

institutional context offers a fresh perspective for understanding the HRVP's role in navigating the complexities of the EU's foreign policy landscape. Moreover, the book's methodological depth is a standout feature. Notably, Helwig's use of 69 semi-structured expert interviews, conducted over 13 years, adds substantial empirical weight to his analysis.

That said, certain aspects could benefit from further development. While Helwig excels in analysing the HRVP's leadership within the EU's institutional framework, his focus on leadership adaptation occasionally overshadows the structural barriers that constrain the HRVP's effectiveness. Although the author acknowledges the "sovereignty reflex" of member states', referring to their tendency to prioritize national sovereignty over collective EU decision-making, a deeper examination of the persistent fragmentation and clashing national interests within the EU would have enriched the analysis (p. 5). This omission is particularly relevant given the EU's ongoing struggle to project a unified foreign policy voice. The book's theoretical contributions, while robust, could also have been further expanded. While role theory provides a solid foundation, engaging with alternative frameworks—such as constructivist or critical approaches—might have offered richer insights into power asymmetry and norm diffusion. Such perspectives could have deepened the analysis of the HRVP's influence on EU global identity and its ability to navigate an evolving international order.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the book provides a thoughtful exploration of a pivotal institution within the EU machinery. This book is particularly well suited for scholars and practitioners of European studies, International Relations and foreign policy analysis. It will also resonate with policy-makers and diplomats invested in the EU's evolving role as a global actor.

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Post-Europe. By Yuk Hui. Falmouth and New York: Urbanomic/Sequence Press. 2024. 144pp. Pb.: £13.99. ISBN 979 8 98542 351 8. Available as e-book.

In 1989, a mere six months before the fall of the Berlin Wall, German poet and essayist Hans Magnus Enzensberger published a travelogue-cum-pen portrait of the integrating continent. With as much acerbic wit as sympathy, he entitled it *Ach Europa!* [Europe, Europe!] (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1989)—the warmly exasperated sigh only barely conveyed in its English translation.

Ach Europa! would not do badly as the descriptor of a whole line of philosophical enquiry, across the twentieth century, that probed the character, promise and manifest crisis of modern Europe. This tradition was not only one of philosophical reckoning with the civilizational project of modern Europe, in thrall of empiricism, technology and material progress. It was also a critique of Europe's unrelenting Eurocentrism, the incomplete grappling with its own role in world history. Unsurprisingly, this tradition has so far sat in happy isolation from the theoretical and empirical analysis of Europe as a geographical, political or legal entity.

In this slim book, Yuk Hui engages with this (largely phenomenological) lineage, the title itself derived from a book by Jan Patočka. *Post-Europe* does not address the social, economic or democratic dilemmas arising in today's Europe. Nor does the ominous prefix in the title reflect a concern with an imminent end to the European Union. Rather, Yuk Hui offers an extended philosophical discussion of how to think about Europe today, in the context of globalization, capitalism and technological advance; in a world where Asia, rather than Europe, is ascendant.

In fact, the book's most original contribution is its substantive two-hander. Based on two lectures given in Taipei in 2022, Hui examines not only European thinkers but also leading Asian philosophers such as Kitaro Nishida, Keiki Nishitani and Mou Zongsan, as they critically engage with the notion of Europe, the question of Asia and the role of philosophy itself. At its core, Hui's argument is not so much an examination of the inevitably ideological constructions of Europe *vis-à-vis* Asia across the history of European thought. Nor is it purely about how Asian philosophers, from the Kyoto School of the 1940s onwards, sought to overcome intellectual westernization, the still-lingering legacy of a declining Europe (although the material quoted is superbly illuminating and among the most interesting parts of the book).

Rather, in what he semi-playfully posits as 'an autobiography, albeit one in which the "I" is absent', Hui imagines a project of post-European philosophy that is capable of establishing a true dialogue between both systems of thought (p. 2). Such an 'individuation of thinking'—a term he derives from Martin Heidegger and Gilbert Simondon—would neither ignore nor neutralize differences, and it would also refrain from offering an idealized notion of particularity and cultural purity (p. 3). This is a tall order, and Hui remains concerned throughout with the tension between today's universalizing forces that technological advance carries and exacerbates, as well as with the claims for physical or cultural home that so often imply a rejection or exclusion of the foreign.

This small book is an exercise in conceptualizing Europe that, at the same time, attempts to offer a non-Eurocentric way of thinking, conceiving homelessness positively. As such, and considering its disciplinary language, it may well be something of an awkward read for political scientists or legal theorists. This is a compliment as much as it is a critique. Even so, one can wish for a meatier engagement with the political reality of today's Europe. Hui picks up on the fragmented, multilayered nature of contemporary Europe and its significant internal differences, particularly the complex tensions between East and West within Europe itself. He is equally alert to the lure and danger of unmitigated ethno-nationalism, and possibly authoritarianism, returning to Europe in the face of current global insecurities.

Yet, the book evades almost all mention, let alone serious consideration, of the EU. This is curious, in light of the EU's attempts to remain a global economic, technological and regulatory power, vying especially with Asia. While an analysis of this aspiration would have added weight to Hui's considerations, the EU's nature as an experiment in post-national, multilevel governance could also be read

as a partial questioning of a homeland as traditionally conceived. Thus, it would have been interesting to investigate, within the EU context, the notions of the universal and the local, planarization and belonging, which feature so prominently in Hui's argument. Nevertheless, the book remains an intriguing provocation to think differently about Europe, its complacencies and its role in a rapidly changing world. *Ach Europa!*

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The rise and fall of the Department for International Development. By **Mark Lowcock and Ranil Dissanayake.** Washington, DC and London: Center for Global Development. 2024. 300pp. £16.95. ISBN 978 1 94469 113 4. Available as e-book and open access.

In 2020, Boris Johnson combined the United Kingdom's international development department with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to form the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Overnight, the globally recognized poster child for international development was merged, leaving civil servants deflated and NGOs regretful. *The rise and fall of the Department for International Development* marks its history. Sir Mark Lowcock and Ranil Dissanayake's book demonstrates that there are still those out there who tackle poverty reduction and deliver assistance to developing nations. Through first-hand accounts and in-depth interviews, this book offers a forensic, chronological account of the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).

The first part details the creation of the department, its initial policies and the leadership of Clare Short (who served as Secretary of State for International Development from 1997 to 2003). Lowcock and Dissanayake emphasize the values and goals that once resonated so strongly with those on the left and centre of British politics. Drawing on interviews, the authors expertly outline the flagship political decision to launch the DFID and reveal the internal politics that underpinned it. It is a useful narrative for those interested in institutional reform and altruistic governance. The second part covers the challenges of implementing the DFID's programmes. The analysis here is somewhat scattered. It starts with an exploration of the DFID's growing budget and then jumps to the key crises, including the Iraq war and the invasion of Afghanistan, the global financial crisis of 2008 and the climate crisis. It concludes with a commendation of the progress that the department made towards reducing global poverty. The authors carefully highlight how, leading its counterparts abroad, the DFID made substantial efforts towards UN Millennium Development Goal indicators. Given that the DFID operated in the context of the flourishing economic environment before the 2007–8 financial crash, it is difficult to ascertain whether there was a level of causation or correlation. However, the book uses data on health, education, private–public partnerships and social protection that illustrate the DFID's model of success and soft power.

The third and fourth parts of the book cover the changes in the domestic political context, beginning with David Cameron's coalition premiership in 2010. Here, the