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**ASCA BORREL**
All ASCA members and friends are cordially invited to the ASCA Borrel and the announcement of the ASCA Awards in the Bushuis, space F101C on 14 June 2018 at 18:00 hrs.

**DISSERTATION DEFENCE: ALEJANDRA ESPINOSA**
The Politics of Public Construction in a Globalized World: Imagining Urban Space in Ecuador
Supervisors: Christoph Lindner and Esther Peeren. Agnietenkapel, 28 June.
The study focuses on how projects of Ecuadorian public construction driven by the State and by city authorities are entangled with notions of globalization and modernity. To show this entanglement, I analyse the planning and construction process of four urban projects: the new Mariscal Sucre airport in Quito; the Millennium Communities in the Amazonian region; the Yachay university/technological hub located in the north of the country; and, finally, local monuments placed by municipal authorities on the northern coast. The first three case studies are State-driven and, due to their high cost and national impact, can be described as mega structures or mega projects; the fourth provides an example of public construction driven by local interests. Each of these cases, approached through a close reading of planning documents, news coverage, interviews with key actors, and a fieldwork-based analysis of the projects’ spatial situation and use, reveals aspects of the dynamic relationship between urban planning, politics, spatial imaginaries (local, national and global) and socio-cultural values. Taken together, they show how the authorities and technicians driving urban construction adapt their projects to what they perceive as a modern and/or globalized context. Each structure, once built, is seen to reflect the imaginaries, dreams and desired futures authorities and technicians have in mind when thinking about urban space and its design.

**NEW ASCA MEMBER: EMILIE SITZIA**
Dr. E. Sitzia (1978) has been named professor by special appointment of Illustration at the University of Amsterdam’s Faculty of Humanities. The chair was established on behalf of the Fiep Westendorp Foundation. As professor by special appointment, Emilie Sitzia will focus on the history of the relationship between word and image and on increasing academic attention to the relationship between books and art. This will involve working on illustrations in books, newspapers and magazines (for children as well as adults), as well as on book art and artists’ books.
Sitzia has been an associate professor since 2012 and programme director of the Master’s programme in ‘Arts and Heritage: policy, management and education’ at Maastricht University since 2016. Previously, she worked eight years at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, first as a lecturer and then a senior lecturer in European Art History and Theory. From 2001 to 2004, she lectured in the French department of Åbo Akademi University in Turku (Finland), where she also obtained her PhD. Sitzia obtained a BA and MA in French literature at Université Paris X (France), as well as a BA and MA in Art History at Université Paris X and Goethe University Frankfurt (Germany), respectively.

Her areas of interest include the relationship between word and image, European art from the 18th to the 20th century and art literature (including artist’s novels and art criticism). She is also interested in interdisciplinary methodologies, cultural education, museology, curation and the history of art museums. Her book Art in Literature: Literature in Art in 19th century France (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne) was published in 2012.

Sitzia is teaching theory and history of illustration/artists’ books/ book art to Art History and Book Studies students. She also supervises students who are writing their thesis and are conducting PhD research in these areas.

IAS FELLOWSHIP FOR ROBIN CELIKATES

Robin Celikates (Philosophy/ASCA) has been awarded a fellowship from the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in Princeton, New Jersey, for the 2018-19 academic year. Robin will be a member of the School of Social Science and work on his book project “Democratizing Disobedience: Towards a Critical Theory of Political Protest”.

The main aim of this project is to develop a critical theory of ‘democratizing disobedience’ that bridges the gap between the rarely redeemed commitment of critical theory to be grounded in actual social struggles and the undertheorized transformative potential of civil disobedience. This involves bringing two claims together: that disobedience is an essential part of struggles for democratization (‘from below’), and thus opens up one way to address the crisis of representative democracies without falling back into the non- or anti-democratic dynamics of right-wing populism, and that theorizing disobedience in a critical vein has to be democratized both methodologically and substantially in order to adequately grasp the democratizing potential of disobedience.

POST DOC POSITIONS AT ASCA: RURAL IMAGINATIONS

ASCA has two vacant post-doctoral positions as part of the ERC Consolidator project Imagining the Rural in a Globalizing World, led by prof. Esther Peeren.

With globalization primarily considered an urban phenomenon, its impact on rural areas tends to be neglected. Tackling this blind spot is urgent as rural-urban divides persist and rural communities, notably in the 2016 Brexit vote and US election, claim their concerns about globalization’s effects are being ignored. RURAL IMAGINATIONS focuses on the crucial role played by cultural imaginations in determining what aspects of contemporary rural life do and do not become visible nationally and globally, which, in turn, affects how the rural can be mobilized politically. Using a distinctive humanities approach, it examines prominent cultural imaginations of the rural in film, television and literature in the UK, US, Netherlands, China and South Africa.


NEW PHD CANDIDATES AT ASCA

Anthi Argyriou, Mediterranean Drift. The Aesthetics and Politics of Contemporary Art in Greece in the Context of the Refugee Crisis

Supervisors: Maria Boletsi and Esther Peeren

The proposed research project will focus on how artistic practices, exhibitions and cultural institutions have dealt with issues of migration in Greece since 2015. In an attempt to respond to images and experiences of the refugee crisis and their implications, individual artists, museums and cultural initiatives have renegotiated the concepts of displacement, home and vulnerability in the framework of globalized (forced) displacement and socio-political upheaval. I will explore these aesthetic and theoretical shifts by analysing specific case studies and employing current concepts from cultural analysis, globalization and migration studies. In addition, I will study audiences’ reception of and involvement in the analysed practices, exhibitions and institutional strategies in order to delineate the social and cultural impact of contemporary art in this context.

Inez Blanca van der Scheer, Human at the Crossroads of Decolonization and Ecocriticism: a Caribbean Discourse

Supervisors: Yolande Jansen and Joost de Bloois
This project will ambitiously approach the question of being human from the crossroads of decolonization and ecocriticism as they figure in Caribbean literature and thought. Taking decolonization as both the historical revolution against European occupation as well as a philosophical endeavour, I am foremost concerned with mapping the myriad creative contemplations on dehumanization in poetry and philosophy from the position of the dehumanized. This project echoes Jamaican philosopher Sylvia Wynter’s stress on the distinction between being “human” in the tradition of European humanism and being human - the human animal - as a shared global condition. It will interrogate the category of the human from the decolonial position that remains always aware of this as an artificial colonial category with a distinct European history. To conceive of a version of the human after decolonization – a “humanism fit for the measure of the world”, in the words of Martinican poet Aimé Césaire – this project will take special care to exorcise not only the racial and gender biases of humanism but also its tradition of anthropocentrism. In mapping a decolonial genre of the human that takes as its subject the human animal, I will rely on a theoretical framework informed by the intersections of the seemingly disparate fields of decolonial theory and ecocriticism and animal studies.

Supervisors: Mia Lerm-Hayes and Joost de Bloois
The research will investigate the experimental, critical and/or self-reflective programs that have taken place in experimental public visual art institutions in Europe since 1989 through interviews and published accounts. It will explore how these programs have affected artistic practices and public cultural debates and policies. It will sketch out a typology of experimental art institutional practices over the past 30 years using a broad theoretical base focused on decoloniality, insitutuent practice and political agency. Key terms will be experimental institutionalism, democratic deviance and the demodern museum. The thesis will partially analyse my own texts, into which I will intervene from my current perspective. I will interview my peers and analyse the critical and artistic reaction to art institutional change. The final chapter will discuss ‘demodernity’ as an untested category within decolonial thinking that might allow a general critique of both social modernity and artistic modernism to emerge.

Daan Roovers, Public Opinion in the Age of the Digital Public Sphere. A public philosophical approach to the expression and forming of opinions
Supervisors: Yolande Jansen and Robin Celikates
Introduction: Public opinion is an essential pillar of a vital representative democracy. As citizens form and voice their opinions in close relation to the possibilities of the available media, the changing media landscape is of crucial political importance. Today we see an explosion of the use and the impact of social media on opinion formation and expression. What does this altered context of expressing and formation mean for public opinion?
This research examines the discursive structures underlying and constituting public opinion in the context of the digital sphere. Are these structures still adequate for opinion formation and expression of the new opinioning sphere? What are the elementary discursive conditions of opinion formation and expression? Are any of these in peril in the new public sphere? In other words: Can we define the vital discursive criteria for a viable 21st-century critical and politically productive public opinion?
In line with the developments and insights from media theory regarding the digitization (and commercialization) of the public domain, I will identify the vital discursive structures for a pluriform public opinion as defined in the history of philosophy. Philosophical approaches to public opinion (Plato, Rousseau, Lippmann, Dewey, Arendt and Habermas) will be explored in the context of the new public discourse. How is the normative framework of a democratic discourse safeguarded or accommodated in a decentralised digital discourse? My central thesis is that despite the strength, speed, accessibility and openness of new media, a crucial political aspect of public opinion is under pressure, namely shaping, adapting and changing opinions.

Gerrit Schaafsma, Contestation in the Anthropocene: Globalised Disobedience and Climate Justice
Supervisors: Robin Celikates and Beate Roessler
Over the past decade, the ethical implications of global climate change have received increasing attention in the philosophical literature (Gardiner, 2010; Jamieson, 2010; Page, 2008 & 2011; McKinnon, 2014). The aim of this doctoral dissertation is to build on this work by exploring a topic related to climate justice, but that has only recently begun to receive sustained attention: the practice of using acts principled law-breaking to advance a global climate justice agenda remains under-theorised. I will argue that theories of civil disobedience that have been used to try and make sense of earlier environmental justice movements cannot accommodate this new phenomenon, and that new conceptual and normative frameworks are required to try and make sense of it. However, the literature on civil disobedience serves as a useful starting point for the discussion about the
legitimacy and methods of the climate justice movement.

My argument is that by using the tactics, vocabulary and normative motivations associated with more traditional civil movements, but applying them in a global, rather than local context, climate justice activists have opened up a new avenue of political contestation. My aim with this research is two-fold: firstly, I plan to map the contours of this new form of political contestation; secondly, I will argue that global climate justice movements may have legitimate grounds for acting in unlawful ways in order to further their aims. In doing so I hope to contribute to the discussion about the globalisation of disobedience (cf. Peeren, Celikates, et al. 2017; Smith, 2017) and the way in which acts of principled law-breaking are being used to in new ways and in service of causes which have only recently emerged.

Harold Garcia Rodriguez, La soberanía del vacío: Abe, Blanchot, Elizondo

Supervisor: Shelley Godsland

The Sovereignty of the Void will analyse the work of Kobo Abe, Maurice Blanchot and Salvador Elizondo, focusing on a key novel by each writer: The Box Man (1973); Thomas the Obscure (1941), and Farabeuf (1965). I will show that these fictions are erected around an engagement with a number of fundamental philosophical concepts and that, despite the disparity of their geographical provenance, these three authors fashion (explicitly or implicitly) and then deploy an innovative literary theory which they use to foreground their own works. The philosophical concepts to be analysed in the first part of my thesis include: the void -- or emptiness (the core concept of my research); the absolute; and the loss of identity, all notions fundamental to Heidegger and the philosophers of the Kyoto School. These concepts are crucial to understanding many important 20th-century social and cultural concerns (primarily in the period from World War II on). The second part of my dissertation will comprise a detailed close reading of the three novels under scrutiny through the lens of the literary theories set forth by these three authors themselves, as well as in conjunction with concepts propounded by Ricardo Piglia (the idea of ‘bad reading’) and Giorgio Agamben (profanation). The theories formulated by Abe, Blanchot and Elizondo deal with issues such as, what is true literature, or what does a reading act consist of? To find the answers to these queries it is essential to comprehend how they are related to the appropriation and re-signification of the philosophical concepts mentioned above. The final part of my research will show how it is possible to construct intertextual and cross-cultural connections between the three authors who at a first glance seem to be dissimilar and will discuss the relevance of this conceptual and textual interconnectivity to the twentieth-century world cultural and socio-political milieus.

Josh Weeks, Roberto Bolaño and the Neoliberal Labyrinth

Supervisors: Shelley Godsland, Hanneke Stuit

From Borges’s metaphysical thought experiments to Gabriel García Márquez’s predilection for spatial and temporal enclosure, South American fiction has historically been preoccupied with both physical and conceptual labyrinths. According to Gerald Martin, this trend can be accounted for by the fact that ‘To be trapped in a labyrinth is essentially a metaphor for the struggle for modernity’ – a mode of socio-political and economic solitude at odds with the developing West. Whilst it is certainly interesting to explore cultural production through what Fredric Jameson calls ‘the political unconscious’, the Eurocentric modes of thought that undergird Martin’s analysis are troubling in their discursive and theoretical rigidity. As Erik Ching, Christina Buckley, and Angélica Lozano-Alonso point out in their exhaustive study of Latin American literature, Reframing Latin America: A Cultural Theory Reading of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Martin presupposes a binary that posits a cohesive, unadulterated “West” against a Latin American “Other” that has yet to have attained such stability.

Adopting a Cultural Studies approach which utilizes Postcolonial Theory, Deconstructive Thought, and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, this project aims to reconceptualize Martin’s project in line with the following question: how can we account for the predominance of labyrinths and isolation in Latin American fiction without falling prey to a Eurocentric rendering of otherness? Whilst the labyrinth has historically been viewed as a metaphor for South America’s socio-political and economic backwardness prior to the imposition of neoliberal rule, this project aims to show how it is also suited to conceptualizing the complex workings of neoliberalism itself. In order to support this hypothesis, the thesis will turn to one of South America’s most lauded contemporary writers, Roberto Bolaño, whose works exhibits a labyrinthine quality in which the classical trope of spatio-temporal disorientation is used to express the conditions of the contemporary moment. As such, the reformulated conceptualization of the labyrinth that this project brings to the fore is both lens through which Bolaño is read, and also a key concept for understanding the intricacies of globalization beyond literature.

Mary Finley Keller, Belief and the Will

Supervisors: Franz Berto and Christian Skirke

This doctoral project studies the role of the will in belief, with the objective being to provide insight into whether there is any power of decision in belief formation.
The research examines how belief acquisition differs from knowledge acquisition and how passive or active the forming of beliefs is. This requires a distinction between belief and knowledge. As will be argued, these differences come into view most clearly if we employ the criterion of degrees of evidence to distinguish between belief and knowledge.

Any reason for a belief other than the aim towards truth is not a logical ground for belief. Involving the will in any explanation of belief makes it possible that one could decide one’s beliefs but also runs the risk of involving desires as causes of beliefs. The paradox of self-deception will offer both a consideration of how purposive planning, or desires, can generate conflicting beliefs as well as facilitate conscious decisions to believe something. The levels of self-knowledge, intentionality and introspection involved in self-deception are used as illustrations of deciding to believe.

Degrees of evidence and differing strengths of belief lead to the conclusion that beliefs are held to work within systems and that absolute knowledge is unattainable. The necessity of weighing evidence before one believes illustrates that decision is a part of how people come to believe, and that beliefs are actively formed rather than passively acquired.

**Miguel Tavera, Murmuring Springs (El Murmurar de las Fuentes).**
Supervisor: Shelley Godsland
My purpose is to present and analyse a significant series of revelations regarding thus far unknown or hidden sources of inspiration, as well as the literary affiliations implicit in the three principal writers of the so-called Latin American Boom of the 1960s: Julio Cortázar, Carlos Fuentes and Gabriel García Márquez. To this end, I mainly focus on their respective emblematic works: Blow up, The Death of Artemio Cruz, and One Hundred Years of Solitude. I will make particular use of two concepts, themselves variants of intertextuality: transposition and trans-fictionality. The former, secular and the very foundation that leads to intertextuality, is part of the process; the latter, recently postulated by Richard Saint-Gelais, a Canadian professor, shines new light on this modern version of imitation.

The contextual reconstruction (historiographical and socio-cultural) of the three cases, both diachronically and synchronically, will enable me to reveal common narrative features and uses; and to understand how theme and technique, intimately interwoven, demarcate and trigger literary trends that the Latin Americans knew how to grasp and exploit successfully.

On unravelling such a mixture of trends, some little known and others flourishing in post-war Europe and North America, both in major genres as well as marginal subgenres, a disturbing dualism in the creative process is revealed. On the one hand, the hidden but huge influence of western thought and the European metropolis on the work of the boom; and on the other the very transformation (in mentality) of the authors. At the same time, while reclaiming the contribution of ignored authors and subgenres, I do them justice.

**Nim Goede, Thinking the Brain through Art and Neuroscience**
Supervisor: Patricia Pisters and Machiel Keestra
The metaphors and images used by (cognitive) neuroscientists to imagine or to represent the brain or neurocognitive processes have changed over time. This project sets out to study how the changing representations of the brain in (cognitive) neuroscience have influenced and inspired the creation of artworks that incorporate, engage with, or critically reflect upon the concepts, images, practices or technologies employed by neuroscientists. Secondly, it will study how artists have created fictional and speculative imaginations, representations and performances that allow us to think the brain, and what it means to be an embodied subject, differently, which in turn have influenced scientific conceptions and representations of the brain - instead of merely offering artistic “illustrations” of neuroscientific knowledge. This study will thus focus on the bi-directional influences of both artistic and scientific representations of the brain created in the 20th and 21st century and will cross examine them making use of analytic tools like those provided by cultural analysis. By systematically clarifying these entanglements of society, art and neuroscience, this project will also develop conceptual tools that can facilitate the articulation and consideration of potential future developments from these fields with their societal, ethical and moral implications.

**Oluchi Joyce Igili, Towards Emplacing Authentic Political Theatre in Nigeria**
Supervisor: Kati Rottger
My project aims to explore the dynamics of institutionalising the Legislative Theatre model of interventionist theatre in Nigeria. I adopt an interdisciplinary approach to my study by conflating the principles of participatory democracy (Cornwall and Gaventa), Input-Output Analysis (Easton) and the Legislative Theatre model (Boal). Legislative Theatre, an extended form of the Forum Theatre, which itself is an arm of the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) uses the principles of the Forum Theatre within a political system to create a truer form of democracy. By conflating these models, avenues for intervention in the lived experiences of select communities will emerge and will be explored.
Omar Escobar, *In the heights of a new Broadway style and the troubles of engaging audiences in the 21st. century: Revitalizing musical theatre.*

*Supervisor: Kati Röttger*

The development of technology such as TV and cinema, and even newer technology such as the Internet and its streaming media has caused a decline in theatre attendance. The purpose of this study is to analyse the evolution of musical theatre since the late years of the last century until our days to find out what authors, composers and directors are doing nowadays in order to revitalize theatre by finding innovative ways to keep attracting audiences into the performing venues.

The research will be focused in the field of musical theatre studies - which can still be considered a new academic field - but will also relate to other fields such as musicology, sociology, technology, performing arts, among others.

Stijn Postema, *Journalism as Artistic Practice*

*Supervisors: Mark Deuze and Jan van der Stoep*

The emergence of visual and digital culture creates opportunities for journalists to be more creative and innovate, deploying more literary and screen-based storytelling techniques. In doing so, journalists frequently make artistic decisions and apply production processes from the artistic field. Journalism as an artistic practice is an underexplored terrain in journalism studies. The purpose of this project is to explore what journalism studies may learn from aesthetics; to raise awareness among news workers of their creative and artistic role; and to map the various ways in which a new generation of artist-journalists addresses contemporary concerns about the quality of journalism.

Tânia Alexandra Esteves Fernandes Cardoso, *The illustrated cityscape: imperfect lines of urban exploration*

*Supervisors: Emilie Sitzia and Carolyn Birdsell*

Cities have been a vital component within visual storytelling and reportage: since illustration became a product for the masses in the decades around 1900, it has represented the social and cultural practices of modern urban life. Since then, illustration – in the form of leaflets, cartoons, and comic strips in newspaper – has been remembered and represented in the popular imagination.

In the contemporary era, illustration often has a realistic approach, and constitutes an exercise of critical, creative and artistic freedom. The depth of information within illustration allows for the dissemination of different points of view and new perspectives on daily-life, everyday stories and ordinary places. Due to its unique characteristics as a mass medium, illustration allows for an intensive engagement between its creator, the audience and the city, with a discursive potential to enable alternative and multiple views. Considering illustration as a device to build fantastic and urban imaginaries but also of truthful reports this research project intends to challenge misconceptions and stereotypical views of this creative field. Combining theory and praxis, it will elucidate how illustration relates to urban space, and its place within a complex assemblage of physical, cultural, social, political and emotional elements. Working in the tradition of artistic research, the project will demonstrate how the phenomenon of ‘illustrated cities’ can precisely be found at the intersection between urban experience, place and illustration.

**ASCA EVENTS**

**WOMEN, MONEY AND MARKETS**

2nd Annual Conference, hosted by ASCA, June 7th and 8th, 2018. Chair: Dr Joyce Goggin (UvA), Co-chair: Dr Emma Newport (University of Sussex). Venue: Doelenzaal, Universiteitsbibliotheek van Amsterdam, Singel 425.

http://www.womenmoneymarkets.co.uk

Building on the success of the conference created by Dr Emma Newport and co-organised by Amy Murat at King’s College London in 2017, the second Women, Money and Markets conference will continue to address contemporary scholarship on the role of women in consumerism, shopping, global trade, domestic trade, markets (literary and otherwise), currency, and varying practices of exchange. The conference is interdisciplinary in nature, bridging literature, material culture, gender studies, theatre and economic history, and aims to relate the debates of the period to modern day issues about the presence and position of women in the economy, the market and the media.

Our confirmed keynote speakers are Danielle van den Heuvel (University of Amsterdam), author of Women and Entrepreneurship: Female Traders in the Northern Netherlands c. 1580-1815, and Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, who specializes in British eighteenth-century literature and culture and feminist and cultural theory. She has published on eighteenth-century women writers and eighteenth-century consumer culture, and mostly recently on the way that the British slave trade has been remembered and represented in the popular imagination.

**HERMENEUTICS AND THE FLESH**

Women in Theory Reading Group organized by Nadia de Vries, 8 June, 10:30-12:30 hrs., Oudemanhuispoort, room C123.

Session curated by Divya Nadkarni

Readings:
THE SUBLIME RUPTURE OF TIME
Presentation by Tessa de Vet. 8 June, 13:00-15:00 hrs.
[NOTE: changed time!] Location: IAS Institute, 0.02 Sweelinck Conference Room (Oude Turfmarkt 145).
At the end of our last session, the question arose how we should think of the feeling of complexity, or the ‘experience’ of complexity. What happens on an affective level, or what is our embodied sensual experience when encountering such complexity in images that we cannot seem to oversee, or fully grasp, what is happening on screen and before our eyes? In other words, how should we think the aesthetics of complexity in film, especially during its moments of opacity, when our understanding seems to be blocked, or at least, temporarily suspended?
Picking up this question, we will return to some aspects of previous sessions and specifically ideas that have been put forward by Sudeep Dasgupta and Patricia Pisters, in relation to the aesthetic and temporal dimensions of complexity. Focusing on the “sensorial intensity” of opaque moments, I propose that we bring the concept of the sublime into the discussion to understand what happens on an aesthetic level and how this is related to the experience of a rupture or break in time. For this we will discuss the writings of Jean-Francois Lyotard and Gilles Deleuze. As we will see, Lyotard is clear about the relation of the sublime to the question of the future, but we will have to investigate if we can and should think the sublime together with the third passive synthesis of time as put forward by Deleuze – and if this would indeed help us to think about complexity in film as such.
Tessa de Vet is the coordinator of the Forms of Complexity seminar 2017-2018. She holds a BA in Cultural Studies and is currently enrolled in the rMA Philosophy programme at the University of Amsterdam, focusing on continental, mostly French, (post-)modern thought.
See the ASCA website for the readings.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE:
Contestation in the Anthropocene
Presentation by Gerrit Schaafsma in the Philosophy and Public Affairs Colloquium, OTM Faculty room, 13 June, 16:00 hrs.
Climate justice activists around the world are increasingly turning to practices associated with civil disobedience in an attempt to put climate change justice on the political agenda. My paper examines some of the main lines of arguments offered in defence of principled law-breaking which is connected with climate change issues. I argue that the so-called ‘climate necessity defence’ is vulnerable to serious challenges and that those employing it will have difficulty in meeting the burden of proof needed for it to succeed. I propose alternative grounds, based on notions political participation and the duties of justice, which opponents of climate change can use to argue for the legitimacy of using principled law-breaking to further their aims. With these arguments I hope to show that, at least in some circumstances, there are legitimate grounds for using principled law-breaking to further climate justice claims.

HERMENEUTICS AND DECONSTRUCTION
(mis-)understanding and plurality
ASCA Theory Seminar, 14 June, 15:00-18:00 hrs. Bushuis F208B. Organized by Alex Thinius, Diya Nadkarni, Fabienne Rachmadiev, Jakko Kemper and Zoenie Liwen Deng.
The texts for this session address the plurality of meaning and what it is to understand something or someone. In Gadamer’s view, it is the other or the text that poses a question to oneself, where understanding the other means asking their question. Understanding, for Gadamer, requires thus a fusion of horizons, where the meaning of the discussed text itself emerges from language and on the grounds of a tradition. On Derrida’s view, in contrast, dialogue does not have such a character of fusion, but the outcome of ‘understanding’ is rather the proliferation of different meanings in the play of significations. This play of evermore différence is the meaning of the text, if that word is to have any meaning after all. In their contributions to the conference in Paris on ‘text and interpretation’ in 1981, one can witness this seeking, interplay, or stalemate of (mis-)understanding between hermeneutics and deconstruction. Spivak stresses how deconstruction is not about decentring the subject but looking at the forces that produce the subject in dialogue, which include those outside of language. Thus, in her view, the subaltern cannot speak. Vasterling approaches the problem of understanding and plurality by suggesting a critical hermeneutics. Meaning indeed is evermore plural and understanding does not presuppose agreement, though we can decide to agree.
For the readings please visit the ASCA website.

GROUNDS FOR MATERIALISM
Public Talk and Master Class by Dr. Jaques Lezra (University of California, Riverside) Thursday, June 14th (4-6pm) Location t.b.a.
To draw from the seeming contradiction—the project of finding “grounds” for a philosophical practice devoted largely to dissolving the primacy or ideality of terms like “principle” and “ground”—this talk proposes a new figure of thought: a materialism of principles. My argument is that a materialism of principles offers a way of imagining, perhaps even of fashioning, defective institutions for radically democratic societies. To draw this figure of thought, "Grounds for
Materialism” follows the long, incoherent philosophical line that leads from Lucretius to Bataille and Derrida.

Jacques Lezra is Professor and Chair in the Department of Hispanic Studies at the University of California, Riverside. He received the PhD in Comparative Literature from Yale University, and taught at Yale, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and NYU before joining the faculty at UC-Riverside. His most recent book is Contra todos los fueros de la muerte: El suceso cervantino (2016). Other books are On the Nature of Marx’s Things: Translation as Necrophilology (Fordham, 2018); Untranslating Machines: A Genealogy for the Ends of Global Thought (2017); Wild Materialism: The Ethic of Terror and the Modern Republic (2010); Spanish translation 2012; Chinese translation 2013; Unspeakable Subjects: The Genealogy of the Event in Early Modern Europe (1997); and (with Liza Blake, eds.) Lucretius and Modernity. Lezra has edited collections on "Allegory and Political Representation;" on the work of Althusser, Balibar and Macherey; and on Spanish republicanism. He has published articles on Shakespeare, contemporary and early modern translation theories and practices, Freud, Althusser, Woolf, animality studies, the New Materialism, and other topics. He is the co-translator into Spanish of Paul de Man’s Blindness and Insight. With Emily Apter and Michael Wood, he is the co-editor of Dictionary of Untranslatables (2014), the English translation of Vocabulaire européen des philosophies. Paul North and he edit the Fordham University Press book series IDIOM.

Masterclass with Jacques Lezra

Jacques Lezra will also host a 3 hour masterclass from 12-3pm on Wednesday, June 13th. All welcome. Contact diamanti.jeff@gmail.com for readings and details.

MEDIA SPORTS AND WORLD BUILDING

A workshop / Master class of the ASCA Cross-Media Research group in cooperation with Arts and Culture, VU)
25 June 2018, 10:00-19:00 hrs. Location: the
The Topic: The media discourse of competitive sports contributes some of the most consistent and powerful world-building dynamics to the constantly changing cross-media landscape. The serialized and repetitive organization of its competitions guarantees an endless stream of interrelated events, and the evaluation of performances provokes ongoing investigations and contested narratives about heroes and villains. While each sport offers its own characteristic spaces and characters, they all share an emphasis on the particular rules that structure behaviour within their specific worlds, rules that aim to create a level playing field that is clearly differentiated from the surrounding ‘reality’.

So far, ‘world building’ has mainly been described as a branding strategy (and fan practice) dealing with works of fiction. Yet, sports also offer a highly dynamic and complex set of elements with their own logic and mythology. All media – from newspapers, radio, and film to television, social media, and smartphones – contribute to this world of sports to attract and monetize eyeballs, activating their specific capabilities to extend the already existing world with additional details and alternative perspectives. While narrative is important, the world building in sports includes other elements as well: rankings and records, data visualizations and memorabilia, medical reports and legal contracts, for instance. Because of sports’ character as a global commercial enterprise, its world building is closely entangled with questions of copyright and the appropriation of the latest technology. And while the media discourse often presents sports as a world of its own, it connects to, and impacts on, the world beyond its delineated space (just like all world building does).

In this workshop, we present several case studies with which we analyse how different media and their specific technological and economic affordances harvest, extend, or modify the world-building dynamics of modern competitive sports, asking how the entanglement of sports and media practices generate narratives, characters, events, visuals, controversies, and real-world (legal, technical, political) effects.

The workshop is open to all interested scholars, PhD- and MA-students. Next to the key-note lecture, there will be a number of smaller presentations; anybody interested in contributing a paper or other form of input (e.g. discussion of pertinent examples) please contact m.stauff@uva.nl before 20 May. RMa and PhD students who want to earn 1 ECTS can either contribute a presentation (15 minutes) or a report on the event (800-1000 words).

Invited speaker: Travis Vogan, Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of Iowa. He researches the intersections among sport, media, and U.S. culture with a special focus on television, media industries and institutions, documentary, and the relationship between commerce and cultural value. Next to numerous articles he published the following books: Keepers of the Flame: NFL Films and the Rise of Sports Media (University of Illinois Press 2014) and ESPN: The Making of the Sports Media Empire (University of Illinois Press 2015) His current book project, ABC Sports: The Rise and Fall of Network Sports Television, uses the American Broadcasting Company’s influential sports TV division to outline the development, politics, and transformation of sports television from the 1950s through the early 2000s.

MEDIATING BRUTALISM: SPECTACLES OF THE ABJECT

Lecture by Christoph Lindner, University of Oregon
26 June, 15:30-17:00 hrs., Belle van Zuylen, University Library, Singel 425, Amsterdam

Brutalism is back. As architectural experts and enthusiasts have been noting since the early 2000s, we
are experiencing a renewed wave of interest in this historically-maligned yet globally-circulating architectural style best known in the 1950s and 1960s for its monumentality, rawness of material, and aesthetic austerity. Adopting a transnational approach, this talk explores how the current brutalist architectural revival connects – via spectacles of the abject – to a global, mediated fascination with post-industrial ruins, urban squatting, and neoliberal gentrification.

Christoph Lindner is Professor and Dean of the College of Design at the University of Oregon, where he directs the Slow Lab research initiative. Recent book publications include *Deconstructing the High Line* (Rutgers University Press, 2017), *Global Garbage* (Routledge, 2016), *Cities Interrupted: Visual Culture and Urban Space* (Bloomsbury, 2016) and *Imagining New York City* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

**THE TRADE OF THE TEACHER**

**Visual Thinking with Mieke Bal**

*Wednesday 27 June – 17:00-18:00, followed by drinks*

Doelenzaal, University Library, Singel 425, Amsterdam

*Speakers: Mieke Bal, Jeroen Lutters, Esther Peeren*

*Book description: Over a number of meetings Jeroen Lutters and Mieke Bal engaged in a conversation on the art of teaching. Lutters brought in paintings by Banksy, Rembrandt, Marlene Dumas, and George Deem as ‘teaching objects’ and asked Bal what these paintings might have to say about teaching. The result is a personal, meandering, and precise account of Bal’s way of thinking through visual art and literature, which makes clear how objects can speak, how we can use them, and how they teach us to find answers to important questions.***

*Event description: At the book launch, Mieke Bal and Jeroen Lutters will enter into conversation with Esther Peeren about the book and the practice of cultural analysis. Mieke Bal is a cultural theorist, critic, video artist and occasionally a curator. She co-founded the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis and has published 38 books, including *A Mieke Bal Reader* (2006), *Quoting Caravaggio* (1999) and *Narratology* (1985). See [www.miekebal.org](http://www.miekebal.org)*

Jeroen Lutters is an art and cultural analyst and educational designer. He concentrates on the central role of the arts and humanities in the contemporary curriculum, and practice of art-based learning. He is a professor at ArtEZ, University of the Arts, Arnhem. Esther Peeren is professor of cultural analysis at the University of Amsterdam and vice-director of the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis.

To attend, please register by sending an email to asca-fgw@uva.nl

**DECOLONIAL AESTHESIS AND POST-SOVIET ART**

*On behalf of the Sublime Imperfections research team we are happy to invite you to a lecture on decolonial aesthetics and post-Soviet art by Professor Madina Tlostanova (Linköping University) on Thursday, 28 June, 15.00-17.00 hrs. at PCH 6.05*

Starting from the reflection on the decolonial aesthetic as opposed to normative aesthetics, this lecture will address how decolonial sensibility is implemented in post-Soviet and postcolonial art (particularly from the Caucasus and Central-Asia), resonating with the complex “futureless” human condition of post-Soviet people. Through the prism of art, we will consider the changing and flexible cultural and political reality of the post-Soviet world on the verge of its imminent division and reorientation.

Respondent will be Dr. Joost de Bloois (ASCA).

Madina Tlostanova is a decolonial thinker and writer, professor of postcolonial feminisms at Linköping University (Sweden). She focuses on decolonial thought, non-Western feminism, post-socialist studies, and contemporary activist art. She was a DAAD visiting professor at the University of Bremen (2006, 2011), international researcher at Duke University (2007), visiting scholar at Linköping University (2013) and Södertörn University (2014). She has taught at several decolonial international Summer schools (Middelburg, Tarragona, Telciu). Her most recent books include *Learning to Unlearn: Decolonial Reflection from Eurasia and the Americas* (co-authored with Walter Mignolo, Ohio State UP, 2012), *Postcolonialism and Postsocialism in Fiction and Art: resistance and Re-existence* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2017) and the forthcoming *What Does it Mean to be Post-Soviet? Decolonial Art from the Ruins of the Soviet Empire* (Duke University Press, 2018).

If you would like to attend, please send an email to Fabienne Rachmadiev at f.j.p.rachmadiev@uva.nl

**MEDIA TACTICS AND ENGAGEMENT**

**NECS Conference 2018 in Amsterdam, 27-29 June 2018**

Keynotes: are Henry Jenkins (day 1), Lisa Parks (day 2) and Kiki Tianqi Yu (day 3).

The changing media landscape requires continuous (re)invention of the ways in which photography, film, television, digital media, and the arts are produced, distributed, accessed, and consumed. Back in the past like today, the question of media tactics and engagement is crucial once more. Today the question seems even more urgent, since large corporations provide platforms and services that foster the desired behaviour of the average media viewer/user/consumer and produc(s)er; nevertheless, in previous decades, ways of planning long-term strategies, tactical reactions to unforeseen circumstances and engagement have determined media practices and discourses. The NECS 2018 conference will explore the various – both intended and/or subversive – ways in which media are currently developed, deployed and distorted.

More info at: [https://necs.org/conference/programme/](https://necs.org/conference/programme/)
**OTHER EVENTS**

**THINKING THROUGH THINGS**

"How can analysis take shape? The many different artefacts collected in Thinking Through Things together answer this question. As projects accompanying the theses of eleven rMA Cultural Analysis students from the University of Amsterdam, these artworks, images and objects are each products of individual thought processes, labour and archives: research in practice.

Heterogeneous in both subject matter and form, the exhibition includes video essays, textiles, performance poetry, visual works, sculpture and photography — on topics as diverse as astrology, alt-right camp, smart cities, Islam Nusantara and drone cinematography. Each student’s artefact in this way attempts to put the complex and time-consuming process of cultural research into tangible form. Concepts, deconstructions, new connections and personal reflections are visualised, physically formed or put into new words — each looking to make their ideas manifest beyond the confines of the academy.

At the same time, these artefacts offer new meanings that exceed the written work that preceded them. Rehearsing the maxim of Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis founder Mieke Bal, these projects ‘let the object speak back’ — forging associations, providing unique experiences and shedding new light on the subject matter in ways not anticipated by their creators, nor in the texts they complement. Never foreclosing the production of knowledge, these objects’ analyses continue beyond their authors, and after their work is done.

In this sense, the exhibition begins and continues to think past the page, through things. The opening of Thinking Through Things will take place at 4bid, OT301 at 20:00 hrs. on Friday, 1 June, the exhibition also remaining open the following Saturday June 2 12.00-18.00."

List of contributors:
- Rijk Kistemaker - Camp Milo (Video essay)
- Flora Woudstra - Cosmic Resonance (Video essay)
- Roselinde Bon - S/Censor (Photo project)
- Erwin Hurenkamp - Touching/Feeling (Textile)
- Luca Soudant - Traces of a Momentary Queer Community (Sketches)
- Erica Moukarzel - I Sometimes Find You in the Strangest of Places, and Wonder, Did I Ever Leave? (Video)
- Ilse van der Spoel - Bird’s-eye Views: Exploring Aerial Vision in Cinema (Video essay)
- José Luis Viesca Rivas - Travelling Crystals: Dissidentifications (Photo project)
- Ana Mustafa - Leather Hard (Clay sculpture)
- Isadora Ponce - Sonic Textualities (Audio poem, text & video)
- Corina van Beelen - The Myth of Exceptionalism (Mixed media linoleum print)

**FORGING FUTURE FAMILIES**

*Good Societies workshop, 10 June, 17:00 hrs.* Join us on 10 June for the Good Societies workshop, Forging Future Families – followed by refreshments!

In the workshop Forging Future Families, Elly Dreyfus and Sophie Silverstein will explore a feminist-utopian analysis and reconceptualization of the family. This is loosely based on their bachelor theses in which they respectively considered the multi-directional relationship between capitalism and the heterosexual nuclear family (Sophie), and ways in which the teaching of home economics in US high school curricula was (mis)used to justify a gendered division of labour in and through the family (Elly). Beyond all else this workshop is about co-creation: we want to stimulate discussion on how we can forge the families of the future that reflect and strengthen our ideals for a Good Society.

- Introductory presentation: Introducing “kinship practices” and how institutions and family structures co-constitute each other – Case studies – what can we learn from speculative fiction about alternative family structures – What do we want our future families (and societies) to look like, and how do we get there?

Doors open: 17.00 Workshop begins: 17:30

NieuwLand: Pieter Nieuwlandstraat 93, Amsterdam. Drop us an email if you’d like to take part: info[at]goodsocieties.org Check out our website for more info: goodsocieties.org

**DUTCH ASSOCIATION FOR AESTHETICS SYMPOSIUM**

19-20 October 2018, Leuven/Louvain

On Friday, 19 and Saturday, 20 October, the yearly symposium of the NGE (Dutch Association for Aesthetics) will take place in Leuven, partly in the context of the showcase of the Flemish academy of arts LUCA.

With this call for papers, you are invited to contribute to the symposium, which will focus on these issues:
- Philosophical questions concerning artistic research;
- The role of aesthetics in art education;
- The relationship between artistic practice and reflection on art.

Papers may be presented in English or in Dutch.

Send an abstract of approx. 500 words to Albert van der Schoot [A.vanderSchoot@uva.nl], before 15 June.

Papers in English may (independent of the symposium) also be presented to the NGE online open access journal: *Aesthetic Investigations* – see http://www.aestheticinvestigations.eu.

For participation fees and further information: www.NGE.nl
UNSCHOOLING THE ANTHROPOLOGIST

LOVA International Summer School 2018, 2-6 July, Amsterdam

Unschooling is seen as a philosophy or educational attitude that promotes self-directed learning, as well as the acquiring of skills, knowledge and wisdom through natural life experiences, honest, meaningful dialogues and curiosity. This Summer School is focused on helping participants to fundamentally empty themselves from acquired constructs and concepts, in order to be open to the world as it unfolds around us. This practice of ‘unschooling’ can be very helpful for researchers, and particularly anthropologists.

Speakers:
– dr. Kathy Davis, senior research fellow in the PARIS research program and the Department of Sociology at the VU University Amsterdam. Kathy Davis has a long-standing interest in feminist scholarship on women’s bodies and health. Her work is situated at the cutting edge between cultural studies, gender studies, and the sociology of the body.
– Shanti George, independent researcher and advisor on children’s issues. Shanti George is a globally oriented researcher and practitioner, who crosses and re-crosses conventional professional boundaries between academia, activism, development practice and philanthropy.
– Marijke Naezer, PhD candidate at Gender & Diversity Studies, Radboud University Nijmegen. Marijke Naezer explores how Dutch young people enact sexuality in their social media practices.
– Alex Thinius, PhD Candidate at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis. His philosophical research project critically examines classificatory essentialism about gender.
– Hanneke Pot, PhD Candidate at the University of Oslo. Hanneke Pot researches the dynamic interactions between NGOs and local communities, health and education services in Malawi, in particular concerning adolescent reproductive health and girls’ education.
– Marielle Le Mat, PhD candidate at the University of Amsterdam’s Child Development and Education department. Marielle Le Mat’s research explores how education initiatives such as sexuality education may address gender-based violence in schools in Ethiopia.
– Somaye Dehban, MA, strategic connector and fundraising advisor with a background in gender, ethnicity and political matters. In the past, Somaye Dehban has conducted research on the political representation/presence of Iranian women.

Some of the topics of this year’s lectures, workshops and excursions are:

Lectures:
• Rethinking education: reimagining industrialized universities and understanding learning in the face of wellbeing,
• Rethinking gender and sexuality: what does it mean to be of a particular gender?
• Rethinking development aid: (sexual) education and the ‘other’.
• Rethinking health: posing critical questions regarding current paradigms on health and the body.
• Unschooling emotions/passion
• Digital peer cultures and self-presentations

Workshops:
• Theatre or life? Learning public ethnographical methods based on theatre dialogues.
• Stress Management: journeying through your own mental constitution.
• The gendered body: exploring the (natural) construction of binary sexed identities through dance and movement.
• The virtue of selfishness: unschooling morality and altruism.
• Nonviolent Communication.
• Crash course on how to fund your research and/or trainings.

Excursion:
• Gendered tour through the Rijksmuseum by Carola Lammers (Anthropologist & guide).

More information: https://lova.network/summer-school/3803-2/

CALLS FOR PAPERS

POLITICS OF BOREDOM
(Extended deadline: 10 June)

Call for Papers for a workshop at the University of Amsterdam, organized by Aylin Kuryel, Adam Gisborne, Helen Weeres, 20-21 September 2018.

Confirmed keynote speakers: Mieke Bal (UvA) and Michael E. Gardiner (University of Western Ontario)

We invite papers and artistic projects that can help us to better understand different manifestations of boredom and to critically examine how we conceptualize it. Themes may include, but are not limited to:
• Different conceptions of boredom in history;
• Boredom as a gendered, classed, racialized, sexualized, and/or affective state;
• Critiques of boredom and the critical potential of boredom;
• Boredom as counter-revolutionary;
• Economies of boredom – its relation to production, consumption and leisure time;
• Boredom as a luxury or as a symptom of precarization;
• Aesthetics of boredom: visual, literary, filmic, musical treatments of boredom;
• Boredom in relation to theories of anxiety, community and/or everyday life;
• Boredom in literature, literary boredom, boring literature.
Participants are welcome to submit formal academic-style papers or to experiment with the form of presentation. We also welcome artistic responses to be displayed alongside the workshop. The workshop will be held in English. Please email an abstract of no more than 300 words and a short biographical note (100 words maximum) to boredomworkshop18@gmail.com.

**DRAWING YOURSELF IN AND OUT OF IT**
The 2nd International Amsterdam Comics Conference VII, Amsterdam, 15-17 November 2018
Amsterdam Comics is pleased to announce its 2nd international conference, “Drawing Yourself In and Out of It,” which will take place from 15-17 November 2018 at Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Comprised of parallel panel sessions, keynote lectures, and a roundtable discussion, the conference aims to encourage interdisciplinary connections between comics scholars from various disciplines, comics artists, publishers, and cultural workers from museums and other heritage sites.

Keynote Speakers Joe Sacco and comics artist Nina Mickwitz, University of the Arts London.

“So, where does a story begin? And if you are inside that story right now, in that situation and it hurts and say you can draw, then you must try and draw yourself out of it.” -Miriam Katin, Letting It Go

To draw in can suggest an attraction, engagement, or involvement with an object, narrative, or cause, or can point to literally drawing someone or something into a work of art. To draw out can suggest an enticement to speak or act, a revelation of things hidden, or an extension of time, but can also be a literal or figural removal of one thing from another. Thus, drawing in and out speaks to an engrossment in and an examination of a politics of affect.

**Drawing Yourself In and Out of It** seeks to explore the notions of drawing in and drawing out in terms of the capacity to affect and to be affected. Such a consideration allows us to interrelate the politics of affect with the reading and production of comics in a variety of genres—including biography, autobiography, memoir, and fiction, and fields—including journalism, history, and the Medical Humanities.

With this conference we aim to encourage an interdisciplinary dialogue from which to further engage with and reflect upon the power of this culturally shifting medium. We encourage papers exploring the notions of drawing in and/or out in relation to, for example: • Graphic Medicine • Art/Narrative Therapy • Journalism • (Micro)Politics and/or Art as Activism • Individual or Collective Memory and/or Trauma • Gender and/or Sexuality Studies • Genre Considerations (Biography, Autobiography, Memoir, Fiction, etc.) • Style (Abstract, Clear Line, Photorealism, etc.) • Poetics and/of/in the Medium of Comics • Comics Production Processes.

**Abstract Submissions:** Applicants to the conference are invited to submit a 250-word abstract and short biographical note by 15 July 2018 to the organizers at info@amsterdamcomics.com. Accepted participants will receive confirmation no later than 15 August 2018.

**Conference Fees:** Registration is €75 for full-time/tenured professionals and €50 for students/artists, which includes all conference events. The keynote lectures and roundtable are open to the public. Registration for each event is €10.

About Amsterdam Comics Founded in 2014, Amsterdam Comics is an independent research consortium that seeks to productively clash theory with practice through several strategies, both academic and public. To read more about our aims and projects, please visit www.amsterdamcomics.com.

Organizing Committee Erin La Cour, Rik Spanjers, Freja Camps, and Nick Burman (intern). Should you have any questions, please contact us at info@amsterdamcomics.com.

**PRACTICES OF LISTENING**
*Call for papers – Soapbox: Journal for Cultural Analysis 1.1 “Practices of Listening”*

For the first issue of Soapbox, a graduate journal for cultural analysis, we invite submissions that explore listening as a critical practice. With this topic, we aim to bring together accounts of listening as both a method and object of analysis, including everyday practices and new modes of research that articulate who or what can listen and who or what can be heard.

In an age characterised by overabundant information and a cacophony of voices, attention is increasingly a matter of selection inseparable from politics. Traditional structures that amplify dominant expressions are being contested by the rise of large-scale communication platforms, which complicates the distribution of heard voices. Listening critically, therefore, calls for an examination of the spaces—digital, urban, or discursive—in which the voices of minorities are either muted or amplified.

An attentiveness to the practices of listening also takes seriously the idea that epistemological agency is not limited to the human subject, but extends across biological, technical, and inorganic bodies. By listening to the polyphonic assemblage of humans and non-humans alike, this issue aims to politicise listening not only in the sense of interpersonal communication but also as a broader cultural logic that creates platforms for some and silences others.

We invite students, PhD candidates, and young researchers to submit proposals that discuss practices of listening directed towards, but not limited to, the following themes:

- Methodologies of cultural analysis: listening in/as analysis;
remained loyal to the raison d’être of the European community and the European Union; of course, this remains valid. But because I think we need, in the beginning of the XXI century, namely for the new generation that is not so much identified with this narrative of Europe, to continue to tell the story of Europe. Like a book: it cannot only stay in the first pages, even if the first pages were extremely beautiful. We have to continue our narrative, continue to write the book of the present and of the future. This is why we need a new narrative for Europe.” (European Commission 2013).

The ‘new narrative’ project reveals something about Europe’s current state: once the political and geographical centre of the world, it has now shifted to a peripheral position and this poses a challenge to the European project. The less Europe is able to define itself as a centre, the more in need of a new story “we” seem to be, but also, the more difficult the construction of such a story (with clearly defined actors and events) becomes (Van Weyenberg 2016).

The idea of constructing a (new) narrative for Europe builds on the relation between story and history, considering history as a textual and discursive formation in a way that evokes the work of Hayden White, and extending the causal relationship of narration to nation, most famously theorized by Benedict Anderson and Homi Bhabha, to that of narration to the formation of the larger imagined political community of Europe. But what does it say that European bodies seem increasingly bent on fashioning narratives for Europe? And if we cautiously agree to view Europe in narrative terms, should we not ask the questions that storytelling evokes? For example, if “Europe” can be read as a narrative, who are its addressed readers? Who are its authors and how exactly is this story written? But also, what is made central and what is made peripheral to, or even left out of, “Europe: The Story”? What are the story’s purpose and effects, especially within the context of current debates about the state and function of Europe and of the European Union? Additionally, who are the heroes and the villains in the different narratives of/for Europe? These questions are central to the understanding of the past and present of the European integration process, and to a large extent will influence its future.

The circulation of narratives of/for Europe is not a spontaneous process. Narratives are articulated by actors in the public sphere, defined as “a social construction constituting a community of communication” (Risse 2003: 16). The public sphere plays a crucial role in the circulation of narratives of/for Europe, given that narratives do not operate in a vacuum, but in a space where they compete with other narratives for visibility and resonance, and tap existing cultural resources that a community has. We take narratives seriously, by analysing how, by whom and with what political goals Europe is narrated in the public sphere. Depending on the narrative that becomes hegemonic, certain actors, and not others, will gain political influence, since each narrative carries certain values and ethical principles that distinguish between ‘heroes’ and ‘villains’, and that place the blame on certain actors for the perceived problems. For instance, the ‘new narrative’ project launched in 2013, and continued by the Juncker Commission, essentially attempts to preserve the ‘permissive consensus’ vis-à-vis the EU (Bouza 2017), attempting to avoid the politicisation of the EU and portray the opponents of the policies of the European Commission as ‘Eurosceptics’.

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**SPECIAL ISSUE POLITIQUE EUROPÉENNE**

**Deadline 1 August 2018** Narrating “Europe”: a contested imagined community. Alvaro Oleart, Université Libre de Bruxelles; Astrid Van Weyenberg, Leiden University

European actors and institutions increasingly attempt to strengthen the European Union’s legitimacy by anchoring “Europe” in a shared ‘new’ narrative. This narrative of/for Europe seems intended to help foster and strengthen Europe’s legitimacy at a time when this legitimacy is frequently questioned. The former President of the European Commission, José Manuel Durão Barroso, introduced the project for a ‘new Narrative’ for Europe as follows:

“A new narrative for Europe not because we don’t remain loyal to the raison d’être of the European community and the European Union; of course, this remains valid. But because I think we need, in the beginning of the XXI century, namely for the new generation that is not so much identified with this narrative of Europe, to continue to tell the story of Europe. Like a book: it cannot only stay in the first pages, even if the first pages were extremely beautiful. We have to continue our narrative, continue to write the book of the present and of the future. This is why we need a new narrative for Europe.” (European Commission 2013).

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However, narratives of/for Europe travel in a segmented way throughout Europe, given the national fragmentation of the public spheres (Risse 2010, 2014; Koopmans and Statham 2010). This makes the study of narratives of/for Europe all the more interesting, given that the very competition of different narratives to define Europe, even if they oppose each other, is ‘de facto’ contributing to understand Europe as an “imagined community” (Anderson 1983). In this way, the narratives of and for Europe put forward by European actors can be considered the ‘infrastructure’ of the fragmented public spheres when discussing Europe.

The present volume seeks to explore the tension between the continuity and homogeneity propagated by Europeanizing narratives, and the inhering differences and inequalities between past and present centres and peripheries. We are additionally interested in how cultural narratives of Europe (will) adapt to a Europe that is at present changing radically, as a result of migration and increasing nationalism, for example, or the impending Brexit. We will do so by looking at narratives from two perspectives. Firstly, we will critically analyse to what extent and how narratives on Europe constitute an imagined community. Secondly, we will investigate the infrastructure of the public sphere when framing Europe, looking at how actors narrate it. The main goal of this volume is to call for more critical attention to the stories of and for Europe that are continuously being constructed and circulated, as well as conceptualising the intersection between culture and politics when dealing with Europe.

We invite contributions by scholars working within the Humanities and the Social Sciences who analyse the stories of/for Europe that different European actors/institutes/projects construct. We are not only interested in the primarily top-down narratives of and for Europe, but also in the ways in which these narratives might be challenged by putting forward critical alternative narratives.

Please send your abstract of 300 words before 1 August 2018 to Astrid Van Weyenberg at a.l.b.van.weyenberg@hum.leidenuniv.nl