14. Bridge and Border – Queering Europe

The crisis of Europe – of the economy, of the Euro, of migration, of terrorism – can lead to simple and crude thinking: I instead of the others, identity instead of plurality, nation instead of federation, exclusion instead of inclusion, friend against foe. Federal Europe is a federation of nation states with nation-state thinking and the claim to appear sovereign as a community to the outside world and, at times of crisis, to each other. The contradiction of nation and federation structurally underlies the European Union both internally and externally – in its organisational form, in the spectre of a monstrous European bureaucracy repeatedly stoked by national politicians, and in the general opinion of the European populations.

In the face of the nationalist 19th and 20th centuries, of catastrophic wars and genocides, a European peaceful federation seems something entirely new. It is easy to overlook the long history of a kind of European federalism in the shape of the Holy Roman Empire from the 10th century until its dissolution in 1806 during the Napoleonic Wars. A largely peaceful federal structure, a heritage that should encourage us in our efforts to live together peacefully in Europe.

I would like to discuss two aspects in the following: firstly, what does it mean to return to the simple and crude thinking of nationalism? What does it consist of? I start from the assumption that, like all thinking, this is based on figurative ideas and can therefore be analysed through an examination of these images. Conversely, this means that thinking of federalism, which I would like to call complex thinking, is also based on figurative ideas and metaphors and can accordingly be described more precisely. The question is therefore, to what extent is this thinking developed in its figurativeness?

Secondly, I would like to further illuminate federal thinking as complex thinking, as found in a few federalist thinkers such as Hannah Arendt or Denis de Rougemont. To answer the question of how this complexity can be preserved and made more clearly visual and conceptualised in order to mitigate the structural contradiction of nation and federation, I would like to draw on Cynthia Weber's study *Queer International Relations*.[1] My thesis is that this contradiction will only be mitigated if

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1   Cynthia Weber: *Queer International Relations*, Oxford University Press 2016.

the recognition of diversity is advanced, if the metaphors of the bridge as a linear connection of European citizens and the border as inclusion and exclusion are replaced by a Queering of Europe. Only a queer way of thinking of the And/Or instead of the Either/Or will do justice to the essence of a federal plurality that has yet to unfold.

To this end, I will first briefly address the issues of imagery, then name various federal ways of thinking and finally present the thesis of a Queering Europe.

Making an image / a concept – deconstructing the concept

The linguistic engagement with reality is inescapably linked to the use of images and metaphors. Not only do we "get a picture" of a certain situation, e.g. the refugees in the winter of 2015/16 who crossed European borders, but we also perceive reality from a certain perspective. The Gestalt psychologist Kurt Lewin pointed out how differently a farmer and a (presumably urban) walker perceive the same landscape. The one as a working field, the other as an aesthetic field. Their perspectives shape their perception of reality (and, as prejudices, influence the judgements based on them).[2] Refugees who are crossing the borders for months on end can, depending on the viewer's perspective, be seen as a wave, a torrent, an invasion and a mass of faceless individuals, or as uprooted individuals in need of protection, as people with faces marked by their experiences. It is the change of perspective, the consideration of many perspectives, that Kant and Arendt declare to be the condition of reasonable judgement, in order to escape prejudice, the reduced view of the world through a single perspective, and to come as close as possible to factual reality. What is given short shrift in the discussion of this enlarged power of judgement is the interplay with the emotional world in which the images are embedded. Those who are already afraid of strangers see the arriving refugees as a supposedly hostile mass. The reduction of fear and a change of image accompany each other, but they can also increase to hysteria and hatred of all foreigners and their supporters in politics and civil society. Whoever then, contrary to expectations, gets to know one of these strangers as a person with a face and a destiny, initially tries to integrate them into their own image world as an exception.

In his study "Fictional expectations and the crisis of contemporary capitalism" Jens Beckert describes the extent to which these images generally guide action, including in the economy. He characterises entrepreneurial action as the "formation of ideas of future relations", on which actors base their behaviour as if these actually described causal relationships, noting that according to Niklas Luhmann, represen-

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2   Kurt Lewin Kriegslandschaft (1917). *Gestalt Theory*, vol. 31, no. 3–4, 2009, pp. 253–262.

tations of the future involve a "doubling of reality."[3] This is a process that also applies to politics, in which the lie, according to Arendt, also occasionally appears particularly attractive to actors as an instrument of fictional expectations.

The metaphor of language, according to Gadamer, precedes conceptuality and takes over its leadership.[4] But only when the image is transformed into a conceptuality – the body of the people, the do-gooders, the lying press – does the fleeting figurative impression stick, transformed into a stable image. Similarly, in a different context, Arendt regretted that the discussion on the formation of the United States of America did not lead to a conceptual version of the new form of government, despite the debate of the founding fathers in the Federalist Papers. "For if it is true that all thought begins with remembrance, it is also true that no remembrance remains secure unless it is condensed and distilled into a framework of conceptual notions within which it can further exercise itself."[5]

In times of crisis, complex ways of thinking seem to offer many people no security. Simple, clear and quick solutions are demanded, whose mental foundations are dichotomously based on pairs of opposites and offer clear alternatives: us or them, friend or foe, sovereignty or foreign determination. According to Rudolf Stichweh, the foreign is already spoken of "where no secure routines of processing and dealing with them are available".[6] The fact that this initial uncertainty leads so quickly to dichotomous thinking is also related to the logocentrism Derrida criticised, which is based on categorical distinctions such as cause and effect, either/or, health and illness, man and woman, day and night – thinking that we take so much for granted that a critique of it seems like questioning thinking itself. There is practically no research on the question of the dangers of dichotomous thinking, what alternatives there might be to it, and whether there is a federalist way of thinking as opposed to a nationalist way of thinking.

In contrast to dichotomous or dyadic thinking, however, there are a plethora of triadic concepts that contradict the dyads in such a way that the focus is not on separation but on the mutual relation of the elements to one another – the three political powers that reinforce and at the same time control each other. To name a few: the judge or moderator and the two parties to a dispute; perpetrator, victim and bystander; liberty, equality and fraternity; politics, economics and civil society; spirit, body and soul in the Bible; Hegel's thesis, antithesis and synthesis; Arendt's

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3   Jens Beckert: Fictional expectations and the crisis of contemporary capitalism, economic sociology. perspectives and conversations, in: *Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2016, p. 40. See also Jens Beckert: *Imagined Futures. Fictional Expectations and Capitalist Dynamics*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press 2016.

4   Hans-Georg Gadamer *Kleine Schriften I, Philosophie, Hermeneutik*, Tübingen Mohr (Siebeck) 1967.

5   Hannah Arendt: *On Revolution*, New York: Penguin 2006, p. 220.

6   Rudolf Stichweh *Der Fremde. Studien zu Soziologie und Sozialgeschichte*, Berlin Suhrkamp 2010.

description of activities as working, making and doing; the Christian doctrine of the Trinity; or sun, moon and stars. Arendt's beautiful image: "Love burns, pierces like lightning the between, that is, the world-space, between people. This is only possible with two people. If the third person joins in, space is immediately restored"[7], makes the difference between individuality, duality and plurality clear. In all triads, distinction takes place, but not an exclusionary opposition. The triad creates common places and common components, a plurality of independent magnitudes that only acquire their magnitude in the entanglement with each other. Hence Arendt's distinction between plurality and duality in relation to action; in the latter, both doers of good works and criminals act precisely in non-public ways, not with others but for or against them, respectively.[8] Unlike triads that seek to level differences, such as the conflation of "one people, one realm, one leader", or Carl Schmitt's mere juxtaposition of aesthetics, morality and politics to assert the opposition of friend and foe as the field of "the political" in analogy to the dyads Beautiful and Ugly and Good and Evil. These triads actually serve dyadic thinking.

As important as it is to transform images into concepts, it is no less important to deconstruct concepts in order to uncover their temporality. Since the studies of Benedict Anderson and others, we have known about the historical conditionality of the modern concept of the nation, an enormously effective narrative which, with a corresponding historicism created in the 19th century, gave the nation a veneer of inevitability and immutability. This included the fusion of nation, people, language and culture with the help of symbols, songs and narratives, which shaped the ideas and conceptualisations in such a lasting way that even today, after 60 years of federalisation efforts in Europe, the constitutional separation of *ethnos* and *demos*, politics and culture as well as state and nation is blurred again and again. People continue to think in terms of the nation, and federalism is hardly "understood".

Is there a federalist mindset?

Before I address this question following the reflections on triadic thinking, I would like to take a brief look at the iconography of Europe and the European Union. Is it capable of placing its own narratives and symbols alongside the heroic figures and symbols of the nation states, such as Marianne or Germania, the Field of Blackbirds, or Andreas Hofer, and historicising them? If it is true that our judgements and actions are guided by an image-constructing perception of reality, then what do we see when we speak of Europe, to what extent is this seeing shaped in a federal way, and could a different terminology emerge from it rather than the fuzzy "Brussels".

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7   Hannah Arendt *Denktagebuch 1950–1973*, Munich Piper 2002, p. 372f. (Translated by WH)
8   Hannah Arendt: *The Human Condition*, New York: Doubleday 1958, p. 160.

Finding answers to these questions would be the task of a cultural-scientific-empirical investigation, which of course cannot be done here. Instead, I want to take a brief look at some images of Europe. First, that of the legendary *Rütli* oath in Switzerland, created at the end of the 15th century, with which the three cantons of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden concluded a covenant, a triad that stands at the origin of federal Switzerland.[9]

Figure 1

In the 16th century, the popular anthropomorphic image of Europe was in the form of a queen.[10] In the 17th century, among allegories, also the representation of the European countries as a group of persons by Charles Le Brun on the Grand *Staircase of Envoys* (1674–1678) in Versailles. In the 19th century, the unity of Europe faded with the differences and polemics of the nation states and was accordingly mainly represented by caricatures.

What iconography can we now expect from a cooperative, federal Europe? The depressing answer is nothing worth mentioning. The banknotes of the euro show gates and windows on the front and bridges on the back, each from a different period

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9   Edgar Bierende points to the triple number and its emphasis on the "harmonious unison, the equality of the allies" from the *Rütli* oath to the handshake of the "big three" at the Potsdam Conference in 1945. See Edgar Bierende Bündnis. In Uwe Fleckner / Martin Warnke / Hendrik Ziegler (eds.) *Handbuch der politischen Ikonographie*, vol. 1, Munich C. H. Beck 2011, pp. 193–200.

10   Dietrich Erben Anthropomorphe Europa-Karten des 16. Jahrhunderts. Medialität, Ikonographie und Formtypus, in Ingrid Baumgärtner / Martina Stercken (eds.) *Herrschaft verorten. Politische Kartographie des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, Zurich Chronos Verlag 2012, pp. 99–124.

of art history. According to this, Europe means mobility, not more. The scenes depicted are deserted, Europeans are absent. Do they exist at all? The cultural-historical objects look like museum pieces. Is a reference to the historical heritage enough?

The importance of figurative-symbolic narratives in the introduction of new ways of seeing political references and concepts is illustrated by the example of the concept of sovereignty. In his illuminating essay *"Wie die Jungfrau zum Staat kam"* (How the Virgin Came to the State), Thomas Maissen demonstrates that the new concept of state sovereignty initially met with unanimous rejection in the early modern period and could only be introduced gradually with the help of images that linked the new with the recognised old. A very popular Christian motif was used for this purpose: the Virgin Mary, in the midst of her *hortus conclusus* (enclosed garden), which had been depicted many times since the High Middle Ages. The state entity as a virgin. "Only those who can keep their political body intact are sovereign", is the message.[11] This was also true in the preservation of the independence of the Netherlands before the Peace of Westphalia, depicted in an engraving by Crispijn van de Passe Junior, in which a French and a Spanish nobleman vainly court Hollandia.

Figure 2

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11   Thomas Maissen Wie die Jungfrau zum Staat kam. In *Ruperto Carola* 1, 2006. http://www.uni-h eidelberg.de/presse/ruca/ruca06-1/wie.html. (11/1/2022). Also *Die Geburt der Republik Staatsverständnis und Repräsentation in der frühneuzeitlichen Eidgenossenschaft*, Göttingen Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht Verlag 2006.

The message here was: "The sovereign and neutral Netherlands does not get involved with the great powers – certainly not in a marriage"[12]. Europe is always a woman to be protected by men, to whom on one occasion a man like Louis XV presents peace in the form of an olive branch, and on another occasion the war of men so afflicts her that she is completely confused.

The emergence of the new European federalism of our time has nothing like this. In 2004, the year of the fifth and largest EU enlargement, the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas was commissioned by the EU to give it a "new face" ("The image of Europe"). The result was rather embarrassing: a circus tent in the European national colours, a barcode in the same colours as a proposal for a new European flag, and the design of an EU passport with lifeless icons in the style of the works of the logical positivist Otto Neurath of the 1920s, who invented symbolic forms for numbers and wordless signposts.[13]

In the absence of convincing figurative-metaphorical representations, we can only conclude that federalism is not "conceived". And indeed, there is no political-philosophical study of federalism that could rival and replace the validity of Bodin's or Hobbes' theories of sovereignty. This is not only due to the strong consensus that the theory of sovereignty still enjoys, but also to the insufficient development of a theory of federalism. It will only become strong if, like the theory of sovereignty, it is not only related to politics and the nation, but also encompasses the understanding of society and the individual. In the modern era, the sovereignty of the state corresponds to the autonomy of the subject; both are part of the basic equipment of a modern understanding of politics, the individual and science. In contrast, the theories of intersubjectivity have hardly been associated with federalism.

One possible way to overcome the European crisis and promote federalist thinking, along with institutional reform, is through a far-reaching and admittedly long-term change of perspective on human existence. What do we see when we look at Europe in terms of an imagined future?

Hannah Arendt's view is not against the autonomous subject and state sovereignty, rather her gaze goes in another direction, into a space shaped by the plurality of interdependent subjects, in who's active intersubjectivity political phenomena such as power, violence, freedom, or politics become visible. We find this active, interdependent plurality at all crucial points in her work and in her description of human existence – in individual thought and judgement, in the extended mode of thought and community of judgemental spectators, in political action, in the distinction between power and violence, and civil disobedience and

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12   Ibid.

13   Leila Hadji-Abdou, et al. *Europäische Bildpolitiken. Politische Bildanalyse am Beispiel der EU-Politik*, Stuttgart UTB 2009.

the exercise of conscience, in her reflections on a federal future for Israel and Palestine, in the abolition of any minority status in a federation, and in the description of the American founding fathers' path to the establishment of a republic based on the division of powers and a federal republic.

These elements and perspectives need to be developed further. What does the plurality of non-autonomous or non-sovereign subjects mean? Does it help them to act out of responsibility for the common concerns and existence of this space? What is the significance of Arendt's declaration against subjectivism and universalism in political judgement when she notes about the extended mode of thinking: "The validity of such judgements would be neither *objective* and universal, nor subjective, depending on personal whim, but intersubjective or *representative*"[14]? And on the state level: to what extent should the federation also be carried by a federal idea in foreign policy, aware of the dangers if the federation reverts to the old thinking of sovereignty in foreign policy and *vis-à-vis* its neighbours, rather than promoting, for example, a Mediterranean Union, as Arendt envisaged to resolve the tensions in the Middle East?[15]

In this context, it is also worth studying the writings of the Swiss federalist Denis de Rougemont and the Frenchman Alexandre Marc, who combine federalism with an ethic of personalism, personal responsibility, tolerance and preservation of differences, renunciation of hegemony and rejection of all forms of ideologies, love of complexity, a sense of paradox and far-reaching decentralisation of what they called an integral federalism based very much on subsidiarity.[16]

Helpful for the development of such an image of federalism is also the deconstruction of the image of the border as a place of inclusion and exclusion and the development of a new view, together with Derrida and others, of the border as a place of transition, and this not only in the sense of an illegal parallel world from the perspective of sovereignty but as a borderland from the perspective of federalism in a twofold sense, the changing physical border space in the duality of federalism of commonality and distinction and the place of thinking.[17]

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14   Hannah Arendt: Some Questions of Moral Philosophy, in: *Responsibility and Judgment*, New York: Schocken 2003, p. 141.

15   Hannah Arendt: Can the Jewish-Arab Question be Solved? In: *The Jewish Writings*, New York: Schocken 2007, pp. 193–198.

16   Bruno Ackermann: *Denis de Rougemont. De la personne à l'Europe*, Lausanne: L'Âge d'homme 2000.

17   Cf. Gloria Anzaldúa: *Borderlands: the new mestiza = La frontera*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books 1987. Jacques Derrida: *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1992.

Derrida was not a thinker of federalism, but his rejection of thinking in identities is essential to federalist thinking.[18] It is only surpassed by a complete absence of identities in Chinese thought, which François Jullien has elaborated in his juxtapositions of classical Chinese and Greek philosophers. With so called "diversions via China", Jullien wants to offer a far-reaching change of perspective, which as de-territorialisation creates the necessary distance to be able to look at the "unthought", i.e. the unreflected presuppositions of European philosophical thought and thinking in general. In his comparison of classical Chinese and Greek thought, Jullien presents the divergent, not the different, which would only lead us to new determinations of identity. It would be paradoxical to "identify" the deviant in Chinese thought as identities analogous to our concepts of heaven and earth, subject and object, health and disease. These concepts have no identity in Chinese, but are entangled in indissoluble interrelations and processes of change and can only be "grasped" in this way.[19]

An example of how these opposites are intertwined in Chinese thought can be found in Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* in the poetic-philosophical description of the constitutive role of nothingness for the function of objects:

> Though thirty spokes may form the wheel,
> it is the hole within the hub
> which gives the wheel utility.
> It is not the clay the potter throws,
> which gives the pot its usefulness,
> but the space within the shape,
> from which the pot is made.
> Without a door, the room cannot be entered,
> and without windows it is dark.
> Such is the utility of non-existence.[20]

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18   "What is proper to a culture is not to be identical to itself." (Derrida: *The Other Heading*, op. cit., p. 19 Marquard's sceptical philosophy is also based on a division of powers in politics and similarly on a plurality of generality claims, history(s), coincidences and determinisms. Cf. Odo Marquard Sola divisione individuum. Betrachtungen über Individuum und Gewaltenteilung. In *Individuum und Gewaltenteilung. Philosophische Studien*. Stuttgart Reclam 2004, pp. 68–90. – Also Lob des Polytheismus, in *Abschied vom Prinzipiellen*, Stuttgart Reclam 1981, pp. 91–116.

19   François Jullien Hinterfragen wir – ausgehend von der Exterritorialität des Chinesischen – erneut die europäische Entstehung des Politischen. In *Kommune*, 1, 2001, pp. v–xii. – On Chinese philosophy see Lutz Geldsetzer / Hong Han-ding *Grundlagen der chinesischen Philosophie*. Stuttgart: Reclam 1998.

20   Lao Tzu: *Tao Te Ching*, New York: *Penguin* 1963. Lin Yutang (trans), chapter 11: The Utility of Non-existence.

In classical Chinese thought, there are no a priori entities such as the true, the good and the just, virtue and will, which inspire what Jullien calls model formations with ideal forms on which, as in Europe since Plato, "the political" is founded. Taking a look at this divergent view, which consists in regulation instead of modelling and ritual instead of law, could open up a far-reaching critical discussion of self-evident entities in politics and political science. Hannah Arendt, in her own way, defined political concepts as phenomena rather than identities, phenomena that arise exclusively in interpersonal relations. An example is her study *On Violence*, in which she dissolved two such supposed entities and re-described them in their transitions.[21] Arendt was in the European intellectual tradition, but she was unmistakably involved in its deconstruction.

Today, according to Jullien, thinking in models and entities is declining in Europe, which is largely free of discourses, constructions and beliefs, i.e. rather unnoticed, and creates space for two things: for a critical reflection on this history of ideas and ideals and, secondly, for preserving what is helpful in the sense of tracking down resources in a world that is no longer about creating cultural identities.[22]

Queering Europe

We have seen how federalism and federalist thinking stand in opposition to sovereignty and identity and how an institutional-political establishment of federalism alone cannot overcome a way of thinking about identity and sovereignty that is also related to the individual. The British political scientist Cynthia Weber offers reflections on a queering of the field of international relations that are very interesting for federalist thinking, especially at the level of narration, imagery and conceptualisation.[23]

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21   Cf. e.g.: "Textbook instructions on 'how to make a revolution' in a step-by-step progression from dissent to conspiracy, from resistance to armed uprising, are all based on the mistaken notion that revolutions are 'made'. In a contest of violence against violence the superiority of the government has always been absolute; but this superiority lasts only as long as the power structure of the government is intact – that is, as long as commands are obeyed and the army or police forces are prepared to use their weapons. When this is no longer the case, the situation changes abruptly. Not only is the rebellion not put down, but the arms themselves change hands – sometimes, as in the Hungarian revolution, within a few hours." (Hannah Arendt: *On Violence*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1969, p. 48)

22   François Jullien: *Il n'y a pas d'identité culturelle*, Paris: Éd. de l'Herne, 2016.

23   Cynthia Weber: Queer International Relations. From Queer to Queer IR. In: *International Studies Review*, 6, 2014, pp. 596–622. Also: *Queer International Relations*, Oxford University Press 2016.

Queer means the deviation of persons, actions and things from the norm and is used today primarily to designate an unfinished diversity of different forms of sexual orientation. Common to this diversity is the rejection of heteronormative labels and identity ascriptions, the freedom of self-determination and self-designation, and equal rights.

From this perspective, it follows from the traditional view that "statecraft is mancraft"[24]. Not only have all political terms been defined from a traditional masculine perspective, but are at the same time based on sovereignty, regardless of whether they are terms as such as state, nationalism, intervention, hegemony and empire, or mutually exclusive pairs of opposites such as civilisation or barbarism, security or danger, peace or war, national or international, and order or anarchy. With the interpretive sovereignty through mancraft and the methodological and dichotomous 'either/or', a double exclusion of all possible other forms of politics and relations takes place.

Queer scholarship does not counter these definitions with its own definitions of identity, but describes how power dominates gender and sexuality in terms of their normalisation and perversion, how, according to Weber, the creation of sexualised orders of international relations is based on a developmental biological understanding whose foundations include notions of race, disability, classification and gender, and which is accompanied by specific codifications and arrangements of time, space and desire.[25] Independent of Weber's investigation, we have already seen above the seemingly self-evident sexualisation of the concept of sovereignty in the early modern period.

The thesis that Weber plausibly unfolds states that the international relations of Europe or the West to the so-called developing countries resemble the national relations to homosexuals. There are countries capable of development and countries incapable of development and, analogously, homosexuals capable of development and perverted homosexuals, a view that was biologically asserted in the 19th century. For Freud, for example, homosexuality was an unfinished transitory stage. Today, as a matter of course, a similar distinction is made among migrants between desirable refugees and undesirable single men. The political homeland and the private home, the private family are, according to Weber, inseparable in the theoretical constructions of International Relations.

Can this queer deconstruction, only briefly outlined here, contribute to answering the question of how federalist thinking can overcome an inherent nationalism and how a narrative can emerge for this purpose? The strength of queer critiques lies in the development of Derrida's deconstruction of identity, Foucault's critique of

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24   Cynthia Weber: Queer International Relations, op. cit. p. 96.
25   Ibid. In the e-book edition. pn.1439.

power, and feminism. The critique of previous notions of sex, gender, race, geopolitics, development and religious and secular authorities that emerges in the process affects political and private space alike. Arendt's political federalism, which removes the tension between minorities and majorities and ends the nation's control over the state, and her interpersonal federalism of shared acting and judging plurality come close to overcoming sovereignty and identity in queer critiques. The further convergence of the thinkers mentioned here would be very fruitful.

As for the narrative, Weber cites a wonderful narrative of a queer Europe with which I would like to finish: the winner of the 2014 Eurovision Song Contest Tom Neuwirth/Conchita Wurst, the bearded Austrian drag queen.

Figure 3

With Conchita (= little shell) and Wurst, Tom Neuwirth created an art figure with a sexualised name and the invented story of a Colombian woman who grew up with her father Alfred Knack von Wurst in Germany, thus also uniting the contradictions of development and being developed. Neuwirth/Wurst is/are border figures like the unwanted migrants, he/she/they "do not want to be one being or the other", but they are in the place of transgression, he/she/they transgress it and at the same time do not transgress it. His/her song *Rise Like a Phoenix* is highly symbolic. The images of

the controlled border and the bridge, often mentioned in the EU, do not apply here, because the border is an Either/Or and the bridge is an And, while the borderland as a state unites the And/Or.[26] This borderland concerns not only sexual orientation, but also race, geopolitics and the thinking of nothing/something. Weber explains, "The queer logic of statecraft allows us to assess how queer-plural figures can order, reorder, or disorder regional or international politics' singular understanding of sovereignty, on which these orders have depended since at least the Treaty of Westphalia."[27]

With Neuwirth/Wurst there is an image and a narrative whose meaning was immediately clear to everyone, and which was therefore immediately a matter of dispute. It is the deserted bridges on the euro banknotes that, after Neuwirth/Wurst's appearance, reveal that it is precisely here, at the crucial point, that emptiness reigns. It seems as if Europe should be reconstructed from Borderland, where Arendt, Derrida, Weber, Neuwirth/Wurst and Jullien, but also Camus and many other are at home. And from there, all the fields become visible in which the emancipatory idea of federalism is undermined in everyday practice.

Picture credits

The Rütli Oath. Woodcut. In Stumpf, Johannes Gemeiner loblicher Eydgnoschafft Stetten, Landen und Völckeren Chronick wirdiger Thaaten Beschreybung hierinn wirt auch die Gelegenheit der gantzen Europe, jtem ein kurtzvergriffne Chronica Germaniae oder Teütschlands, in sonders aber ein fleyssige Histori […]. Getruckt Zürych in der Eydgnoschafft bey Christoffel Froschouer, 1548. Zentralbibliothek Zürich, AW 40 1–2, https//doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-5076 / Public Domain Mark

Crispijn van de Passe. Publicity for the Dutch Virgin, ca. 1647. In Thomas Maissen Wie die Jungfrau zum Staat kam. In *Ruperto Carola* 1. 2006.

Conchita Wurst (Thomas Neuwirth), Dancing Stars on 21 March 2014. Wikimedia Commons (2022/11/27).

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26   In this context, Weber refers to the role of the and/or in Roland Barthes: *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 1976, and in: *S/Z: An Essay* (1975), New York: Hill and Wang 1975; "To miss the plurality of codes is to censor the work of the discourse: non-decidability defines a *praxis*, the performance of the narrator." (Roland Barthes: *S/Z*, p. 77) See also Barthes: The Androgyne, in: *The Neutral: Lecture Course at the Collège de France (1977–1978)*, New York: Columbia University Press 2005, pp. 186–195.

27   Cynthia Weber, op. cit., 3798.