

Inventing Homo Europaeus

The Cultural Politics of European Integration

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According to its officials, the European Union is laying the foundations for a new kind of political order, one that will transcend the logic of the nation-state and pave the way for a more federal and supranational system of European government. The legitimacy and success of this venture, however, rests on the EU's capacity to capture the loyalty and allegiance of its would-be citizens; to transform nationals into self-recognising European subjects. The absence of a tangible European public and lack of a coherent European identity among the peoples of Europe thus poses a serious obstacle to the EU's project for 'European construction'. Taking up debates in the theory of European integration, this article examines the idea of ever-closer union from an anthropological perspective. It argues that what political scientists call the EU's 'democratic deficit' stems primarily from a cultural deficit. Following a review of EU attempts to mobilise culture as a device for creating and diffusing European consciousness, the article analyses three specific areas where EU policy-makers have tried to invent Europe at the level of popular consciousness: 1) EU information policy; 2) the Europeanisation of mass education and the re-writing of history; and 3) the targeting of 'women' as a key group for EU intervention. In conclusion, the article considers the wider implications of these EU-sponsored cultural actions designed to forge *Homo Europaeus* as a new type of political subject. In doing so, it challenges prevailing assumptions about the EU's model of supranational governance.

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"His mother was half-English, his father was half-French. All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz; and by-and-by I learned that, most appropriately, the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs had entrusted him with the making of a report, for its future guidance"

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Introduction: European Integration from a 'Cultural Perspective'

Over a decade ago the historian Hugh Seton-Watson (1985) wrote an essay entitled 'What is Europe, Where is Europe?' His argument, which most social scientists and ethnologists would broadly agree with, is that 'Europe' is a contested concept that can only be meaningfully understood as a cultural and historical entity. The

word 'Europe', he wrote, 'has been used and misused, interpreted and misinterpreted, in as many different meanings as almost any word in any language. There have been and are many Europes' (Seton-Watson 1985: 9). The logical corollary of this is that Europe should not be conceptualised as a fixed, bounded continent and culture-area or a particular kind of 'civilisation', but rather as a fluid space with shifting boundaries and uncertain content.¹ To say this is simply to acknowledge an axiomatic principle of anthropological enquiry: Namely, that the fundamental categories of thought we use to order our universe and through which we come to perceive ourselves and our world are culturally constructed and symbolically defined. Like other macro geo-political regions such as the 'West', 'Mitteleuropa', 'the Orient' and the 'Third World', Europe is an imagined geography forged

from peoples' mental maps and cultural beliefs: 'a region created by intellectuals to persuade others to think about their relations with their neighbours in a particular way' (Wallace 1990: 8). To put this in an anthropological context, 'Europe' is an example of what Turner called a 'master symbol': a polysemous entity that embraces a spectrum of different cultural meanings.² This has important political as well as cognitive implications for as William Wallace notes (1990: 8), the boundaries of Europe are fundamentally 'a matter of politics and of ideology' rather than geography or economics. In this respect, as Philip Schlesinger argues (1994), the definition of Europe has itself become a 'new cultural battlefield'.

If Europe is a 'cultural construction', the key question to ask is 'who is constructing it' and 'how is it being constructed?' To answer these questions requires an analysis of the cultural politics of European integration. By 'cultural politics' I mean a focus on the various cultural strategies, discourses and political technologies that function to make certain ideas about Europe authoritative, while alternative conceptions are rendered marginal and muted. In short, we need to understand the processes by which particular narratives of Europe become hegemonic. These questions, in turn, raise several theoretical issues that lie at the heart of current anthropology, notably, the anthropological study of policy (Shore & Wright 1997), the relationship between ideology and consciousness (Gramsci 1973; Foucault 1991; Rose 1992), political ritual and the mobilisation of bias (Abélès; Ketzer 1988; Lukes 1975), and the manufacture of consent (Herman & Chomsky 1988).

My personal view is that anthropology is at its most effective when it challenges received wisdom and dislodges the certainties that govern the present (what Foucault calls the 'regimes of truth'). In doing this, we make visible things that are typically taken for granted and expose those beliefs and ideological assumptions that form the building blocks for conventional modes of thought – ideas and concepts that have often become so naturalised and axiomatic that they go unquestioned.³ As Eric Wolf (1994) has warned, we ignore at our peril the way that others are using our own concepts,

particularly such perilous words as 'race', 'ethnicity' and 'culture'.

This paper, which arises from fieldwork carried out on European Union (EU) institutions in Brussels between 1995 and 1997,⁴ focuses on the way the concept of 'culture', and more specifically, 'European culture', is being utilised by EU officials and politicians in their attempt to integrate Europe. Among policy elites in Brussels, this project is typically referred to as '*construction européenne*', a phrase which, significantly, has no real equivalent in English. Like its German translation '*die europäische Konstruktion*', the expression 'European construction' denotes fabrication; something artificial and mechanical.⁵ However, '*construction européenne*' is a revealing metaphor; a cultural idiom that is simultaneously industrial and modernist, yet also curiously post-structuralist and post-modernist. It symbolises on the one hand, the EU vision of a new, supranational European system of governance, but on the other hand, the mechanistic and managerial way that EU elites tend to approach European unification in practice. The idea of 'building Europe' also sums up the sense of historical destiny and mission that informs their thinking about Europe, and their image of themselves as the architects and pioneers of this grand European enterprise (Shore 1997). As Timothy Garton-Ash (1998: 51) observes:

"Like no other continent, Europe is obsessed with its own meaning and direction. Idealistic and teleological visions of Europe at once inform, legitimate and are themselves informed and legitimated by the political development of something called the European Union. The name 'European Union' is itself a product of this approach, for a union is what the EU is meant to be, not what it is."

As EU policy-makers see it, the European Community provides an institutional blueprint for what is, in effect, a new kind of political architecture that will transcend the old international order based on competitive nation-states. This is what EU enthusiasts call Europe's '*vocation fédérale*', or 'federal destiny'. According to this view, globalisation, the dictates of interna-

tional markets, and the end of the Cold War, have rendered the nation-state economically and politically obsolete. We have entered what Roger Cooper (1996) calls the 'era of the post-modern state', in which the idea of national sovereignty has become at best, a futile anachronism, at worse a dangerous fiction. This is the grand narrative of European integration, perhaps the last and most ambitious of what Lyotard (1984) would call the grand metanarratives of European modernity.

Government Without Statehood, or State without a Nation?

The 1986 Single European Act, the completion of the internal market and the 1992 Maastricht Treaty have effectively created a new system of governance in Europe for which we still lack an adequate analytical vocabulary to describe. While critics warn that the EU is slowly transforming itself into a European superstate, EU officials and their supporters emphatically deny this charge. They argue instead that the European Community is a hybrid political entity that cannot be compared with the nation-state: it is a *sui generis* form of political organisation; an unfinished project whose ultimate trajectory is unknown. According to William Wallace's famous formulation, the European Community is 'less than a federation, more than a regime' (Wallace 1983: 403–36). More recently, Wallace has amended this conclusion to argue that the EU's complex multi-level arrangement of national, transnational and supranational institutions and actors has developed into a form of 'government without statehood' (Wallace 1997: 339–360).

However, my own ethnographic research among EU officials in Brussels leads me to question Wallace's claims. For many anthropologists, the phrase 'government without statehood' recalls a long-standing ethnographic debate over acephalous, segmentary societies such as the Nuer and Dinka of Sudan, or the Swat Pathans of Pakistan. Compared with these 'tribes without rulers', the idea that the EU constitutes a form of government without a state is both sociologically naive and empirically flawed. Moreover, as anthropological studies

have often shown, functionalist models that purport to describe societies without a state often fail to register the longer term processes of class-formation that are actively creating a new state-like entity (see Asad 1972; Ahmed 1976). Rather than celebrating the EU's novelty and uniqueness as a novel kind of political system we should ask instead to what extent the steady expansion of EU institutions and powers constitutes a process of state-formation? Even the most casual observer will note that the EU has already acquired most of the trappings of a state – a process to which monetary union, the single currency and the creation of the European Central Bank and single currency have added a major new dimension. Indeed, there are virtually no independent nation states in the world today that do not possess their own currency. As EU policy-makers perceive it, political union will be forged primarily through economic integration. Jacques Delors spelt all this out over a decade ago in a speech to MEPs in Strasbourg when he warned member states to 'wake up' to their loss of sovereignty and predicted that within ten years 80% of all economic and social decision-making would be made at European rather than national level. What the EU treaties have created, in the words of Walter Goldstein (1993: 122–23), is not 'government without statehood' so much as 'the first transnational state of the nuclear era'.

However, despite making impressive legal, economic and institutional advances towards a united Europe, EU elites have signally failed to create a 'European people'. There is no 'European identity' or 'European consciousness' to rival or challenge the hegemony of nationalism or to provide an alternative basis for cohesion and solidarity in the emerging European state. Moreover, those factors that give coherence and meaning to existing national identities (such as shared history, memory, religion, language, myth and memory) are precisely those factors that most divide fellow Europeans and therefore cannot be invoked as a basis for pan-national unity (even place-names such as Waterloo Station, Trafalgar Square and Place d'Austerlitz celebrate victories of one nation over its neighbours). The problem for the EU is that the transfer of loyalties from the nation-

states to the new European institutions that was supposed to occur according to integration theorists such as Ernst Haas and Leon Lindberg, simply has not happened. Most Europeans remain stubbornly wedded to their nation-states and show little sign of embracing the kind of European identity entertained by EU enthusiasts. The grand vision of a transcendent, unified Europe entertained by EU policy-makers in Brussels is generally not a vision shared by most European citizens. Moreover, recent opinion polls suggest that since the high-water mark of the late 1980s, people across the continent have become more indifferent and even hostile towards the European project. Clearly, European integration is an ideology of the elites that has not yet succeeded in hailing the masses.

To a large extent, this public disenchantment with Europe can be blamed on EU leaders themselves, as they readily admit.⁶ Until the early 1990s, EU elites were able to advance their plans for European construction without the active participation of the citizens of Europe. Their involvement was not deemed necessary. The term 'permissive consensus' was coined by political scientists to describe what was assumed to be the 'passive consent' of the public. In the words of Pascal Lamy, Jacques Delors' powerful *chef de cabinet*, 'the people weren't ready to agree to integration, so you had to get on without telling them too much about what was happening'.⁷ Nowhere was this approach to European construction more evident than in the case of the 1992 Treaty on European Union (or Maastricht Treaty). That treaty was, in effect, the blueprint for a new constitutional order, which would necessarily have profound social, cultural and political implications, yet it was presented as a technical, economic and legalistic document of interest only to legal experts. The treaty itself was largely incomprehensible to the vast majority of citizens whose interests it claimed to represent, a fact that served very effectively to disguise its political content (Hoffman 1993). Since the turbulent Maastricht referenda debates of 1992, however, that 'permissive consensus' can no longer be taken for granted, and this is what underlies the EU's current crisis of legitimacy. The term

'democratic deficit' has thus become EU code for lack of accountability and democracy.

Democratic Deficit or Cultural Deficit?

However, the term 'democratic deficit' refers not simply to the EU's institutional and constitutional shortcomings but more fundamentally, to its lack of cultural legitimacy. Stripped of its legalistic and constitutional veneer, the EU's 'democratic deficit' arises primarily from a 'cultural deficit'. As Habermas (1992) and De Witte (1993) point out, all political regimes – especially democratic ones – seek legitimacy in the cultural domain. The idea of 'governing by consent', a principle which lies at the heart of modern democracy, presupposes that consent has to be freely given and that political leadership has to be earned. Leaders who appeal to the national interest have to demonstrate that they, too, are part of the 'nation' in question. In most democratic states, the bedrock of political legitimacy and stability lies in the recognition of shared cultural values or understandings between rulers and ruled. To echo Durkheim's (1953) argument about the internalisation of social control, people obey the law not simply because they fear its sanctions, but because they come to accept the law as *their* law. In the modern era, rule by people of a different nationality (or 'foreigners') is equated with colonialism and tyranny, and thus an affront to the principles of self-determination and national sovereignty. This is the essence of Gellner's (1983) argument about nationalism: what makes the nation-state such a powerful *idée-force* is not simply its appeal to chauvinism, but the fact that it embodies a fundamental principle of political legitimacy: namely that all nations should have their own 'political roofs' and that 'the political and the national unit should be congruent' (1983: 1). However, as Gellner argues, what constitute 'a nation' are cultural factors, particularly consciousness of kind among its members.

The key problem for the European Union is that unlike most nation states, Europe has no coherent common culture around which fellow Europeans can unite. There is no popular sense of 'European consciousness' and identity to lend

legitimacy to the EU's political ambitions, or to galvanise feelings of cohesion and belonging among the divided people's of Europe. EU leaders and institutions have failed to win the loyalty and affection of its would-be citizens, largely because there is still no such thing as a 'European public' as a self-recognising category or body-politic. The EU is thus an embryonic state without a nation; an administration without a government. It aspires to be a democracy, but cannot become one until there exists a self-identifying European people or *demos*. And democracy without a *demos* is simply *cratos* (power) masked by *telos* (idealism).⁸

This 'cultural deficit' has become a source of increasing embarrassment for the EU, even a threat to its survival. EU institutions repeatedly claim that they exist to serve and protect the 'European interest', but without a European public these claims to embody the 'General Will' of the European people appear as little more than a modern version of *raison d'état*. The question EU policy makers ask is how to 'transform the technocrats' Europe into a People's Europe'? What they have learned is that the goal of 'ever-closer Union among the peoples of Europe' enshrined in the Treaty of Rome, hinges largely on the EU's capacity to forge a new sense of 'Europeanness': a collective identity that can transcend exclusively parochial and nationalistic loyalties and lay the foundations for a higher level of consciousness based on allegiance to European, rather than national, institutions and ideals. This entails much more than just popularising the EU: rather, it requires a wholesale shift in governmentality – i.e. a radical transformation in the way individuals in Europe relate to government, to each other and, more importantly, to themselves. In short, building Europe is not only about creating a new system of governance: it also demands a new category of individual and a new kind of political subjectivity. The question is can such a 'European identity' be created? Can a sense of loyalty to Europe as a *patria* be engineered?

This is where the cultural politics of European integration acquires particular saliency. During the 1980s EU strategists began to realise that to 'construct Europe' required more than just the traditional 'neofunctionalist' solu-

tion to integration. That model was based on the rationalist assumption that a kind of automatic 'functional spillover' would occur whereby integration in the spheres of economics and law would lead progressively and inevitably to political and social integration. According to neofunctionalist theory, European integration was a process with a dynamic of its own (Haas 1958; O'Neill 1996). Progress towards ever-closer union was believed to part of the trajectory of European modernity, or what David Marquand (1991) called the 'irresistible tide of Europeanization'.

However, even before the late 1980s, EU policy-makers had begun to advocate a more interventionist stance. During the mid-1980s, a number of European Commission and European Parliament reports appeared that started to discuss integration as a cultural issue (Baget-Bozzo 1986; European Commission 1988; 1988a). The message from all these reports was that Europeans lacked awareness of their shared European heritage and were ignorant of the many things the European Community was doing for them. The reports blamed commercialisation, 'Americanisation', the breakdown of traditional social structures and the lack of a coherent EU information policy respectively, for this state of affairs. What was needed, they claimed, were concrete measures to 'strengthen and promote the Community's image and identity both for its citizens and for the rest of the world' (Adonnino 1985: 5). The solution they proposed was a series of public awareness campaigns and symbolic initiatives to promote 'the European idea' and diffuse among Europeans greater consciousness of their shared values and cultural heritage. As the European Commission and Parliament saw it, the task was to educate and inform the public about Europe. These ideas were translated into policy initiatives on several fronts including, *inter alia*:

- the 1984 'People's Europe' Campaign (an explicit attempt to invent new symbols for Europe, resulting in the new European logo, flag and anthem, European passports, car number-plates, and a reconfiguration of the ritual calendar to include thematic 'European Years', local 'Europe week' festivals and

- an annual commemorative 'Europe Day'⁹;
- the European Commission's controversial 'Television Without Frontiers Directive' (the first explicit attempt to use audio-visual policy and pan-European TV as an instrument for promoting political integration)¹⁰;
- the various EU-sponsored cultural initiatives designed to make Europeans more conscious of their common cultural heritage (including new prizes for literature, architecture, conservation, and sport);¹¹
- the creation of the single currency, or euro – defined as one of the three 'pillars' of European political union and, in the words of Jacques Santer (1998:8), 'a powerful factor in forging a European identity' which 'will provide a physical manifestation of the growing rapprochement between European citizens'.

The remainder of this essay examines three other key sites where EU policy-makers have attempted to invent Europe at the level of public opinion: First, in the field of information policy; second, in the attempt to Europeanise national education systems; and third, in the identification of 'women' as a key target for EU culture-building activities.

EU Information Policy as Nation-Building Tool: The de Clercq Report

The 1993 de Clercq Report provides a paradigmatic example of the EU's approach to information and public opinion. Following the near-disastrous French referenda of 1992, Commission President Jacques Delors set up a working group composed of communications professionals and PR experts (called the '*Comité des Sages*') to examine the European Community's communications policy and to suggest ways of improving its image. The report, drawn up by Mr. Willy de Clercq, a Belgian MEP and former Commissioner, was completed in March 1993 and approved by the Commission before being unveiled at a Brussels press conference on 31 March.

The report begins by noting that European integration was a 'concept based far more on the will of statesmen than on the will of the people'.

It then proceeds to identify the problem: 'There is little feeling of belonging to Europe. European identity has not yet been engrained in peoples' minds' (de Clercq 1993: 2). To achieve this, the report recommends that Europe be treated as a 'brand product', to be promoted using the slogan, 'Together for Europe to the Benefit of Us All' (1993: 25). It argues that European governments should stop trying to explain the Maastricht Treaty to their publics – because 'treaty texts are far too technical and remote from daily life for people to understand' (1993: 4) – and concentrate instead on presenting the European Union to the public 'as a "good product" with an emphasis on the beneficial effects "for me" (1993: 13). Taking up the idea of 'positioning' commonly used in advertising ('whereby branded products are clearly described and placed in relationship to their competitors in peoples' minds') the report proposes that 'the Commission should be clearly positioned as the guarantor of the well being and quality of life of the citizen of Europe... It must be presented with a human face: sympathetic, warm and caring' (1993: 15). It also suggested that the institutions responsible for European construction 'must be brought close to the people, implicitly evoking the maternal, nurturing care of *'Europe'* for all her children' (1993: 9).

Among its other recommendations, the report advocated 'personalised certificates awarded to all newly-born babies attesting their birth as citizens of the European Union (1993: 40); a European library and museum (1993: 27); a 'European dimension' to be included in school text books and syllabuses; a European 'Order of Merit' which would outrank all other national honours (1993: 34); a new banner for the Commission bearing the motto 'In Uno Plures'; and direct television appeals by the Commission President to the women and youth of Europe (1993: 26–33). At the heart of the advice given to President Delors was that the Commission should set up a centralised Office of Communications, similar to those in the United States and Japan, 'to ensure that the Community speaks with one voice, and communication the 'right message' to its target audience (1993: 48).

Senior Commission officials genuinely believed that this Report offered a solution to the

EU's communications shortcomings. In fact, it had the opposite effect. At the press conference to launch the Report, journalists staged a walk-out in protest and the Greek president of the Brussels International Press Association, Costas Verras, publicly accused the Commission of behaving like a military junta. What particularly angered the journalists was the Report's suggestion that certain social categories – notably women, youth and journalists themselves – become 'priority target groups' for EU information activities. To quote the Report again: 'newscasters and reporters must themselves be targeted, they must themselves be persuaded about European Union ... so that they subsequently become enthusiastic supporters of the cause' (1993: 35).

I mention this incident, which occurred a few days before I began my second period of fieldwork in Brussels, because it provides significant insight into EU conceptions of, and instrumental strategies for nurturing, European consciousness. What is also significant is the fact that although the Report received widespread condemnation from the press, EU Commissioner for Information and Culture, Mr. Pinheiro, refused to distance himself from it and said that he would be using some of its proposals. While many officials admitted to me that the Report's approach was too commercial, none criticised its basic premise of using 'information' as a tool for manufacturing consent.

The Europeanisation of Mass Education and the Re-Writing of History

A second area where EU officials have sought to invent Europe as a category of thought is in the education sector. This is summed up most vividly in the notion of 'introducing the *European dimension*' into national school curricula, textbooks, and university syllabuses. Central to the process of constructing any new political order is the mobilisation of history and memory. As Anderson (1983), Gellner (1983) and Hobsbawm (1990) remind us, mass education – together with conscription, taxation and state violence – were the foremost technologies for inculcating nationalist consciousness among the peoples of the emergent nation states. For this reason, EU

officials now emphasise the importance of re-writing history from a European perspective to challenge the nationalist bias of traditional ways of teaching and learning (Brugmans 1987). But what does history look like from this 'European perspective'?

Typically, EU historiography – like Seton-Watson's view of European culture – represents the last 3,000 years of European history as a kind of moral success story: a gradual coming together in the shape of the European Community and its institutions. According to this conception, European history is an evolutionary process that starts with 'prehistory' (where the key stages include *Homo Erectus*, megalithic civilisation, the neolithic revolutions and the Bronze Age), before advancing to the age of classical antiquity. The result is that European identity is portrayed as the end product of a progressive ascent through history – albeit a highly selective history – from ancient Greece and Rome, to the spread of Christianity, the scientific revolution, the Age of Reason, the Enlightenment and the triumph of liberal democracy. These key episodes thus become palimpsests for an essential European cultural community: a 'core Europe' whose common bonds lie in its shared heritage, moral ascendancy and cultural continuity. The EU's choice of 'ERASMUS' and 'SOCRATES' as acronyms for its two major educational exchange programmes is a minor example of this. Another is the targeting of the Acropolis and Mount Athos as the two largest EU-funded projects within its 'Conservation of Europe's Archaeological Heritage' initiative.

French historians seem to have made a particularly noticeable contribution to the EU's attempts to re-write history. For example, in one recent EU-sponsored history textbook Henri Brugman's (former rector of the Collège d'Europe) has an essay entitled: 'Europe: a common civilisation, a destiny, a vocation' (Brugmans 1987:11). In the same volume, George Pflimlin (1987: 9) describes the last 3,000 years of European history as '*le miracle européen*'. Similarly, the historian Hélène Ahrweiler argues that there does indeed exist 'an essential Europe':

"All peoples (Valéry says 'races') and all lands which were in turn Romanized, Christianized and subjected - at least mentally - to Greek discipline, are thoroughly European . . . Everywhere where the names of Caesar, Caius, Trajan, and Virgil, everywhere where the names of Aristotle, Plato and Euclid have simultaneously held meaning and authority, that is Europe" (Ahrweiler 1993: 32).

The idea that European cultural unity is founded upon a shared ancient civilisation is attractive to the architects of political integration and clearly informs much of their campaigning work. The problem with such a notion, however, is that it reifies an out-dated idea of cultures as fixed, unitary and bounded wholes that is both sociologically outmoded and politically dangerous. As Pieterse (1991: 5) states, 'what is being recycled as "European culture" is nineteenth century elite imperial myth formation'. EU officials and image-makers, however, continue to draw on 'classical' images in their quest to identify the essential elements of European culture, and show little sensitivity towards post-colonial criticisms of Western orientalism.

Typically, EU officials justify their attempts to promote the re-writing of history books to reflect the 'European perspective' on the grounds that this is necessary to combat the hegemony of nationalist ideology, which they regard as the primary obstacle to European union. The result, however, is that nationalist ideology is simply substituted for a new ideology of 'Europeanism'. For example, writing in a recent EU 'information' booklet Pascal Fontaine (Monnet's former chef de cabinet and Director of the Commission's Information Office in Paris) charts the progress of the 'European ideal':

"... in the nineteenth century, it was an inspiration for poets and romantics, only to be distorted by conquerors seeking to justify their lust for power. It did not come to full expression in practical form, however, until a handful of courageous, visionary statesmen determined to put a stop to the loss of life that seemed to be the inevitable outcome of conflicts between nation-states" (Fontaine 1991:5).

The true saviours of Europe are thus not the leaders of the Resistance or the Allies, but Monnet, Spaaks, Schuman, De Gaspari and Adenauer: these 'visionary statesmen' have become the symbolic guardians and ancestors of the 'European ideal'. But if Europe symbolises peace and prosperity, the nation state is construed as an agent of conflict and war. To complete this heroic myth of itself, the EU has also produced a series of films and videos for distribution to schools, colleges and local authorities. These include 'Jean Monnet, Father of Europe', 'A European journey' (a jingoistic potted history of the various stages, achievements and future of European integration); 'The Tree of Europe' ('[a]n original feature which will make all Europeans aware of the common roots of their past'); and 'After Twenty Centuries', which surveys 2,000 years of European history and features Europeans' 'shared experiences at political, intellectual and cultural level' (European Commission 1991:1-5).

Jean Baptiste Duroselle's (1990) volume, *Europe. A History of Its Peoples*, represents an even more ambitious attempt to re-configure history. This 416-page magnum opus - part textbook, part manifesto - reflects the historiography implicit in EC discourses on culture. Chapter one opens with the image of rape of the Greek Goddess 'Europa', and proceeds to discuss the geographical complexity and uniqueness of the continent (sic) of Europe. Chapter three describes the Celts and Teutons as the first Indo-Europeans. Chapter four proceeds under the heading 'Classical Antiquity: Greek Wisdom, Roman Grandeur'. Chapter five ('the First Four Centuries AD in the West') is devoted exclusively to the expansion of Christianity. Chapter seven is a lengthy discussion of whether Charlemagne's empire marks the 'beginnings of Europe'. Chapter eight ('Europe Under Siege') opens with a vivid image of banner-waving Saracens on horseback - 'European civilisation' thus being equated unequivocally with Christendom defending itself against the resurgent forces of Islam. The book continues in a similar vein until Chapter seventeen ('The Road to European Disaster') which deals with nationalism, Chapter eighteen ('Europe Destroys Itself') which covers the period of 1914-

1945, and finally chapter nineteen, 'Europe's Recovery and Resurgent Hopes', which focuses on the 'makers of Europe' and the 'building of Europe in the face of Gaullism'. The net result is that European history is presented as the story of reason and unity triumphing over disunity and nationalism – the apotheosis of the Enlightenment project, or what Wolf (1992: 5) calls 'history as a genealogy of progress'. It is invariably a selective, sanitised and typically heroic re-reading of the past, one that systematically excludes or ignores the less noble aspects of European modernity such as the history of slavery, anti-Semitism, colonialism or imperial conquest. The author's conclusion that Europe's history has been marked by a 'general if halting growth in compassion, humanity and equality' (Duroselle 1990: 413), simply confirms this interpretation. History, it seems, is as much about 'forgetting' as it is about remembering and interpreting past events.

Inventing Euro-Woman: The 'European Woman of the Year Award'

So far we have focused primarily on cultural initiatives for creating 'European Man' as a new kind of political subjectivity, without reference to gender differentiation. There is, however, an important gender dimension to the cultural politics of European integration, exemplified most notably in the recently created 'Women of Europe Award'. This award offers an interesting case study of the way the EU's communication policy – with its strategic focus on women as a target group – has been put into practice.

The 'Women of Europe Award' began in 1987 under the auspices of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Movement, its aim being to 'honour a woman from each Member State who, in the previous two years, has helped to increase European integration among the citizens of the European Union'.¹² According to one of the Award's founders, the idea for the award began as a 'brain-wave' during a Brussels lunch in 1987 with two Belgian members of the European Movement who were lamenting the fact that the EU's eponymous ancestral heroes were all 'founding fathers' (rather than 'mothers'). The aim, there-

fore, was to correct this male bias by giving official recognition to women who had made an outstanding contribution to 'European construction'. The award is organised as follows. Each member state appoints a National Committee composed of representatives from the European Parliament and Commission, together with representatives of women's organisations, academia and business, to produce a shortlist of nominations. The shortlist is then put to the vote by a national jury made up of this committee and journalists representing the various media, and a ceremony is held to award the prize – a symbolic silver pendant of clasped designed by the Spanish jeweller ERLANZ. From these national winners, one woman is selected every year by an international jury to hold the title of 'European Woman of the Year'.

The overall Award winner in 1996 was Marit Paulsen, a Swedish trade-union schooled farmer with ten children who writes essays in praise of integration and campaigns on behalf of the environment. Leaving aside her practical contribution to European integration, the choice of Mrs Paulsen as an archetypal 'European woman' reveals a great deal about the symbolic logic that underlies official thinking about the award. Nominated by the Swedish Commissioner Anita Gradin, and the Swedish MEP, Charlotte Cederschiöld, Marit Paulsen was born in Norway in 1939, just as World War II had broken out. Her father died early in her childhood, but her widowed mother fell in love with a German man, and Marit grew up with them. According to her biography, her 'childhood quickly taught her how love between two people of different nationalities can bring hatred to the children'.¹³ At the age of nine she started to work in local fish factory in the north of Norway. In 1963 she moved to Sweden, working for seven years in an iron ore factory before becoming a farmer, mother of ten children (biological and adopted) and author of seven children's books, five works of fiction and several television and film scripts. Living in a strongly anti-EU area, we are told that 'Marit fights the elements of snow and cold and the anti-EU feeling with her burning devotion for the European Union, peace, democracy, the rights of people and animals and the preservation of our beautiful European countryside'.

Marit Paulsen thus epitomes the ideal 'Euro-woman': a down-to-earth 'woman of the people'; a mother figure whose birth and childhood symbolise reconciliation between nations divided by nationalism and war; a transnational European worker who has taken up permanent residence in another member state; a farmer whose work experience symbolically traverses each of the major areas of common policy (fishing, iron-ore and agriculture) that lie the heart of integration project; a champion of good causes, including closer European integration; a writer and lover of children whose very lifestyle is an embodiment of the traditional Christian virtues associated with 'rural civilisation' (Guizzardi 1976). From a structuralist perspective, the narrative of Paulsen's history has numerous mythic qualities that are reminiscent of Aycock's (1987) analysis of the Old Testament story of Lot's wife: both occupy the status of wife and mother; both symbolises purity and perfection; both play a sacrificial role that symbolically mediates between wilderness and civilisation, past and future, as well as between war/destruction and peace/safety; and in both stories the hero is poised between phases of an epic journey, like an initiate undergoing a rite of passage.¹⁴ To quote once again from Paulsen's official biography:

"Marit is the difference between 9 million new EU members in 1995, between a Sweden inside or outside the European Union. With her tremendous fighting spirit and her voluntary and total devotion to the European Union, with her honesty and her down to earth way of discussing and arguing the absolute necessity of entering the European Union for the sake of peace and democracy, she achieved what no money and no amount of sophisticated debates ... could achieve. She convinced the ordinary person in the street and the farmer in the countryside that the European Union is foremost a project for peace in Europe and, in spite of her own devotion to nature and animals, *'the ... one question above all other is peace'*. Without peace you have nothing but with peace in Europe you can do wonders."¹⁵

The presentation ceremony to award Paulsen

her title was held during an international conference on 'Women and the Future of Europe' in Vienna in December 1996. The event is recounted with almost ethnographic detail by Anne McElvoy,¹⁶ one of the journalists invited to attend that conference. Having announced the winner, Mrs Paulsen mounts the podium and informs the audience that 'when building a European home it is unwise to start with the roof'. What this prophetic-sounding statement means is not at all clear, but the Commission's representatives applaud vigorously. As McElvoy notes, 'Institutional Europe has its own meta-language of allegories, euphemisms and omissions'.¹⁷

The audience is invited to ask questions to Mrs Paulsen. How had she been selected for the award, asks a journalist from the floor? 'I honestly don't know', replies Paulsen. 'I was told I had won and invited to Brussels, but I never discovered why or who voted for me. Then they asked me to come here to Vienna. They're paying for the trip, so I came. It's a nice break'. Sensing that this was not the kind of acceptance speech the Commission had in mind, Mrs Paulsen adds cheerfully: 'But we women are valuable resources for the making of Europe'. At this point, McElvoy confesses that her pro-EU leanings and sentiments were strained. The mysterious process by which Paulsen was elevated, she notes, is itself 'a perfect microcosm of the Commission's workings - unaccountable, unquestioned, unrepresentative'. In her words, the whole conference was 'a bizarre attempt to galvanise the continent's females into loving Big Europe'.

"I know that any gathering bearing the word 'Women' in its title is likely to assume a set of shared values and aims - and that to question these is seen as an act of grievous disloyalty to one's sex. Add Europe to the mix and the result is reminiscent of those conferences they used to hold in Moscow - which always started by discussing the need for disarmament, only to end by extolling the Soviet nuclear deterrent."¹⁸

McElvoy also provides an important critique of the way the European Commission uses statistics to promote the idea of a latently pro-EU

public. Prior to this conference, she notes, a questionnaire was circulated in the Member States asking the reasons why women in Europe know so little about what the EU is doing for them, and how to correct this. Two of the four categories of reply were designed to imply acceptance of a federal Europe, a third allowed respondents to be 'hesitant but in favour of joining forces against the outside'. The fourth permitted one to harbour reservations, but only if one was prepared to be described as 'nationalistic' at the same time. The 17 per cent of women who answered the fourth category were described in the summary as 'in favour of control, order and protection', and 'against sharing and solidarity'. In other words, a Euro-sceptic woman, in the Commission's eyes, is a 'grudging, selfish, small-minded, flag-waving shrew'. The contrast between the virtuous, self-sacrificing Marit Paulsen, who epitomises good 'European values', and the Euro-sceptic female, who symbolises selfishness, individualism and nationalism could hardly be starker. What we see here in the EU's attempt to arrogate to itself the stereotypical feminine virtues of maternal caring and nurturing, is precisely the approach advocated in the de Clercq Report.

Conclusion: Whither Homo Europaeus?

How should we interpret these various EU-sponsored cultural actions, and what do they tell us about the European Union? Several key points can be gleaned from the examples cited above. First, these initiatives illustrate the way 'culture' has become increasingly politicised by EU elites in their attempt to mobilise support for further European integration. They are also indicative of the EU's characteristically top-down, managerial and instrumental approach to 'culture-building' and its assumption that 'European identity' can somehow be engineered from above and injected into the masses by an enlightened vanguard of European policy professionals using the latest communication technologies and marketing techniques. This approach to culture clearly violates the EU's celebrated principle of 'subsidiarity'.

Secondly, the EU's concept of 'culture' privileges an elitist, bourgeois-intelligentsia idea of

'high culture', and a refusal to accept that other 'non-European' influences (including Hollywood movies, blue-jeans, jazz, hamburgers, Asian cuisine and Japanese consumer goods) are now an integral part of the way Europeans experience and consume culture. But more importantly, the initiatives we have discussed indicate the sheer scope and ambition of the EU's project. Its aim is not simply to make people more conscious of their shared European identity, but rather to infuse among them a new kind of 'European consciousness'. The goal is to create a new kind of political subject: one who identifies with, and is loyal to, the EU's fledgling institutions of European government. As Gellner noted, writing about the rise of the modern nation-state, 'the [national] economy needs both the new type of central culture and the central state; the culture needs the state; and the state probably needs the homogenous cultural branding of its flock' (Gellner 1983: 140).

For some, no doubt, 'cultural branding' is another word for cultural imperialism. However, there is nothing particularly new or scandalous about this. Virtually every nation-state since the French Revolution of 1789 has practised similar nation-building manoeuvres and most emergent political regimes engage in rhetoric about creating a new order based on redemption, renewal and morally superior subjects. What we are witnessing in the case of the EU could be described as the 'Europeanisation of Europe', or perhaps 'Europe's colonisation of itself' – although in this case it is EU elites that occupy the colonising role. It is a good example, albeit on a larger continental scale, of what Michael Hechter called 'internal colonialism'.

But is this process of cultural appropriation working? To be effective, it is necessary that those who are being interpellated as 'European subjects' actively identify themselves in this way. So far there is little evidence to suggest that this is happening to any significant degree, except among EU officials and politicians in Brussels and Luxembourg, and among those permanent national civil servants, journalists and lobbyists who increasingly owe their livelihood to the EU institutions. This situation, however, is bound to change in future, particularly as the single currency gathers momen-

tum. Most of those officials that I interviewed in Brussels felt that economic and monetary union would be a powerful catalyst for binding Europeans together and for making the EU more visible in the lives of its citizens. Significantly, the word 'Euro-land', initially a term of ridicule, has now become a commonly accepted idiom in the discourse of EU politicians and journalists when speaking about the eleven participating member states in the new 'euro' currency zone. 'Euro-land' has thus become an accepted economic reality. The task remains, however, to create 'Euro-men' and 'Euro-women' to populate this imagined geographical space.

The final question is what exactly might *Homo Europaeus* look like when he eventually emerges from his chrysalis? As an ethnographic phenomenon, 'European Man' is hard to observe, but perhaps literature provides some clues. Jean Monnet (1976: 551) wrote enthusiastically about the European Commission in Luxembourg as a 'supranational' institution that would nurture the creation of a new type of 'homme européen': a transnational, 'post-national' political actor who would rise above parochial attachments to locality or nation. According to this high modernist vision, *Homo Europaeus* is a rootless cosmopolitan; a deterritorialised Bohemian who epitomises the virtuous ideals of Enlightenment rationalism. For other writers, however, European Man evokes a darker conception of modernity. Historically, a European identity has only ever crystallised into a salient social category in situations of opposition to a non-European 'other', such as Africans, Asians, Americans and Muslims. As Edye (1997: 76–77) observes, 'the one country where the label European had a specific meaning was South Africa under the apartheid regime, where it meant white'. Xenophobia and cultural racism would appear to be an unavoidable corollary of the EU's strategy of forging a sense of cultural unity, or 'We-ness', among fellow Europeans.

Perhaps the bleakest vision of *Homo Europaeus* is contained in Joseph Conrad's book, *Heart of Darkness*. For Conrad, *Homo Europaeus* is not the culmination of 3,000 years of history and progress, still less the noble creation of modern supranational institutions that

point the way to a post-national future. On the contrary, he is the embodiment of entrepreneurial colonialism personified in the figure of Mr Kurtz, the charismatic emissary of a nineteenth century trading company working the ivory trade from deep inside the Belgian Congo, the 'dark continent' and 'white man's grave'. Kurtz symbolises a very different kind of European heritage and identity to that envisaged by Monnet, Ahrweiler and Duroselle, although there are some interesting parallels. Like the modern-day EU official, Kurtz is educated, sensitive and civilised ('[a]ll Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz', says Conrad (1978: 71)): a polyglot cosmopolitan of pan-national parentage who is at ease in different countries. The base from which he sets off for Africa, and where the company headquarters are located, is Brussels, the 'sepulchral city', as Conrad calls it. Like his modern-day EU counterpart too, Kurtz is perceived, from the outside, at least, as a man of wisdom, vision and outstanding ethical rectitude (the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs entrusts him to guide its future). But Kurtz is an emissary of European colonialism rather than a statesman. The *missione civilisatrice* of colonialism was to bring Christianity, commerce and civilisation to the unenlightened lands beyond the reach of European modernity. However, what Kurtz discovers at the savage centre of the jungle is not the superiority of European values but rather the darkness and horror at the centre of himself. The European Union's *missione civilisatrice*, by contrast, is to 'Europeanise' Europe by diffusing 'European consciousness' and enlightened 'European values' among its would-be citizens, transforming national subjects into true Europeans. Conrad's vision of *Homo Europaeus* is by no means prophetic but it does, however, provide a salutary warning of the potential pitfalls interent in European grand narratives of Progress and Civilization.

Notes

1. Despite this warning, Seton-Watson proceeds to argue that the growth of an 'increasingly homogeneous European culture' and the recognition by 'thinking men and women that they belong to a single ... cultural community' are 'facts of history'.

- (1985: 9 – my emphasis). His conclusion that ‘the unity of European culture is simply the end-product of 3,000 years of labour by our diverse ancestors’ (1985: 17), is itself an illustration of the way the concept of ‘European culture’ is reified, interpreted and misinterpreted by historians.
2. To many people in Britain (and Scandinavia), it is the continental landmass across the water: to a Pole or a Lithuanian, it may symbolise freedom and prosperity – a gateway to capitalism and America. For many French and Italian intellectuals, Europe is ‘culture-area’ and ‘civilisation’, one shaped by a distinctive kind of Greco-Roman and Christian heritage; for EU politicians, the term ‘Europe’ denotes a set of institutions that embody an ideal or vision of a unified economic and political bloc. The point, however, is not simply to see Europe as some kind of semiotic ‘free-floating signifier; rather, it is to recognise that the idea of Europe is a highly contested political space.
 3. This is what I interpret Clifford and Marcus (1986) to mean when they speak of ‘anthropology as cultural critique’ and what Scholte (1972) argued for in his plea for a ‘reflexive and critical anthropology’.
 4. The title of that research project was ‘EU Civil Servants and Cultural Policy’. I would particularly like to thank the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) of the United Kingdom for supporting this research.
 5. I am grateful to Peter Niedermüller of Humboldt University for drawing this point to my attention.
 6. See for example the European Commission’s 1995 Report for the Reflection Group, pages 1–4.
 7. Cited in Ross 1994: 94.
 8. For a cogent analysis of this argument, see Herrera de Miñón 1996.
 9. For a more detailed analysis of the People’s Europe campaign see Shore 1993.
 10. See Schlesinger 1997 for a recent assessment of this.
 11. For a recent analysis of these, see Shore 1998.
 12. Cited in ‘Women of Europe Award’ leaflet (n.d.), produced by Allison Parry (British President) with the support of the European Commission, Brussels.
 13. Cited in ‘Marit Paulsen – Women of Europe Award’, leaflet (1996).
 14. Here the comparison breaks down. According to Aycock (1987: 116) Lot’s wife occupies an ambiguous position as a woman and genealogical ‘stranger’, and it is this that dooms her to permanent ‘immobility’ between the initial and final events of the myth. Hence, her transformation into a pillar of salts (which Aycock suggests for the ancient Hebrews symbolised sterility as well as perfection and mediation). A structuralist interpretation of the Paulsen narrative would doubtless reveal a different symbolic logic.
 15. ‘Marit Paulsen’ *ibid*.
 16. McElvoy, a supporter of the EU, is a former deputy editor of the *Spectator* magazine.
 17. McElvoy’s 1996:12. All subsequent references to this event are drawn from McElvoy’s article.
 18. McElvoy 1996:12.

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