

# Unity and difference: is European history in Euroculture inclusive?

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# outline

1. Introduction: do we pay attention to the different history and diverging historical narratives about the past in Euroculture: is it inclusive?
2. National and European history: unity and difference
3. History in Euroculture: what do we teach?
4. Conclusion: How inclusive is 'history' in Euroculture?
5. To be discussed: what could and/or should we teach in Euroculture?

# Inclusive history

- history in which there is space for the similarities and the differences within Europe and within the nation- states
- European history: taking great care not to take a finalist perspective ( “reading history backwards” ).

# European dimension in curriculum

- ‘seen to be important in consolidating a Europe in which past animosities can finally be abandoned and replaced by a firm pan-European attachment to ideals of freedom and cooperation between European nations, dedicated to the defence of democracy, human rights, freedom and tolerance’
- Difficult: ‘the accent has often been on “us and the other Europeans” rather than on “us Europeans”.’
- Ryba, Raymond. “Unity in Diversity: The Enigma of the European Dimension in Education.” *Oxford Review of Education* 21, no. 1 (March 1995): 25–36.

# “Return to Europe, 1989”

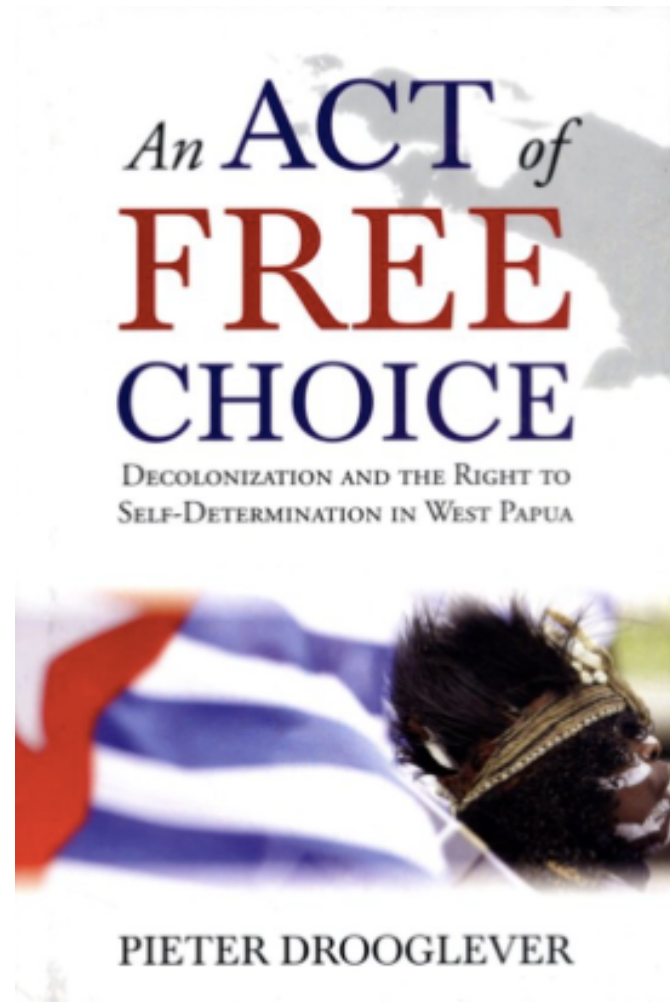


- "One can turn an aquarium to fish soup, but how can a fish soup be turned back into an aquarium?"
- [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/poland-europe-democracy-anniversary\\_b\\_5453823](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/poland-europe-democracy-anniversary_b_5453823)

# The 'contestedness' of Europe

- Europe as an idea or a continent or a political organization is always contested and pluriform (...) There is no single European narrative, and there is at least as much discontinuity as there is continuity in European history.

‘After all, history is always political’



## 2. National and European history-unity and difference

- Contestedness: history is often linked to questions of (national) identity
- Peter Stearns, Why study history: history helps provide identity : “national stories are meant to drive home an understanding of national values and a commitment to national loyalty”.
- [https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-\(1998\)](https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-(1998)).



# Proposal for a ‘House of European History’, 2007

- ‘a place where a memory of European history and the work of European unification is jointly cultivated, and which at the same time is available as a locus for the European identity to go on being shaped by present and future citizens of the European Union’
- Speech Hans-Gert Pöttering, 13 February 2007, presenting his programme as president of the European Parliament.

# Staircase with historical quotes, HEH



<https://visit.brussels/en/place/House-of-European-History>

# Treaty establishing the European Community

## Article 151

1. The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.

2. Action by the Community shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in the following areas:

- improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples;
- conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance;
- non-commercial cultural exchanges;
- artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector.

# 3. history in Euroculture:

## **What are we teaching?**

- (What could we be teaching
- What should be teaching)

Western Europe is dealing with a different past than Eastern Europe. Is this also visible in what we actually teach in Euroculture in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester?

# Europe is diverse....

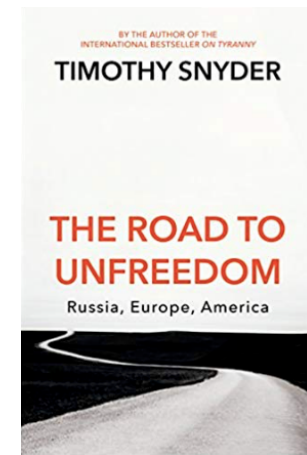
- And arguably, if we can no longer talk of communism we should no longer talk of Eastern Europe, at least with a capital “E” for Eastern. Instead, we shall have central Europe again, east central Europe, southeastern Europe, eastern Europe with a small “e,” and, above all, individual peoples, nations, and states.

“Eastern Europe: The Year of Truth” [Timothy Garton Ash](#)

- [NYRoB, February 15, 1990 issue](#)

# 4. Conclusion: inclusive history matters

- ‘Politics of inevitability’
- ‘Politics of responsibility’: “If we see history as it is, we see our places in it, what we might change, and how we might do better (...) We begin a politics of responsibility”.
- Timothy Snyder, *Road to Unfreedom* , 279





## 5. To be discussed: what could and/or should we teach in Euroculture?

- The first semester is meant as a general introduction to the programme
- the specific regional focus can/should be dealt with in the other 3 semesters
- **What can/should be included, and how?**