

Creating a 'Union in Diversity': European Identity in Twentieth Century Narratives of Travel

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In *Europe: An Unfinished Adventure*, Zygmunt Bauman demonstrates that “Europe is not something you discover; Europe is a mission—something to be made, created, built.” Spanning the twentieth century, the narratives of travel of Paul Morand, Stefan Zweig, Primo Levi and Paul Theroux play a key role in this process of European identity construction. These four authors promote a forward-thinking and inclusive conceptualization of Europe—and the relationship between nation, language, and identity—through largely autobiographical narratives that detail travel within Europe, enforced or otherwise. Drawing on the work of European thinkers such as Zygmunt Bauman, Jürgen Habermas, Jacques Derrida, Roberto Dainotto, Amin Maalouf and E.J. Hobsbawm, this dissertation demonstrates to what extent all four authors show their readers that the importance given to national borders can be subverted through both multilingualism and the motion of travel, in which these arbitrary lines on the map are crossed by the travelers in question. In accordance with the renowned pacifist Romain Rolland—who believed that national and European identity were not ‘mutually exclusive’ affinities—these four authors use their narratives to promote a sense of European or supranational identity. This is achieved through urging of their readership to rethink their relationship with their nation as part of a collective European whole, and to perceive diversity as being not Europe’s weakness, but rather its greatest strength. This work demonstrates how it is through valuable cultural productions, such as these narratives of travel, that Europeans are exposed to an alternative and more inclusive mode for identity construction, which triumphantly forwards what Ulrich Beck describes as “a Europe that helps diversity to flourish.”