Identifying with Europe

Reflections on a Historical and Cultural Canon for Europe

Compiled and edited by
Ineke van Hamersveld and Arthur Sonnen

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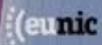
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Since the end of World War II Europe and European (cultural) identity have been dreamed of and discussed by artists, writers, scientists, politicians and policy-makers. Until 1992, when the *Maastricht Treaty* was signed, the centre of attention was the development of a supranational European unity, built on a shared culture, the legacy of a common past. Art and culture were considered primarily in an economic way. After 1992 the attention shifted to Europe as a cultural commonality, with buzz words like cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. The emphasis increasingly lies on the strengthening of artistic and cultural cooperation, the discussion focuses on what holds Europe together in a cultural sense.

In *Identifying with Europe* the authors reflect on the idea of a European cultural identity, rooted in cultural heritage. They question the possibility and desirability of a cultural or historical canon for Europe. In this way they contribute to the body of knowledge about European cultural identity from a fresh, new perspective. Some consider a canon as a dialogue between past and present, a show case, or as an instrument for self-knowledge or more European historical awareness. Others point out that a canon excludes the phenomena that do not suit its explicit or implicit political and cultural agenda. Although the authors represent very different points of view, they express the conviction that an open-minded attitude to the contributions of members of different cultural communities and backgrounds can work for the benefit of all.

Foreword
by Henk Pröpper (SICA), Arthur Sonnen (EUNIC Netherlands), Cas Smithuijsen en Ineke van Hamersveld (Boekman Foundation)

Reflections on European identity

Narratives of European Cultural Identity
by Monica Sassatelli

Europe as an idea

>Two phases in the discourse on Europe

>History of consciousness of being European

>Simultaneity of Europe as an idea and as an institutional project

>The shift from unification to integration to identity

Approaches to European cultural identity: a classification of discourses

>Three models of thinking about European integration and identity

>Model 1: unity

>>*The unity of European culture, projected in past and myth*
>>*Specificity of Europe in classical sociology*
>>*The unity of European culture, projected into the future*

>Model 2: diversity

>>*Culture, not the glue of European integration*
>>*A nation-based civic European identity*

>Model 3: unity in diversity

>>*Striving for a synthesis*
>>*Critique on the unity in diversity model*
>>*Alternative views*

European identity as an institutional project

>An overarching unity: the Declaration on European Identity (1973)

>The shift from unity to diversity: the Maastricht Treaty (1992)

>Towards unity in diversity

A Need for Commitment
European Solidarity Requires an Expanded European Identity
by Tzvetan Todorov

The capacity to manage different national, regional, religious and cultural identities determines the unity of Europe. A pluralistic concept of European identity that encompasses other, non-European heritages is needed.

The essence of European identity according to Paul Valéry

New elements to the model of Valéry

The drawback of the European identity

Incorporating foreign and immigrant influences

Plurality of identities

>Initial identities and language

>Identity as citizens

>Moral and political values

Creating a superior type of unity out of diversity

European Union inspired by pluralist Enlightenment model

The Horses of the Apocalypse
Present Turkish (Cultural) Identity Ignoring the Ottoman Past
Interview by Michaël Zeeman with Asli Erdoğan

Kemalist Turkey is a myth, a canon of its own, created at the expense of what is considered not to be European. Large parts of the Ottoman past are ignored, minorities expelled from society. This is causing a broadening gap between secularists, with their orientation towards Europe, and nationalists.

To be or not to be European

In between worlds

Paying the price for mixed roots

Reflections on a historical and cultural canon for Europe

Opening Windows
A Humanist Historical Canon as an Instrument for Self-Knowledge
by Han van der Horst

A humanist historical canon has to connect with the many diverse frames of reference that can be found in Europe. In doing so it does not close off Europe, but is giving openings, on the lookout for deep historical roots and coherences. Such a canon does not explain, defend or legitimize, but is liberating and emancipating in the true sense of the word. A (humanist) canon functions at the level of citizens and is aimed at offering them a tool to be able to function in an effective manner as world citizens.

Historical awareness needed for self-knowledge

    Revaluation of the past

European dimensions

    Christianity

    Democracy and the separation of power between Church and State

    The separation between emotion and reason

    The blackside of history

Design for a canon of European humanist history

    History of Europe

    European spirit

    From Europe to the world

    History of mankind

    History of humanity

    A violated world

    Utopia?

    The making of Europe

The canon as an instrument for becoming world citizens

Multi Perspective History, a Case Study
European History from a German-French Point of View
by Ulrich Pfeil

History is not a fact, but an interpretation of the past, filtered through national images, myths and stereotypes. A German-French history book about European history makes a start to help overcome this way of thinking and to contribute to a supranational understanding and mutual appreciation in Europe, by presenting different perceptions.

The making of a joint German-French book on European history

Histoire/Geschichte

A new generation, a different treatment of history

Acquis communautaire historique: a European history book

The European Cultural Canon and the Predicaments of Memory Politics
by Leonidas Donskis

The current search for a European identity stems from feelings of uncertainty, unsafety and insecurity and is the kiss of death for tradition. It is a symptom of our inability to accept the world as it is. The rediscovery of the cultural canon, used as a shield to protect us from the ambiguities of modern society, is in line with this development. The canon needs to be understood as a dialogue, between past and present, and therefore humanism and universalism are indispensable prerequisites. In the end the (European) cultural canon is nothing but a process of conscious continuation of someone else's existence.

Is our life as shaky as the Fiddler on the Roof's?
> The duality of identity according to Kant and Durkheim
> Identity as a crisis of tradition
> Being European is part of the political agenda

What is the cultural canon?
> The function of and need for tradition
> The cultural canon: an intensive debate
> How does the cultural canon work?

Memory politics: remembering versus forgetting
> Instruments of forgetting
> Politics of remembering
> Forgetting and forgiving
> At the limits of modernity
> The importance of the reference system and language
> Organized memory versus the role of power

Epilogue

A Sense of Belonging
Paradoxes of Identity, Nationalism and Cultural Policy in Europe and Beyond
by Peter Duelund

Recent years have witnessed a growing emphasis on a more nationally oriented approach in the cultural policies of European countries. Yet the EU is increasingly arguing for cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. Proposals for a common historical and cultural canon for Europe are raised in the chapters of this book. UNESCO's Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) has been ratified by many countries all over the world, including the majority of European countries. This current European and global development raises a number of scientific and political questions relating to cultural policy, and implemented and reflected upon as identity policy.

Cultural policy as a medium

Paradigms of identity and nationalism

> Questions of globalization and nationalism
> Three theoretical paradigms on nationalism
> Habermas and the paradigm of constitutional patriotism: nationalism and religion
> An alternative, sociological approach

Identity issues in national cultural policies

> The Danish cultural canon
> The canon on Dutch history
> Differences between the Danish cultural canon and Dutch historical canon
> Turkish paradoxes

Identity issues in EU cultural policies

> Cultural policy before and after Maastricht
> Identity and culture in the cultural programmes and proclamations of the EU
> EU cultural policy and the world

New directions for cultural policy and cultural policy research

> Present challenges
> Conclusion

Bibliography

About the Authors

About the Artist, Gerhard Lentink