural-reflexive character of human communities does not mean that the world is completely discursive. An example illustrates this: if a child is born from a culturally and ethnically mixed union between a man and a woman, this is a natural cultural and ethnic mixture. The term <cultural-ethnic> expresses that it is not primarily a biological-ethnic criterion that matters, but that a way of life formed by cultural sedimentation can also be experienced as a natural difference. A child from a Russian-French union, for example, experiences the Frenchness or Russianness of each parent as natural in the sense that this difference – which is abstractly contingent – is a given for the child, not something that is made up or can be deconstructed at will. This applies first and foremost to languages, but also, where applicable, to the different ways in which parents show affection, deal with problems, and their lifestyle. These are given circumstances to which the person concerned can or must respond. However, the differences between the two parents and their respective languages, attitudes, and lifestyles do not necessarily have to be experienced as foreign: On the contrary, it is to be expected that this will be integrated as a familiar difference, just as there are other differences between the parents that are based on their personal situations. On the other hand, it may also be necessary to conceal this otherness, e.g. if it is socially or politically inopportune or even dangerous to incorporate one or the other side of one's origins into one's own life plan.

<Being born is one of the most significant moments in which we experience our natural being. As a self-given fact, it contains everything that must be attributed to oneself on the basis of one's own corporeality. However, the experience of this is not a completed process; rather, we repeatedly encounter ourselves, experiencing unknown possibilities and circumstances.> (Böhme 2003, 233)

What is revealed here as an existential possibility can therefore, depending on certain circumstances, be grasped as emotionally moving, ignored, concealed, or, in a reflective attitude, distanced from oneself as an objective fact

This quote underscores that considerations about Europe cannot be reduced to the power-political or cultural-scientific perspective "from nowhere."

#### 4.2 Franz-Joseph Meißner: " Politische Dimensionen der rezeptiven Mehrsprachigkeit für die europäische Demokratie " (57-64)<sup>103</sup>

With regard to Europe, Meißner emphasizes the limitations of global English as a ' language of international communication since, apart from English-speaking societies, it is never an expression of the cultures involved and their issues. ' (Op. cit., 58) However, the demand he derives from this is merely the increased promotion of second foreign languages and ' plurilingualism as a language policy guideline of the EU '; he expects this to have positive effects on the 'construction of European identity' (op. cit., 61). There is no mention of the numerous European languages beyond the common school languages of French, Spanish, and Italian, which also want to see their contribution to Europe taken into account, because this doesn't correspond to the political project of the economic and political ' heavyweights ' of the EU. However, despite the sensible measures proposed (such as ' receptive plurilingualism through intercomprehension, language learning competence, and language-networking learning in methodology '), he remains stuck in a distant perspective top-down and fails to provide what would be needed in response to the questions of young Europeans bottom up: *What Europe are we talking about*

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(emotionally neutralized/objectified). Under certain circumstances, people who grow up biculturally experience their lives in a state of tension, in which their origins and future are not simply accepted as fate (standard distance: That's human nature. (Richard Baerwald, quoted by Hermann Schmitz 21995, 182), but as a destiny to be unraveled (subjectification; personal distance). This refers to the ability to assume different levels of personal emancipation, i.e., to behave in different ways toward affective involvement, to change one's own composure accordingly, and to develop specific modes of corporeal existence. This <indicates that our corporeality is not a fact, but a possibility that we decide on through our relationship to ourselves and our life practices.> (Böhme 2003, 211) [...]

The <finding of oneself in one's environment> (Hermann Schmitz) is initially corporeal and, in this respect, completely subjective. Only with the developmental phases of the child are certain facts gradually or smoothly released into objectivity, i.e., they lose their subjectivity and thus enable the slowly emancipating ego to create a personal situation of its own in the course of growing up and to distinguish itself from the other. Ontogenetically, the personally acquired lifestyle is mixed with cultural norms, so that subsequent reflective objectification is only possible to a limited extent. Accordingly, there are limits to subsequent resubjectification (such as <rediscovering one's own roots>). If the language in question has been acquired sufficiently intensively in situations characterized by pal and atmospheric influences, it forms a unity with the implanting situation of birth and cannot therefore be objectified (deconstructed, affectively neutralized) at will. '

<sup>103</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' Political Dimensions of Receptive Plurilingualism for European Democracy '

*here? What significance can a political identity construction that is imposed on me from above have for me?*

The programmatic chapter heading (2019, 63): ' Multilingual reception competence and values education in the European Union as a task of foreign language teaching ' (Meißner) illustrates the aforementioned ambivalent dual role of the EU as a 'global player' and 'values educator', which Meißner takes on as a matter of course. In 2000, with the Lisbon Agenda,<sup>104</sup> the EU announced its ambition to become a political power able to surpass the US within 10 years; on the other hand, with the adoption of the Charter of Fundamental Values of the European Union, the EU declared to the whole world that it had privileged access to the normative foundations concerning living together in Europe.<sup>105</sup> Today, the hyperbolic world-historical claim to have absorbed and to want to preserve the Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman traditions, the Enlightenment, modern democracy, the achievements of civilization, and the artistic and linguistic heritage of the occident has become part of the repertoire of the political class.<sup>106</sup> Under these circumstances, 'values education' becomes a form of continued deprivation of rights. There is no need to ask citizens what affects them emotionally and how they want to live together in the future when the EU elites, without batting an eyelid, claim to be the philosophical and cultural authority over Europe. Politicians such as Emmanuel Macron (2017, 2) respond to the questions of concerned Europeans with the categorical assertion that Europe and the EU have 'melted' into the 'European project'. Rather than providing an explanation, his chosen metaphor sounds like a rebuke: ' Stop looking for a difference between the two! ' Clearly, the EU elites do not hesitate to reserve the monopoly on interpreting the future for themselves: *Europe is the EU, nothing else!* Instead of deciding their own lives, Europeans are, in the view of the EU elites, at best spectators of an event that they are assured is magnificent.

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<sup>104</sup> *European Council*, March 23 and 24, 2000, Lisbon.

<sup>105</sup> The discourse on values had become necessary in order to counteract the lack of a strong, affective bond between Europeans. According to Sloterdijk (2010), every 'global player' needs a mission.

<sup>106</sup> Hans Joas (2012) has rejected this claim calling it 'self-sacralization of Europe': ' I am disturbed by the idealization, indeed, the self-sacralization of Europe – and by the fact that the constant emphasis on European values clearly serves the purpose of talking up a European identity that does not exist. The greatest nonsense probably lies in the conflation of history and politics, i.e., in the assertion of an identity for political purposes. The invocation of a unified Judeo-Christian tradition is something new. This way of speaking was practically non-existent until the Second World War; on the contrary, it only became common after the Holocaust. ' (Transl. W.M.-P.)

### 4.3 Hans-Jürgen Krumm: " Bildungspolitische Perspektiven auf Mehrkulturalität " (89-95)<sup>107</sup>

H.-J. Krumm's article is an exemplary case of what the editors of the *Routledge Handbook* (chapter 3) refer to as "Western episteme," that is, the assumption that language is a universal fact that can be analyzed and broken down into individual genres and subgenres in order to apply the categories obtained to any individual case. The merit of research from the "South" lies in having opened our eyes to the culturally different significance of speech embedded in the respective contexts of life. For his part, Krumm first defines the conceptual field of multiculturalism and related terms, before applying the results to Europe in a second step. In doing so, he draws on the work of other scholars (Blell & Doff; Altmayer; Byram; Christ). Krumm then goes on to refer to the statements of the Council of Europe (GeR; RePA; Companion Volume) and the EU's plurilingualism policy, not without criticizing the mild concept of multiculturalism and multiple identities, which he considers to have been implemented half-heartedly. For him, the main reason for addressing this topic is the large number of immigrant pupils, both past and present, who come primarily from non-European cultural backgrounds. This gives new impetus to the repeatedly voiced criticism that too little is being done in the school and education system to combat the 'persistent homogenizing orientation towards national or ethnic groups' (op. cit., 89). According to Krumm, this is incompatible with the principle of human dignity and the cultural self-determination that goes with it. Different cultural principles must be tolerated or 'negotiated'. For Krumm, the fact that this recommendation has hardly been implemented is a moral failure that he projects onto 'European societies'. Readers are instructed as follows:

So wie die europäischen Gesellschaften erkennen und eingestehen mussten, dass sie längst zu Einwanderungsgesellschaften geworden sind, so müssen sie entsprechend ihre Bildungssysteme in mehrsprachige und mehrkulturelle Bildungssysteme umwandeln, monokulturelle Erwartungen und Ansprüche überwinden und sich für sprachliche und kulturelle Vielfalt öffnen. (Op. cit., 94)<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> ' Educational Policy Perspectives on Multiculturalism ' (Transl. W.M.-P.)

<sup>108</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' Just as European societies have had to recognize and admit that they have long since become immigrant societies, they must transform their education systems into multilingual and multicultural education systems in a corresponding manner, overcome monocultural expectations and demands, and open themselves up to linguistic and cultural diversity. '

It is apparently 'societies', not politicians or scientists, who should admit their failings. Krumm takes the now familiar global perspective "from nowhere". The term 'immigrant societies' is introduced as a fact, but proves to be a program that is no longer up for discussion. Krumm's admonition to open up to *diversity* is not without irony in a Europe whose linguistic and cultural diversity is proverbial but ignored.<sup>109</sup> Enlightenment about different styles of Europeanization, provided one is willing to take note of them, would be a suitable starting point for banishing the obsession with homogenization that Krumm criticizes.

Since the author knows nothing about the European type of civilization and considers the globalizing EU-Europe to be a given, the concept of "Mehrkulturalität" (multilingualism vs. plurilingualism) becomes ambiguous. Together with the political equivocation of the term Europe, Krumm's discussion gets caught up in the false alternative of 'monocultural-national vs. pluricultural-global' societies and identities (cf. Krumm 2019, 90). Europe as an affective space of involuntary life experience is not taken into account, blurring the fundamental difference between *European* pluriculturalism/plurilingualism and *global* multiculturalism/multilingualism. Therefore, Krumm's (2019, 94) recommendation that "Mehrkulturalität" (pluriculturalism) should be inscribed in the society of the future as a constitutive feature of its constitution is ambiguous: if it were indeed a matter of *European* pluriculturalism, the reference would be superfluous: In most European countries, mutual respect for common languages and cultures is largely guaranteed by constitutional law, but it needs more attention. With the simultaneous claim that, as far as possible, all immigrants to Germany should adopt 'universal fundamental values' or 'the values of the Basic Law as a guideline for their thoughts and actions' (Meißner 2019, 9), this can therefore only refer to *global* immigration. However, even in the 'best case scenario' (Krumm 2019, 89), no deep, affective bond can be expected from a global multicultural society without a common European way of life with tacitly shared norms. Krumm uses the monocultural norms of earlier nationalist politics, which he abhors, to exaggerate the point: "Kulturelle Identität in diesem Sinne [d.h. beliebiger *globaler* Mehrfachidentität] würde

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<sup>109</sup> But the question is whether unplanned immigration from non-European cultures can be remedied with the 'trendy' discourse of multiculturalism and multiple identities. After all, indiscriminate immigration has largely undone the progress that had been made in promoting mutual understanding between peoples. It would be more advisable for Europeans to make use of the 'heteroglossic resources' mentioned by Meißner (2019, 18), e.g., with regard to Greek, Slovak, Swedish, Romanian, or Icelandic, which would be useful for forming a European sense of unity.

bedeuten, dass die Zugehörigkeit gerade durch die Anerkennung von Verschiedenheit entsteht [...]." (Op. cit., 94)<sup>110</sup> What would be trivial in the context of a *European* multiple identity involving implanting common situations (cf. chapter 5) cannot be claimed for encounters with people from other types of civilizations.<sup>111</sup>

From a global, social constructivist perspective, belonging can probably only be defined in negative terms: as an emotionless acknowledgment, without interest in the past and the aspirations of others, focussing on the interest of relative stability of collectives. Those in power who are committed to the construction of a 'European political identity' may be satisfied with this, but a creative contribution to the respective European style of civilization<sup>112</sup> is not to be expected; rather, increasing alienation must be assumed. Authors such as Stefanie Rathje see no disadvantage in this. According to Rathje (2006, 15), the stability of modern societies does not arise from shared values and norms,

[...] sondern vielmehr durch die Erzeugung von Normalität. [...] Der evidente Zusammenhang von Kulturen ergibt sich dann nicht aus ihrer Kohärenz, sondern gerade aus der Bekanntheit und Normalität von Differenzen. [Interkulturelle Kompetenz zeige sich danach darin, dass der jeweiligen] Multikollektivität modular-additiv ein weiteres, gemeinsames Kollektiv [hinzugefügt wird.] Kultur lässt sich in diesem Sinne als Vorrat divergenter Angebote verstehen, der ähnlich wie Substanzen eines Chemielabors, die im Reagenzglas zusammengemischt ihr dynamisches Potential entwickeln, im Kontakt mit der Innenwelt der Individuen seine individuelle Ausprägung erfährt.<sup>113</sup>

There is no mention here of Europe as a diverse interlocking set of shared situations with countless affecting atmospheres and deontological emotions. This quote clearly shows what Europe is *not*. The reductive constructivism in the above quote can be countered by the differentiated assessment of the identity problem by Andreas Reckwitz, himself a social scientist. In postmodern conceptions of identity, he sees (2001, 17; print version: 34) 'a double danger: that of

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<sup>110</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'Cultural identity in this sense [i.e., arbitrary *global* multiple identity] would mean that belonging arises precisely through the recognition of diversity [...].'

<sup>111</sup> We should remember the concept of the global citizen, which expresses an anthropologically questionable wish list.

<sup>112</sup> See Müller-Pelzer (2021, 106-113). The 'EU values education' cited above quickly leads to a dilemma. Cf. section 4.4 treating Fäcckes' essay from 2025.

<sup>113</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: '[...] but rather through the creation of normality. [...] The evident connection between cultures does not arise from their coherence, but precisely from the familiarity and normality of differences. [Inter-cultural competence is then evident in the fact that the respective] multi-collectivity is modularly and additively expanded to include another, shared collective. In this sense, culture can be understood as a stockpile of divergent offerings which, similar to substances in a chemistry lab that develop their dynamic potential when mixed together in a test tube, experience their individual expression in contact with the inner world of individuals.'

dramatizing the stability of differences and the precisely opposite danger of dramatizing the permanent changeability of identities. ' In the first case, he is thinking of ethnic or gender identities, in the second case, of a permanent 'dissolution' and recombination of patterns of self-understanding. Reckwitz (2001, 18, print version: 34/35; transl. W.M.-P.) summarizes:

Dem Risiko einer Reifizierung der Differenzen zwischen kollektiven Identitäten steht das Risiko gegenüber, genau umgekehrt die permanente Veränderbarkeit und Auswechselbarkeit von - personalen wie kollektiven - Identitäten vorauszusetzen. Teilweise neigen die poststrukturalistischen und postmodernistischen Modelle kollektiver und personaler Identitäten dazu, die ständige Dynamik, 'Auflösung' und Rekombination von Mustern des Selbstverstehens zu dramatisieren (oder auch in einer Weise normativ zu fordern, daß sie dem Ideal des hochkapitalistischen 'flexiblen Subjekts' bereits verdächtig nahekommen). Wenn die entsprechenden semiotischen Ansätze hier dazu tendieren, die subjektive Perspektive der Alltagspraxis zu überspringen, in der die Akteure die Praktikabilität von Mustern des Selbstverstehens in den Alltagsroutinen erproben müssen, und statt dessen eine 'Beobachterperspektive' auf sich verschiebende oder sich überlagernde [Druckversion: 35] Sinnelemente einnehmen, dann übernehmen sie jedoch genau jenen kritisierten 'Objektivismus' der klassischen Identitätstheorien, der gegenüber dem 'praktischen Sinn' der Akteure immun blieb. Die neueren Identitätsanalysen müssen offenbar nicht nur dem Risiko des kulturalistischen Essentialismus, sondern genau umgekehrt auch dem Bild eines hyperflexiblen, seine Identitäten auswechselnden Subjekts entgehen, das den Boden der Alltagspraktiken zu verlassen scheint.<sup>114</sup>

Anticipating the explanations in chapter 6, reference can be made here to the *situationism* of New Phenomenology: this eludes social constructivist hypercomplexity and remains open to the unprejudiced life experiences of Europeans (cf. also chapter 5).

The representative comments by Hu, Meißner, and Krumm (2019) criticize the EU for its lack of consistency in implementing its self-imposed goals. However, they cannot (or do not want to) see the double game played by the EU elites. This makes them supporters of the 'global player' in spreading a cosmopolitan and philanthropic image, while its dual neo-colonial language policy is swept under the carpet: Global English is what it is, and together with global 'markets', immigrants are supposed to become the driving force behind the restructuring of

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<sup>114</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' The risk of reifying the differences between collective identities is counterbalanced by the risk of assuming, conversely, the permanent mutability and interchangeability of identities, both personal and collective. In some cases, poststructuralist and postmodernist models of collective and personal identities tend to dramatize the constant dynamics, <dissolution> and recombination of patterns of self-understanding (or even to demand them in such a normative way that they come suspiciously close to the ideal of the highly capitalist <flexible subject>). If the corresponding semiotic approaches here tend to skip over the subjective perspective of everyday practice, in which actors must test the practicability of patterns of self-understanding in everyday routines, and instead shift to an <observer's perspective> on shifting or overlapping [print version: 35] elements of meaning, then they adopt precisely the <objectivism> of classical identity theories that has been criticized for remaining immune to the <practical meaning> of the actors. The newer identity analyses must obviously avoid not only the risk of culturalist essentialism, but also, conversely, the image of a hyperflexible subject who changes identities and seems to leave the ground of everyday practices. '

foreign language teaching, the school system, and ultimately society as a whole – or so it seems. For these and other authors, the term plurilingualism does not refer to European *states of affairs* (or facts), but to a global *program* – as a ticket to Europe's global, multicultural future.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the cultural studies argument for plural identities, reinforced by human rights, seems to believe one can do without detailed reference to historical contexts. The authors do not seem to notice that their advocacy of global plurilingualism, multiculturalism, and multiple identities (often presented as 'liberation') is dictated by global economic imperatives, just as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the forced formation of national languages and identities on the European mainland was fueled by the close interlocking of capitalism and the nation-state (cf. Osterhammel <sup>4</sup>2009, 950-957).

#### 4.4 C. Fäcke: "Intercultural Discourses between Universalism and Particularism"

In her latest article, Christiane Fäcke (2025) explores the question of how the goal of foreign language teaching, namely to promote intercultural understanding on a global scale, can be achieved given the tension between universal values and particular local values. The author assumes that the established values of a society always reflect the prevailing power relations (op. cit., 221). After presenting relevant statements and concepts from various fields of knowledge and social spheres, Fäcke admits that she sees no solution that would promise a rapprochement between the universalist dreams and political aspirations of scientific committees and enlightened scholars on the one hand, and the fragmented values of postmodern societies on the other. This dilemma can be attributed to the fact that the author takes the hypothetical, extraterrestrial standpoint of the "view from nowhere" (Nagel) instead of starting bottom-up, i.e., from involuntary life experience. This creates the false impression that, after weighing up reasonable arguments, one must be able to 'choose' values that seem plausible. The popular concept of value suggests this impression: one imagines a value as an argumentative construct with certain qualities that can be examined impartially. In reality, however, this is not the case. What is subsequently defined as a value is the result of an intersubjectively confirmed experience in which individuals are seized by an emotion that confronts them with a binding norm accompanied by the sensation of authority:

*Verbindlich* gilt eine Norm für jemand, dem sie die Bereitschaft zum Gehorsam *exigent* abnötigt. Die Nötigung ist *exigent*, wenn der Genötigte dem Gehorsam zwar ausweichen kann, aber nur zwiespältig, halbherzig, befangen, unsicher, nicht in voller Übereinstimmung mit sich. (Schmitz 2012, 16; emphasis in the original text) <sup>115</sup>

Behavior that is inevitably demanded of many people in a social group by a binding norm<sup>116</sup> can then be designated as 'valuable' behavior for communal life. Since norms occur in a specific context of life, they can be said to be *relative* to an environment, a specific type of civilization, and a period of time.<sup>117</sup> This has nothing to do with value relativism, because such norms have binding (subjective) validity for those to whom they apply due to the perceived authority with which they occur. Assuming universally valid values, whether in the wake of Kant or in the wake of discourse ethics, is misguided after the 'fall of canonical ethics' (Schmitz <sup>2</sup>1992, 332). So, if the problem is formulated incorrectly, no viable solutions can be expected.

If we take into account the findings of New Phenomenology, one should not imagine humanity as an agglomeration of individuals; the autistic error that has persisted since the destruction of common situations in Greek philosophy has been addressed on numerous occasions. Based on current knowledge, it makes more sense to think of a globally cooperating community of independent types of civilization, each of which has its own binding norms.

Against this backdrop, it would be easier to understand why, in the present text, the European type of civilization and the styles of Europeanization associated with it are placed at the center of Europeans' search for identity and orientation: different types of civilization around the world have produced different value hierarchies; sometimes correspondences with the norms of other types of civilization can be found, sometimes not. Given the impossibility of asserting binding norms for every person, every time and every place, serious dialogue between different types of civilization about their different perceptions is probably the only viable way to achieve at least an understanding of the differences. If, for example, a European attitude to life (germ.

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<sup>115</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'A norm is *binding* for someone whom it *exigently* compels to obey. The compulsion is *exigent* if the compelled person can evade obedience, but only in an ambivalent, half-hearted, self-conscious, uncertain manner, not in full accordance with themselves.'

<sup>116</sup> Consider the traditional saying attributed to Luther: *Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me. Amen.* This manifests the claim of a binding norm with unconditional seriousness, emanating from a moving emotion (such as a numinous atmosphere).

<sup>117</sup> Schmitz (2012, 144) explains: 'I advocate a perspectival relativism of morality, not to advocate *laissez-faire*, but, on the contrary, to defend the absolute seriousness of the moral demand, which entails its highly personal character, against all temptations to arbitrariness.'

*Lebensgefühl*) with its *nomos* as a frame of reference were assumed in Germany, controversies such as the discord reported by Fäcke (2025, 225) in a German language course could probably be avoided.<sup>118</sup> Anyone who wants to become a participant in a particular style of Europeanization, who understands and affirms the common origin of the European type of civilization, is invited to participate. Anyone who, as a member of another type of civilization, would like to follow the discussion as a guest is free to choose this role, but then has only limited rights of intervention and decision-making. This rule would have the advantage of general comprehensibility and fairness. In contrast, the admonition to treat foreigners and members of minorities with respect can quickly become a reason for accusations of not doing so sufficiently. A sensitivity for what is right and fair arises from living together in internally diffuse but characteristic implanting situations, through which a cultural style develops. A few universal norms can probably be abstracted from this, but they are unsuitable for deciding what is right and fair in individual cases. Without the guidance of an established cultural style, the struggle for recognition becomes a permanent state of affairs, as can be observed at present. Rightful peace cannot be expected in this way. Fäcke's excursion into the realm of norms would have taken a different direction if the concept of *intercultural speaker* had been problematized. In the following section, critical objections are formulated and a counterproposal is explained.

#### 4.4 A plea for the *inter-European speaker*

The term *intercultural speaker* (also *intercultural plurilingual speaker*, cf. Hu 2025), coined in the 1990s in the context of the CoE, does not justify the expectations placed on it. The starting point was the revision of the concept of the *native speaker* as the benchmark for successful foreign language acquisition.

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<sup>118</sup> Fäcke (2025, 225) begins his exposition of the situation as follows: "In a learning group in adult education, the following writing task in a standard German textbook was to be carried out: 'You find a note in your letterbox from your (female) neighbor asking to borrow your car to help her move. You respond by offering not only your car but also your help inviting friends to join you and suggesting to breakfast together.' The learning group was supposed to write a short letter in response. However, this did not happen. Instead, a highly controversial conversation developed about the social appropriateness of this behavior, which was rejected by a female student from the USA with a Christian fundamentalist background, who was apparently supported by other male students with an Arabic Islamic migrant background. [...]"

There is broad consensus among foreign language teachers that the benchmark for learning a foreign language cannot be the depth, breadth, and level of competence that can be achieved by native speakers ('locuteurs natifs', 'hablantes nativos', 'Muttersprachler'). It is astonishing that this model has survived into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, even though its exaggerated claim was already apparent earlier. No less astonishing, however, is that the term *intercultural speaker* (House 2007; Byram 2008) has now been widely accepted as the new benchmark. At the same time, the terms L1 (first language) and L2, L3, L<sup>n</sup> for additional acquired languages, preferred by linguists, have become widespread. Both terms reflect a scientifically detached approach that differs from the affective approach implied by the term "Muttersprache" (mother tongue).<sup>119</sup> It is about the difference between the detached, methodical approach to language and the involuntary life experience with a language, which is based on corporeal and atmospheric impressions.<sup>120</sup> From the perspective of *European plurilingualism*, a one-sided *functional* understanding of language misses the opportunity to open up new ways of living, together with the Europeanization style of the respective culture. Replacing the term *native speaker* with *intercultural speaker* does away with the arrogance of setting an unattainable standard for language learners. At the same time, however, it eliminates the subjective nuance of *native*. Apparently, most experts in foreign language teaching understand the term "mother tongue" to be purely metaphorical: Replacing it with "first language" or L1 seems to them to be a prosaic, scientific equivalent without any loss of meaning. However, it does not seem to occur to them that *native* also refers to *one's own* birth,<sup>121</sup> which means that the early childhood phase of corporeal and atmospheric experience up to the onset and development of human speech is not taken into account. It is this phase of affective attachment – in most cases still to the mother – that not only enables the newborn's preverbal access to the world qua incorporation (germ. *Einleibung*) into people, things, and semi-things, but also shapes the situational mode of approaching human speech:

Das sprechenernende Kind erfasst zunächst nicht das, was der geäußerte Satz meint, sondern, was ein Sprecher meint, und gesteuert von dem protolinguistischen Duktus der Zuwendung, der Intonation, lernt das Kind, die in dieser Situation produzierte verbale Äußerung so zu analysieren, dass es später

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<sup>119</sup> Cf. above the explanations on the concept of European plurilingualism).

<sup>120</sup> Witte explains the difference between the terms foreign language and L2: "[L2] includes informal situations of language use and learning in a variety of contexts [...]". (2024, 708, endnote 2) Although this definition of L2 is more comprehensive, it does not seem to include the *affective dimension* referred to here.

<sup>121</sup> From the perspective of new phenomenology, the term mother tongue is not meant in a philological or biological-genealogical sense.

weitgehend auf die Stützung durch derartige dann ‚zusätzliche‘ Fähigkeiten verzichten kann. (Hörmann 1976, 234) <sup>122</sup>

Schmitz adds:

Nur durch Einpflanzung seiner persönlichen Situation in solche gemeinsame Situationen kann ein Kind sprechen lernen, indem es die Muttersprache aus der Bedeutsamkeit gemeinsamer Situationen abzulesen lernt. (Schmitz 2010, 94) Zunächst sind es aktuelle, von Augenblick zu Augenblick verschiebbare Situationen, aus denen das Kind sein Sprachverständnis schöpft; durch rasche Verallgemeinerung bilden sich ihm daraus zuständige, auf längere Sicht verlässliche Situationen [...]. (Schmitz 2012, 234) <sup>123</sup>

It should have been taken into account that a *native* speaker is initially (as a small child, entirely) an *affective being*, but also remains an affective being throughout their childhood and adolescent (and adult) development, despite all the changes they undergo. With the opening up of human language, the child therefore very quickly becomes an *affective speaker*.<sup>124</sup> If this is taken into account, the ubiquity of corporeal communication cannot be overlooked. In particular, the key competence of encorporation (see section 6.1) as a way of dealing with the environment (corporeal impulses, atmospheres, situations, semi-things, corporeal bridgings) is completely absent in *intercultural speakers*. On the one hand, applied linguists understandably focused their interest on the quantitatively and qualitatively more moderate linguistic requirements for language learners; but on the other hand, and more importantly, they slipped into the role of pedagogues to disseminate the sharpened *analytical* attention to the cultural dimension of transnational encounters (cf. Byram 1997). The concepts developed in the context of CoE have led to a transfer of contemporary psychological, social psychological, and action-theoretical findings into school pedagogy: For decades, *language awareness* has been emphasized, which is indeed useful from the perspective of adult (and adolescent) learners moving on different levels of personal emancipation. However, since corporeal and atmospheric perception as

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<sup>122</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ‚The child learning to speak does not initially grasp the meaning of the spoken sentence, but rather what the speaker means, and, guided by the protolinguistic style of attention and intonation, the child learns to analyze the verbal utterance produced in this situation in such a way that it can later largely dispense with the support of such <additional> abilities.‘ In the case of language acquisition during the European semester, it can be assumed that this use of situational elements to understand the meaning of a sentence will play a major role until the end of the semester. For more recent discussions on language pragmatics, see Finkbeiner / Mehlbauer / Schumacher (eds.) (2012) and Staffelt / Hagemann (eds.) (2014).

<sup>123</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ‚Only by placing their personal situation in such shared situations can children learn to speak, by learning to interpret their mother tongue from the significance of shared situations. [...] Initially, it is current situations, which can change from moment to moment, from which the child draws its understanding of language; through rapid generalization, these form relevant situations that are reliable in the longer term [...].‘

<sup>124</sup> Prieur (2017) emphasizes: ‚It is the fact that learning is most often a radically subjective, affective, relational experience that fully mobilizes the subject, their desire, their body, their imagination, their relationships with others, their family history, their educational background, and not just their cognitive abilities.‘ (Transl. W.M.-P.)

a basis is not taken into account, *language awareness* leads to one-sidedness and exacerbates the distanced attitude towards language acquisition. Therefore, the *intercultural speaker* moves unrestrictedly and quite naturally on an increasingly unfolding level of personal emancipation. In contrast to the profile of the *affective speaker*, the *intercultural speaker* can therefore be described as an *intellectual speaker* (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2021, 201-204; 338 f.): In this regard, neither the affective relation to the respective target language is of interest, because one starts solely from the objective facts, from languages in general; nor is the affective relation to *one's own* subjectively significant language of importance. The affective and situational significance of a language is not considered constitutive, but merely a dispensable, subjective nuance. This detached view is transferred to cultures. This detached view is transferred to cultures, so that their respective significance excludes any affective involvement in the relativistic perspective of the *intercultural speaker*.

Schmitz considers objective facts to be 'emaciated' subjective facts, i.e., their rich significance has been stripped away, so to speak, and falls by the wayside. Objective facts are simply there, while subjective facts are characterized by one striking feature, namely, "**dass das Gefundene sich nicht passiv darbietet, sondern den Finder in solcher Weise angeht und gefangen nimmt, dass er nicht umhin kann, als den Betroffenen sich selbst zu spüren.**"<sup>125</sup> Schmitz (2016, 210-218) describes this identity as absolute because it is felt corporeally without attribution, while the rest of identifying with something is based on attributions, i.e., it describes a relative identity that can also be different.<sup>126</sup>

It goes without saying that intercultural speakers do not care about the subjective experiences that learning a European language can entail, because the proponents of interculturalism operate

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<sup>125</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'that what is found does not present itself passively, but rather approaches and captivates the finder in such a way that he cannot help but feel himself to be the one affected'.

<sup>126</sup> Schmitz cites several examples to illustrate this point. The dialogue quoted here is taken from the same source (p. 52):

<< I [...] invent an individual named 'Peter Schulze', whom I place in situations of high emotional involvement. The first is a declaration of love. The following dialogue takes place:

Man: 'Peter Schulze loves you.'

Woman: 'Why don't you say: <I love you.>?'

Man: 'That's completely unnecessary.'

Woman: 'It's not superfluous at all, that's exactly what matters to me.'

The declaration of love has failed; the woman is upset. She wanted to hear from Schulze what only he alone can say to her among all speaking beings, a subjective fact of his loving emotional involvement that only he himself can express in his own name. >>

in the political arena. In fact, Byram starts from *foreign language education* to arrive at *education for intercultural citizenship* (2008). This placeless "intercultural citizenship" can be seen as the 'crowning glory' of the approach: it assumes that learning a new language primarily serves to develop a critical mind and the ability to judge the respective culture; it aims to support the students' willingness to get involved in order to participate in democratic life as citizens: "engagement in action".<sup>127</sup>

At first glance, Byram's concept could be interpreted as the 'good conscience' of the ER and EU: foreign language learning and teaching are given high priority, firstly as a contribution to understanding people from different European countries, and secondly as a contribution to the formation of democratic coexistence in Europe. However, a close examination comes to a different conclusion, and here it is primarily French linguists who have analyzed the backdrop of the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" (cf. Maurer 2011; Maurer/Puren 2019): It is no longer primarily a question of understanding language as the expression of a way of life that has something to say to me, but of guiding learners towards skill descriptors. Functional multilingualism has become "the new dominant ideology" for building a political identity. Following the model of functional plurilingualism, a functional cultural model is being promoted, whereby both together are supposed to ensure harmonious living together.

From the European perspective that interests us here, however, this vision raises an uncomfortable question: What language will the *intercultural speaker* speak? Since the established European languages are being robbed of their resources from European "histoire croisée" and only a limited communicative function (political, economic, commercial, etc.) remains, the answer is clear: the *intercultural speaker* speaks global English and will speak it more and more. The second, no less uncomfortable question is not long in coming: What does "culture(s)" mean in the term *intercultural*? First of all, this is not about Europe, but about the whole world. To put it more concretely: What will remain of European cultures when developed European languages no longer play a role? The answer is: Nothing more than idiosyncrasies and folklore. We are therefore dealing with global 'technical civilization' (cf. Böhme 1963). Just like the term "world

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<sup>127</sup> " <Citizenship> is a term that conveniently embodies the issues that arise: the need for self-aware judgment, the willingness to become engaged, the skills and knowledge which facilitate engagement. This is a move <from> FLT within education <to> FLT that brings a specific additional contribution in the term <intercultural citizenship>, a focus of citizenship to education for (democratic) citizenship. [Especially] when one is a member of an international society, especially of an international civil society. " (Byram 2008, 229)

citizen" (Risager), the intercultural speaker's program has been formulated from the detached perspective of "nowhere". The unreflectively adopted, seemingly harmless rhetoric of the 'complex globalized world in which we live' serves to conceal the interests that benefit from globalization. The intercultural speaker is an instrument of location- and culture-less neocolonialism (cf. also Fred Dervin 2025, 63), which is a dangerous attack on the European type of civilization.

From a neophenomenological perspective, the following four points of criticism can be summarized:

- 1 The previous, politically desired focus on functional plurilingualism remains. The *intellectual speaker* does not have the sensitivity to sense pre-reflexive experiences in internally diffuse situations and to treat them hermeneutically, i.e., with corporeo-atmospheric intelligence. Their goal is efficient, contextually differentiated and adapted communication geared towards clearly defined constellations. If European languages conform to global English as a reductive model for efficient communication, they will have little of their own to offer that is indispensable.
- 2 For Byram's fungible model, Europe is just one region of the world like any other; it can be easily applied to *global* plurilingualism and *global* multiculturalism, which is in the interests of the EU elites.<sup>128</sup> There is no longer question of styles of Europeanization with independent, affectively significant, developed languages and cultures. The result is likely to be the universally fungible "homme mondialisé" with his fluctuating "identités en archipel", which has been the stuff of dreams in management literature for several years now (cf. Cloet & Pierre 2018).
- 3 The assumptions made by Nemouchi & Byram (2025) in their struggle to find an episteme (in Foucault's sense) appropriate to the "global South" are questionable. The authors apparently believe that the efforts of researchers from the "global North" to achieve epistemic inclusion and social justice could build bridges (cf. the key words "rejoin", "reconcile", and "bridge", op. cit., 2025, 52) in order to dissuade representatives of the "global South" from a "rhetoric of violence" (op. cit., 51). Researchers from

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<sup>128</sup> For more on the much-discussed topic of social "integration" on this basis, see the quote from Rathje (2006) reproduced and commented on at the beginning of this chapter.

the "North" would have to take care "to critically reflect on their own intercultural competence as individuals, engage in processes of intercultural dialogue with one another" (op. cit., 52). The top-down assumption that there can be a common, global, intercultural denominator of understanding must first be worked out through patient efforts at understanding bottom-up – an even more demanding global *convergence herméneutique* than the European convergence.

- 4 In his program of global interculturality, Byram ignores the fact that, according to social scientists, the Western 'imperial way of life'<sup>129</sup> (Brand & Wissen 2017; cf. Streeck 2021, 338-350) is maintained through economic, military, and cultural power. Compared to this, the approach recommended by Byram and others, which involves students putting themselves in other people's shoes (so-called empathy) in order to see the world from their perspective, is an intellectual exercise that at best gives participants a 'good feeling'.<sup>130</sup>

Compared to the earlier nationalist incitement of Europeans, which led to armed conflicts, the functional cultural model has considerable advantages: firstly, in the interests of increasing economic productivity and political process efficiency; but secondly, it has also given interpersonal, transnational relationships a great deal of leeway. However, the war in Ukraine shows that this freedom of movement is also being curtailed as soon as the ruling global interest groups deem it useful: in addition to the other devastation, the achievements of European understanding and a critical and cosmopolitan attitude are being destroyed for future generations.

Since the adepts of *intercultural speaker* have integrated themselves into the politics of the EU elites, *they have no autonomous basis of legitimacy* from which they could, if necessary, raise their critical voice: *This is not right!* In contrast, thanks to *affective plurilingualism*, independent

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<sup>129</sup> The Wikipedia article offers an overview: Imperial Way of Life. [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperiale\\_Lebensweise](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperiale_Lebensweise)

<sup>130</sup> There is evidence that Byram's philosophical basis is questionable. (1) Hu (2025, 517) has pointed out that Byram adopts Kant's foundation of moral law on the autonomy of human beings. However, this is incompatible with Kant's insistence on duty, which Byram also emphasizes, thereby adopting the internal contradiction of Kantian philosophy (cf. Schmitz 2007 a, 2, 396-403). (2) Furthermore, Kant espouses the now historical anthropological view that humans must defend their freedom equally against God and against their own inclinations (cf. Schmitz 2007 a, 2, 415). (3) With regard to the validity of norms, since the 'fall of canonical ethics' (Schmitz<sup>2</sup>1995 a, 332), we must move away from the assumption of absolute norms that apply always and to all people (Schmitz 2012, 14 f.). Today, it must rather be taken into account that norms apply to someone at a particular time (cf. Schmitz 2012, 11-23).

Europeans are able to develop the sensitivity to respond to the sense of justice that emanates from the *nomos* of the European type of civilization. In joint discussion, those affected can weigh up the options and, if necessary, oppose political decisions. However, the decision as to what behavior is appropriate, for example in the case of outrageous actions, remains dependent on the critical self-examination of the individual.

In summary, the proposed concept of an *inter-European speaker* has the following strengths:

- 1 By limiting itself to Europe, it avoids making global claims. The focus is on the acquisition of *European* languages; allowing oneself to be emotionally affected by them is the first prerequisite for a *convergence herméneutique* of different styles of Europeanization.
- 2 The emphasis on *inter-European* refers to the different styles of Europeanization and the corresponding languages, the differences between which are sometimes very clearly perceived. The term does not need to be supplemented with words such as "pluricultural" or "plurilingual," because both would be pleonastic in view of Europe's extraordinary cultural and linguistic diversity.
- 3 The emphasis on *inter-European* refers to the *nomos* (implicit norms of right and wrong) that derives from the European type of civilization (cf. chapter 5) and can serve as a reference for self-reflection and discussions about future living together.
- 4 Language learners are invited to enter into shared everyday situations in which they grow into an unfamiliar European language and integrate into an unfamiliar style of Europeanization, its common situations, atmospheres, and emotions. Parallel to the affective implication, linguistic and communicative skills are acquired.
- 5 Sensitivity to the significance of their own mother tongue acts as an antenna for learners, enabling them to be receptive to subjectively significant, corporeally tangible moments in the new language they are learning, embedded in common situations. Allowing themselves to be affected emotionally allows them to feel: *Mea res agitur!*

The new term *inter-European speaker* refers to Europe as an overarching community of speakers whose members feel that characteristic requirements are addressed to them as such. Participation in this community of speakers is not tied to a specific level of linguistic competence, because it is not a matter of cognitive skills, but primarily of affective resonance for collective

atmospheres. For this reason, the *convergence herméneutique* program of different styles of Europeanization is not an event for linguistically and culturally particularly competent specialists, but is open to all who are sensitive to the life experience between Europeans and who face the associated challenges.<sup>131</sup>

Summarizing the results of chapters 3 and 4, the following differentiation emerges: The ongoing task of decolonizing the "global South" is complemented by the insight that (1) the "global North" is no longer a monolithic (colonial) bloc in philosophical and cultural terms and (2) that Europe itself has become the target of a neocolonial language and cultural policy. The revision of philosophical transgressions undertaken, for example, by New Phenomenology, as well as the re-founding of anthropology, ontology, and epistemology, invites researchers from the "South" and the "North" to engage in a joint postcolonial reflection on human coexistence. The corporeal growing into European languages, as proposed by the MONTAIGNE program,<sup>132</sup> provides initial approaches for a *convergence herméneutique* derived from the European type of civilization. However, this should not be understood as harmonization, let alone homogenization, because the different styles of Europeanization have produced independent cultures and languages that can pose major obstacles to spontaneous understanding.

In the following chapter, I will focus on explaining the normative implications of *convergence herméneutique* of different styles of Europeanization, because I have already presented the planned practical implementation of the exchange program for European students in a comprehensive study (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2021). In addition, thematically focused books and journal articles are available (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2021 b; 2023a; 2023b; 2024a). I recently explored the aspect of intercultural language learning in greater depth (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2024 b; 2024 c) as well as the foreign language teaching perspective (Müller-Pelzer 2025).

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<sup>131</sup> The language learning method of intercomprehension/Eurocomprehension is a useful building bloc.

<sup>132</sup> I have explained this term in detail (2024, 38-39, note 74). It is no coincidence that Michel de Montaigne (1533-92), author of the *Essais*, was an early critic of colonialism.

## 5. Life emotions and emotions of right <sup>133</sup>

Human speech is situated; it is rooted in situations. At this pre-reflexive level of corporeal communication, state of affairs, programs, and problems are still indeterminately intertwined and, depending on the current occasion, condense into bundles of meaning that are processed holistically in corporeal communication. Warnings, calls to flee, collective gathering, enticement, play, rivalry, etc. are only general indications of a highly differentiated, holistic, situational understanding. In contrast, sentence-like human speech intervenes explicitly in situations,<sup>134</sup> and this takes on special significance when it comes to being emotionally affected by an unfamiliar European language. From this consistently changed pre-reflexive attitude to life, individual states of affairs, programs, and problems can now be explained. The enormous gain in consistent clarity and personal emancipation is a great temptation to believe that entanglement with the diffuse, pre-reflexive experience in situations can now be considered irrelevant. But this would induce an insensitivity to the diffuse but characteristic programmatic content that connects European feelings of life. In the one-sided functional perspective that serves international purposes, this diffuse programmatic content would be displaced.

The assertion that affective European plurilingualism is something unique that cannot be equated with an affective inclination toward Japanese, Persian, or Quechua, for example, requires clarification as to how the two differ. Affective involvement with a language as a language can have different motives: curiosity, the joy of unraveling foreign 'worldviews', biographical clarification, etc. In the case of European plurilingualism, it is the moment of perplexing discovery: *This is part of me!* This is where Trabant's definition of European plurilingualism as something that educates (germ. "Mehrsprachigkeit, die bildet") comes into play. On the one hand, as with 'family members' who know each other well, there is the telling intellectual and literary contrast: 'You, Racine, you, France!' On the other hand, there is also the tempting emotional distance that becomes closeness, a kind of an 'unknown person' who comes from outside and turns out to be the unexpected and instantly indispensable completion of emotional life: 'You flamenco, you Andalucía!' Europe is an affective resonance chamber that allows one to resonate

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<sup>133</sup> A good translation of the German title „Lebensgefühle und Rechtsgefühle“ is a challenge.

<sup>134</sup> For a detailed description of the situations according to Schmitz see chapter 6.3.

and go along with it, which is not readily available with Chinese, Persian, or Quechua. This is not meant in the sense of exclusion or devaluation, but rather describes a fact.

### 5.1 Sensitivity to emotions

For global markets, communication difficulties between different cultures are disruptive 'sand in the gears' that can only be removed to a very limited extent by global English alone. For this reason, although it has not been possible to define it clearly, the university teaching of *intercultural competence* has become an integral part of degree programs with curricular components abroad since the 1990s (cf. Lüsebrink <sup>4</sup>2016). With the help of modeling different cultures by types and subtypes, cultural levels, dimensions, structures, cultural and communicative styles, etc., attempts have been made with some success to prepare students (and managers of all kinds) for the hurdles they would encounter as internationally active trainees, managers, experts, researchers, etc. when working in intercultural conditions. The starting point is a global frame of reference with situations that are usually confusing, difficult to understand, and stressful, which are addressed with the help of a conceptual "toolbox": with reference to general models the social role and hierarchical function of the people involved are recorded, as are the framework conditions, the specific reason for the contact, any previous history, and the accompanying emotions, expectations, disappointments, etc. The cases, now conceptually outlined, are then methodically broken down according to the relevant aspects (business goals, planning objectives, etc.) and connected with the highlighted constellations that can be worked with. The cognitive and discursive skills of the students are trained in courses and simulated case studies. The study stay abroad then serves to try out intercultural *skills* in internationally composed working groups: to develop social competencies, apply technical language flexibility, discourse analysis skills and useful colloquial registers.

In contrast, the MONTAIGNE program is *not a career-oriented simulation*, but rather an introduction to a new life experience aiming at a *secondary epigenesis* as a European.<sup>135</sup> That is why

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<sup>135</sup> The following quote (Schmitz 2017, 9) led me to the neologism "secondary epigenesis": ' In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a debate about preformation and epigenesis began in biology. Preformation occurs when the finished organism is already preformed in the germ; epigenesis spontaneously produces something new, but depends on the preliminary stages. My view of the origin and formation of the person – the conscious being with the ability to self-attribute, which consists in understanding oneself as a case of several species – can be described as epigenetic in this sense.

the *European semester* is a sabbatical semester at a European university *without curricular obligations*. The MONTAIGNE program differs from the constellation-based approach outlined above in its phenomenological, *situationist* approach. The frame of reference is an unknown style of Europeanization, but the corporeal and emotional impact of confusing, difficult to understand, and stressful situations is not seen as an obstacle: it is about a neighborly European language and live style that has something subjectively meaningful to say to you and therefore cannot be dismissed in the process of Europeanization. Resistance should not be eliminated from the involuntary life experience with the help of an intercultural toolbox (cf. Vatter 2016) under the requirement to 'do something sensible' with it. Here, with the help of New Phenomenology, a 'pathic' attitude (cf. chap. 6) comes into play as the key to understanding the unknown situation: Regardless of a programmatic requirement to master the surrounding conditions, it is advisable to allow one-self to be guided by affective involvement in an 'open-ended' manner. This is essential to independently sense the offers and appeals of the *nomos* that emanate from the affective emotions of the European type of civilization. European students therefore do not escape normative impositions by fleeing into a constructed, shielded "third space", a hybrid "in-between". Pathic means, e.g., allowing oneself to be affected, feeling the tensions caused by a conflict, allowing oneself to be enchanted and disappointed, empathizing with what confuses or excites one. In short: opening oneself to the whole range of meaningful impressions that demand something from the person involved in a situation. "Der Mensch kann nicht anders als unter Normen leben, weil er in Situationen lebt, in denen Programme enthalten sind, die seine Gefolgschaft herausfordern." (Schmitz 2012, 7).<sup>136</sup>

This imposition is not an excessive demand: as a participant in a *European* study group, growing into an unfamiliar *European* language means settling into a *European* emotional space in which different emotions with programmatic content occur that refer to the *European* type of civilization. From the one-sided intellectual perspective of personally emancipated observers, the impression of confusion and lostness in a pre-linguistic encounter situation seems to be

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I have repeatedly and carefully explained that the person can only exist by being prepersonal at the same time, i.e., drawing on sources of the felt body, space, time, and diversity that already exist in preliminary stages, but adding something new that cannot be derived through isolation (by means of propositional speech) and neutralization. '

<sup>136</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'Human beings cannot help but live under norms because they live in situations that contain programs that challenge their allegiance.' Schmitz (2012, 11) continues the above-quoted thought as follows: 'A norm is a program for possible obedience. A program is a guideline for the self-guidance of a conscious being. Self-guidance is the opposite of external guidance by a power that does not belong to the guided.'

inevitable. As a phenomenologist Hilge Landweer (2011, 57) emphasizes however "dass wir Situationen mit Gefühlen erschließen, und dass wir mit Gefühlen auch die normativen Gehalte von Situationen erfassen können. "<sup>137</sup>

The transition from their home environment to an unfamiliar European setting initially presents students with a conflict: the norms of their home country (often adopted as routines) clash with the norms prevailing in their destination country. The discrepancy is clearly noticeable, sometimes even intrusively so. However, this conflict does not usually arise as a topic that is explicitly addressed; the focus is initially on the 'awkward' process of settling into new social conventions and emotional repertoires, accompanied by misunderstandings, which accompany the process of growing into the unfamiliar language.

A phenomenologically informed educational team supports the students during the European semester, particularly in creating a common atmosphere in new common situations. This team provides the study group with the necessary emotional support to not only endure the tension between different points of view and attitudes, but also to go along with the meaningful impressions (corporeally perceptible suggestions of movement, synesthetic characters, language, emotions etc.). Through a weekly repetitive work routine, common encounter and learning situation should develop within a short time, in which participants can rely on each other. Not to be forgotten are the accompanying everyday situations in which participants can interact with each other and with other people without guidelines and discuss their experiences in all available languages. Sensitive to emotional atmospheres, the question of what the unusual European semester is doing to them and how they are dealing with it is likely to be omnipresent in this context as well. Through this exchange between the participants in the study group, a common implanting situation can gradually develop in which common atmospheres are established, including initial assumptions about what is right and fair. By anchoring the personal situation of the participants in the implanting situation, mutual trust can develop. Nörenberg deepens this practical life experience by bringing deontological emotions of oughtness and permissibility into play as "corporeal-affective background orientations":

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<sup>137</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'that we approach situations with feelings, and that we can also grasp the normative content of situations with feelings. '

Deontologische sind leiblich-affektive Hintergrundorientierungen, deren jeweilige Erfahrungsqualität einen Einfluss darauf hat, was die in Frage stehenden Individuen oder Gruppen für sich als Verpflichtungen oder Berechtigungen anerkennen. (Nörenberg 2024, 19) **Lebensgefühle – oder auch existenzielle Gefühle – sind auch Rechtsgefühle, indem sie die Anerkennung von etwas als eine Verpflichtung oder Berechtigung mitbedingen.** (Nörenberg 2024, 11; emphasis added by W.M.-P.)<sup>138</sup>

In order to detect these diffuse background orientations, one must have at one's disposal hermeneutic intelligence, and this can only be learned in common situations. In contrast to prosaic discursive explication, in which the situation is broken down and only the facts, programs, and problems relevant to the interests at stake are skimmed off, hermeneutic intelligence revolves around the situation.<sup>139</sup> This increases sensitivity to emotions that indicate what the other person perceives as wrong or right. A sense of what is *appropriate* (cf. Landweer 2011) is the decisive prerequisite for being prepared for a *convergence herméneutique* of different styles of Europeanization.

After this sketch the following chapter will deepen what enables Europeans not to miss the forest for the trees, i.e., not to overlook broad common (internally diffuse) situations in view of obvious problems.

## 5.2 On the European type of civilization

From the perspective of comparative cultural anthropology, Occidental and European culture is based on a type of civilization that differs, on the one hand, from the cultural type of priests and despots (the ancient empires of the Egyptians, Babylonians, and Persians) and, on the other hand, from the East Asian cultural type, in which rules and rites of decency and propriety determine all aspects of life.

In the Occidental understanding, social discipline is achieved through

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<sup>138</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'Deontological emotions are corporeal and emotional background orientations whose respective quality of experience influences what the individuals or groups in question recognize as obligations or entitlements. [...] **Emotion life – or existential emotions – are also emotions of just/unjust in that they contribute to the recognition of something as an obligation or entitlement.**'

<sup>139</sup> Großheim (2010) presented a vivid contrast between two literary types, the detective Sherlock Holmes and the inspector Maigret, as a 'master of constellation' and a 'master of situation'. This representation can also be useful for inter-European exchange.

[...] die europäische Intellektualkultur, den spezifisch europäischen Stil der zur Hochkultur gehörigen besonderen Disziplin. Dieser Stil besteht darin, daß jeder Mensch (zunächst: jeder erwachsene Mann) eingeladen ist, sich sein eigenes Urteil zu bilden und auf dieser Grundlage Vorschläge über Tatsachen und Programme einzelnen und gemeinsamen Lebens zu machen; die Disziplinierung besteht darin, daß er seine Meinung begründen und der Kritik der Anderen aussetzen muß. (Schmitz 1997, 23)<sup>140</sup>

In the search for truth, making doubt the necessary test of subjective certainty has become the hallmark of European civilization. The extent to which the achievements of the Greek *poleis* successfully shaped the politics of ancient city-states or the Roman Republic is irrelevant in this context. Rather, it is important to understand that self-disciplined freedom in all cultural spheres has given rise to the Occidental style of self-examination (germ. *Selbstvergewisserung*), i.e., the recognition of reasoned discussion as a guiding norm, protected from violence and coercion, of what can be considered right and wrong in living together.

The following three central motti of ancient philosophical self-reflection concretize the Occidental type of civilization:

- *Neither to rule others nor to be ruled by others.*<sup>141</sup> The affective attachment to tyrannical power or submission to it was rejected as unworthy of a free man.
- *Become who you are.*<sup>142</sup> Or: 'Become, in dealing with yourself and other people, learning what you are.'<sup>143</sup> Human beings can emancipate themselves from the animal determination on biological programs and from theological dogmas, become persons, and thus realize something new.
- *Know thyself! Be prudent!*<sup>144</sup> A self-critical and worldly-wise power of judgment enables human beings neither to overestimate nor to belittle themselves.

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<sup>140</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' [...] European intellectual culture, the specifically European style of discipline associated with high culture. This style consists in inviting every person (initially: every adult man) to form their own judgment and, on this basis, to make proposals about facts and programs of individual and communal life; discipline consists in requiring them to justify their opinions and expose them to the criticism of others.' Cf. Christian Meier (2009; 2000, 64-100; <sup>4</sup>2006, 108).

<sup>141</sup> Herodotus: 'For I neither want to rule nor be ruled.' Quoted by Arno Baruzzi (1999, 7).

<sup>142</sup> Pindar: *Second Pythian Ode*.

<sup>143</sup> Translation by Michael Großheim (2019).

<sup>144</sup> Schmitz (1997, 14): 'This is also the meaning of the famous inscription on the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, which urged the Greeks to philosophize: <Know thyself!> This is clear from its connection with the other inscription: <Be prudent!> (Σωφρόνει) What is meant, then, is a self-knowledge that teaches people to set the appropriate proportions for themselves and their self-esteem in relation to what surrounds them and what they encounter, instead of exalting or humiliating themselves.'

At first glance, the significance of these sayings may be underestimated in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is therefore worthwhile to transpose their meaning into today's situations, including their programmatic implications.

- *Neither want to dominate others nor be dominated by others.* This warning to stay away from the corrupting temptations of power<sup>145</sup> could hardly be more aptly worded. There are currently plenty of examples of both behaviors. The perversion of human relationships has always been a relevant topic of criticism and self-reflection in Europe.<sup>146</sup> In terms of global interdependence, global English is used as a useful communication tool within a certain framework, but the ambition to dominate other languages must be rejected. The latter also applies to other widely spoken languages that are used to increase power according to the model of global English. However, the saying can also be applied to private capitalist economics and to human living together, for example with regard to the relationship between men and women.
- *Become who you are.* This call to make something right of oneself, in this case specifically to overcome the self-alienation into which the EU elites have entangled Europeans, hits the sore spot of self-reflection, because those addressed often lack a foothold in implanting common situations: The uncertain emotion of 'floating' is usually glossed over in the present by offers to refine *one's lifestyle* (cf. Reckwitz <sup>3</sup>2020); the futility of these proposals is also met with extremist behavioral change (cf. Nörenberg 2022). In contrast, the MONTAIGNE program proposes to use the affective potential of European languages. Based on Michael Großheim's new version of the ancient Greek saying,<sup>147</sup> the translation can be concretized in the European context: *Become, in dealing with yourself, with other Europeans and their languages, learning what kind of European you are.* This refers to new situations of growing into an unfamiliar European language, which can open up life experience in a completely new way and change the subject

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<sup>145</sup> In the context of what he calls the 'dynamic failure of the Western spirit' Schmitz (1999, 37-55, 186-198) refers on several occasions to the 'emotional attachment to the theme of power' which has become the fateful legacy of European life, mainly through Christianity.

<sup>146</sup> Here, one might think of French moralism (Montaigne to La Rochefoucault) and the 'worldly wisdom' cultivated in Spain (Gracián). An early stage is marked by Étienne de La Boétie (2002), see Müller-Pelzer (1983, chap. 7). For today cf. Streeck (2020); idem (2021).

<sup>147</sup> See Großheim (2019) and the translation of the saying presented by Michael Großheim in chapter 3: 'Become who you are.'

involved. A language is not learned solely on a linguistic level; learning also relates, for example, to unknown 'deontological emotions' (Nörenberg) of oughtness and permissibility, which become, via hermeneutic circles, more definite through integration in an unfamiliar style of Europeanization. Hermeneutic intelligence (as mentioned above) includes pre-reflexive, pre-linguistic corporeal experience. With the broadening of the student's domestic perspective to the European horizon, the ability to take a stand on the existential questions is increasing: *What kind of European do I want to be? How do we want to live together in the future?* The answers are no longer delegated to anonymous political authorities. Gaining this independence can be described as 'secondary epigenesis' as a European (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2024, 77 and passim).

- *Know thyself! Be prudent!* For many people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this advice may seem like yet another unreasonable demand.<sup>148</sup> The titanic, dynamist, expansionist self-image of technological civilization stands in sharp contrast to the search for a new European life practice that the subject is exploring and explaining with good reasons. The milieu of top researchers in the natural sciences and engineering, as well as the respective equipment and the associated economic interests and institutions, have so far prevented a debate about alternatives (cf. Böhme 1993). Therapeutically, it may be inevitable to distance ourselves from the imperative of world domination, which has become a matter of course: artificial intelligence, genetic manipulation, human-machine hybrids, space travel and colonization of other planets, economic exploitation of the oceans, the Arctic and Antarctic, and other landscapes.<sup>149</sup> There is also no question that advocating for European plurilingualism is not linked to the claim of playing a prominent role in the world. An appropriate, prudent attitude would be one that combines three moments: (1) an affective attachment to one's mother tongue and one's own style of Europeanization, (2) self-critical distance, and (3) secondary epigenesis, by integrating into other

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<sup>148</sup> Alejandro G. Vigo Pacheco (2023): "Prefacio," in: Müller-Pelzer (2024): 'Europe is no longer able to recognize itself because it looks into a mirror that, although built by itself, reflects back an incurably distorted image of itself. This mirror is nothing other than the European Union in its current state.' (Trans. W.M.-P.)

<sup>149</sup> Slaby (2023, 229) argues that it must be examined to what extent the 'imperial way of life' (Brand & Wissen 2017) has 'comprehensively seeped into the practice, thinking, and corporeal-affective habituality of Western affluent subjects'. Slaby adds: 'The affective is not merely connected in some way to social practices, ways of life, and their diverse socio-material environments, but affectivity itself is an integral dimension of these practices and ways of life and thus inseparable from them.' (Op. cit., 230) 'Everyday affectivity [...] binds subjects into a global arrangement of resource and energy use and a world-shaping infrastructure.' (Op. cit., 231)

civilizations to become European. Finally, this also refers to criticism of utopical transculturalism, insofar as it offers children and young people the dream of a world without violence, discrimination, and injustice under the conditions of a technological civilization that has taken on a life of its own. Transculturalism, which conceals power interests, can also be treated under the headline of the first saying.

Self-determination vs. external determination, self-actualization (germ. *Selbstwerdung*) vs. alienation of subjectivity, striving for self-reflection vs. arrogance and/or instability: exposing one-self to the appeal of these guiding principles has become the hallmark of critical and self-critical European nomos. The risk of failure is present, but thanks to the guidance provided by the internally diffuse programmatic suggestions, there is also the prospect of a new beginning.

The description of the European type of civilization might suggest that cultural essentialism is being introduced into the debate. This assumption is based on a misunderstanding. It is appropriate to look at current attempts to undermine the European principle of self-reflection (germ. *sich auf sich selbst besinnen*).

### 5.3 Criticism and anti-criticism<sup>150</sup>

As mentioned several times, this text does not enter the political arena of power, where the social role of language(s) and culture(s) is discussed – and negotiated. According to sociologists such as Reckwitz, today's society is characterized by a tension between tendencies toward hyperculture and tendencies toward cultural essentialism: in the former case, individual self-realization counts, in the latter, collective identity. The EU elites represent the side of 'apertistic and differential liberalism' (Reckwitz <sup>2</sup>2020, 371); they are confronted with nationally oriented political forces in individual member states that strive for 'particular cultural communities and collective identities' (op. cit., 372).

This sociological debate has nothing to do with reflecting on the European type of civilization. From a phenomenological point of view, sociological analysis is based on a philosophical error

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<sup>150</sup> I am very grateful to Mr. Victor Neumann, professor at the University of the West, Timișoara, for his expert comments and helpful suggestions.

that dates back more than 2500 years: Modern individualism is a late result of the Occidental and European ideal of individual, who has to work his way out of all conditions as an emancipated human being and to set goals autonomously. However, wanting to 'cap' this individualism in an organistic (Aristotelian) or communitarian way comes 'too late'. Instead of trying to cure the symptoms, it is necessary to revise the initial ontological and anthropological error. According to the New Phenomenology, pre-reflexive, pre-verbal, and prepersonal experience takes place in internally diffuse situations that enable a corporeal-atmospheric orientation in the environment. However, the individual cannot completely emancipate themselves from their entanglement in corporeality and common (internally diffuse) situations, except at the price of autistic arbitrariness without 'grounding'.<sup>151</sup> With sufficient sensitivity, everyday situations become 'resonating bodies' for atmospheric emotions that convey programmatic meanings, i.e., implicit norms. To the extent that individuals succeed in responding to stimuli with resonance (cf. chapter 6), they have points of reference that allow them to develop freely without having to deny their corporeality. In the event of a failure of personal emancipation, it brings personal regression back to a corporeal level where they can give their composure a changed, resilient shape.

This is also the case with the MONTAIGNE program: it is the participants who clarify for themselves and among themselves what Europe means for their lives. They have competence and legitimacy and regenerate their sensitivity to norms in implanting situations. Instead of curtailing their opportunities for emancipation, individuals can flourish in European implanting situations.<sup>152</sup> The fact that the Occidental and then European way of life is sensitive to norms should not be confused with a catalog of abstract 'values': there is no authority or theory in the backdrop that dictates what Europe should be. This is the opposite of exclusive essentialism. However, the ability of individuals to resonate with deontological emotions also leads to the affective experience of binding norms. After careful consideration, these are not 'negotiable' for the person concerned; they cannot be 'deconstructed' from a detached perspective. While the colloquial term 'European civilization' is an approximative designation of constellations, the

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<sup>151</sup> This attitude fits perfectly with the dynamism of capitalist economic activity: the motto *Plus ultra!* also applies to the individual. The slogan *Anything goes* should also be mentioned here. This refers to the rejection of binding norms (which can get in the way of free economic activity). As recently as the 1960s, it was taken for granted that economists believed that economic activity had to be regulated by the state as the guarantor and framework of a moral order. That is no longer the case, but the problem has not gone away.

<sup>152</sup> On the role of hermeneutic competence, see Chapter 7.

*European type of civilization* refers to common affective situations that reveal normative claims of what ought to be and what is permissible.

Without this shared subjective anchor, any cultural contact can quickly lead to feelings of alienation. Some authors have even described the unsettling experience to be faced with 'radical alterity' as the defining characteristic of intercultural encounters.<sup>153</sup> This assertion does not generally apply to encounters between Europeans. Rather, the thesis put forward in this text asserts that, for Europeans, the affective anchor of the European type of civilization is a favorable prerequisite to become competent in discussions about questions like: *What kind of Europeans do we want to be? How do we want to live together in the future?* This is because it is not a matter of explaining a definitive, objectifiable answer (constellations) and of discursive agility, but rather of an atmospheric, hermeneutic, tentative naming (cf. section 6.4).

As a result, the three ancient Greek maxims take on far-reaching 'subversive' significance as impulses for self-reflection, even for Europeans of the 21st century.<sup>154</sup> However, this does not refer to a conventional protest stance, but rather to the ability to break through the alienating filter of subservience that supposed authorities attempt to establish concerning Europe in a variety of ways. Submission is understood here as part of a public repertoire of emotions whose significance is usually underestimated. A central task of the MONTAIGNE program is to render the power of seduction of these repertoires ineffective by immersing oneself in an unfamiliar European language.

#### 5.4 On sensitivity to feelings of injustice

The explanations provided so far have already mentioned public programs that oppose the discussion of European plurilingualism as affective plurilingualism and its consequences, e.g.,

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<sup>153</sup> Correspondences between different legal traditions need to be explored further. See Guido Rappe (2008).

<sup>154</sup> Journalist Julitta Münch (1959-2020) was an outstanding example of how the European mission to educate the public can be implemented today for broad sections of the population. With her program "Hallo Ü-Wagen" on Westdeutscher Rundfunk, she set standards for citizen-oriented democracy. The fact that the program was canceled in 2010 can be seen as proof that this support for empowerment was undesirable. See also the association "Solidarconsult" founded with Michael Schubek: [www.solidarconsult.de](http://www.solidarconsult.de) ; cf. the belated obituary for Julitta Münch in *impEct* 14 (2025): [https://www.fh-dortmund.de/medien/hochschule/i14\\_Art6\\_Julitta-Muench.pdf](https://www.fh-dortmund.de/medien/hochschule/i14_Art6_Julitta-Muench.pdf) - For his part, perception psychologist Rainer Mausfeld (<sup>3</sup>2019) has been pursuing an enlightening, anti-authoritarian project for over 10 years.

one-sided functional plurilingualism, monolingualism (global English), and global multilingualism. In addition to the general instrumentalization of languages for power interests, however, targeted programs that 'psychagogically' manipulate affective involvement must also be taken into account, i.e., that the level of corporeal sensation and atmospheric feeling is to be splintered, neutralized, or to 'reverse polarity' in accordance with powerful interests. So-called emotion repertoires are used for this purpose.

The concept of the emotional repertoire has recently been analyzed in an interdisciplinary manner in the Collaborative Research Center "Affective societies – Dynamics of coexistence in changing worlds" at the Free University of Berlin<sup>155</sup> and in the associated research network. According to this, an emotional repertoire is a "set of emotional modalities and forms of expression as well as [...] the corresponding ability to perform them."<sup>156</sup> In this case, too, it is worth distinguishing between a *state of affairs* and a *program*. European multilingualism has been defined not only as affective multilingualism (subjective state of affairs), but also as a prerequisite for outstanding European convergence herméneutique (program). Thus, the programmatic significance of emotional repertoires will be explained using five exemplary campaigns that have been organized in Germany since 2024 around the following expressions: 1. "War readiness", 2. "Man-made climate change", 3. "Our threatened prosperity – us first! ", 4. "Culture of remembrance", and 5. "Restructuring of the welfare state".

Ref. 1: The politically intended German "military readiness" (a term coined by German Defense Minister Pistorius) is the counterpart to the phrase "Russian war of aggression": This expression is the key term in official discourse when talking about the war in Ukraine: from the German *Bundestag* to the *Tagesschau* (ARD news program) to the cultural channel of *Westdeutscher Rundfunk* (WDR 3). The constant repetition creates the impression that this is the description of an objective fact. This reductive approach obscures the moral judgment; the expression "war readiness" becomes a programmatic response, for which the 'Russian war of aggression' provides the justification. This ideological code has become the password for all those who want to 'belong'. The European principle of public, free speech, argumentation, and criticism is significantly suppressed

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<sup>155</sup> Affective societies. <https://www.sfb-affective-societies.de/>

<sup>156</sup> Quoted from the keyword Affective societies. <https://key-concepts.sfb-affective-societies.de/articles/emotions-repertoire-version-1-0/>

by the quasi-theological notion *Zeitenwende* ('turning point'):<sup>157</sup> those who have insight do not need to worry about those who are left behind. Publicly proclaiming one's own good behavior without being asked is familiar from the era of McCarthyism, from the ancient German Democratic Republic, and from the Nazi regime. To adapt to this conformism without question means to give in to fears of social exclusion and to renounce independent judgment; in other words, this use of language serves to discourage, which becomes a *habitual attitude of subservience*. Jean Chapoutot hit the nail on the head with the title of his book: *Obedience Sets You Free*.<sup>158</sup>

Ref. 2: "Man-made climate change". For years, slogans suggested to the general public that industry and government were determined to reduce CO2 emissions: 'For a better world!' or 'For a better future!' But obviously, these feel-good slogans have had to be revised in the meantime. Now the media speak in unison about the 'human-induced climate change.' Everyone is supposed to feel guilty now, instead of pointing the finger at the main culprits and demanding consequences from them.<sup>159</sup> The subservient "Umfühlen" (Slaby 2023) is in full swing.

Ref. 3: "Our threatened prosperity – us first!" The distortion of who is threatening whom allows us to dispense with reflection. In his book entitled 'Next to us the deluge', Stephan Lessenich (2016, cover) demonstrates from a sociological perspective how 'the global North dictates the mechanism of externalization to the South.' 'Global migration movements are just one of many obvious signs that, in a globalized world, the poverty and injustice of some is based on the abundant prosperity of others.' What is most interesting here is that, especially in times of crisis, most political leaders cultivate the subliminal feeling of 'us first!' – with the undertone of 'it's our right.' In election campaigns, this becomes: "For a strong Europe!" This is where the politics of affective desensitization or, as Slaby (2023 b, 1) says, 'reality defense', i.e., another repertoire of emotions, comes

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<sup>157</sup> In accordance with ancient Gnostic theology, the beginning of a new eon is proclaimed.

<sup>158</sup> Chapoutot (2020): *Libres d'obéir. Le management, du nazisme à aujourd'hui*, germ. (2021): *Gehorsam macht frei. Eine kurze Geschichte des Managements – von Hitler bis heute*; engl. (2023): *Free to Obey: How the Nazis Invented Modern Management*.

<sup>159</sup> The German federal government, for example, refuses to implement its own climate protection program, which aims to reduce CO2 emissions by 200 million tons by 2030. Based on previous experience, the ruling of the Federal Administrative Court (the highest German administrative court) on January 29, 2026, is also unlikely to be complied with by the government and is likely to result in further litigation. <https://www.duh.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/pressemitteilung/>

into play. This is facilitated by the older emotional repertoire of the 'self-sacralization of Europe' (Hans Joas, most recently 2020, 89-97) by the European Union (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2021, 15-36), according to which the EU is the heir to European culture and 'European values'.

Ref. 4: The "culture of remembrance" is a current political construct that anchors another repertoire of emotions in the German public sphere. The aim is to perpetuate the indelible guilt for the murder of the Jews during the Nazi regime: the introduction of days of remembrance and ceremonies would not be enough. The goal is for current and future generations in Germany to internalize and automate certain ways of feeling through a kind of conditioning of perception. The implementation of these registers of emotion is to take place in public, in schools, museums, theaters, cinemas, TV, clubs, etc. (cf. Assmann <sup>2</sup>2019; for the critique cf. Müller-Pelzer 2021, chap. 2.2.8).<sup>160</sup> Chancellor Merz, for example, recently demonstrated (and performed) which emotional gesture (the tears of a high-ranking official in public, suppressed with difficulty) can now be considered exemplary on the occasion of the inauguration of the rebuilt synagogue in Munich. The relevant German press reports were unanimously positive.<sup>161</sup> The broader political function of this emotional register, however, is to deny that Netanyahu's governments are continually destroying the livelihoods of the Palestinian people.<sup>162</sup>

Since the emotional register of the 'culture of remembrance' is being implemented across the board by the federal and state governments, it can be assumed that the subservience in this regard will soon become part of the new German 'raison d'état'.

Ref. 5: The "restructuring of the welfare state" is the program to be implemented with the 2026 federal budget. Under the banner of reducing bureaucracy and digitalization, the aim is to achieve greater fairness and efficiency in the distribution of social benefits. This program is clearly failing to convince the already overworked and poorly paid

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<sup>160</sup> The questionable treatment of the subject with the means of artificial intelligence is in full swing. Cf. <https://www.ndr.de/kultur/Anne-Frank-als-KI-Version-Erinnerungskultur-im-Wandel,annefrank236.html>

<sup>161</sup> Cf. representative commentary in the taz: 'The Chancellor's tears. They are credible.' <https://taz.de/Die-Traenen-des-Bundeskanzlers!/6110363/>

<sup>162</sup> See the article dated September 18, 2025: <https://www.juedische-allgemeine.de/meinung/die-traenen-des-kanzlers/> With regard to the charges of crimes against humanity, see below.

employees in nursing and daycare centers.<sup>163</sup> The number of resignations is skyrocketing. Mobile care providers such as *Diakonie* are progressively withdrawing because the services are becoming unaffordable for more and more people. The cost increases in inpatient care and the reduction in home care services are already a done deal.

The economic pressure that had previously led to an increase in part-time employment among women is now being further intensified by business associations: in view of foreseeable AI solutions that save on personnel and of numerous migrants, part-time work should only be possible in exceptional cases. From now on, kindergartens are to increasingly employ selectively unskilled workers. Although some federal states are trying to demonstrate 'better' care for children through the reallocation of time and care quotas and selective financial injections, the *affective continuity* of personnel in childcare is gone. A child-friendly society looks different. In addition, anyone who criticizes the redistribution of social wealth from the bottom to the top,<sup>164</sup> continuous tax evasion (CUM/EX cf. Brorhilker 2025), and the 'two-tier health insurance system' – unlike in Switzerland, for example – becomes in no time an enemy of 'our prosperity.'

These five examples represent the numerous emotional repertoires, combined at will, create a false reality producing the consensus: *Where everyone feels the same, nothing else should be felt*. Adapting to this language without thinking means giving in to the fear of social exclusion, discouraging and disrupting or neutralizing sensitivity to feelings of injustice. The *habitual attitude of submissiveness* then leads to a *social climate of subservience*. These social emotional repertoires are intended to prevent individuals from reflecting on themselves and their sense of injustice which must be examined in free discussion. The quoted Nazi-motto *Free to obey* represents the frontal attack on the European type of civilization and the European Enlightenment. The advanced decomposition of implanting situations analyzed by Schmitz and the resulting autism are noticeable today, e.g., in comprehensive disorientation, 'profound boredom', chronic 'fatigue', or addictive behavior, as Nörenberg (2022) has explained. Thus, the invitation to disciplined self-reflection can remain without any corporeal resonance and may also be

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<sup>163</sup> Cf. <https://www.diakonie.de/informieren/bundshaushalt-2026> , <https://www.rav.de/publikationen/mitteilungen/mitteilung/gegen-den-autoritaeren-sozialstaadie-verschaerfung-des-sozialrechts-bedroht-die-rechte-aller-1175>

<sup>164</sup> Cf. <https://www.tagesschau.de/wirtschaft/finanzen/deutschland-club-superreichen-ubs-100.html>

supplanted by the temptation to surrender to a compelling authority and carry out its commands without reflection (cf. Nörenberg 2022, 45).

Nevertheless, if powerful social and political interests do not see the goal of subservience satisfactorily realized, they do not hesitate to use all means of political repression.<sup>165</sup> This was recently illustrated by a conflict with representatives of the International Criminal Court. Here is a brief review.

Different types of civilization determine in different ways what causes affective concern, what is considered unbearably outrageous, what is considered unbearably shameful, what is tolerable, and what is insignificant. However, in the case of crimes against humanity, representatives of European-influenced legal culture in the 1990s became strongly convinced that a consensus on the definition of such crimes and a procedure for sanctioning them could be agreed upon among all developed types of civilization. This conviction underlies the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 1998: crimes against humanity should be prosecuted throughout the world, regardless of the prevailing power circumstances. However, the number of signatory states, or states that have ratified the statute, is still small and subject to change.<sup>166</sup> Above all, however, the court has been accused of pursuing cases from the "global South" in a one-sided manner. While the recent arrest warrants issued against Russian President Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu suggest a departure from this practice, the vulnerability of judges and prosecutors has also become evident. Consider, for example, the cases of British judge Karim Khan and French judge Nicolas Guigou.<sup>167</sup> Due to massive attacks, both no longer feel able to perform their judicial functions. In 2023, Attorney General Karim Khan obtained an international arrest warrant for Russian President Putin; the Russian government then issued a warrant for Khan's arrest and prosecuted him for violating Russian laws and other charges. In late 2024, Khan obtained an international arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. Since then, Khan, along with other judges and prosecutors at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, have been under increasing pressure from the US and Israeli

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<sup>165</sup> Since the 2020s, competing emotional repertoires in the US have led to conceal the sensitivity to feelings of injustice, thereby promoting the emergence of fascist thinking.

<sup>166</sup> See Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Criminal\\_Court](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Criminal_Court)

<sup>167</sup> Their investigations into crimes against humanity (the war in Ukraine, Israel's war in Palestine) and past activities have led the US government to impose sanctions against them (a total of six judges and three prosecutors).

governments.<sup>168</sup> Khan has temporarily suspended his role as chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court since the end of 2025 (cf. Neuhaus 2023).

This example illustrates the practical relevance that European – and in this case also international – legal culture can attain as a form of European nomos. While the general public is convinced that crimes against humanity that are so outrageous they are intolerable must be prosecuted by the court, statal administrations – even signatory states – are now invoking their 'raison d'Etat'. The German governments are playing an inglorious role in this. In his article (2024), entitled "Staatsräson vor Völker(straf)recht?" ('Reason of state before international (criminal) law?'), Kai Amboss sums up:

Insgesamt lässt sich sagen, dass Deutschland zwar einige interessante und bedenkenswerte Argumente vorbringt, die deutsche Stellungnahme sich auf grundsätzlicher Ebene aber auf der Linie der im Zusammenhang mit Israel allenthalben angeführten Staatsräson bewegt. So zeigt sich auch hier eine starke, fast bedingungslose Unterstützung Israels, die einem Primat der Politik über das Recht nahekommmt und eine Israel meistbegünstigende Auslegung des Völker(straf)rechts zur Folge hat.<sup>169</sup>

Thomas Patett (2025) titles a section of his essay as follows: "Verschleierte Machtpolitik statt Recht – zur Geschichte eines anhaltenden Misstrauens". (Transl. W.M.-P.: 'Veiled power politics instead of law – on the history of ongoing mistrust.')

He concludes with a cautious expectation: "Der Haftbefehl gegen Netanjahu hingegen bedeutet bereits jetzt eine Zäsur. Er verkörpert den Anspruch einer unabhängigen internationalen Strafjustiz, die jedes geopolitische Kalkül zurückweist."<sup>170</sup> This requires persons like Karim Khan and Nicolas Guigou who courageously stand up to the intimidation posed by political powers.

This section has provided examples that demonstrate sensitivity to feelings of injustice. Discursive strategies (emotional repertoires) and massive interventions in personal freedom must be employed to suppress the evidence of feelings of injustice. In order to keep alive the feeling of evidence of unbearable injustice, Europeans must build resources through their shared living

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<sup>168</sup> According to press reports, the US government is also relying on years of espionage on the individuals concerned by the Israeli secret service (<https://taz.de/Berichte-ueber-jahrelange-Ueberwachung/!6010426/>).

<sup>169</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'Overall, it can be said that although Germany puts forward some interesting and thought-provoking arguments, its position is fundamentally in line with the *raison d'état* that is universally invoked in connection with Israel. Here, too, there is strong, almost unconditional support for Israel, which borders on the primacy of politics over law and results in an interpretation of international (criminal) law that is mostly favorable to Israel.'

<sup>170</sup> Trad. W.M.-P.: 'The arrest warrant against Netanyahu, on the other hand, already represents a turning point. It embodies the claim of an independent international criminal justice system that rejects any geopolitical calculations.'

together. The path highlighted in this text is to grow into an unfamiliar European language and its attitude towards life, i.e., including deontological background feelings. The following chapter explains in more detail the corporeal and atmospheric experience of implanting oneself in a unknown European language.

## 6. How inter-European understanding comes about

### 6.1 Anthropological foundations

Since in the present context plurilingualism is understood not as a social state of affairs but as a subjective situation, its relationship to anthropology requires explanation. Instead of anthropology in the ethnological sense, we are referring here to philosophical anthropology and its prehistory in ancient Greece. A brief review may be useful.

The renowned classical philologist Bruno Snell had described the beginning of Greek philosophy as the 'discovery of the spirit' (1946). Before that, Wilhelm Nestle, another prestigious classical philologist, had coined the phrase of the 'transition from myth to logos' (1942). However, the revolution initiated by Democritus and Plato appears in a new light since Hermann Schmitz rediscovered the corporeality (*Leib*), which had disappeared from Occidental and European consciousness for more than 2,500 years.

Instead of focusing solely on the extraordinary gains in rationality and self-control, Schmitz argues that the price paid for this must also be mentioned, namely the "Zerschlagung der vielsagenden Eindrücke auf der Gegenstandsseite der Wahrnehmung" (Schmitz <sup>2</sup>1995, 21; transl. W.M.-P.: 'the destruction of the meaningful impressions on the object side of perception'). Democritus' and Plato's initial motive was the desire to overcome the impulses, impressions, corporeal urges, intense emotions, etc. that prevailed in the early mythical experience of the world; humans experienced themselves as playthings of inscrutable powers (gods, numinous forces, demons). With the ego as the central control and steering authority, a new paradigm emerged in which humans became accountable and responsible for their actions. This required the

division of reality into an external world of determinable, fixed, and manipulable things and an internal world – in the European tradition, the soul. The meaningful impressions of life experience with which Parmenides and Empedocles had worked were irrelevant to the epistemological model of solid bodies in the central field of vision. At the end of this upheaval stood the model of a human being who faces the world on a stable level of personal emancipation, breaks internally diffuse situations down into constellations, interconnectable according to relevance and linkable with other data networks. The 'thing ontology' allowed humans to take control of the material environment arranged in the central field of vision. Building on this success, the aim was to get a grip on involuntary, prepersonal life experience. But phenomena such as fear, corporeal sensations, momentary impressions, the wind, the voice, etc., which are subject to interruptions and varying degrees of intensity, elude definition as things. Philosophers disposed of them by shifting ('projecting') them into the soul or psyche, which was invented for this purpose. Entire areas of phenomena (e.g., emotions) were cut up or distorted, while others were denied, especially the emotions and felt body (*Leib*), which became invisible to philosophical reflection: "[...] dieser verschwindet zwischen Körper und Seele wie in einer Gletscherspalte" (Schmitz 2014, 8; transl. W.M.-P.: 'it disappears between body and soul as if fallen into a crevasse').<sup>171</sup>

With the rediscovery of corporeality in New Phenomenology, the traditional ideal of man as a rational being who controls his desires and passions is abandoned in favor of a view of an individual characterized by the pursuit of balance between opposing, dynamic, corporeal tendencies. This instability takes place in an environment (situations) that is also in motion, giving the corporeal dynamic further unpredictable impulses. At the same time, however, the intrinsic

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<sup>171</sup> ' The turning point in Democritus, the psychological-reductionist-introjectionist objectification, isolates the individual in his inner world and entrusts him with the power to become master of his own house over his involuntary impulses; at the same time, it prepares the scientific-technical domination of the world that has followed since 1600, two millennia later, by leaving only those types of qualities (unspecific sensory qualities) in the empirical external world, that remain after all souls have been removed, which are optimal for statistics and experimentation. Philosophy thus enters the service of a striving for domination. [With the domination of Christianity over culture, in the wake of the threat of damnation and the torments of hell], the significance of the shared situations into which the individual has grown (implanted) with his or her personal situation is weakened or even devalued in the human self-image, and this leads to what I have called the autistic transgression of the Western mind: the isolation and leveling of individuals through the dismantling of implanted situations. The flip side of this autistic transgression is the dynamistic one, the binding of affective involvement to the theme of power. [...] The world is marked by the dynamistic and autistic transgression, making it available to people as a field for exercising their power in the interest of private happiness, whereby it is now left to the individual to decide at will what his happiness should consist of. ' (Schmitz 2007 a, 2, 816 f.)

instability of the person also presents mobility as an opportunity to develop a role through 'playful identification' that is more than just subjective being and allows to design new social roles. These and other processes are held together by personal composure (germ. *Fassung*, cf. Schmitz 2016 a, 297-305): This is the human ability to realize a constant rebalancing between the 'primitive present' of corporeal existence and the 'unfolded present' at a level of personal emancipation (or several).

Die Fassung ist das einzige Hilfsmittel, das die Person zu ihrer Stabilisierung besitzt. Dies kann aber nicht in der Verschanzung gegen die Labilität der Person bestehen, sondern nur in beweglicher Anpassung der Balance. Deshalb ist das Schwingenlassen der Fassung so wichtig, auch als Hauptorgan der Sensibilität in der Einleibung. (Schmitz 2015, 137)<sup>172</sup>

Applying this understanding to the situation of encounters between European students, flexibility must prove its worth when coming into contact with an unfamiliar attitude to life that suits the atmosphere of those involved. In order for understanding to be possible on the basis of pre-reflexive feelings and sensations, each participant must be prepared to encounter the unfamiliar attitudes to life of the other students. What is commonly said about other peoples and their attitudes to life is of little help when it comes to developing a sense of this for oneself. The following situation arises for the study group: one's own pre-reflexive attitude to life remains inconspicuous to those affected and usually only becomes noticeable when viewed from the outside (cf. Großheim et al. 2014, 14). Even if the participants are encouraged to reflect on this during the European semester, no participant can develop a sense of what is characteristic, which often imposes itself on outsiders. All those involved are too deeply entrenched in their respective situations, i.e., in the pre-conceptual, relatively chaotic diversity. There is no contrasting backdrop of a different attitude toward life that would make the characteristic impression of a peculiarity and, if applicable, a poster (cf. section 6.3) of it catch the eye. Therefore, the playful, pre-linguistic, physical-atmospheric use of resources in practical exercises, as in drama training (movement games, articulation and expression exercises, vocalization and singing, possibly in chorus, etc.), is indispensable.

This approach is also appropriate because individual students do not embody an ideal type of attitude towards life, but are first and foremost individuals with their own specific experiences

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<sup>172</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'Composure is the only tool that a person has to stabilize themselves. However, this cannot consist of entrenching oneself against the person's instability, but only in flexibly adjusting one's balance. That is why allowing composure to swing is so important, also as the main organ of sensitivity during incarnation.'

and characteristics. On top of that, in 21st-century Europe, previous intercultural experiences can be assumed. Instead of a threatening blockade, students can therefore be assumed to be willing to accept a 'game situation' that is meant to be taken seriously. This attitude is also appropriate because in the MONTAIGNE program the habitual relationship between personal emancipation and personal regression is methodically challenged: Instead of armoring the habitualized composure against meaningful (irritating, moving, stimulating, alienating, etc.) impressions, young adults are invited to expose themselves to the unknown, corporeally perceptible impulses with a pathic attitude. The benefit lies in the prospect of counteracting the alienating encapsulation of composure and gaining access to a more flexible composure through the affecting new European language. Being flexible in unpredictable situations and to go with the impulses is essential in order to become sensitive to meaningful impressions (and internally diffuse situations as a whole). Just as a child grows into its mother tongue, students open up the unknown language as a bundle of meaningful impressions, as a situation that initially affects learners corporeally and atmospherically.

The third sentence of the quotation addresses the relationship between composure, sensitivity, and incorporation, which requires a separate explanation.

## 6.2 Incorporation and being taken into atmospheres

Contrary to the habit of immediately engaging in speech about a subject, a program, or a problem when acquiring a foreign language, both practically and theoretically, it should be noted that languages are not the first thing that happens to human beings when they are born. Speech accompanies the child before and after its birth. However, what is heard acoustically is part of a series of meaningful corporeal impressions (light, noise, music, cold/heat, etc.) that compete with sensations such as hunger, thirst, or discomfort (wetness, restricted movement) (vgl. Schmitz 2011, 1-27 and beyond). Therefore, phenomenological observation does not begin with human speech, i.e., speech in the form of sentences,<sup>173</sup> but first turns to the differentiated

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<sup>173</sup> Demmerling (2018, 367; transl. W.M.-P.): 'A distinction is made between sentence-like speech and evocative speech, which can also be used by animals. Simple cries or sounds belong to this category, as Konrad Lorenz illustrates with the example of a flock of jackdaws gathering to take flight and signaling different behavioral options through light and dark calls. Speech in general is defined as <work on situations>. With the help of language

prepersonal and pre-verbal realm, which remains intertwined with human speech learning and speech throughout life. This already suggests that speech is not understood, as in constructivist or cognitivist conceptions of language, as the result of biological, mental, or interactive programming on a neurophysiological basis, which, for example, generates sentences via generative grammar, forms them via metalinguistic rules in the brain, or constructs them through action in contexts. Rather, the decisive factor is that New Phenomenology understands humans as corporeal beings, i.e., that they experience corporeal sensations such as fright (constriction), lust (expansion), focusing (tension), stretching (swelling), relaxing, e.g., in the sunshine (protopathic), and tickling, stinging, etc. (epicritic); in addition, they can be affected by atmospheres (security, freshness, calm, etc.) and moving emotions (fear, anger, shame, forms of ecstasy). This also happens to them as a personally emancipated being, so that the individual may repeatedly be forced to abandon the elevated level of self-control and, if necessary, find themselves in the prepersonal ('primitive') present when they lose their composure.

In addition to sensitivity to corporeal impulses, the first orientation in the world takes place through affecting atmospheres and emotions. What the child finds unsettling triggers rejection; conversely, even infants have an astonishing sensitivity to beneficial atmospheres. However, the development of affectivity takes shape in different ways in the course of each individual's life history: depending on corporeal disposition and character development, dealing with emotional atmospheres shapes the personal situation (personality).

[Deshalb] ist die Gesamtform der persönlichen Situation der Empfänglichkeit für Gefühle mehr oder weniger günstig. Manche wehren mit ihrer Fassung solche Empfänglichkeit ab und entziehen sich der Stimme ihres Leibes, sofern er für Gefühle offen ist, obwohl auch sie von der Verwurzelung ihres Personseins nicht loskommen. (Schmitz 2016, 243 f.) [...] der Leib ist keine abgesonderte Provinz, sondern der universale Resonanzboden, wo alles Betroffensein des Menschen seinen Sitz hat und in die Initiative des eigenen Verhaltens umgeformt wird; nur im Verhältnis zu seiner Leiblichkeit bestimmt sich der Mensch als Person. (Schmitz <sup>2</sup>1995, 116) <sup>174</sup>

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in the sense of sentence-like speech, situations that only have an internal diffuse meaning are transformed into constellations in which individual meanings emerge.'

<sup>174</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: '[Therefore] the overall form of the personal situation is more or less conducive to emotional receptivity. Some people use their composure to ward off such receptivity and withdraw from the voice of their body, insofar as it is open to emotions, even though they too cannot escape the roots of their personal being. [...] the body is not a separate province, but the universal sounding board where all human affections have their seat and are transformed into the initiative of one's own behavior; only in relation to one's corporeality does one define oneself as a person.'

As explained, the ancient separation of the inner world from the outer world has led to the division of human experience and a one-sided intellectualistic view of human nature. In this sense, the pre-linguistic phase of the European Semester serves to free the (individually different) corporeal and atmospheric resources from civilizational influences, e.g. traditional or contemporary emotional repertoires. In the daily, initially pre-linguistic interaction between the participants, a situational sense of how to 'take' the other person is awakened; over time, this gives rise to a new shared implanting situation in which the participants are charged with certain topics and problems with atmospheric, corporeally perceptible significance. Thanks to these reciprocal situational relations, European students without extensive linguistic resources can cope with new situations that arise (see section 5.1 and Müller-Pelzer 2024, 83-130). According to Schmitz (2011, 29-53; 2016, 183-210), the key to this is *encorporation*, a type of *corporeal communication*. The body is not something that stands in opposition to the world, but is predimensionally 'fused' with it. According to this view, perception is not a process of construction:

Man darf es sich nicht so vorstellen, als werde im Raum hier ein Sinnesdatum, da ein Problem, dort ein Programm wahrgenommen. In Wirklichkeit ist Wahrnehmen nicht so sehr ein Registrieren von Objekten oder Sinnesdaten wie vielmehr eine Subjekt und Objekt im Sich-einspielen und Eingespieltsein auf einander umgreifende Kooperation, die ich [...] als *Einleibung* bezeichnen werde. (Schmitz <sup>2</sup>1995, 66; emphasis in the original text)<sup>175</sup>

Encorporation is the competence with which people initially and mostly orient themselves in their environment, be they newborns or students of the MONTAIGNE program. They enter into a situation with others and other things. According to Schmitz, a situation stands out from its background and has characteristic features, but it remains internally diffuse, i.e., without anything specific being determinable as a fact. Encorporation is omnipresent. Orientation is provided, for example, by the suggestions of movement that can emanate from pointing hands, head or eye movements, the architecture of buildings, urban design, etc., as well as by affecting synaesthetic characters such as the dense or scattered movement patterns of a city population, the 'soundscape' in a Mediterranean cafeteria (in each case specific) or the caressing sea breeze. The gentle, rough, oscillating, hard, soft, etc. aspects of natural phenomena (wind, landscape, forest, rocks, etc.) can be transferred to the holistic impression of people we encounter, their

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<sup>175</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'One should not imagine that sensory data is perceived here, a problem there, and a program somewhere else in space. In reality, perception is not so much a registration of objects or sensory data as it is a subject and object attuning to each other and being attuned to each other in an all-encompassing cooperation, which I will refer to as *incarnation*.'

habits and manner of speaking. Thanks to these corporeal *bridging qualities* (cf. Schmitz 2005 b, 137; 2011, 29–30) of objects and human beings, the occasions for encorporation are inexhaustible. *Latent* encorporation is present in everyday life: one brushes against the impressions one encounters without being challenged by them. This changes abruptly when one finds oneself in an unfamiliar European civilization: everyday practices – latent encorporation in one's habitual environment – are now felt with a nuance of resistance or ease; the difference can be illustrated with the synaesthetic characters of rough vs. smooth: Latent encorporation becomes *manifest* encorporation. When settling into an unfamiliar style of civilization, this impression of rough vs. smooth, for example, can be felt again on other occasions.

As soon as partners come into play, unilateral encorporation turns into *antagonistic encorporation*: If, for example, one encounters the prosodic form of an unknown language, possibly nuanced by the vocal timbre of individual speakers, this can, with sufficient vital attention and receptivity to stimuli, leave a corporeal and atmospheric impression that is processed and transformed into an individual resonance. The widespread belief that we understand another person primarily through what they communicate with words must therefore be corrected. For example, before a conversation between two or more participants begins, a complex exchange takes place on the level of corporeal communication, i.e., as part of pre-conceptual, prepersonal experience. The mutual exchange of meaningful impressions (proxemics, voice, gestures, facial expressions) between the conversation partners culminates in an exchange of glances, one of the most important channels of encorporation. This mutual assessment reveals the gaze as the prototype of *reciprocal antagonistic encorporation* and creates a shared atmospheric premonition between the partners, so that one feels what to expect from the other person. Even if this impression is not confirmed, or only partially confirmed, the atmospheric impression remains a means of pre-linguistic orientation. In the course of the conversation, the subjective spectrum between corporeal attraction and repulsion is explored, corporeally felt correspondences are examined, the resulting potential for trust is weighed up, the original intentions are adapted to the new situation, and expected behaviors are assessed. Encorporation forms a unity that transcends the individual emotion and felt body (*Leib*) and the source of the impulse. In this respect, a distinction must be made between antagonistic encorporation and *solidarity-based* encorporation (cf. Schmitz 2011, 47-50). The latter can be found, for example, in traditional choral speech and choral singing, in hymns, in folk music and its songs, in group dances, and

in work songs.<sup>176</sup> Current pop culture hits are likely to be particularly popular with students today, whether in English or in the respective national language: all the forms of solidarity-based encorporation mentioned above reappear here in a new guise.

With the corporeal and atmospheric relaxation, a corporeal and atmospheric closeness can develop between the participants of the European semester through songs sung in alternation, impromptu games from coaching practice, pre-linguistic acting exercises, etc.<sup>177</sup> Antagonistic and supportive encorporation can also occur together, as is known from team games, which are also popular with students: each team draws its strength from solidarity-based encorporation, but uses it in mutual antagonistic encorporation against the opposing team.

Thanks to the focus on prepersonal and pre-linguistic experience, students can more easily (playfully) adapt to unfamiliar speech articulation (breathing technique, place of articulation, etc.). Encorporation helps to overcome what may be perceived as strange or offensive in comparison to yet known languages. Generally speaking, the playful attitude of the childlike gaze, in combination with the 'playful identification of oneself from a distance' (Schmitz, cf. chap. 1.1; transl. W.M.-P.), promotes a willingness to follow the offers of encorporation, which take on an additional intensity of affective involvement under the extraordinary circumstances.<sup>178</sup> Depending on the corporeal disposition and character development of the individual, a 'rough' or 'smooth' vocal timbre, etc., can then affect the person concerned in such a way that they corporeally 'put themselves' (vocally, gesturally, mimically, etc.) into the mode of articulation that affects them. The melodic form, the predominant place of articulation (labial, nasal, palatal, guttural), and much more can convey the current impression (an impressive situation) of emotion the attitude towards life in the new environment. As the person continues to grow into the language and environment in question, the prosody may merge with the internally diffuse situational content of the specific way of life, the 'aura of significance' of the situations, and become

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<sup>176</sup> Even today, in many countries, solidarity and the resulting communal emotions are formed in this way, which can have profound affective effects; think, for example, of national singing cultures, songs that call for revolution, the struggle for freedom, equality, etc.

<sup>177</sup> One-sided encorporation is evident in the gaze, for example, when an object binds the corporeal center of gravity to itself, so that averting one's gaze is equivalent to 'breaking away'. An example of mutually antagonistic encorporation is the exchanged glances of two children (aged approx. 1.5 years) when they are pushed past each other in opposite directions while sitting in their strollers. Their gazes merge for a moment, as it were, and probe what the other person might be like.

<sup>178</sup> Metzeltin (2015, 244 f.) reports on the ease with which an attitude of 'linguistic openness' can develop in plurilingual environments.

a 'poster' representing a lifestyle (for these terms, see chapter 6.2). The approach to an unfamiliar style of Europeanization does not come top-down based on cultural studies concepts and issues, but rather from meaningful impressions, bottom-up. The goal is not to acquire interesting knowledge, but to experience affective involvement. Encorporation becomes a corporeal sensor that indicates 'what is going on atmospherically'.

Peter Sloterdijk has spoken in his own way of a 'proxemic anthropology' (2012: 27), which describes climatic 'relationships of proximity' as atmospherically charged spheres through which people first find themselves in their environment. In this way, they know

[...] auf der Stelle, woran sie sind – mit sich selbst und mit anderen und allem. In Atmosphären sind sie eingetaucht, aus Atmosphären spricht zu ihnen das Offenbare. Durch Immersion ins leitfähige Element sind sie ursprünglich *da* und für Umgebung offen. Der Raum als Atmosphäre ist nichts als Schwingung oder *reine Konduktivität* (vgl. Gosztonyi 1976: 1255). (Sloterdijk 2012, 28; Hervorhebungen im Original)<sup>179</sup>

The pre-dimensional corporeal space of involuntary pre-linguistic life experience is, then, an atmospheric space, whether it is corporeally perceptible as a background mood or as a corporeally moving, sometimes even overwhelming excitement, without a name or identifiable origin.<sup>180</sup> While in constructed three-dimensional space one confronts points, lines, and surfaces as a distant observer, predimensional spaces envelop or permeate the persons concerned. For students of the European semester, certain corporeal-atmospheric experiences can become formative and crystallize in memory, bringing together the experiences they have had. Such shared atmospheres (as atmospheres of emotion) also have a 'setting in life' (germ. *Sitz im Leben*): one might think, for example, of group solidarity in connection with a milieu-specific, regionally colored youth language, or of the fascination with flamenco dancing in an Andalusian *tablaó* (local), including interaction with *aficionados*, or the traditional choral singing of village

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<sup>179</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: '[...] immediately know where they are—with themselves, with others, and with everything. They are immersed in atmospheres; the obvious speaks to them from atmospheres. Through immersion in the conductive element, they are originally there and open to their surroundings. Space as atmosphere is nothing but vibration or pure conductivity (cf. Gosztonyi 1976: 1255).'

Gernot Böhme (1995, 15; transl. W.M.-P.) emphasized: 'The primary theme of sensuality is not the things one perceives, but what one feels: the atmosphere.'

<sup>180</sup> Furthermore, (individual and collective) emotional atmospheres from the pre-dimensional emotional space intervene in the corporeal space and have a lasting influence on the well-being of those affected, their perception of their surroundings, and their actions: someone who is deeply sad, for example, experiences their surroundings completely differently from someone who is hopeful and cheerful.

communities, which playfully identify with their origins, varying traditional forms with appropriate and incorporating linguistic variants.<sup>181</sup>

One might expect the objection that the limited time span of a summer semester hardly allows for the MONTAIGNE program's expectation of delving into language and culture and to make the secondary epigenesis possible, i.e. to become a European. This doubt is understandable from the perspective of language learning in schools, where the process is systematic and takes years. Duration and quantity are indeed crucial in this context, especially since the language subject has to share time with other subjects and the learners' motivation is completely different. In contrast, the MONTAIGNE program consists of (at least) a bloc of approximately 14 weeks of face-to-face, similarly oriented and interconnected activities, the content of which is not different from moving around in the linguistic and cultural environment, but also receives additional, potentially formative, stimulation from it. Unlike an elective school subject, the MONTAIGNE program is driven by a vital interest in clarifying open questions about one's own life. Unlike language teaching in schools, the focus is on the affective involvement in common situations, and here it is not the quantity of what is offered that is decisive. A high intensity and quantity of corporeal and atmospheric impressions do not increase the likelihood of an affective response. Rather, in each individual case, the availability of vital drive, the receptivity to stimuli, and the ability of the participants to resonate with a corporeally perceptible impulse must be present in order for resonance to occur at the level of corporeal communication.

Die Ausdrucksphänomene geben an das eigenleibliche Spüren nicht einfach einen Impuls weiter wie die Billardkugel an die andere, sondern interferieren mit der aktuellen Stimmung des Individuums, gewissermaßen die jeweilige ‚Eigenschwingung‘ des eigenleiblichen Spürens. Diese ‚Eigenschwingung‘ ist eine wesentliche Bedingung dafür, dass das leibliche Spüren überhaupt sensibel für diese oder jene Ausdrucksphänomene ist. (Großheim / Kluck / Nörenberg 2014 a, 26)<sup>182</sup>

The term 'natural vibration' is intended to indicate that it is not the objective side of the impulses that matters, **which may be minimal when viewed from the outside**. The affective encounter with a European language takes place – differently for each participant – via subjective atmospheres and only in this way does it give language practice a *subjective* significance. A

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<sup>181</sup> Individual atmospheres, on the other hand, have an unpredictable effect due to being drawn into an unknown individual situation.

<sup>182</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' The phenomena of expression do not simply pass on an impulse to the own corporeal sensation, like a billiard ball to another, but interfere with the individual's current mood, in a sense the respective 'natural vibration' of the corporeal sensation. This 'natural vibration' is an essential condition for the corporeal senses to be sensitive to this or that expressive phenomenon in the first place. '

participant can then become receptive to impressions that were previously unknown, or in other words: suddenly, phenomena become noticeable to the person concerned in their subjective significance: illuminating, surprising, confusing, fascinating and connectable to their own experiences. For other participants, on the other hand, receptivity etc. comes about through different impressions. Subjectivity is therefore not a characteristic of individuals (cf. Großheim 2012 b, 23–24), but rather that which leads to affective involvement in individual cases, or, to generalize: everything 'for which and against which they warmly engage' (Schmitz 2003, iii; transl. W.M.-P.). European plurilingualism has an incomparable corporeal and atmospheric potential that does not leave one 'cold' (Schmitz 1997, 23–33).<sup>183</sup> Subjective involvement is the distinguishing feature of affective plurilingualism compared to functional plurilingualism.<sup>184</sup>

Jan Slaby (2023 a, 72 f.) formulates a critical socio-philosophical addition: Individual affectivity is embedded in the affective repertoires of the lifeworld, so that it is not only in the case of reflective judgments that there is a risk of following an imperceptible trend due to a social milieu or subliminal collective influences. The emotional registers and repertoires prevailing in

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<sup>183</sup> See also Meier (2012); Müller-Pelzer (2024 a, 159-166; 2024 b: 259–260; 2024 c: 277).

<sup>184</sup> To my current knowledge, this distinction is missing from the statements of the *Observatoire Européen du Plurilinguisme* (OEP). Christian Tremblay, the current president, has contributed an essay on the subject (cf. Tremblay 2019; transl. W.M.-P.). After a cursory review of earlier language theories, he adopts Ludwig Wittgenstein's definition that the limits of my language are the limits of my world (Tremblay 2019, 13). He explains the related schema "Monde ↔ Langage ↔ Pensée" as follows: 'This schema suggests that the interaction between the real world and thought takes place through the mediation of language, regardless of the modalities of perception, language and thought being distinct but inseparable. According to Vygotsky's very strong expression, thought is not expressed in language, it is accomplished in it. [...] That reality is external to the observer is an illusion. This reality is indeed found in language, because only language allows us to conceive and describe it, but it will always be only a 'point of view' and nothing more, yet this point changes reality, because the way we see reality is part of reality. What is not conceived in language does not exist for the individual who speaks it.' (Tremblay 2019, 14; transl. W.M.-P.) Based on New Phenomenology, I would like to formulate three antitheses:

1. Wittgenstein claimed that the limits of my language are the limits of my world, i.e., language has a monopoly on my experience of the world. Antithesis: Pre-reflexive perception of the world through incarnation ('corporeal understanding') and holistic processing of situations (atmospheres, emotions, cf. section 6.3) have a lasting significance for life as it unfolds linguistically.

2. Psychological perspectivism, which holds that languages are "points de vue", remains caught up in an objectivist understanding of the environment insofar as every human being can adopt these points of view/perspectives from a distance. Antithesis: In contrast to functional plurilingualism, the concept of European plurilingualism is about an unknown language affecting me in an unpredictable way and that 'has something to say to me', i.e., in a subjective way that is accessible to Europeans. The atmospheric emotion also encompasses pre-linguistic experiences ('situations', cf. 'speechless thinking' in section 6.3).

3. Plurilingualism has exclusively to do with the linguistically understood "individu parlant." Antithesis (in addition to the first antithesis): *European* plurilingualism does not abstract from the *individu sentant/affectif*. This means that the "individu parlant" remains dependent on sensitivity to corporeal impulses, atmospheres, and emotions, including deontological emotions, when analytically explaining facts, programs, and problems: The nomos (programmatic claims) of the European type of civilization makes itself felt here.

a society, such as the idea that this or that usually deserves sympathy, while other things do not, also change the perception of surrounding situations.<sup>185</sup> Therefore, the question must be asked how participants in the European semester can be sure that they will not fall victim to deception when exploring a style of Europeanization that is unfamiliar to them.

Schmitz (2015, 223) clearly recognized this danger and therefore defined corporeal understanding as follows: "Alles Verstehen von Situationen, primär leibliches Verstehen in antagonistischer Einleibung, ist personal und kulturell überformt und kritisch geprüft."<sup>186</sup> In the present case, it can be assumed that students are going through an initial phase of disillusionment due to their experience of being steered by the EU elites. Their decision to participate in the MONTAIGNE program will be the beginning of their detachment from conventional emotional repertoires. The phenomenological concept of the European semester, which emphasizes the pathic character of the experience, will offer protection against being captured by dominant political interests, as warned by Slaby (2019). Pathic means remaining open to new impulses that arise in diverse and unpredictable ways and can change students' personal situations – sometimes imperceptibly, sometimes abruptly. Being corporeally affected by an unfamiliar style of Europeanization, made possible by growing into the respective language, frees corporeal sensations from predetermined categories. The emergence of a new common situation, experienced as implanting by European students from different cultural backgrounds, then offers the opportunity that different emotional repertoires become noticeable and lose their matter of course, especially the repertoires propagated by the EU elites. The goal of the MONTAIGNE program, to overcome self-alienation as Europeans, therefore remains fundamentally open in terms of content. Thus, the European semester offers favorable conditions for taking Slaby's observations into account.

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<sup>185</sup> As Reckwitz (<sup>3</sup>2020, 429; transl. W.M.-P.) explains: 'The society of singularities continues to be enabled in the background by formal, emotionless rationalizations, but in the foreground it is a cultural society in the form of a hyperculture that is repeatedly challenged by cultural essentialisms and is a generator of socially circulating affects.'

<sup>186</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'All understanding of situations, primarily physical understanding in antagonistic embodiment, is personally and culturally shaped and critically examined.'

### 6.3 Situations

Latent encorporation is fleeting. On certain occasions (danger, hunting, time pressure), the program of having to act is accompanied by corporeal constriction; manifest encorporation spontaneously compresses relevant aspects of the dissolving (total) chaotic diversity. Schmitz refers to this as a situation. For a holistic approach to a current situation, Schmitz repeatedly refers to the example of a driver who, in poor visibility on a wet road, swerves to avoid a vehicle that has skidded.<sup>187</sup> The driver is confronted with pressing, overwhelming, and disordered impressions.<sup>188</sup> The resulting *situation* has three characteristics: (1) The event stands out holistically from its background, (2) states of affairs, programs, and problems together form a common significance, in such a way that (3) these contained within it are not all individual – in prepersonal experience, not at all (cf. Schmitz 2005 b, 22).

Human beings initially share this ability to process situations and their diffuse significance as a whole with higher animals, for example through alarm, mating, and distress calls. Schmitz does not hesitate to use the terms 'speechless thinking' and 'language-free thinking':

Ganz ohne Rede kommt bei Mensch und Tier die intelligente Verarbeitung impressiver Situationen (vielsagender Eindrücke) mit und ohne direkten Eingriff aus, das sprachlose Denken, das ich als leibliche Intelligenz beschrieben habe. (Schmitz 2012, 213; vgl. ders. 2010, 86-95: „sprachfreies Denken“, sowie Demmerling 2018, 376)<sup>189</sup>

Beyond acting in the moment (see the following list), humans have further, more differentiated insights for orientation, instead of the schematic animalistic control of instinct. For situations, (programs, problems) that are not yet isolated, but rather fluid (relatively chaotic and diverse), Schmitz has proposed the following types of situations:<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'The driver does not have time to take in the individual sensory data like a strategist surveying the battlefield, compare it, draw conclusions from it, make a plan based on it, and then put that plan into action; he must perceive the situation holistically at a glance and act accordingly. This can only be achieved if he perceives the relevant facts, the problem they present him with in the form of danger, and the guidelines for his behavior to solve the problem – the programs that guide this behavior – from the situation and allows himself to be guided by what he has perceived. This is the intelligent perception that Greek poets and philosophers called "voεiv" until well into the 5th century BC [...].' (Schmitz <sup>2</sup>1995 a, 66)

<sup>188</sup> The technical term 'situation' has a considerably broader meaning for him than the common word in colloquial language.

<sup>189</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'Without any speech at all, humans and animals are capable of intelligently processing impressive situations (meaningful impressions) with and without direct intervention, the speechless thinking that I have described as bodily intelligence. (Schmitz 2012, 213; cf. 2010, 86-95: 'language-free thinking', as well as Demmerling 2018, 376).

<sup>190</sup> See Peter Sloterdijk's philosophy of spheres.

- *Segmented* situations that only reveal themselves gradually through repeated access. For example, Europe never appears as a whole because of its diachronic depth, synchronic breadth, diverse civilizational and cultural dimensions, etc. These are perspectively segmented situations, for example, when historical figures or events are given a different profile from national or regional, religious, or ideological perspectives. Segmented situations also arise in the development of a person's personality (personal situation) over a longer period of time, in the impression of the zeitgeist of an era, or in changes that a community's way of life or a language undergoes (cf. Großheim et al. 2014 a, 53-61). If segmented situations are 'condensed into a meaningful impression (an impressive situation) reduced to the essentials, this is a *poster* of the segmented situation' (Schmitz 2012, 171; emphasis in the original).<sup>191</sup> The internally diffuse character of situations explains why Schmitz opposes the colloquial expression 'to master a language' as if it were an object. Language is not an object, but is only tangible to the speaker in the act of speaking as speech and then only in excerpts, i.e., a segmented situation.
- Schmitz refers to *impressive* situations as, for example, a person's manner or voice, which is maintained and recognized as a meaningful impression through the variation of performances. These situations often occur in connection with emotions that attach themselves to them. The assessment of such situations allows for orientation, but this can also be deceptive: impressive situations, such as the so-called first impression one has of a person, can also change and force a painful revision of the original assumptions. The impressive impression of a social or regional milieu can be condensed into a *poster*: for some, for example, the various linguistic facets (phonology, accent) and everyday life embody the Provençal landscape and Provence as a Mediterranean habitat (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2024, 146-148; 150 f.).<sup>192</sup>
- *Stable* situations are those that have been going on for a long time and show certain characteristics, like the emotionally charged polarization between Paris and the provinces in France, regional multipolarity in Germany, and constitutionally framed linguistic and cultural diversity in Spain. Accordingly, different collective atmospheres and deontological sentiments have developed in the individual countries, the affective impact of which can lead to controversial interpretations and actions. Different styles of Europeanization are addressed by the *convergence herméneutique* program.

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<sup>191</sup> The ancient figure of Oedipus embodies such a poster of human transgressions, just as the great tragedies of that time produced a multitude of characters in which complex, segmented situations condensed into impressive posters – with a formative effect that continues to this day. But figures such as Don Juan, Hamlet, Faust, Michael Kohlhaas, and Peer Gynt are no less posters of segmented situations. For a broader audience in a certain period of time, the following individuals can also be included: Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Ernesto ("Che") Guevara, Edward Snowden, Julian Assange, etc.

<sup>192</sup> Literary analysis can also benefit from the consideration of impressive situations (also called meaningful impressions). Think of the famous ending that Heinrich von Kleist gave to his *Amphitryon*, Alcmena's 'Ah!' when she learns the truth from Jupiter. This sigh arises from an impressive situation: the actual facts are suddenly revealed, but the problem (which entanglements need to be untangled and overcome) and the plan of action (what needs to be done) is beyond human capabilities.

- *Current* situations are experienced as latent incorporation and are mostly overlooked. On the other hand, they can be brought together into an *impressive* situation in which a segmented situation appears to manifest itself in a concentrated, often atmospherically intrusive manner (*patent* incorporation). This is the case, for example, when encountering an unfamiliar style of Europeanization, which triggers a resonance for corporeal communication through meaningful impressions under certain circumstances (when there is sensitivity to stimuli, attentiveness to vital impulses, and the ability to resonate with a corporeally perceptible impulse). Then the encounter can have a lasting effect. The example of the driver cited above is also worth mentioning.
- *Including* common situations of living together, provided that behavior goes beyond the mere perception of interests, are governed by everyday implicit norms (routines, graded manners) and create a latent collective attitude towards life. These are schematically picked up, for example, in surveys conducted by the EU's Eurobarometer institute, in which citizens are asked about their satisfaction with certain policies or institutions. In most cases, people are satisfied with this sense of belonging, which is based on social behavior patterns, without considering that inclusive situations are only held together by loose bonds that can easily be dissolved.
- *Implanting* common situations include binding norms that become apparent in the affective anchoring in a group of like-minded people, shared goals, a language, a cultural environment, etc. In addition to what connects people, this also includes heated debates about the interpretation of certain events, personalities, and norms. The personal situation grows into implanting common situations (family, style of Europeanization) and creates a strong affective bond that can only be broken at the cost of painful losses.<sup>193</sup> Through experiences of affective involvement, the European semester offers opportunities to create new implanting situations.

This typology provides useful guidance for assessing practical problems in the *convergence herméneutique* of different styles of Europeanization before it is even possible to think about determining facts that, when linked to constellations, are accepted as a common basis for discussion.

Situational competence and conversational competence are intertwined in practice. Corporeal resonance allows us to sense, for example, whether our partners in a given situation are likely to want to dominate, whether they are offering to go along with us, whether we are likely to find a spontaneous communicative approach to them, whether there is a prospect of continuing contact, etc. From the outset, the conversation partners are looking for an 'atmospheric fit'.

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<sup>193</sup> Schmitz has assigned a central role in the regeneration of Europe to the implanting situations (cf. 2007 a, 2, 820-823).

Diffuse expectations (protentions), which also accompany the course of later conversations, are particularly important in the case of communication between participants of different European origins, because a relationship of trust (implanting situation) needs to be established.

In the MONTAIGNE program, situational competence proves useful for cooperation in (changing) tandems; it is not primarily a matter of already elaborate linguistic expressiveness. Each tandem can additionally resort to *translanguaging*, so that an interruption of corporeal communication and any resulting irritation can be prevented. The conversation partners usually understand (some) explicit content, but above all, through mutual (antagonistic) incorporation, they sense a lot of atmospheric content that could be verbalized in soliloquy, for example: *I have the impression that he (or she) is openly accommodating me. I find it easy to express myself. I believe that I can also address a sensitive topic.*<sup>194</sup>

#### 6.4 Human speech between implication in situations and their explication

Humans share implication in situations with animals, but speech in sentence form is reserved exclusively for humans.

Tiere reden, aber sie sprechen nicht. Spezifisch menschliches Reden ist von Sätzen geleitetes Sprechen. Sätze sind Regeln der Sprache. Sie liegen dem Sprechen niemals einzeln vor, sondern können nur indirekt, von den erzeugten Sprüchen her, als Regeln zu deren Erzeugung erschlossen und gekennzeichnet werden. Jeder aktive Könnner einer Sprache kann nach deren Regeln sprechen, aber keiner weiß, wie er es macht, welches Rezept er anwendet. [...] *Eine Sprache ist kein System, sondern ein Nomos.* (Schmitz 2012, 211; 212; emphasis in the original text)<sup>195 196</sup>

As soon as sentence-like speech begins, state of affairs, programs, and problems become isolated, combinable into constellations, and freely interconnectable. Due to their programmatic

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<sup>194</sup> For a detailed account, see Müller-Pelzer (2024 a, chapter 3; 2021 a, chapter 8).

<sup>195</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'Animals talk, but they do not speak. Specifically human speech is guided by sentences. Sentences are rules of language. They never exist individually in speech, but can only be indirectly deduced and identified as rules for their creation from the utterances they generate. Every active speaker of a language can speak according to its rules, but no one knows how they do it, what formula they use. [...] *A language is not a system, but a nomos.*' (Schmitz 2012, 211; 212; emphasis in the original text)

<sup>196</sup> 'Why articulate language rather than nothing?' This philosophical question, posed by Bruno Maurer at the beginning of his latest book (2025), was also asked by Schmitz (2012, 235-249). It would be valuable to discuss the respective anthropological assumptions on another occasion. Here, the focus can only be on explaining the power of human speech.

content, situations contain norms that require the people affected to take a stand. The controversial question of what is perceived as wrong in a community, what is considered tolerable, what is considered outrageous, punishable, and unacceptable touches on the foundations of living together.

An instructive example is ancient Greece, which, after a long period of searching and experimentation, generated a culture of regulated (philosophical and rhetorical) argumentation that became the basis of citizens' self-image in the course of the 6th century BC. The subsequent European type of civilization adopted as its guiding norm the assertion, based on reason and protected from violence and coercion, of what can be considered right and wrong in social life (cf. chapter 5). In this precise sense, the idea of a 'culture for the sake of freedom' (Meier 2012) has found its way into the various styles of Europeanization. In this respect, *European* plurilingualism is not just a sociolinguistic fact that one approaches with detachment, as one does with other languages. Rather, the European languages of education, in their characteristic variations, express an attitude toward life in which a preconceived sense of what ought and may be is present. Part of Europe's self-image is to have a public space where the spontaneous sensitivity to what is wrong for an individual at a particular time and place can be expressed and discussed (cf. chapter 5).

In order to gain an understanding of a different style of Europeanization, it is not enough to learn the respective language in the conventional way and to profess, with the best of intentions, a commitment to peaceful coexistence between peoples. It requires experience of dealing with a language and the corresponding culture that have something subjectively meaningful to say. What is meant here is the *addressability* of facts, i.e., subjective facts,<sup>197</sup> that only those who are emotionally affected can express; they differ from objective facts in that anyone can express the latter (Schmitz 2010, 366 f.):

Eine Tatsache ist *subjektiv für jemand*, wenn höchstens er (oft nicht einmal er) sie aussagen kann; sie ist *objektiv* (oder *neutral*), wenn jeder sie aussagen kann, sofern er genug weiß und gut genug sprechen kann. Ohne Beimischung affektiven Betroffenseins ist keine Tatsache für mich subjektiv [...]. [...] Subjektive und objektive Tatsachen sind im Inhalt vollkommen gleich.

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<sup>197</sup> Schmitz (2 1995 a, 7; transl. W.M.-P.): ' Subjective facts are, so to speak, more real than objective facts; they have the vitality of the blood-filled and urgent real, while the merely objective world, constituted solely by objective facts, is something like a specimen [...]. [...] Subjective facts cannot be accepted in a merely registering attitude, but their actuality, even their mere factuality, only arises from engagement in affective involvement. '

Sie unterscheiden sich durch die Tatsächlichkeit, die bei den subjektiven Tatsachen um eine Nuance reicher ist, die man als **Nahegehen, Ergreifen, Beanspruchen, unwiderstehliche Herausforderung zu unbeliebiger Selbstverstrickung umschreiben** kann.<sup>198</sup> (Emphasis in the 1rst sentence in the original text; bold type W.M.-P.)<sup>199</sup>

It is this 'irresistible challenge' that can be felt when affected by a *European* language, because the new situations are accompanied by an subjectively significant atmosphere. This affecting atmosphere can spread to collectives such as the European study group or parallel groups in other countries. If, in the course of the European semester, participants from different styles of Europeanization develop a 'collective style of corporeal affection and resonance' (Großheim et al. 2014 a, 26f.; 52f.) and grow into an implanting situation permeated by atmospheres, this would be, *in essence*, the result of a *convergence herméneutique*.<sup>200</sup>

When growing into an unknown language, the internal diffuse situation is kneaded, as it were, until certain meanings can be condensed and made explicit: ' The situation takes on a contour that allows someone to deal with it by identifying and classifying something as something. ' (Demmerling 2018, 374; transl. W.M.-P.) Schmitz thus arrives at the thesis that communication is not the main thing in speaking, because communication already takes place in non-sentential speech during antagonistic incorporation, whereby a situation (play, work, warning of danger, etc.) is processed as a whole. The main thing is rather the *explication* of meanings from situations:

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<sup>198</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' A fact is subjective for someone if only they (and often not even they) can state it; it is objective (or neutral) if anyone can state it, provided they know enough and can speak well enough. Without the admixture of emotional involvement, no fact is subjective for me [...]. [...] Subjective and objective facts are completely identical in content. They differ in terms of their factuality, which is a nuance richer in subjective facts, which can be described as closeness, grasping, claiming, an irresistible challenge to arbitrary self-entanglement. ' (emphasis in the original; bold type by W.M.-P.)

<sup>199</sup> This is followed by a detailed definition of the term: 'Affective involvement is always a going along with or participating in suffering in a specific way. I refer to this going along in arbitrary self-entanglement as *disposition*. This therefore creates the actuality of the (in my case) subjective facts for me and is itself such a fact in each case. Therefore, one can say that it causes itself and fulfills the requirement of normal moral responsibility with regard to independence [...].' (Schmitz 1997, 43; transl. W.M.-P.)

<sup>200</sup> Since we are dealing with young adults who also want to understand contradictions and conflicts, it cannot be assumed that the shared situation will be a 'harmony event'. In my book (2024 a, 144-159), I have outlined three different (authentic) examples of how experience with subjective facts and addressed norms can lead to lasting affective involvement with a European language. Typically, these are (1) an encounter with the sound of a European language that was experienced as an 'epiphany' (Jürgen Trabant), (2) being affected by the sound of a language that was experienced as an enticing promise of a lifestyle, and (3) continuously growing into a culture that is discovered as a unique affective complement.

Das Hauptgeschäft, das Spezifische, des Sprechens besteht in der Explikation (einzelner Bedeutungen aus Situationen mit anschließender Kombination der Explikate) [...]. Bei der Explikation setzt die Leistung der Sprache für das Sprechen ein. Ihr grundlegender Erfolg ist die von den Sätzen geregelte Abteilerung der Explikationsprodukte in Portionen durch Darstellung in Sprüchen. (Schmitz 2012, 218 f.)<sup>201</sup>

According to Schmitz (2017, 14), sentence-like speech enables us to 'break free from the captivity' of situations that schematically control our behavior. By isolating meanings and linking them to constellations, students can form their own point of view and emancipate themselves from immaturity and subservience (cf. Schmitz 2017, 14-31), as propagated by the EU elites. The European Semester is intended to allow students to discover for themselves what Europe means to them emotionally. Then we can speak of *secondary epigenesis as Europeans*.<sup>202</sup>

In summary, Schmitz (2016, 50) states:

Satzförmige Rede ist ein doppelseitiges Zwischending, ein Schritt, der beim Leben aus primitiver Gegenwart ansetzt und zu dem hinüberführt, was ich gleich als Leben in entfalteter Gegenwart bestimmen werde. Im Verhältnis zu der Sprache, die sie verwendet, lebt sie aus primitiver Gegenwart, wie ich gerade gezeigt habe, im Verhältnis zu den Bedeutungen, die sie durch Gebrauch der Sprache aus Situationen expliziert und dann kombiniert, aber in entfalteter Gegenwart, im Umgang mit Einzelnem.<sup>203</sup>

## 7 Secondary epigenesis as Europeans

European plurilingualism is based on the attitude to life that a 'culture for the sake of freedom' (Christian Meier) is preserved in the European languages and the respective styles of Europeanization. The multifaceted, intertwined situations include implicit programmatic demands that must be re-experienced, explained, and discussed from generation to generation. Trust in this invaluable resource seems to be a 'red rag' for the EU elites because they have committed

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<sup>201</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'The main business, the specific business of speech consists in the explication (of individual meanings from situations with subsequent combination of the explicates) [...]. In explanation, the power of language comes into play for speaking. Its fundamental success is the division of the products of explanation into portions, regulated by sentences, through representation in sayings.'

<sup>202</sup> How this process is likely to develop among the participants in the study group at the beginning has been outlined elsewhere (Müller-Pelzer 2024, 83-135; 2021, 415-474).

<sup>203</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: 'Sentence-like speech is a double-sided intermediate stage, a step that starts from primitive present life and leads to what I will soon define as life in unfolded present. In relation to the language it uses, it lives from a primitive present, as I have just shown, in relation to the meanings it explicates from situations through the use of language and then combines, but in an unfolded present, in dealing with individuals.'

themselves to the ' affective attachment to the theme of power ' (Schmitz 2007, 2, 816-823): *We determine what Europe is!* (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2024, 43-82) Christian Meier (2012, 356), on the other hand, saw in the mentality of *not placing oneself at the service of power* (transl. W.M.-P.) the astonishing gift of the Greeks, which explains their openness to new ideas. In order to make it clear to what extent European plurilingualism implies a turning away from power as an ' affective magnet ',<sup>204</sup> numerous cross-references to ontology, epistemology, and anthropology have been woven into the considerations so far. They emphasize that the fixation on self-empowerment and world empowerment has alienated Europeans from their lives. Europe as a type of civilization had initially created incomparable conditions for humans to ' find themselves in their environment ' (Schmitz 2016, 9), but the philosophy that had prevailed since Plato had treated the achievements of Occidental civilization with contempt and, in certain respects, perverted them. Only by clearing away past transgressions is there now a chance to rehabilitate the involuntary experience of life. The MONTAIGNE program offers students the opportunity to understand themselves as Europeans and to create something new for themselves by growing into an unfamiliar European language and settling into the corresponding European style of life. This secondary epigenesis is not based on an intellectual process, but should, to do justice to the term, be a development that arises, for example, from the experiences of the European semester. Once students have learned to deal with tempting, dismissive, demanding, and sometimes overwhelming impressions in their destination country, they are prepared to become aware of surprising, confusing, inspiring, shocking, astonishing, or sympathetic impulses in the environment of their host university. This does not mean, however, that they should now be able to deal with them routinely. Thanks to their pathic openness, they have the ability to let themselves be affected, to resonate and go along with people who are primarily students, but who may also come from other social milieus, other age groups, or unknown ethnic groups. Based on the now familiar holistic processing of situations through 'corporeal intelligence' (Schmitz 2012, 213), students will approach the situation cautiously at the beginning of a conversation in order to get a feel for what they can expect.

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<sup>204</sup> Michel Foucault and Peter Sloterdijk have interpreted the figure of Diogenes of Sinope in this sense.

Students are questioners, not knowers, and want to learn from their conversation partners how they arrived at the attitude toward life that needs to be understood.<sup>205</sup> The linguistic level achieved by the students and the subjectively affecting aspects that have led to resonance play only a minor role here: what is decisive is the interaction of mutual, antagonistic incorporation, spontaneous adaptation to atmospheric modulations, and speech. Certain states of affairs, programs, and problems are tactfully touched upon, and the 'poetic explication' (Schmitz 2005 b, 54-55) of situations begins. In contrast, 'prosaic explication' means breaking down a situation in order to skim off relevant aspects as constellations and discard the rest; this is the level of analytical intelligence.

The term 'poetic explication' does not refer solely to the careful approach to understanding poetic texts. Rather, it also refers to an attitude in life in which one allows the respective situation to have an effect on oneself in order to process corporeal and atmospheric impressions holistically: The 'aura of significance' (Schmitz 2002, 26; 1997, 187), which accompanies situations, can only be understood in this way. "Hermeneutic intelligence" complements corporeal understanding in that the explanation of certain meanings remains discreet and takes the overall situation into account (cf. Schmitz 2005 b, 55). This will be essential because encounters between Europeans are associated with stressful, sometimes even traumatic, individual and collective experiences.<sup>206</sup> Above all, the different living conditions and existential background emotions prohibit the immediate use of highly abstract concepts when meeting, in the expectation of 'getting to the heart of the matter'.

In dieser Hinsicht neigt die hermeneutische Intelligenz zu sparsamer Explikation, bis dahin, dass die Explikation ganz entfallen kann und muss, um die Situation in ihrer Ganzheit sichtbar zu machen und ihr zu entsprechen. Dann genügen entweder Blicke, Schweigen, ein Händedruck, ja das sanfte Alleinlassen als

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<sup>205</sup> It is about understanding attitudes and positions: (1) Subjective attitudes: What is subjectively important to those addressed, what are they committed to and what are they opposed to: commitment to justice, sober calculation of utility and pleasure, thirst for adventure and dropout mentality, social advancement, professional success, profession as a means of earning a living vs. self-realization, etc.? (2) Attitudes that affect the relationship between the self and the world: winners vs. losers (top-down perspective), social power interests vs. self-organization (bottom-up perspective); spirit of contradiction vs. servility; defense/withdrawal/experience of alienation/emptiness vs. zest for action/new challenges, search for one's own path, etc. Accordingly, (3) one's own life can be assigned its own significance with regard to the past, present, and future: forgetting the past, fleeing from it, or preserving it; striving for the future, fending it off, or controlling it; savoring the present or viewing it as a stage for something greater or worse.

<sup>206</sup> This is where there is a point of contact with Bruno Maurer's intention: "mettre en avant des formes 'qui évitent les conflits et traduisent le respect de l'autre' ". Presentation of the book *Grammaire française du vivre-ensemble* in: *L'Unicope. Le magazine du campus* of the University of Lausanne (transl. W.M.-P.): 'promote forms ,that avoid conflict and convey respect for others'. <https://wp.unil.ch/uniscope/le-langage-cet-epouillage-social-essentiel/>

Träger neuer, nicht expliziter und doch eindringlicher Bedeutungen (Sachverhalte, Programme, Probleme), in denen die Situation abgefangen wird, und das hermeneutische Denken geht in das leibliche über [...]. (Schmitz 2010, 91)<sup>207</sup>

Consider, for example, the current war in Ukraine. These are diverse, intertwined collective situations. In addition, individual situations must be taken into account, because in there is hardly a family among the Russian and Ukrainian interlocutors that has not suffered war victims or indirect suffering. Hermeneutic tact is the basic prerequisite for even considering the possibility of mutual trust,<sup>208</sup> i.e., an emotional atmosphere that is not shaken even by dissent in the assessment of a situation or certain intentions. This requires time and opportunities (e.g., continued verbal and/or written exchanges) in which the attitudes of those involved, i.e., their handling of poignant emotions, can be revealed.<sup>209</sup>

Furthermore, this attitude must prove itself in the further course of communication, for example in the tactful limitation of excessive political reasoning, e.g., about everything that is going wrong in the EU and other countries, what abuses exist, what mistakes or crimes certain politicians should be held accountable for, and much more. In academic circles, the temptation to engage in a principled discussion of rights and values is no less great; here, there is a different danger of overlooking the life experience of the person you are talking to.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Transl. W.M.-P.: ' In this respect, hermeneutic intelligence tends toward economical explanation, to the point where explanation can and must be dispensed with entirely in order to reveal the situation in its entirety and respond to it appropriately. Then either glances, silence, a handshake, or even gently leaving someone alone are sufficient as carriers of new, non-explicit yet powerful meanings (facts, programs, problems) in which the situation is intercepted, and hermeneutic thinking merges into the corporeal [...]. - Here, we should also mention Trabant's plea for *educational plurilingualism* [germ. *bildende Mehrsprachigkeit*] and the artful speech of poets, which can become a bridging of understanding in some encounters. '

<sup>208</sup> This does not mean naive trust: ' Trust comes in two forms: as naive, self-evident trust and as carefully considered, acquired trust. ' (Schmitz 1993, 89; transl. W.M.-P.)

<sup>209</sup> Distinguishing trust from reliance, as Schmitz does, is reminiscent of the difference between functional plurilingualism, which is interested in constellations, and affective plurilingualism, which is focused on situations. In characterizing trust, Schmitz (1993, 88) emphasizes ' that it even resists a detailed breakdown of what is trusted into a structure of individual facts. Trust is holistic. [...] Those who truly trust do not list in detail what they rely on in accordance with their trust. On the other hand, those who merely rely on the functioning of a corporeal or social apparatus, e.g., the punctuality of the railroad, without trust being involved, would do well to clarify, piece by piece, which individual facts they want to rely on. ' In the present context, however, it must be pointed out that the initiation of an inter-European exchange involves trust in the integrity of the European spirit (see above 86, note 116). This does not refer to personality as a whole (personal situation according to Schmitz 1997, 47-65), but rather to the confidence that the European spirit is protected from regression by a resilient framework.

<sup>210</sup> The alienation from the European model of civilization has progressed. In sociological terms, this is referred to as ' loss experiences ' (cf. Reckwitz 2024): the discourse of progress can no longer cover up the self-inflicted global crises. Others have made moral appeals about what needs to be done (cf. Hessel 2011). In addition, interdisciplinary scientists with a sociological orientation have come together to recommend the concept of convivialism (cf. Adloff/Leggewie 2014; Adloff/Heins 2015). Ecologically committed academics, for their part, are calling for a

One of the tasks of the supervising educational team is to point out that discussions in which known but also unknown sensitive issues are 'touched upon' do not proceed according to a script. There is also a risk that those involved will imperceptibly fall back into the mode of exchanging 'information' or trying to agree on 'facts': This can very quickly end in fruitless dissent, because discussions of this kind are often based on implicit, rigid preconceptions.<sup>211</sup> In contrast, based on coaching situations that have been tried out during the European semester, students should refine their sensitivity so as not to overlook occasions for incorporation. The task of young Europeans is to dissolve the differences and discrepancies that have become entrenched through historical developments and can hinder mutual understanding during their encounters during the European Semester.

Cultural scientists who often operate at a high level of abstraction and use specialized terminology might doubt that it is possible to use corporeal intelligence, hermeneutic experience, and carefully explicit cultural discourse to break down complex barriers between peoples based on traumatic experiences and ideological or religious differences. For example, there is a widespread assumption in the West that European culture is reaching its limits in countries where Islam has been present for centuries, especially in Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Albania. This view is likely to be influenced by the widespread presence of the Catholic, Protestant, and Russian-Greek or autocephalous Orthodox churches, which (France being a special case) have often penetrated deeply into social structures. To

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departure from the growth dogma of postmodern capitalism (cf. Jackson 2011; Latouche 2015; Paech<sup>8</sup> 2014; Schmelzer/Passadakis 2011; Sommer/Welzer 2014). This is accompanied by criticism from economic ethics, which diagnoses the hopelessness of 'finding personal meaning under conditions of self-assertion in competition' (Ulrich<sup>4</sup> 2008, 236-244): 'Therefore, as long as no limits are set on it, the <free market> is not merely a form of economy, but tends to be a *form of society*. Namely, that of a total market society that tends to subjugate all cultural lifestyles.' (Ulrich<sup>4</sup> 2008, 240; emphasis in the original text) These and similar ideas converge in the insight that the necessary change in the status quo can only succeed if the (predominant Western) view of the self and the world, as it is currently taken for granted, is revised and placed on a new, 'life-serving' (Ulrich: germ. *lebensdienlich*) foundation. However, the proposals made so far draw on modern philosophical and/or economic teachings that do not deconstruct philosophical tradition radically enough and lead to further, intellectually one-sided top-down proposals; technocratic solutions are then the obvious choice. (All transl. W.M.-P.)

<sup>211</sup> For the questioning methodology, see Großheim et al. (2024 b). The following simplified key points can give students an initial idea of the procedure. What type of conversation is it: first encounter, deepening, problematic situation, expansion of what has been achieved? Under what circumstances does the conversation take place: spontaneous, planned, available time? Are the expectations of the conversation known on both sides: unknown, presumed, on one side, on both sides, informative, advisory, polemical? What register is used: confidential, informal, formal? What impression do the participants have of each other before the conversation? Does the impression that the other person makes change during the conversation: reserved, friendly, attentive, engaging, brusque, emotional? If so, how?

understand that it would be wrong to adopt this perspective for the regeneration of the European type of civilization advocated here, we need to take a step back. As a starting point, it is useful to take a look at the recent past of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Southeast Europe (cf. Neumann 2020; 2021).

Students who may come into contact with conversation partners from Eastern, Central Eastern, or Southeastern Europe during their semester in Europe will learn about the formation of the current nation states, which took place between the end of the First World War and 1945. The states that emerged as a result, whose borders were sometimes drawn arbitrarily, have to cope with both the loss of people who speak their own language and with sections of the population who speak minority languages, in some cases those of neighboring states, and/or have different cultural roots. It is therefore quite possible that students may find themselves talking to someone who speaks the majority language of the host country but belongs to an ethnic group with its own language and/or culture.

Therefore, the expectation that encounters may lead to subjectively affecting experiences, even to the point of evidence: *This is part of who I am!*, should not lead to overlooking the contrasting diversity of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious affiliations. Properly understood, however, this point is not a limitation of the aforementioned expectation, because it is always a *subjective experience* and not an objective fact that would occur with a certain statistical probability.<sup>212</sup> A distinction must be made between the social conditioning that one undergoes, so to speak, and the intellectual and spiritual conditioning of the mentality that young Europeans are beginning to develop. Consider, for example, the gap between secular-rationalist influences on the one hand and religious-spiritual influences on the other: In the first case, a rough distinction can be made between traditional utilitarian, power- and market-oriented, enlightened freethinking, and class-struggle milieus; in the second case, one can think of the broad spectrum between Christian Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, and Free Church milieus, Jewish and Muslim milieus, and mystical-speculative milieus.

However, this level of analysis is still too high for an assessment of the extent to which collective background emotions that refer to the European type of civilization can be felt. A brief look

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<sup>212</sup> In any case, it should not be forgotten that certain social and cultural milieus in one's own country of origin may also be perceived as foreign and inaccessible on a permanent basis.

at the conditions under which the Occidental type of civilization emerged reveals which factors should be given priority.

This type developed against the backdrop of a diverse ancient Greek popular religiosity and mystery cults. With the establishment of self-determining *poleis*, a public religiosity with communal rites emerged, but – and this is the decisive criterion – without an established, politically influential priestly caste that could have become a power factor in the city-state (cf. Meier 2012, 114; 136). In addition, traditional forms of piety remained in place. The priesthood of the numerous oracles (most famously in Delphi) remained, in modern terms, something like external political and life counseling. With the late Roman phase, in which Christianity entered the political arena as a supporting force, began a period lasting almost 2000 years in which religious groups organized themselves in the form of associations in order to exercise power as political actors. To this day, religious organizations continue to exert influence in as many key areas of society as possible through their church officials and lobbyists, in some cases with resounding success (e.g., Germany). The less power clerical officials have, the less control they generally have over individuals, because adherence to traditional rituals is in most cases an expression of the claim to power of a religious organization that presents itself as divine authority.<sup>213</sup>

It is not easy for European students to distinguish between this striving for power and the existential – religious or ideological – attitude of their counterparts in the individual case: Depending on their first impression, the respective habitus, including practiced rituals, could raise doubts: Do I perceive this as foreign, disturbing, archaic, atavistic, etc., or as curious, outdated, meaningless, ridiculous, etc.? It suffices to refer to the criticism of 'halved' empiricism and the reductive restriction to constellations discussed in chapter 4 to understand that the objectivist, reductive view also leads to distortions in the present case of ethnicity, religion/denomination, culture, and language. As with the differentiation between functional plurilingualism and affective plurilingualism, a distinction must also be made between the functional, politically motivated definition of ethnicity and the lived, affectively significant ethnic origin. The same applies to the differentiation between functional, objectifiable religiosity, which serves the interests of an organization, and the affectively significant experience of religious attachment; and finally,

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<sup>213</sup> It is symptomatic that all religious organizations intervene in children's lives as early as possible with the intention to create irreversible facts. One need only think of Luther's opportunistic shift from New Testament adult baptism to infant baptism.

to the differentiation between functional culture, e.g., national culture, and affectively significant culture, e.g., culture transmitted within the family. A vivid example of this are marriages that ignore linguistic, ethnic, religious, and cultural differences, provided that the connections are deeply rooted in affect. Functional aspects of everyday life are then irrelevant for partnership-based cohabitation because the emotional feeling of love, in this case partnership-based love, melts the relative identities into the affective involvement of mutual incorporation (cf. Schmitz 2016 a, 63). Compared to the individual development of the personal situation, this is therefore the opposite perspective: Instead of the freedom to have relative identities, to be this and that and, as it were, to ' explore what is possible ' (Schmitz 2018, 39), the relative identity of the partners fades in the case of a moving, undirected emotion by sinking into the ' primitive present ', in which there are still no categorical distinctions: "In der primitiven Gegenwart ist nichts einzeln. "(Schmitz 2016 a, 251; transl. W.M.-P.: ' In the primitive present, nothing is separate. ') "Alles, was die Einleibung erreicht, wird dadurch mit absoluter Identität belehnt. " (Schmitz 2016 a, 215: 'Everything that achieves incorporation is thereby endowed with absolute identity. ') Schmitz calls the resulting relation an ' indivisible relation ' (Schmitz 2016 a, 107-118: „unspaltbares Verhältnis“), to which one is, as it were, ' at the mercy' (Schmitz 2019, 49: "gewissermaßen ausgeliefert").<sup>214</sup>

From these considerations, it can be concluded that the deontological emotions emanating from the European type of civilization cannot come into conflict with different *relative* identities and the corresponding social interests (linguistic, ethnic, religious, and cultural): This example can serve to illustrate the relation that is at the heart of this exposé: European plurilingualism was introduced as an affective relation with the fictional saying: *That belongs to me!* It is now clear that this thesis is based on an ontological foundation: **the ' indivisible relation ' between the situated language and the affectively involved speaker.**

Since this is a pre-reflexive experience, the forms of organization that make language, ethnicity, religion, and culture socially manageable play no role: their discourses of power, which come top-down do not affect corporeal evidence. The European type of civilization, provisionally condensed in the three sayings quoted above, even turns out, in a surprising twist, to be a

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<sup>214</sup> In contrast, relationships are distributed across two poles, i.e., they are directed in each case.

protective authority against inappropriate claims to power. Therefore, conflict with organizations that want to control people in the interest of securing and expanding power is inevitable.

At the beginning, two questions were quoted that Paul Stock had formulated in 2018 as a task for politicians and citizens: *What kind of European do I want to be? How do we want to live together in the future?* Caught up in the perspective of power politics, the EU elites prove to be unresponsive: they are interested in maintaining their ideological monopoly on the interpretation of what Europe is in political terms. The affective involvement into the atmospherically felt nomos of the European type of civilization and its possible consequences for the coexistence of Europeans do not feature in this narrow field of vision. This gives rise to an obligation for the MONTAIGNE program to offer European students a platform for the free discussion of vital issues, which has been lacking until now. The introduction to affective plurilingualism may prove to be a suitable way to experience, together with other Europeans, the emergence of common atmospheres that refer to Europe. The program of the *convergence herméneutique* of different styles of Europeanization is thus driven by questions that are not only being asked by European students today:

*What does my heart depend on? What should I warmly commit myself to, and what should I oppose? What is worth living for?*

The theme of the European type of civilization is the human being who – based on involuntary life experience and self-reflection on one's own possibilities and duties – can lead a fulfilled life with his or her peers. Thanks to the secondary epigenesis, the experience of European students 'feeling at home' in another European culture and language (and perhaps even more) can be described as an example of what Schmitz (2018, 84) calls "Verankerung des Lebenswillens in der Gegenwart" ('anchoring the will to live in the present').<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Schmitz (ibid.) mentions 'love, both as romantic love and as charitable love,' the latter as exemplified by Mme Guyon.

## Epilogue

When taking stock of the findings of this study, both analytical and practical aspects must be considered.

Based on New Phenomenology, European plurilingualism as a subjective experience is distinguished from the prevailing understanding of plurilingualism: European languages are close to Europeans because they convey something meaningful about their shared life, provided that alienation from the European type of civilization is overcome. Growing into an unfamiliar European neighboring language then becomes an encounter with a 'brother language' or 'sister language', as Jürgen Trabant (most recently in 2020) aptly put it. Resonating and going along with the emotional atmospheres that arise in the process includes shared (and jointly tested) deontological emotions, which guide a *convergence herméneutique* of different styles of Europeanization.

This analytical clarification allows practical conclusions to be drawn. New Phenomenology, which sees itself as a contribution to the 'rehabilitation of life experience' (Hermann Schmitz), provides – after an incomparable critical parcours – the conceptual tools for implementing the new insights. The MONTAIGNE student exchange program is intended to exemplify how students can become Europeans through a process of *secondary epigenesis* by growing into an unfamiliar European language.

The design of the concept (cf. Müller-Pelzer 2021) is based on many years of experience with student exchanges. In addition, the critical reconstruction of relevant factors of the present has brought to light insights that can contribute to the success of the program.

The need to reject the *winner-loser* ideology is based on the experience of *neocolonialist crudeness*, with which, behind a smokescreen of alleged practical constraints (competitiveness) and ideological set pieces (freedom, human rights), global English and one-sided quantitative thinking are being imposed on Europe: European languages (along with the constantly evolving scientific, literary, and philosophical European literatures) are thrown away as 'useless'; the Europeanization styles that embed them, now trimmed down to 'commodified' constellations, are exhibited as a 'beautiful corpse' in the museum of cultures. This practice reveals the

asymmetrical power constellation between a center of power and the periphery, which, in the context of the area under discussion here, must be described as cultural neocolonialism. As a result, the ability to reflect on oneself (germ. *sich auf sich selbst besinnen*) falls by the wayside. Bruno Maurer's comment seems to me to fit here: "Ce qui me frappe dans la société actuelle, c'est l'émergence de types de discours simplificateurs, des discours de la peur, qui transforment le rapport à la citoyenneté. Car la peur, c'est l'obéissance, l'abandon de l'esprit critique."<sup>216</sup>

Freeing themselves from subservience and reflecting on themselves gives European students the opportunity to develop a sense of deontological norms that arise from the newly accessible, shared European attitude to life. Then the siren song of dynamism may lose its irresistible power: yesterday it was globalization, today it is digitalization, and tomorrow it will be artificial intelligence, on which 'all our futures' supposedly depend. But the neocolonialist EU is wary of guaranteeing that its economic model will not further accelerate the impending collapse of the biosphere. Since the emotional attachment to the issue of power is now visibly and tangibly eating away at the foundations of communal life, the EU elites have no choice but to ignore the consequences. Unlike the previous European Communities, the current European Union owes today's and future generations an answer to the question: *What is worth living for?* Even the simplistic argument that *there is no alternative* no longer holds water: by moving away from external control and starting from new implanting situations, it is already possible today – as exemplified by European students – to discover unknown ways of realizing a fulfilled life in the European environment without the prospect of gaining power.

With secondary epigenesis as Europeans, any interference of political interests in the discussion of *how we want to live together in the future* is rejected. Conversely, any consideration of getting involved in day-to-day political debates must be rejected because it is the bait offer of the hostile arena of power. For the students addressed here, the temptation of power should lose its appeal: thanks to the experience of the European semester, the affective anchoring of the will to live in a fulfilling present can ensure that students develop the need to deepen their proven corporeal-hermeneutic and linguistic-analytical understanding. Sensitivity to a more familiar language is

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<sup>216</sup> 'What strikes me in today's society is the emergence of simplistic types of discourse, discourses of fear, which transform the relationship to citizenship. For fear means obedience, the abandonment of critical thinking.' Translated from the presentation of the book *Grammaire française du vivre-ensemble*. In: *L'Unicope. Le magazine du campus de l'Université de Lausanne*. <https://wp.unil.ch/uniscope/le-langage-cet-epouillage-social-essentiel/>

likely to arouse interest in linguistic repertoires and registers, including cultural spaces and European diachrony. Students can supplement the European semester, e.g., with an internship in the country, or possibly follow it up with a semester of study at a partner university and join a network of Europeans who, by virtue of the secondary epigenesis as Europeans, are dedicated to create new situations of hermeneutic convergence between the surrounding styles of Europeanization.<sup>217</sup>

Leaving behind the *plus ultra* of dynamistic transgression and the capriciousness of autistic transgression can be broken down into three practical steps, analogous to the three ancient maxims:

*Discovering self-discipline:* The *winner-loser* ideology breeds an unfounded gambling mentality. Gaining power over others, but also submitting to it depending on the situation, obscures the opportunity offered by the European type of civilization to reflect on oneself. The MONTAIGNE program can counteract that mentality.

*Growing into an unfamiliar European language, settling into an unfamiliar European style:* affective plurilingualism creates the conditions for becoming sensitive to the deontological feelings of the European *nomos*. Mediators are not necessary for this.

*Creating new implanting situations:* in the case of inter-European speakers, the personal situation finds its footing in the shared practice of *convergence herméneutique* of different styles of Europeanization and their inexhaustible cultural potential.

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<sup>217</sup> For further information, see Müller-Pelzer 2021, 415-474; also 2024, chap. 3.

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