New Narratives for Europe

Seminar 10 May 2010

Narratives are collective stories and representations made from people's memories of the past, their experience of the present, and above all their imagination of the future. Narratives underpin and bind communities, and keep them moving forward.

INTRODUCTION BY ODILE CHENAL, EUROPEAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION

In 2009, the European Cultural Foundation decided to explore what came to be called 'New Narratives for Europe'.

Our questioning began with: if there are inspiring stories out there now, being shared by the people of Europe, what can these stories tell us? Who are telling these stories – and where and how are they telling them? And which of these narratives are inspiring – and perhaps even mobilising – for the younger generation of Europeans, both within and beyond the EU?

These questions were already in the air. That 'Europe needs a story to tell' is often heard in European political and intellectual circles. While the word 'narratives' has already been long used among social scientists and those from the art world, it is now emerging in political discourse.

Why European Narratives now?
We all know the background: there's a disconnection between Europe and its people, between the EU and its citizens.

The people living in this continent experience Europe every day, yet they do not feel that they belong to it. In all EU countries there is a strong movement towards the national – or rather a withdrawal to within national borders.

People in the EU are often critical of the distant, soulless power of Brussels, and do not feel that they are citizens of Europe. The results of the 2005 referenda on a European Constitution – with the French and Dutch saying 'No' – underlined what had been apparent for some time. And those who strive to become part of Europe as a political project – the EU – feel disconnected, if not excluded. Many people, especially young people, do not see the need for Europe between the local and the global.

Europe as project for peace and shared welfare, which was the vision after WWII, does not 'work' any more. Even the magic of 1989 is forgotten.

The European Cultural Foundation as a political and cultural organisation, a foundation working towards European integration through cultural means, naturally sees a challenge in this situation. This is why we are embarking on an exploration of narratives of, and for, Europe. The aim is not only to identify common ground, but also dissonances, paradoxes, conflicting perspectives among European people of all backgrounds and generations. We also wish to engage European cultural and political policymakers in the debate.

ECF's role
There are, as yet, few spaces in which the experiences and memories, perceptions and perspectives, questions and visions of the people of Europe can be voiced, connected, debated and confronted – places for European Narratives in the making.

ECF wants to be one of these spaces but not one where politically-correct stories about the values and hopes of Europe are distilled from above. We seek a space for artistic expression, debate and reflection, in which narratives can emerge, be confronted, negotiated and widely shared.

For this exploration of Narratives for Europe, ECF will support and commission artistic projects , will work with young video makers. Over the coming years, we will also pursue a line of reflection and publication around European narratives. This will involve gathering together and questioning intellectuals, artists, politicians and journalists from across Europe and beyond.

What are 'narratives'?

We began this reflection line with a seminar on the very concept of narratives. What are these 'narratives' that we are talking about? How do they emerge? How do they work? When do simple 'stories' become collective expressions and representations, which are able to inspire, connect and mobilise?

The concept of narratives is indeed seducing. Alongside 'values', 'canon', 'identities', it appears as a dynamic, multilayered and open concept. Narratives integrate memories and experiences, but also visions of the future. They are made from different stories that interact and are negotiated. And they assume all forms of cultural expression, both intellectual and emotional: words but also art works, history but also the prospective, utopia but also experience.

But we are also *questioned* by these narratives, and not only because we are aware that the word 'narratives' risks becoming a catch-all concept and losing real meaning.

We have many questions about the nature, impact and mechanisms of narratives but also about their political dimension. Narratives are not political messages, yet they relate to a political project, to political aspirations. Where exactly is the articulation between cultural expression and political vision?

Challenges

In starting to reflect and work on European Narratives, we face many challenges. One of the most exciting of these is exploring how transnational narratives can take shape – narratives that are not just a collection of national perspectives.

Our experience of narratives stems from a time (mainly the 19th century) when arts and culture, language and history were used to build nation states. So what could be the narratives of Europe, when Europe is even not a delimited territory, has multiple languages and divergent shared histories, and is only partly a political entity in the making? And when Europe can be neither associated with nor dissociated from the European Union?

Today's Europe as political project is immersed in a globalised world – a very different context from the one in which it started, which was that of a post-war East-West polarisation. Are new narratives able to bridge the European and the national, still the determining political frame, as well as the European and the cosmopolitan? This is another challenge!

And for ECF, one of the specific challenges is: whose narratives? Narratives should not be, or not only be, the stories of the dominant. While looking for shared narratives, how do we give space to unheard voices, to conflicting stories?

To begin reflecting on all these questions, the European Cultural Foundation, in partnership with the Department of European Studies of the University of Amsterdam (UvA) started a series of meetings that gathers scholars, journalists, and people in the art world together. The first seminar took place on 10 May 2010 in Amsterdam.

The aim of this first 'reflection group' is to gain more insights into, and perspectives on, the **concept** of narratives itself, and to start debating the nature and impact of 'European' narratives.

*The report of this first working group, written by **Steve Korver**, is presented below. For biographies of all the participants, see the end of the document.*

*The seminar was moderated by **Marjo van Schaik**.*

EUROCENTRISM IS DEAD…

Professor **Joep Leerssen** of the European Studies department at the University of Amsterdam opened the workshop with an inspiring talk that managed to include most of the day's main markers in regards to narratives and Europe.

He began by pointing out that not *everything* is a narrative. 'Recipes, computer manuals, prayers and political debates are not narratives.' Narratives are specifically 'a description of the actions of a protagonist with who you can have empathy with one way or another.' This protagonist is usually presented with unusual or challenging circumstances—making the adventure novel a prime example of a narrative. Within Western Europe, a deeper template would be Homer's *Odyssey* where the protagonist 'sees the cities of many men and gets to know their minds' before managing to get home again thanks to his wits. And ever since, as Leerssen put it, 'ingenuity has been a core value of self-congratulatory Eurocentrism.'

'But narratives are also a way of unifying experiences and giving them a moral or ethical template: the characters are defined by the choices they make. The protagonist becomes a hero as a result of his or her actions. Narratives therefore not only provide a passive reflection of what is done but also an active pre-figuration of what is to come. Narratives are scenarios. Narratives provide role models. That is to say: narratives provide the profiles of the morals behind the choices we make and can thereby influence our future behaviour. They already figure future actions into what will become memories. They translate future into past, past into future.'

So how does this all work in early 21st century Europe? Leerssen sees Eurocentrism as Europe's core narrative. Just as ingenuity is celebrated in the epic mode of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, it was picked up as a rationale behind the voyages of discovery and colonialism: Europe bringing their arrogance into the big wide world.

'From Robinson Crusoe to James Bond, we have plenty of protagonists who show European ingenuity in triumphalist mode,' observed Leerssen. He suggested that the person who might have inspired this way of thinking is Vasari, with his mid-16th century *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* which 'for the first time sees art as a progress with every new generation surpassing their predecessors. From that moment the notion of progress and dynamic culture is firmly enshrined within the European self-image. Throughout the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries the dominant master narrative of Europe was that of triumphalist Eurocentrism. Europe as the home of progress and the hatching ground of human ingenuity.'

But ever since the highpoint of imperial colonialism, there have always been critiques of this view. In fact the Netherlands, while one of the last countries to abolish slavery, also produced one of the first anti-colonial novels, Multatuli's *Max Havelaar* Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* took the critique of colonialism a step further by showing Europeans carrying their own, as Leerssen described it, 'dark, Freudian, wild, barbaric, oedipal urges.'

Leerssen believes that these narratives are still very much with us, but Eurocentrism was 'trumped and overshadowed' in the 20th century by Auschwitz: 'When we talk about narratives now, we have to talk about a mode called "Out of Auschwitz". This is the heart of darkness that sits in the middle of the 20th century—and in the middle of present-day European self-consciousness.' In short, Europe stands between arrogance and trauma, and while the past should not be forgotten, the future requires more directly binding stories.

Europe as a project can be seen as a way of exorcising its heart of darkness: after all, it was in part a result of the anti-nationalist and anti-colonial feeling, which had come from observing the effects of heedless imperialism and nationalism. But as Leerssen observes, we are not always moving forward. 'Now we are kind of in phase B of the swinging pendulum. If we read recent speeches of for instance President Sarkozy, we see some extraordinary examples of old-

fashioned European triumphalism and sense of superiority. A new paradigm doesn't automatically abolish the old. There are still many vestiges of the old Robinson Crusoe attitude.'

Since the 1960s, the critique of Eurocentrism has only grown as it was backed work done by Frantz Fanon and Edward Said .Their 'postcolonial studies' proved to have a strong influence on academic thinking, while, however, not ever really crossing over to mainstream thought. Meanwhile anti-Eurocentrism has evolved into a form of Euroscepticism. As Leerssen found very telling: 'When we had a volcanic ash cloud coming out of Iceland it was just an ash cloud. But when KLM got worried about the amount of money it was losing from the EU flight ban, it suddenly became an EU problem. Europe became the bad one and the symbol of all the bureaucratic inefficiency that keeps people from getting things done.'

Leerssen sees present-day Euroscepticism carrying some similarity to Dorian Gray. In the Oscar Wilde story *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a vain man lives a decadent lifestyle. After he has a portrait painted of himself, he continues to look as fresh as ever while his portrait, stored in an attic, turns old and repellent. 'Sometimes I wonder if the nation states have their portraits like Dorian Gray up in the attic and that's their European part. And Euroscepticism is the Freudian transference trying to blame all things that go wrong in political life on a faceless Europe which is up in the attic.' Leerssen then returned to the good cop/bad cop idea found in *Heart of Darkness* with the delusional and power-drunk Kurtz representing everything that's foul in the West and Marlow as the hard-working sailor who gets the job done. In short, Europe is everyone's bad cop.

In which direction will the pendulum swing next? And how do narratives fit in? Leerssen even warned that the notion of narrativity, the process where narratives are presented and then interpreted subjectively by an audience, is under threat. 'The unification of experience into ethical choices and moral profiles can be criticised for being possibly totalising or stereotyping—for actually being the very things that true culture has to try to break away from.'

Another issue that Leerssen sees is that recent narratives do not identify with hero protagonists, but with the victims. 'We are much busier with a paradigm of trauma.' As examples, he cites the 'two great recent books about European history,' Norman Davies' *European History* and Geert Mak's *In Europe*, which both see 'Europe as one long blood-stained tradition of suffering and victimhood.'

In conclusion, Leerssen outlined the dilemma that needs to be resolved: 'Today we stand between triumphalism and trauma. And narratives can no longer be offered as a form of propaganda, nor as a form of self-flagellation.' He suggested we look to 'one of the great 20th century odysseys', Primo Levi's *The Truce*, in which the author tells how he *got out of Auschwitz* through shell-shocked post-war Europe to get back to Italy. And how once he was home, he struggled to commemorate his past, while at the same time working to move on…

Leerssen: 'Perhaps there are other trajectories, such as road movies, where individuals coming to terms with the problematic world can still offer inspiration as a European narrative.'

WHY EUROPE NEEDS A NEW STORY

While consensus is the death of debate, all seminar's participants seemed to agree on one point: that Eurocentrism is dead, and that WWII cannot engage as a widely-binding story across greater Europe. Europe must find a living place within people's living emotions.

'A focal point of "European histories" is to take 1945 as point of departure. But this is controversial,' said **Carl Hendrik Fredriksson**, Editor-in-Chief of *Eurozine,* 'because 1945 is only "never again" for Western Europe while on the other side of the Iron Curtain it's just an intermediary point. There is no grand narrative when it comes to European history but rather two diverging ones.'

Guido Snel, lecturer at the University of Amsterdam, also emphasised how differently Europe is experienced in Eastern Europe, Russia and the former Soviet states, as well as within the migrant communities of Western Europe. But he still believed that 'narratives are a good starting point for a discussion of these perspectives.'

Gabrielle Schleijpen, a course director at the Dutch Art Institute, has organised many arts exchanges in Eastern European countries, and has talked to lots of people there who feel that there is 'very little space for their negotiation with the past, especially since the West's limited eyes regard the region as a "failed project". Many artists are really struggling to deal with the past in a more inspiring way that tries to include the good things that were there as well.'

In a way Europe has historically always defined itself through divergent narratives: for example, as 'Christians against Jews' within its borders, or Christians against the Muslim hordes outside its borders. **Gal Kirn**, a research fellow at Van Eyck Academy, cited a more recent example: 'Within Europe, the Balkans is perceived as some sort of black stain. In the post-1989-world, all the nations had to be happy and be part of one grand European narrative. But *what are those people in the Balkans doing? They are still fighting!* So Europe suddenly started to pretend ex-Yugoslavia was not part of Europe.' And now perhaps with the European monetary crisis unfolding, Greece and its southern neighbours may prove to be an emergent 'black stain'. In short, it does indeed seem that Europe always needs 'an other' through which to define itself.

Europe not only occasionally loses the plot – it is generally a bad storyteller, who has difficulty keeping things fresh. Snel quoted a Russian formalist: 'How beautiful and convincing metaphors are at the beginning, but at some point they will suffer from fatigue and no longer be convincing.' And certainly the story of Europe as an existentialist, or tragic, hero after WWII—*the* story of Europe—no longer convinces. But at the same time suffering remains a main European narrative: 'Since 1989, new communities have been struggling to have their victimhood identified, a process that writer/journalist Ian Buruma called "the Olympic Games of suffering". We see it in the Bosnian community whose own suffering almost rivals the Jewish experience in WWII.

Snel also noted how the EU's official discourse still exploits suffering. 'For instance, before Serbia can enter the EU, we demand that they cooperate with the Yugoslav War Crimes Tribunal. And there, of all places, is where they really deal with individual stories very carefully—testimonies are involved all the way through to the verdict. But on the political level, it's being used as exchange money. If you want to be part of the EU, you have to recognise that the ideology behind it is a fair one.'

Professor **Antoni Liakos** of the University of Athens certainly has a problem with how the EU generally structures their narratives: 'They have a kind of bureaucratic, unilateral strength that no one can identify with.' He believes it comes down to a lack of emotionality. Narratives gain strength when there's a kind of emotional attachment to them.

European bank notes are a good example of the EU's emotional detachment on a symbolic level. Fredriksson brought out some Swedish bank notes to show how both sides 'represent something

that is the core of the Swedish soul, namely its relationship to nature. But on Euro notes, all you see is a bridge or a window. You don't see Linnaeus, Charlemagne or Goethe or other famous Europeans. No, we put buildings on them. These are not protagonists to identify with…'

As Snel quoted the historian Tony Judt: 'Politicians fail at seducing the European audience that Europe is something good to be involved with, because these politicians have had another experience: namely, they did not grow up in a mixed and diverse society.'

Meanwhile, there is a whole new generation that has. **Guido van Hengel** of Platform Spartak, which brings together young European creatives, is a historian who works a lot with young comics artists in Eastern Europe. Mostly born after 1989, these youth are in fact quite optimistic about the idea of Europe. 'Especially in former Yugoslavia, young people are looking for new identities. They are no longer Yugoslavian. So are they Serbian, Croatian or Belgradian? So why not European? But just last week I was with a very diverse group in Den Haag who were all making fun of Europe as the ultimate symbol of rampant bureaucracy. But at the same time, they were fifty people from all over, even rural areas, sharing new narratives.'

BUT DOESN'T EUROPE ALREADY HAVE A BIG AND CURRENT STORY?

Kirn in his presentation 'Narratives on Europe: Is There No Big Story?' outlined his belief that there is already a 'big story for Europe': the transition under globalisation that has been occurring since the 1990s. And while the EU is an intrinsic part of this process that plays out on all levels of society, it also seems to be blatantly ignoring it.

'Twenty years after the fall of Berlin wall, all the enthusiasm for a united European family has been shattered, as EU enlargement has shown its negative sides (for both old and new Europe) and the economical crisis continues. There is a need for a new narrative that can legitimise Europe and European future.' Therefore, Kirn regards the EU's plea for 'a new story' merely as a desperate and ideological call to action.

The story of transition that began after the fall of the USSR rested on the idea of *the end of history* as put forward by Yoshihiro Francis Fukuyama, which was embraced by political and economic elites in the 1990s. Time has neutered his argument, but Fukuyama believed that the battle between ideologies was largely over since the entire world would now merrily settle into liberal democracy. Kirn: 'By claiming the end had come – that there is no alternative to European integration and neo-liberal reign of capitalism – the theory assumed a position of universality, which is basically a false universality. Because it speaks from an already very particular position with particular interests: the universality of the rich and developed North bringing misery and poverty to masses of people at home and abroad.'

Europe's hopeful story gets interrupted whenever a crisis—like war in Yugoslavia or Greece on the edge of bankruptcy—comes along to remind us that European integration is 'not a one-way street to progress and happiness'. So with Europe shaking, Kirn wondered 'if there actually something worthwhile to look for in new Europe?'

Transition also comes coupled with a related and more dangerous narrative: the last decade's rise of the extreme right, who is recycling the tricks of 19th century nation states as it works to define an 'other' to blame for every manner of political and economic grievance. Kirn: 'What the extreme right does very well is that it detects real problems, such as immigration, the end of the welfare state or the role of the state on individual freedoms. But then it reduces it to easily conveyed media messages, while ignoring the real causes of the problems: global economic competition, domination of neo-liberal restructuring of capital and state, exploitation…'

Meanwhile the political left comes across as disoriented. However, Leerssen argued that certain messages of the left have just been internalised in the general discourse and politics and can no longer be recognised as something separate from Europe: 'Social democracy is seen as one of the uniting factors of Europe. Also, as Jay Winter studied, there's more of an emphasis in discourse here on human rights as opposed to the US, where the emphasis is more on civil rights. In general, the left actually provides one of the main points of difference with the US: just look at how "liberal" means something left there and something right here.'

But in general, the right wing is appearing to tell a much stronger story, which is both being taken seriously in the media and influencing how people vote. So what can Europe's counter-story be? Unity in diversity? Multiculturalism? Peace?

Leerssen: 'European societies are negotiating the catastrophic events of their past on the basis of the notion of reconciliation. And perhaps this is a European master-narrative: the idea that all European nations have a history of bloody, deep fundamental divisions that, at some point, were overcome.'

CAN NATIONAL NARRATIVES INSPIRE CROSSBORDER NARRATIVES?

National narratives have a lot in common with transnational ones, and Professor **Ann Rigney** from Utrecht University and the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies (NIAS), believes that those two don't necessarily have to clash. 'Just look at the 19th-century constructions of national narratives: they were based on reconciliation and overcoming differences. In a sense the construction of the original national narratives was based on bringing together different stories from different peoples.' Therefore, the building-up of European narratives can be regarded as a similar process, but occurring on a larger scale and in a different time.

'Europe has the luxury to learn from the mistakes of those dominant national narratives which excluded minorities and led to less benign forms of nationalism. If a narrative becomes exclusive, as a European privilege, then it has a problem,' said Rigney. Instead, the process should be flexible and not only deal with content, but also be backed by serious thought on how one engages with narratives and how they can be several things at once. Rigney half-joked that perhaps we should think of Europe as less like Dorian Gray and more like Frankenstein—a being made from many parts.

Different nations have had different procedures behind establishing their national narratives. Liakos: 'In some countries it came out of some kind of action between individuals, society and the state. In others it just came directly from the state; for example, in Turkey it was Atatürk who established the national history of the country. In Italy, on the other hand, the narratives of individual regions were brought together in the larger national narrative. In Greece there was a combination between state and individual incentives.'

'But look at how, when the EU tries to establish European memorial days and narratives, the individual countries establish their own in response,' said Liakos. 'This shows how political identity is very important in establishing narratives.' In other words, the nation state still stands the strongest.

'So what makes a narrative national? Is it the content? What makes a narrative European? Is it the fact that it's subsidised by Brussels?' half-joked Leerssen. 'Possibly, what makes a narrative national or not is the way it is read or heard. It's a form of performance and pragmatic actualisation. So it might be possible to retell a national narrative and reframe it as a European narrative: for example, *Don Quixote* and Joan of Arc as European stories. We don't need to change the content but just the framework—and the perspective—of how we read it.'

ECF's Odile Chenal concluded: 'The question is how to go from the 19th century nation narrative to a European story and, while perhaps using some of the same tools and instruments as the nation states, do it without the same mistakes around exclusion. Political Europe is really only at the very beginning of this…'

WHAT CAN ACADEMIA TELL ABOUT THE NATURE OF NARRATIVES (AND EUROPE)?

Sociology

As a sociologist, **Monica Sassatelli** began using the term 'narratives' over more restrictive ones as 'symbols', as a way to understand European identity. Her talk 'Are European Narratives an Expression with Multifaceted Connotations?' outlined why the idea of narratives can be useful, but also limiting.

Narratives call for a 'focus on meanings and their dependency on contexts', rather than a reliance on the seemingly straight facts. It is on the 'basis of what meanings and values they follow that people will have certain interests and not others. In other words: identities precede interests. In fact, "identity" is now seen as a narrative, and that is the real shift. It recognises that we are all multifaceted and contradictory, but that we all still "make sense" as coherent identities.'

But while flexible, narratives also have their dangers. One can still overemphasise the text and thereby miss the performative context—meaning, and identity, comes from a combination of both. "We need to really understand how narratives are performed, while remembering that to be effective a narrative does not need "logic" or "rationality", but it does need to be meaningful and have what many call "flow".'

Another danger is to focus too much on the 'master-narrative'—something seductively uniting and consensual—when in fact with narratives the whole idea is, according to Sassatelli 'to explore the possibility of maintaining a plurality of voices.' But of course, then again you run the danger of getting lost in a mass of micro-narratives…

So how does one swim these oceans of stories?

Cultural Memory

Professor Anne Rigney works with cultural memory: how societies engage with the past. Around 20 years ago, this field also experienced a 'narrative turn' away from the previous 'symbol notion' because 'it was not only about symbols, but about the processes of making, developing and observing symbols and making them comprehensible. Narratives raise issues about emotional connectedness, the notion of protagonist and intelligibility in ways that symbols do not.' But time marches on in academia, as narratives are now competing with other terms such as heritage and memory.

Rigney believes that the term 'memory' is the most relevant in relation to narratives. She cited the importance of major works like Pierre Nora's *Les Lieux de Mémoire* whose ideas around 'sites of memory' were mentioned throughout the workshop as an important contemporary reference point. Furthermore, the work around 'collective memory' done in the 1920s by sociologist Maurice Halbwachs influenced the rise of the idea of sites of memory as an alternative to national canons, which essentially just list objects and works associated with a particular group.

Actual specific sites often have more of an immediate impact. Rigney: 'We all identify with sites that have both symbolic and emotional importance for a particular people.' And by sharing their stories, a particular people create an identity – and shape their community.' In short: 'Identity doesn't precede these stories, but identity is created through the stories.' So how can this be applied in constructing a European identity over a national one?

According to Rigney, there has been a lot of work done in the past 20 years that studies how cultural memory has developed 'as a way of scrutinising memory, examining the way stories develop and migrate, and see what's possible to elaborate on through negotiation and new forms and new stories.' She distilled three key ideas of cultural memory as being an ongoing, open and dynamic construct.

1) **In the process of sharing stories, some details are always left out.** This is natural and only dangerous when certain details are repressed or forced to be left out. Rigney: 'How we deal with these different forms of amnesia is extremely important.'

2) **The frameworks in which we remember things can shift and be shifted deliberately.** The frameworks of memories go back to an idea of Halbwachs from the 1920s about how, when we share stories, we do so by invoking a common framework that can be recognised by others. A 'nation's story' has been one of the most effective frameworks since the 19th century. But in practice, these stories are shared within very many different sorts of frameworks: local, regional, European, global. And they can shift from bottom up or from top down. Rigney: 'So the question is: to what extent can you direct the type of stories people are going to tell? And to what extent are other agents involved, such as institutions, individuals, artists, etcetera…'

3) **Stories can migrate.** In the book *Atlas of the European Novel* one can follow *Don Quixote* as it slowly came to be translated and published across Europe. Rigney also pointed to America for research done on the construction and travel of common stories. 'In particular, the book *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* by Alison Landsberg suggests that memory is something that you can implant in people and that people can also appropriate. The movies were very important, in particular the Western and other key genres, in helping create stories for America, and in particular for immigrants who had to "buy into other people's stories" and seeking emotional identification. This is in contrast to notions of nationalism where you are "stuck with the story you were born with". It is possible, for better or worse, to take on a new story!'

Rigney also observed how cultural memory and memory politics are already widely used in both diplomacy and reconciliation as a way to negotiate your relationship with your neighbours, and across split communities. 'If you think of Katyn or the way the end of WWII, or rather the Great Patriotic War, is celebrated in Russia, these symbolic gestures are part of the way a nation gets their view out to others.'

'In the end it's not just about storytelling but also about actual shared experience,' said Snel. 'In Ireland, at one point people had got so fed up about the story of reconciliation that they just started to count off victims of both sides. And that's perhaps the most concrete example you can get of a shared experience in that situation. So with this process of reconciliation, there was a simple need of knowing how many victims there were on each side. It may be blunt but it's also a very telling story of the need for *real* experience behind a story...'

EUROPE'S INSTITUTIONAL NARRATIVE

Institutions not only have narratives, they also have the power to diffuse them. In fact, as Sassatelli observed, 'an institution such as the EU *has to* construct narratives in order to justify its very existence.' And in doing this, the EU becomes the perfect case study of both the possibilities and the dangers involved in using narratives of identity.

In its way, the EU has followed similar trends as academia in telling its story over the last 50 years. As **Isabelle Schwarz**, ECF's Head of Strategic Programmes and Cultural Policy Development, said: 'European institutional language has changed from "integration" through "diversity" to, now, "narrative". It's embraced these terms, but with different levels of intensity and understanding. But what do these three terms really mean? At first it was the integration of markets, economies, institutions and nation states, but why is it now about communities?'

A Case Study: 'Unity in Diversity'
'Europe's main institutional narrative today is that of "unity in diversity". But it's a difficult story to sell,' said Sassatelli. 'Because the most effective identity-building technologies (education, media, welfare, military service) were developed by nation states and are still controlled by them.'

'Self-proclaimed European institutions have to be very cautious as they shift their rhetoric from around integration to that of identity, and now, perhaps, to narrative as they desperately look for a "story to tell".' They need to incorporate the diversity of nations, while not getting lost in simplified rhetoric or banality. But in theory, as Sassatelli observed, 'Unity in diversity does accommodate the idea of multiple allegiances.'

The building of the EU's institutional narrative of 'unity and diversity' was a transparent process and embodied in such key texts as the Council of Europe statute ('Diversity lies at the heart of Europe's cultural richness, which is our common heritage and the basis of our unity') and the EU Treaty article on culture (to promote 'the flowering of the cultures of the member states, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore' [TEU, art. 151]).

'Unity in diversity' has also been translated to actual initiatives that often share a similar style: stimulating grassroots projects and direct participation and 'bestowing the title of "European" to local representatives who therefore then act as European, and thus provide content to that empty idea of "unity in diversity".' And it's here where the EU loses control of their product, as it gets re-appropriated and redefined while evolving under local conditions. For example, Sassatelli has studied the European Capitals of Culture project and noticed how recipients ended up embracing a much wider idea of diversity. 'In fact, most cities had a significant number of projects dealing with non-European cultures in their programmes. Which is quite progressive…' (And probably not what the EU originally had in mind.)

The EU also does a good job of representing how 'not all narratives are equal in the way they frame reality. The nation was imagined as culturally homogeneous and, as such, it enforced homogenisation. Europe is now being imagined as "unity in diversity": so that is a new style of imagining a community.' But just as national narratives can become banal by stripping them of variety and complexity, so can Europe's 'unity in diversity'. Sassatelli: 'Instead of homogeneity, commonality and exclusiveness it just sets itself up as opposite: plurality, diversity and multiple allegiances.'

Of course it's easy to mock the official rhetoric coming out of the EU, but Sassatelli warns against merely critiquing their efforts. 'The way in which cultural Europeanisation is normally envisaged as a top-down policy process, criticised for elitism and ineffectiveness, ignores the transformations that are taking place. These include poly-vocal, bottom-up and unofficial processes, which are being promoted by a policy style that encourages networking and diversity.

These are practical forms of cultural Europeanisation that often escape analysis because of their supposed "banality"...'

In his talk 'Narrative, Canon, Heritage: Top-down or Bottom-up Constructions of European History?' Professor Liakos spoke about the problems around constructing institutional narratives. These narratives usually take the form of an implied 'canon' of European History. But because no one feels comfortable at the shadows of a canon, Liakos wondered how we could promote a European historical culture by making it more flexible and adjustable to the needs and tastes of a more varying audience.

Liakos also believes that the EU should do a better job of learning from its past mistakes in its quest for identity. He cited the European Parliament's recent idea to set up a House of European History as an action that lacked reflection. At the end of 2008, the Parliament appointed a Committee of Experts consisting of nine members—historians and museum experts—from various European countries to research the issue. The resulting discourse provoked strong reactions. Voices in the UK loathed the political correctness, in Poland the project was accused of being a German-French version of history, in Greece they thought it neglected Ancient Greece, in Spain they questioned the interpretation of the two world wars, while in France some resented the lack of space dedicated to medieval times and the Renaissance… As Liakos concluded: 'Any construction of an official narrative on European history will always be opposed from different points of view.'

In theory, this lesson could have been learned during the establishment of the Council of Europe (1949), which was based on recovering the idea of Europe and the creation and promotion of a new European consciousness of peace and co-operation. A handful of distinguished historians and intellectuals were invited to Rome in 1952 to discuss the writing of a new and unified history of Europe. The organisers, seeing nationalism as the enemy, wanted a unified history and were therefore willing to exclude some 'problem countries' from the history. In contrast, most of the participating historians wanted to include national perspectives and conflicts because, as Liakos said, 'they had emerged from historical institutions in the service of nationalism, and were unwilling to discard the national glasses of seeing the past, even the European past.'
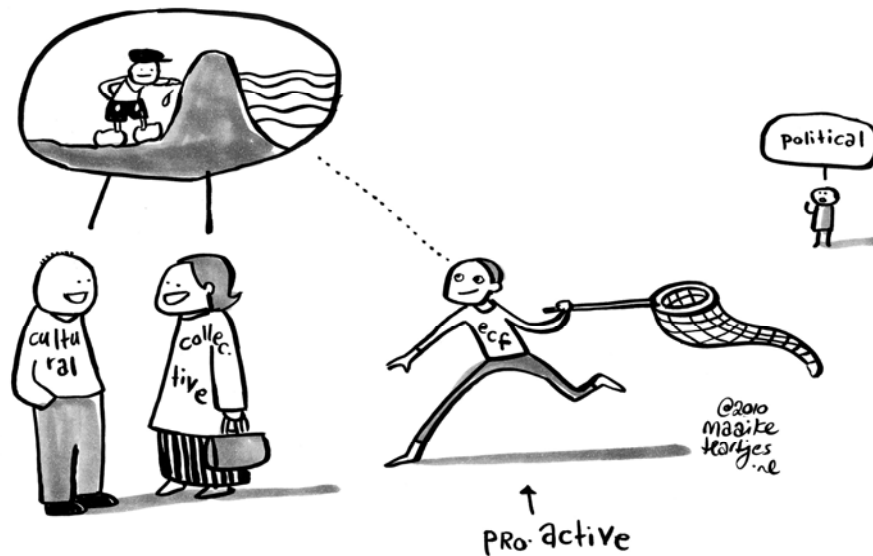
The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 only renewed the old debates about the boundaries and the borders of Europe, the canon of its history and European identity. Central East European countries jumped on the 'returning to Europe' bandwagon, since that was considered the alternative to communist regimes. Liakos: 'They tailored their history, swiping aside all their dark aspects, and the return to Europe appeared as the triumph of the belief in truth, justice, freedom, human dignity and democracy. For this European history, Russia and Eastern Europe were considered alien and, even more, the cause of all misfortune and backwardness in Eastern European countries.' In other words, a new 'other' was quickly and firmly established.

Meanwhile, the European Union encouraged the writing of European history with grants. However in general, the historians who became dependent on these financial programmes lacked the background and awareness of the past problems related to writing such histories. One famously middle-of-the-road result was Jean-Baptiste Duroselle's *Europe, Histoire de ses peuples* (1990) which excluded Greece and Slavic Europe and was 'imbued with a European teleology and too closely organised around predefined concepts.'

Liakos: 'The early experience of the Council of Europe and the reactions to Duroselle demonstrated the difficulties in the construction of a coherent institutional narrative of the European past. A possible solution was the appearance of the discourse on heritage in the 1970s. The concept of heritage promotes both the material and the symbolic and is therefore more flexible in articulating a European past than a canon. It brings together both physical and immaterial cultural achievements as the unifying elements of European history, with the exception

of martial and war monuments. It was even adapted in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, where it was decided to "bring the common cultural heritage to the fore".'

A consequence of the shift from historical canon to heritage was that the canon was constructed by metonymies—Athens for the Classical past, Rome for the Roman Empire, Charlemagne for the Christian civility of the Middle Ages—and thereby defined Europe as only those things we can associate with it. Liakos: 'These moments of the past were then connected with special features of the present: Athens for democracy, Rome for the legal tradition of Europe, Charlemagne for a unified Europe that respected differences. The iconography of the banknotes of Euro is a good example of the articulation of the canon with the concept of heritage and identity at the turn of the 21st century. European history is recognised in the depiction of major, common moments from antiquity to the modern world, through different architectural styles. At the same time, these common images were combined with national symbols for the coins of each country. In this way, European and national audiences could share a common past with differentiated readings.'

SITES OF MEMORY

Just as Professor Rigney, Professor Liakos believes the concept of heritage was enriched with another concept, elaborated on in Pierre Nora's above-mentioned book *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (1984-1992). 'Sites of memory' can be defined as the 'material and non-material crystallisations of memory, or memorialisations of the past, that include such places as archives, museums, monuments, commemorations and widely-recognised symbols. In contrast to heritage, sites of memory are principally national-based. The only exception is the memory of the WWII with the Holocaust which became a symbol of European commemoration.'

Liakos believes that the construction of European history around historical sites is the most plausible and flexible option going at the moment: 'It could combine conventional history with micro-history and would be open to cultural and social history. It's also bottom-up since it can use everyday experience of common European life, rather than top-down and state-centred history. It has more possibilities to articulate the national, the local and the transnational. It has more possibilities to ensure visibility for migrants, minorities and other minor groups.'

And this is essential. As Liakos observed: 'What South Africa did was to divide memory and set up Committees of Reconciliation. But the first thing they addressed was not reconciliation but *recognition*. That's the shared experience of history and memory.'

But Rigney also sees problems with how 'sites of memory' have become the term of instrumentalisation in public discussions of how to reconcile with the past. And of course, this plays out most effectively on a national level. For example, in Spain with the *Ley de Memoria Historica Nacional,* a law that recognises all victims of the Spanish Civil War and General Franco's dictatorship. Rigney: 'It makes memory *the* place where the national identity is located.'

So what possible *lieux de mémoire* could there be for Europe? Leerssen: 'Again, the obvious EU site of memory would be Auschwitz; the second would be the battlefield of Waterloo. But we are still firmly in the traumatic paradigm there. It's almost structurally impossible to think of a European translation of a site-of-memory-project except by stripping the respective site of its relation to the nation state…'

Another problem with sites of memories in relation to narratives is that they work on the notion of fixity. As it is said: 'the best way to forget something is to put up a monument.' And as Rigney observed, 'There's a life cycle to all these things and once you've linked it to a notion of place, what inevitably happens, if it works as memory, it will provoke someone to say it's the wrong memory. And that's absolutely the way it has to be because the worst thing you can do is say "we agree" because then you forget about it. Consensus is the enemy of memory. And once European history is no longer a point of discussion, then it really is lost.'

Snel considered this a very interesting tension: 'So the question should be while we look at the European project: Are we going to repeat that sort of logic of the past or do we seek a whole new re-imagining? Academia and the arts are fond of nuances and non-finalised models of thinking. But once you take, for instance, a sense of history to the public space, you need moments of finalisation, you need commemorations, you need -as with WWII- concrete symbols.'

It also happens that a memory is fixed not to a site but to a date. Kirn cited the initiative of East European countries to make 23 August a 'Totalitarian Remembrance Day' that links the entire 1945-89 period, from fascism to communism. 'Here you have one of the first big European memorialisation projects after Auschwitz, and it comes with a very negative and conservative answer to what socialism was, and the idea to suspend this whole history of Europe. You can always blame Europe for being colonial, etcetera, but on the other hand the last century was also about big ideas—socialist revolutions that brought a new world of social relations and really transformed societies—which of course will always have negative consequences as well. But how about the Russian avant-garde or socialist Yugoslavia? These all feed the complexity of

European memory and history, which is not to be seen as just in the memory of victims. And these kinds of history already exist. Socialism cannot just be equated with fascism as they each produced different answers to modernity, socialism as its carrier, the legacy of radical Enlightenment, and fascism as its dark equation.'

Snel brought up the similar 'House of Terror' in Budapest which also lumped Hungary's past together. 'This national story also takes fascism and communism together as one huge evil against the Hungarian nation. A more historically proper version would include the complex involvement of Hungarian individuals in both phenomena.'

Indeed, there are many stories to deal with…

DEALING WITH CONFLICTING NARRATIVES

How do you deal with confronting narratives—ones that use similar elements for opposite ends? Fredriksson brought up a strong recent example. In early 2005, the German artist/writer Feridun Zaimoglu made an installation named 'Kanak Attack' in Vienna. The work was subtitled 'The Third Turkish Siege of Vienna' and consisted of covering the Kunsthalle with 500 Turkish flags. It made the front pages of Austria's biggest newspaper with a picture and the headline: 'Vienna must not become Istanbul', referring back to 1683 when the Second Siege had occurred. The front page was immediately appropriated by the right wing Freedom Party for their city election campaign. They covered Vienna with this headline and ended up doing quite well at the polls. Later in the year in Scotland, during negotiations about whether to have talks with Turkey about joining EU, Austria became the main opponent and pushed negotiations long into the night before finally giving up. The next day in Istanbul, the main Turkish daily headlined on its front page: 'Vienna has Fallen'. As Fredriksson pointed out, 'they were referring to the same story but from the exactly opposite perspective.'

Fredriksson: 'This is a good example of the instrumentalisation of memory. And while you can frame this as a right-wing political problem, both narratives are alive and therefore we have to recognise their legitimacy or at least part-legitimacy. So the question is not "Which narratives?" but "What is the space where these narratives can be negotiated?" Today there are few, if any, transnational spaces where different perspectives and narratives can be negotiated. In my mind that has to come first before we settle for a certain narrative or take things in a certain direction. These narratives have to encounter each other and really meet. But right now this space only exists in the national spaces.'

Using the 'Third Turkish Siege' example, Snel suggested involving the significant Turkish communities in Austria, Germany and the Netherlands in the search for a space in the public sphere where narratives can be negotiated. 'They are bilingual and must have had a different perspective on this clash of national views than those citizens back in Austria or Turkey. We should pay more attention to these emerging communities because of the particular position they exist in. We usually call this place "in between", but it's more "both/and", in all sorts of conflicting ways.'

Leerssen questioned if these spaces even had to cluster around the idea of nation states or of Europe as a place of reconciliation. 'How about the idea of the city? Before the idea of the nation, there was the city as the writer of the public sphere. How about you go down one level and don't see Europe as a jigsaw puzzle of nations, but as an archipelago of cities? Each with their own gravitational field from which they draw cultural, economic and social influxes. With this you might get a much more optimistic, or enabling, view to regard conflict and resolutions.' And indeed, many studies have observed that local and regional loyalties are only getting stronger during this time of globalisation.

FINDING THAT SPACE FOR NARRATIVES

As Europe struggles for a story, narratives have been already flowing across borders for years in the world of art. Curator **Nat Muller** has long observed how there seems to be 'a current obsession with narrativity in the contemporary art world. Issues around individual and collective memory as topics and/or themes are currently very dominant in contemporary artistic practice in the Middle East and the Arab world: individual collective memory and collective individual memories and their ensuing amnesia have been dominant tropes.'

In her presentation 'Narrating through Others: Identity and Artistic Practices', Muller also wondered if artists, or the arts, are trying to 'correct' what Europe is unable to do when it comes to sharing and spreading narratives. As Kirn later noted, this idea of 'art as a sort of corrective replacement for politics' is well-described in *Culturalization of Politics* by Frederic Jameson, which posits that 'where conflict occurs you have to replace it with culture. Basically neutralise it with art, artists or socially-engaged art.'

But Muller sees limits, as long as the art world continues to follow certain trends. For example, when artists from "old" Europe work with socio-political issues, 'they tend to get their sense of self/identity/belonging by narrating it through "others". Meanwhile, artists coming from the "new" EU are *expected* to engage with socio-political topics and become spokespeople for their community.'

Muller has also observed various 'turns' in dealing with narratives in the last decade, which have also influenced the role that artists play. The 'Documentary Turn' had the artist as witness. The 'Social/Political Turn' reframed the artist as activist. And, most recently, the 'Educational Turn' with its 'emphasis on analysis and discourse and countless debates, panels and symposia on how and what to teach within an artistic context, saw the artist as a translator/analyst, which perhaps reflects the increasing role of the curator in the last decade.' All of these 'turns' are very much based 'on showing, sharing, challenging narratives within certain matrixes of power—with many layers of narratives running simultaneously—sometimes intersecting, sometimes not—from funders, artists, institutions and curators.'

The enormous growth of art residency programmes in recent years is another example of how artists are increasingly telling stories of 'the other'. Muller: 'Of course telling someone else's story also means that the self is somehow narrated, albeit in an indirect or extremely convoluted way.'

Muller warns that 'much of the work produced through above strategies risks becoming too exegetic, too explanatory, and too careful of the risk of losing its poetic license…'

Similarly, houses of dialogue, such as Kosmopolis in the Netherlands, and their general demise are an example of 'SAFE places for interaction, where whatever "the other" says is already expected and pacified, filtered through for easy interaction. These institutions are often top-down so it's all pre-scripted with a very narrow channel of articulation. I'm very frustrated by the political correctness that these institutions often have. Consensus is the end of politics, art and narrative. How can you really have a proper discussion if you can't be honest and bump your heads together? There are these differences and that's fine. It's okay to have that confrontation but evacuating that from the subject just numbs everything.'

Rigney noted that since the 19th century, artists have been put in a more institutionalised position where they are 'safe' to be revolutionary and alternative. 'Victor Hugo saw his role as covering those people who live in darkness and who have no one to speak for them. Is there a problem with this whole history that precludes artists really playing that role, an institutionalised role of being a revolutionary? There is a limit to that. Anyone who speaks for anyone else has a limit.'

As a way of possibly rethinking the autonomy of the arts, Leerssen suggested a more museum-like approach, such as reflected in Paris's Immigration Museum which is formulated not as a

place of display but as a place where things happen. It's a place about the immigrant *experience* in France. 'It has three layers: there is a historical display of immigration streams into France from the Middle Ages to the 20th Century, historising and de-anecdotalising present-day immigration. Secondly, there's a place where immigrants put their own mementos, memorabilia and relics of their own experience. This is an anthological, bottom-up approach since it still needs to be filled. And the third layer is contemporary artistic reflection. You get photographers taking pictures of both sides of the family of the immigration trajectory. It works magnificently. Art working in tandem with the display of knowledge and experience.'

Indeed, as nations search for identities, they often end up with unexpected mediums. For Europe, perhaps these transnational spaces may be found in the new media.

And of course that's already happening. Van Hengel: 'There are many European portholes, and as for me – I feel European, even though I don't know what it's all about. Ninety-nine per cent of my friends come from all over Europe and they are in contact. That's the environment I am living in right now. The new media is very far away from the EU: the EU just doesn't know what's happening there. But a lot of people sharing stories, ideas and visuals: this is the place where it's going to happen.'

But of course, the internet is not the solution in itself. As Muller pointed out, 'Web 2.0 applications have reduced everyone's blogs, RSS-feeds and Facebook status lines into an amalgam of mini-narratives. But while a shared collectivity might be evoked, some would argue that this is false narrativity—a confessional and narcissistic one, in blips. Sharing stories does not always mean they are meaningful…'

The discussion ended on this interrogative note**.**

Katherine Watson concluded in thanking the participants "who started with us this journey - an odyssey? - through the European narratives in such an inspiring way."

Other debates will follow, and the next one, probably to take place in Sofia in autumn, will open new perspectives in connecting and confronting European stories.

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Olga Alexeeva is project Officer Grants at the European Cultural Foundation (ECF). Before joining ECF, she worked as project manager and editor at PDC Information Architecture, mainly on projects concerned with disseminating information about the EU towards various target groups by using internet. She was also responsible for the management of the grant program of the Montesquieu Institute (Centre for European Parliamentary History and Constitutional Development) in The Hague. She studied European Studies (BA) and European Policy (MA) at the University of Amsterdam, after graduating as classical pianist at the North Netherlands Conservatoire (Groningen).

Wouter van den Bos is doing a PhD in cognitive neuroscience at the University of Leiden. He studied philosophy and psychology at the University of Amsterdam and Princeton University, USA. During his studies, he worked for the art cinema and cultural institute Kriterion, where he organised several events and festivals. He is a founding member of the Danube Foundation, an organization that aims contribute to the exchange of ideas between young Europeans.

Odile Chenal was born in France and graduated in Art History and History (Nancy) and Political Sciences (Paris/ Oxford). From 1975 to 1982, she worked as sociologist at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris. In 1982 she moved to the Netherlands to become Director of the Centre Culturel Français in Rotterdam and, later, Cultural Attaché at the French Embassy in The Hague. Since 1990, she works at the European Cultural Foundation and is currently in charge of Research and Development.

Carl Henrik Fredriksson is a Swedish literary critic, columnist and essayist living in Vienna, Austria. He is co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of *Eurozine* and president of the association Eurozine – Verein zur Vernetzung von Kulturmedien. He is also the former Editor-in-Chief of Sweden's oldest cultural journal *Ord&Bild* and is published widely on subjects such as poetry, literature, literary theory, art, philosophy, media and politics.

Guido van Hengel is a historian. Currently he is chairman of Platform Spartak, a Dutch NGO that functions as a scene for young and creative Europeans. He studied Balkan history in Groningen (Netherlands), Jena (Germany) and Belgrade (Serbia) and received his MA-title in 2006 for the thesis 'Thinking on Tito. Coping with History in Former Yugoslavia'. Since then he has worked as editor, publicist, interpreter and youth worker.

Mascha Christine Ihwe was born in Germany and brought up in three European countries. After graduating from the European School in Bergen (NL), she obtained a Bachelor degree in Law in Germany. Between 1993 and 2004, while working as communication specialist in Paris, she obtained a degree as a goldsmith and followed a two year study at a renowned film school. Since 1998 she has been working as communication specialist in both the private and the non-profit sector (eg. Siemens, Brambles S.A., Médecins du Monde, Mama Cash and currently the European Cultural Foundation). Her specialties are: public relations, network building, match-maker, strategic advice, creative out-of-the-box thinking, journalistic projects, coaching and event management. She is committed to a personal and professional development trajectory which makes her a strong strategic player on management level as well as on the work-floor.

Gal Kirn is doctoral candidate in philosophy at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences, where he combines the research on contemporary French philosophy (especially Louis Althusser) with the history of the emergence of revolutionary Yugoslavia and its tragic break-up. He was a researcher at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht (2008-10), from this year on he will become a fellow at the ICI in Berlin, whereas in Ljubljana he participates in the Workers'-Punks' University, which sets up a platform of events: lectures, film seminars and reading groups. He is a correspondent editor for the international journal *Historical Materialism*, editor of *Postfordism and its Discontents* and co-editor of *New Public Spaces, Dissensual Political and Artistic Practices in the post-Yugoslav Context.* He

comments on politics in the Slovenian weekly *Objektiv* and student monthly journal *Tribuna* and has been involved in the struggles against the privatisation of universities. He currently lives in Amsterdam, where he is working on a collective volume on Althusser and helps organise events for Balkan Buro.

Steve Korver is a writer/editor. After years of travel subsidised by carpentry and B-movie acting, he came to Amsterdam in 1992 to reverse the journey his parents made as immigrants to Canada. Soon he was a columnist, copywriter, editor/writer of guide books, and contributor to the likes of *New York Times, Guardian, Time Out, McSweeney's Quarterly, Condé Nast Traveller* and *The Globe & Mail* on such subjects as food/drink, design/architecture, Yuri Gagarin, Serbian gangster kitsch and all-things-Amsterdam. He finally got his first real job in 2005 as editor-in-chief of the cultural paper *Amsterdam Weekly.* But after 175 issues and 14 European Newspaper Awards, he returned to his freelancing roots in 2009.

Maite García Lechner holds a MA in Art History. She started as grants officer at the European Cultural Foundation in 2008. Before joining the ECF, Maite briefly worked as a researcher at Princeton University (USA) and in various project-related positions in the Dutch cultural sector (including: Netherlands Institute of Cultural Heritage/ICN and the Dutch Centre for International Cultural Activities/SICA). She became ECF's Programme Manager Grants in 2009. In this position she manages the activities of the grants programme. This includes the development, implementation and coordination of 4 different open grant schemes and recently started the co-development of grants within ECF's other programmes.

Joep Leerssen is professor of European Studies at the University of Amsterdam and recipient of the Spinoza Award 2008. His specialities are Irish cultural history, national stereotyping and the history of cultural nationalism in Europe. Relevant work includes: *Europese Literatuurgeschiedenis* (audiobook, 2006) *Imagology* (co-edited with Manfred Beller, 2007), *National Thought in Europe* (2nd ed. 2008), *Editing the Nation's Memory* (co-edited with Dirk Van Hulle, 2008).

Antonis Liakos is professor of contemporary history and history of historiography at the University of Athens. His main books are 'How the Past turn to History', 'The Nation. How has been imagined by those who wanted to change the world?', 'The Unification of Italy and the Greek National Idea' and 'Labour and Politics in the Interwar Greece'. He is part of the European Doctorate in Social History of Europe and the Mediterranean, the editorial board of the review *Historein* and the research team of the European Science Foundation network National Histories in Europe (NHIST). He is member of the board of the International Commission for the History and Theory of Historiography.

Nat Muller is an independent curator and critic based between Rotterdam and Beirut. Her main interests include: the intersections of aesthetics, media and politics; media art and contemporary art in and from the Middle East. She has curated video screenings for projects and festivals in a.o. Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Berlin, New York, Istanbul, Copenhagen, Grimstad, Lugano, Dubai, Cairo and Beirut. With Alessandro Ludovico she edited the *Mag.net Reader2: Between Paper and Pixel* (2007), and *Mag.net Reader3: Processual Publishing, Actual Gestures* (2009), based on a series of debates organized at Documenta XII. She has taught at the Willem de Kooning Academy (NL), ALBA (Beirut), the Lebanese American University (Beirut), A.U.D. in Dubai (UAE), and the Rietveld Academy (NL). She has served as an advisor on Euro-Med collaborations for the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), the EU, and as an advisor on e-culture for the Dutch Ministry of Culture. She is currently working on a large site-specific project with Mediamatic in Amsterdam, and on her first book for the Institute of Network Cultures and NAi Publishers.

Ann Rigney holds the chair of Comparative Literature at Utrecht University. Her research deals primarily with the intersections between literature and historiography and she has published widely on topics relating to narrative theory, historical representation and cultural memory. She is currently completing a book on the cultural afterlife of Walter Scott and directs the research

project 'The Dynamics of Cultural Remembrance: an Intermedial Perspective'. Since 2007 she is one of the coordinators of the Utrecht University focus area Cultures and Identities. She was elected a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) in 2005 and, in 2009-2010, will be a fellow of the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies (NIAS).

Monica Sassatelli gained her PhD in Sociology from the University of Parma in Italy. She has taught courses in Sociology at several universities in Italy and has been Jean Monnet Fellow at the European University Institute of Florence. Since January 2008 she is at Sussex University in the UK as a research fellow, working on the EU funded FP7 project 'Art festivals and European public culture'. Her recent book *Becoming Europeans. Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies* has been awarded the British Sociological Association Philip Abrams Memorial prize for 2010.

Marjo van Schaik was born in the Netherlands and graduated in European Studies and Law. After a short period as a juridical advisor at a consulting agency, she worked for Randstad Uitzendbureau from 1990 until 2000 ending in a director's position. From 2000 to 2006 she worked as business director at Het Muziektheater (Amsterdam's main opera house). In that period she took up several governing positions in local and national bodies in the cultural field. The following years she dedicated to advising and directing cultural and social initiatives in suburbs, where diversity was key topic. Recently she started a promotion on the topic of diversity and cultural art policy.

Jair Schalkwijk studied law and philosophy on the University of Amsterdam. At the moment he is working for the Doetank Foundation. The Doetank Foundation is an independent research and action bureau in which philosophers, artists and sociologists work together on creative social research in an urban environment. The Doetank is based in Amsterdam.

Gabriëlle Schleijpen is Course Director of the Dutch Art Institute, an ArtEZ MFA program currently based in Enschede but about to move to Arnhem. She is also Head of Studium Generale, the transdisciplinary lecture programme of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. Next to these two part-time positions she is chair of the board of If I Can't Dance I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution, member of the board of Metropolis M and advisor to the International Advisory Committee Visual Arts and Design of the Mondriaan Foundation.

Isabelle Schwarz joined the ECF in 2002 with the assignment to build up a cultural policy development strand for the foundation. Since June 2009, she leads a team of ten staff combining programme and policy development. Former Executive Director of the European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres (ENCATC), first in Brussels, then Copenhagen, she launched within ENCATC the Nordic-Baltic Platform for Cultural Management. Earlier, she worked at the World Commission on Culture and Development (UN/UNESCO), the Council of Europe (Cultural Policy and Action Division), the French Ministry of Culture (Department of Forecast Studies), and with cultural NGOs in London, Paris, and Brussels. She serves on several juries and boards. She holds a MPhil in international cultural exchanges, as well as and in history of international relations. She also has an MA in history of art and archaeology.

Guido Snel is lecturer teaching in the department of European Studies, University of Amsterdam. Specializes in contemporary European literatures, with a specific focus on Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Academic publications: the cultural debate on Central Europe during the Cold War; imaginary geographies in Central-European fictionalized autobiographies; art and literature and the Bosnian war. Other fields of research interest: multilingualism, literature and cultural memory, cosmopolitanism, literature, public space and the debate on European identity, migration and cultural diversity. He is also a novelist: *Mr. Lugosi's butler* (Arbeiderspers 2008), *Hugo en Ayla. Scenes uit een huwelijk* (forthcoming, autumn 2010, Bezige Bij).

Katherine Watson is Director of the European Cultural Foundation, Amsterdam. She lived and worked in both Canada and Europe, before joining the ECF as Director of LabforCulture in 2006. In June 2009 she was named Associate Director of the ECF and assumed the responsibility of

Director in November 2009. Her 30 year experience combines interdisciplinary art production with advocacy, research, policy and programme development for non-profit arts organizations and government. Prior to moving to Amsterdam, she produced many international projects that combined art and technology. She is regularly invited to speak around the world and to write on issues of culture and the digital shift. She has been a director, manager, fund developer, arts advisor and jury member, and chair of several boards, however she most likes to be remembered as a 'connector' of people and ideas and a 'deviser' of innovative interdisciplinary projects.

Bregje van Woensel is art historian and studied Language and Culture Studies with a focus on cultural history. From 2005-2008 Brechje worked as a curator at the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam. She works for VPRO's Zomergasten and Metropolis M Magazine and made the publication BURN & LEARN on 30 years of medium conservatism in the graffiti culture. She is also guest curator at De Ateliers. Bregje van Woensel programmes and writes in the field of historiography.