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# Michael Heffernan: The Meaning of Europe Study Guide

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# MICHAEL HEFFERNAN: THE MEANING OF EUROPE

## STUDY GUIDE, 2011

Steven Alan Samson

### CHAPTER ONE: EUROPE: THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF AN IDEA

#### Study Questions

1. **Europe and Its Others: Civilisational Geopolitics** How did the intellectual upheavals of the Enlightenment alter the debate about Europe's place in the world? What contributions were made by the Duc de **Sully** and Baron **Montesquieu**? When were the ideas of culture, civilization, and progress introduced into the debate and how did they help shape it? When did notions of a collective national political identity emerge? The emergence of **political economy** with the Physiocrats in France and **Adam Smith** in Britain contributed to the realization "that people were both the form and the instrument of government, the ultimate source of national power." How did Jean-Jacques **Rousseau's** idea of *la volonté general* [**general will**] reflect this new realization later noted by **Michel Foucault**? (23-25)
2. How were these changes reflected in the debate about Europe's geopolitical character? How were perceptions about the **balance of power** altered? What countries were part of the new **pentarchy** (introduced with the Treaty of Utrecht)? When did Russia begin to become a European (rather than Asiatic) power? What changes were introduced by **Peter the Great** [similar to those later introduced in Turkey by Kemal Atatürk]? How was this change demonstrated geographically? (25-29)
3. What reforms were proposed by **William Penn** and **John Bellers**? How was Sully's Grand Design expanded by the **Abbé de Saint-Pierre**? How was his proposal received? What did Rousseau believe to be necessary for a more positive form of unity to develop? (29-32)
4. **People, Nation, Empire: the Geopolitics of the Masses** How did the French Revolution alter European conceptions of time and space? How was the French administrative system changed? The reference to a **Cartesian grid** means a division of local administrative units according to the geometric principles of the rational philosopher René Descartes. What did Tocqueville mean by indicating that the First Empire of Napoleon completed a thousand year process of centralization? How did this transform political power and statecraft? Except for political economy, which arose earlier, most of the modern social sciences began to emerge during or after the Napoleonic era. (33-35)
5. Regarding European unity, what were some of the chief features of the "ironic and paradoxical legacy" of the Napoleonic period? How was the French political culture universalized? How would you characterize the various schemes for universal peace offered by Jeremy Bentham, Immanuel Kant, and Claude Henri de Saint-Simon? (35-40)
6. What was the nature of the geopolitical order constructed at the **Congress of Vienna**? What was the **Concert of Europe**? How did the character of **nationalism** and Europeanism both change? What did **Edmund Burke** believe to be at stake? How was the Europeanness of nationalism evident in the "springtime of nations," *i.e.*, the revolutions of 1848? What were Young Italy and Young Europe? What sorts of European unity were envisioned by **Victor Hugo**, Pierre Proudhon, and Richard

Cobden? (40-43)

7. How did the following contribute to the destabilization of Europe: the Crimean War, the *Risorgimento*, Habsburg political expansion into the Balkans, and the unification of Germany? What does the author mean by saying that the idea of a harmonious Europe was already a pipe dream by 1880? (43-45)

**Review**

Sully  
pentarchy  
Concert of Europe  
Victor Hugo

Montesquieu  
William Penn  
nationalism

political economy  
Cartesian grid  
Edmund Burke