Treaties
of
Nymegen
Medal

Treaties of Nijmegen Medal

2012

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Foreword

On 7 May 2012 the Treaties of Nijmegen Medal was awarded to Umberto Eco. The name of the award commemorates a series of Peace Treaties signed in Nijmegen in 1678 and 1679. These peace treaties were one of the first attempts to achieve peace on a European scale.

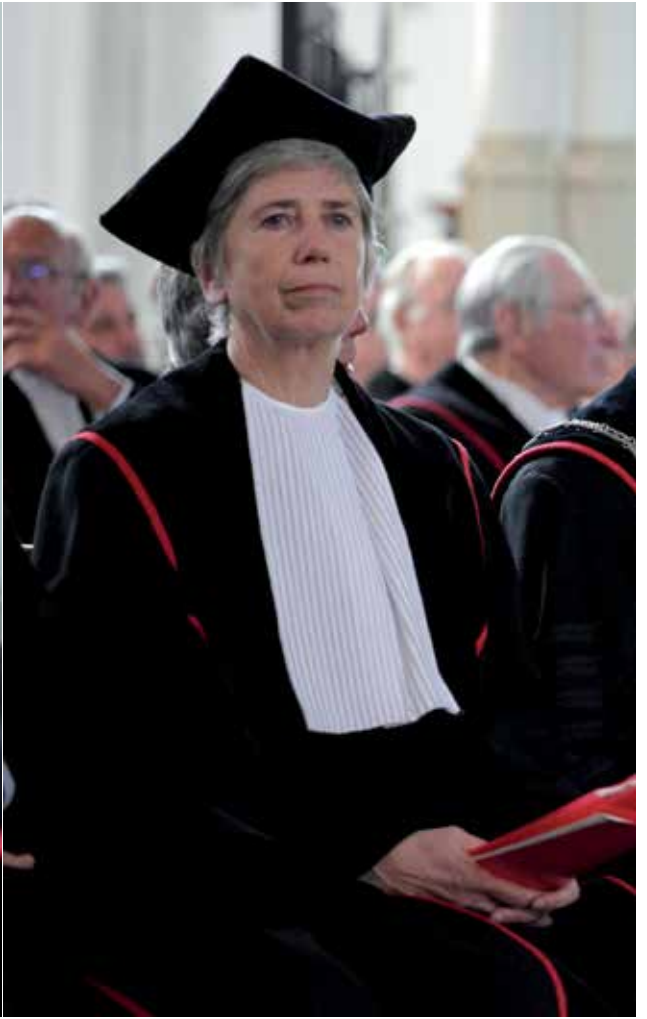
The most important lesson the Treaties of Nijmegen can teach us, is that discussion, dialogue and mutual respect can lead to European peace and tolerance. This is what inspired the City of Nijmegen, Radboud University Nijmegen and Royal Haskoning, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to award a Treaties of Nijmegen Medal every two years. The Medal is awarded to a person or organization that has devoted special efforts towards achieving peace, prosperity and tolerance in Europe. In 2010 the first Treaty of Nijmegen Medal was awarded to Jacques Delors, who was president of the European Commission from 1985 tot 1995.

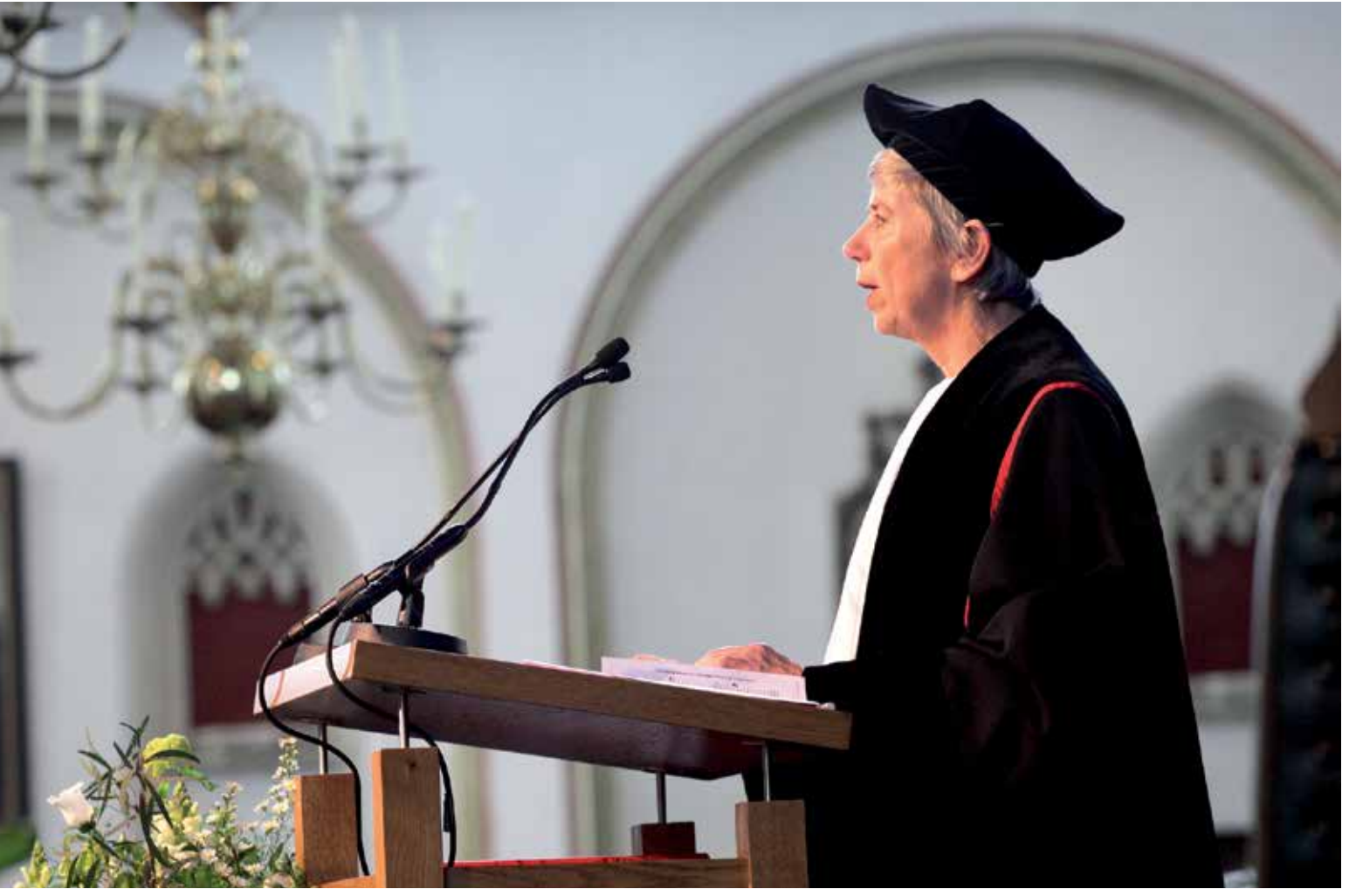
Ben Knapen, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, praised author and scientist Umberto Eco in the St. Stephen's Church on 7 May, for his contribution to the discussion and thinking about the past and future of Europe. "His future of Europe is a community of people who can relate to the spirit, the flavour and the atmosphere of different languages. Because when they understand the languages, they understand the cultural universe behind them as well."

In this collection you will find Ben Knapen's speech, together with the addresses delivered by Prof. Ellen van Wolde and the Mayor of Nijmegen. Of course, the Treaties of Nijmegen Lecture by Umberto Eco himself is also included.

The collection also contains a reproduction of 'The signing of the peace treaty between France and Spain on 17 September 1678/1679' by Henri Gascard (1635-1701), a painting which is on display in the Museum Het Valkhof in Nijmegen.

In this way, Nijmegen authorities, academics and business come together to honour an important European and to help shape the future of Europe.





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We must remember that it is culture, not war or economy, that cements our European identity.
Umberto Eco

Eco, Europe, and the Dynamics of Semiosis

Professor Ellen van Wolde

1. Eco and Europe

When we think of Europe today, most of us might think of politics, economic crises or a history of wars. However, one of the main characteristics of Europe is culture: an aggregate of ideas and habits that migrated from the ancient Near East and Egypt to Greece, Anatolia, all over the Roman Empire, through the Middle Ages travelling from Byzantine Europe to Western Europe, from the Mediterranean to the Northwest and Middle European empires, from Europe to America and other colonies around the world. In this "Migration of the mind" Europe has played an important role.

Eco and his students

Thirty years ago, students would travel to Bologna to study with Umberto Eco. They came from all over Europe: Italy, Germany, England, Belgium, France, Spain, Greece and the Netherlands but also further afield from Australia, Iraq, Egypt and America. This was similar to the Middle Ages, the Renaissance period and the Grand Tour period when students travelled for miles to be taught by famous professors and to develop their intellectual strengths and capacities. Nowadays students can get support from the Erasmus Programme but thirty years ago students had to support themselves.

In 1982, I was such a student. Recently graduated from Radboud University Nijmegen (then the Catholic University of Nijmegen), I went to Bologna for a year to study an illustrious branch of the arts and humanities called semiotics. I was eager to learn how people develop ideas, how culture, language and ideas can influence people's perceptions and minds and to explore my research question: how do language and concepts relate to the actual world? Are we imprisoned by language, unable to reach out to the world; are we simply products of culture, never able to understand the minds or 'other' peoples? What if language constructs the world? How then would we ever be able to understand people born and raised in other cultures, for example, Indian, Islamic, African or even ancient Mesopotamian or Greek cultures? These questions intrigued me and so I too went to visit Professor Umberto Eco hoping to find some answers.

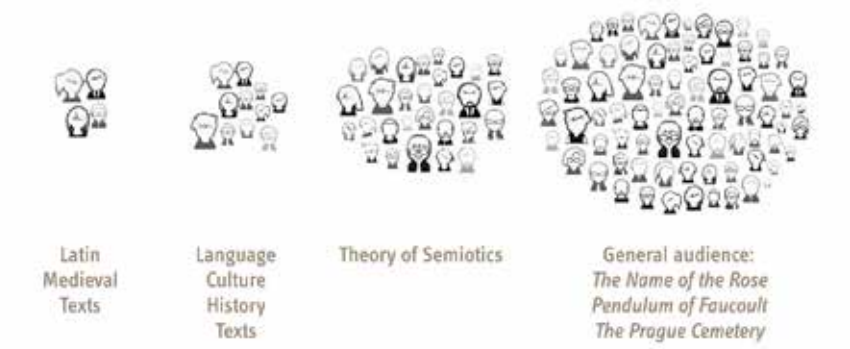
Every Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Professor Eco would travel from Milan to Bologna to teach. On Thursday he gave a general course on semiotics, on Friday a course on language and meaning, and on Saturday medieval philosophy and semantics. Huge numbers of students attended his Thursday classes. The room was always packed with students sitting on chairs, on the floor or leaning against the walls. I always followed the classes before Eco's, to make sure I had a chair to sit on in his class, which meant that I inadvertently learned a lot about the films of Pasolini, the topic of the previous course. The Eco class on Thursday was so packed that one day the floor gave way under the weight of students.

The Friday group was smaller, fifty or so, and we concentrated on topics of language and meaning, language and communication, semantics and pragmatics. Quite often, experts from abroad were invited. On Saturday there was a seminar with six to eight students specialising in medieval philosophy and semantics. We read texts written in Latin. We studied them closely, discussed details: how should we read this Latin word, how does the argument run in this text? And it always turned out that the study of details has important consequences for the interpretation of the entire text. My impression was that Eco loved these seminars most.

Eco and the University

Figure 1 offers a picture of Eco's teaching courses at Bologna University from the specialised small groups to larger student groups and large introduction classes. This image represents good university education, classes from introduction to specialisation, students eager to learn and professors who are experts in their fields with great intellectual rigour and a sense of responsibility towards their students. In addition to his research and courses at Bologna University, Umberto Eco started to write for a larger audience, the novels, often detective stories with a semiotic background: *The Name of the Rose, The Pendulum of Foucault, The Prague Cemetery*.

Figure 1: Eco, University and general audience



Why did so many European students want to study with Eco? Because of *Theory of Semiotics*, the book he wrote between 1967 and 1974 which was published in English in 1976. In it, he described semiotics as a 'logic of culture', a unified approach to every phenomenon of signification and/or communication. In the early eighties, he wrote *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (1984). I assume he was writing it while I was still his student, because its topics (what are signs, what is the difference between dictionary and encyclopaedia, the topics of metaphor, symbols and mirrors) figured widely in his courses.

After a couple of months of intensive study, I plucked up the courage to ask Eco my own questions and he invited me to his office. 'I discovered', I said, 'that semiotics is a kind of constructivist theory, and even more that you are a constructivist. You only believe in the name of the rose, not in the rose itself.' Professor Eco, started laughing, and said: 'Piccola teologa, that's your problem, isn't it. What if God only turns out to be a name, and nothing else?' And he was right of course.

But let me phrase this problem in other terms, in terms of quantum mechanics. 'Is quantum mechanics a description of the actual world or is it simply a system that happens to

work?' This was a matter that dominated Einstein's life and led him to insist that the theory was correct but incomplete. Intuitively, he just could not accept that there was no reality without an observer, or that this reality was defined by the observer, as Bohr and the rest seemed to be saying. In Einstein's memorable phrase, there was out there a 'real factual situation'. 'When a mouse observes', he once asked, 'does that change the state of the universe?' Einstein expressed himself better than I did, but the question was the same.

And it was a great pleasure to discover that Eco, in his last theoretical book, *Kant and the Platypus. Essays on Language and Cognition* (1997, 2000 English edition), addressed this question and discussed it extensively in the first two essays.

2. Eco, Semiotics and the Dynamics of Semiosis

In his ground breaking and fundamental book, *A Theory of Semiotics*, Eco offered a comprehensive study of semiotics, which will be sketched here shortly in a sort of 'semiotics for dummies'.

Semiotics for dummies

We, the human species, seem to be driven by a desire to make meanings. We are, above all, Homo significans – meaning makers. Distinctively, we make meanings through our creation and interpretation of 'signs'. A sign is everything which can be said to significantly stand for something else. In its widest sense, a sign may be defined as a form that stands for something else, which we understand as its meaning. For example, raising one's eyebrow is understood to be a sign of surprise, whereas blowing one's nose is usually not taken to be a meaningful sign, but it may become one if it is intended as an expression of protest. We interpret things as signs largely unconsciously by relating them to familiar systems of conventions. The meaningful use of signs is at the heart of the concerns of semiotics. In Europe, we have been educated by a mixture of social

codes or semiotic conventions from Greek, Roman, Judaic and Christian origins.

Example a: European sign codes in contrast to American sign codes: 'justice'.

The social political philosopher Michael J. Sandel offered the following example of the American idea of justice in his book *Justice. What is the right thing to do?* (2009).
In the summer of 2004, Hurricane Charley roared out of the Gulf of Mexico and swept across Florida to the Atlantic Ocean. The storm claimed 22 lives and caused $11 billion in damage. A gas station in Orlando was selling $2 bags of ice for $10; stores that normally sold small household generators for $250 were now asking $2000. One resident was told it would cost $10,000 to remove a fallen tree from his roof. And so on and so forth. Many Floridians were angered by the inflated prices.

Florida made a law against price gouging. But in the discussion, some economists argued that the price-gouging law was wrong. 'In medieval times, philosophers and theologians believed that the exchange of goods should be governed by a "just price", determined by the intrinsic value of things. But in market societies prices are set by supply and demand. There is no such thing as a "just price". This isn't greedy or brazen. It's how goods and service get allocated in a free society.'

For someone born and raised in Europe, this sounds outrageous. Fortunately, Attorney General Crist (a Republican who would later be elected governor of Florida) defended the law against price gouging, saying (and I quote Sandel who quotes Crist):
'This is not the normal free market situation where willing buyers freely elect to enter into the marketplace and meet willing sellers, where a price is agreed upon based on supply and demand. In an emergency, buyers under duress have no freedom.'

Example b: Christian sign codes in contrast to Arabic sign codes: Arabic Bible translations.

Recently a controversy arose over three reputable Christian organizations, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and Frontiers, because they published Arabic translations of the Bible, in which the words 'Father' for God and 'Son' and 'Son of God' for Jesus were replaced by 'Lord' and 'Messiah'. The translators claim that a word-for-word translation of these titles would communicate an incorrect meaning in Arabic societies in which the notion of 'God the Father' would have been interpreted as God physically having sex with Mary, thus justify-

ing substituting 'Father' and 'Son' in new translations. In our European social conventions, based on a long Christian tradition, we would never think of God the Father as one who had sex with Mary who begat God's son Jesus. In Arabic culture, the semantic concept of father would involve sex, or so the American translators assumed. They let cultural anthropology prevail over biblical theology, or so at least the protesters assume. (*see*: http://news.yahoo.com/father-son-ousted-trinity-bible-translations-003300519.html)

Semiosis

The American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1939-1914) is one of the founding fathers of semiotics. He formulated the basic concepts of semiotics in his famous essay: *Some consequences of four incapacities* (1868).

1. We have no power of Introspective, but all knowledge of the internal world is derived by hypothetical reasoning from our knowledge of external facts.
2. We have no power of Intuition, but every cognition is determined logically by previous cognitions.

Peirce proposes to call the interpretative process *semiosis*, in which he defines semiosis as an operation of three subjects: the sign, its object and its interpretant. The sign is described above, the object is the actual or mental phenomenon referred to, and the interpretant is the meaning effect or mental image that is the result of the process of semiosis. In his studies Peirce tries to explain how every semiosis involves a form of inference making that takes a sign as its origin, generates interpretation, and has a meaning or a mental image as its effect. Thus he shows that inference making is at the heart of semiosis. Take, for example, the following three statements: "John Milton wrote *Paradise Lost*", "His wife died", "John Milton wrote *Paradise Regained*." When these statements are interpreted chronologically, the inference is made that these events just happened one after the other (= *post hoc*). However, when they are interpreted causally, the inference is made that the last event was the consequence of the antecedents (*post hoc, ergo propter hoc*). However, the latter inference is wrong, since the three statements were ordered and expressed as a subsequence and not as a consequence. Peirce explains how the only justification of an inference from signs is that the conclusion

explains the fact. And he makes a distinction between three types of inferences, namely *abduction, induction*, and *deduction*.

- *Abduction* is an inference from a body of data to an explaining hypothesis. Later Peirce described abduction as the method of discovering hypotheses.
- *Induction* is an inference from a sample to a whole. Later Peirce described induction as the method of testing hypotheses.
- *Deduction* is an inference in which the conclusion is of no greater generality than the premises. Later Peirce described deduction as the method of generalization, the establishment of rules, habits and conventions.

Abduction constitutes according to Peirce the first stage of scientific inquiries and of any interpretive processes. It covers two operations: the selection and the formation of plausible hypotheses. As process of finding premises, it is the basis of interpretive reconstruction of causes and intentions, as well as of inventive construction of theories. Thinking and reasoning is based on abductive, deductive and inductive inferences, and aims at establishing beliefs, habits, rules and codes.

Eco and the dynamics of semiosis

So far, we have argued that (1) semiosis requires sign-functions and social codes, and that (2) semiosis requires inference making, which can be specified in three different types of inferences. Umberto Eco elaborates on Peirce's view on semiosis in a crucial way. Eco considers human culture to be characterised by the on-going productions of meaning in nodal networks. In his philosophical explorations of lexical and encyclopaedic semantics, Eco proposes a model which he calls Model Q. This model differs from many others, both ancient and modern, in that it does not assume that natural, conceptual or cultural reality can be arranged according to hierarchical classifications or taxonomies such as those presented by Linnaeus in his *Systema Naturae*, in which he classified 4,400 species of animals and 7,700 species of plants in *classes, ordines, genera* and *species*. Because reality is so complex, Eco argues, there will invariably be alternative configurations and arrangements of inferences, concepts and expressions, while no arrangement is necessarily or ontologically the correct one. Each arrangement and understanding is the result of dynamic interpretation processes, represented in Model Q as a dynamic network that consists of a mass of nodes interconnected

by various types of associative links. Model Q shows a structure that may grow in complexity almost without limit, based as it is on a process of unlimited semiosis. In such a growing network, new nodes preferentially attach to existing nodes. These nodes are clustered and firmly based on social codes and open to grow in on-going interactions.

The Twitter diagram in *figure 2* (from http://burak-arikan.com/tr/growth-of-a-twitter-graph) shows what such a Model Q might look like. It is a network of clusters, starting at one place. Via interaction, links and social groups, it spreads out and explodes. In the nineteen-eighties and nineties, the network model became dominant in neurological studies of the brain, artificial intelligence, cognitive studies, and in linguistics and the social sciences. At present, the study of complexity networks has become the bridge between a great number of disciplines which until recently had been separated in sciences, humanities and social sciences.

In fact, Umberto Eco was the first to explain the logic of culture, language and communication as a complex growing network, a highly interactive chain of signs, codes and inferences. What was first a speculative model developed in the studies of semiotics became an explanatory instrument with which one can explain the cultural conditions of the migration of the mind.

3. An example: Semiosis and the concept of God

Within the framework of this semiotic theory, I will offer a short reflection on one of our ideas rooted in European tradition, our conceptual image of God. My opening question is: Do you think of 'God' as having a wife? And why do you think so? Is your inference based on cultural-religious codes in Europe? And do you think that God in the Bible is thought of as having a wife and do you consider it likely that the biblical concept of God exerted its influence on European codes and/or on yourself?
In order to answer these questions, I will examine words in the Hebrew Bible (also known as the Old Testament), artefacts found in ancient Israel, and Early Hebrew inscriptions and pictures that relate to the goddess *Asherah*, also known as Yahweh's consort. Words, texts, pictures and artefacts are used as signs in inferential reasoning that consists of:

1. Collection, construction and reconstruction of data
2. Formulation of hypotheses (abduction)
3. Falsification/verification and drawing conclusions (induction)
4. Deducing general rules (deduction)

The words *asherah* (singular) and *asherim* or *asheroth* (plural) occur 40 times in the Hebrew Bible. They are used in the context of altars or other places of worship. For at least 2,000 years, any connection with a goddess was forgotten – or perhaps denied. If there were originally any direct or indirect references to a goddess in the Hebrew Bible, by the time of the Greek translation of the Septuagint the concept of a goddess by that name had gone. The Hebrew *asherah* was translated as 'sacred place' (Greek: *alsos*) (twice, in 2 Chron. 15:16 and 24:18, the Septuagint indicates the goddess Astarte). The Vulgate also gave the meaning 'grove' (*lucus*) or 'wood' or 'grove' (Latin: *numus*). The King James Version (KJV) translates the passages with 'grove' or 'groves', too. But by the late 19th century CE, belief in this goddess begins to reappear (see for a survey of this history, Hadley 2000). The Assyrian evidence of a goddess Ashratu convinced many that there was probably a Canaanite goddess of that name. In 1885, the Revised Version (the British revision of the King James Version of 1611) used the translation Asherah with capital letter. It was the tablets found at Ras es-Shamra (old Ugarit) that brought the goddess Astarte or Asherah into prominence. This was evidence that a goddess of that name was worshipped in the general region during the second half of the 2nd millennium BCE. Yet, in modern (confessional) Bible translations we hardly find traces of the goddess Asherah. In the New Revised Standard Version (1989; NRSV) the Hebrew *asherah* is only 6 out of 40 times understood as the name of the goddess Asherah, and the other times it is translated 'sacred pole(s)'. The New Jewish Publication Society (1999; NJPS) renders the Hebrew word *asherah* 7 times Asherah, the other 33 times 'sacred post(s)'. The only modern English translation I know of in which *asherah* is consistently translated as the name of the goddess Asherah, or its plural form Asherim or Asheroth is the English Standard Version (2001; update 2007; ESV); this is an "essentially literal" translation of the Bible in contemporary English (see www.esv.org). The passages that in which *asherah* is commonly translated Asherah are:

Judges 3:7
"The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, forgetting the LORD their God, and worshiping the Baals and the *Asherahs*." (NRSV, NJPS, ESV; KJV translates 'groves')

1 Kings 15:13
"He also removed his mother Maacah from being queen mother, because she had made an abominable image for *Asherah*; Asa cut down her image and burned it at the Wadi Kidron." (NRSV, NJPS, ESV; KJV translates 'grove')

1 Kings 18:19
"Now therefore have all Israel assemble for me at Mount Carmel, with the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of *Asherah*, who eat at Jezebel's table." (NRSV, NJPS, ESV; KJV translates 'grove')

2 Kings 21:7
"The carved image of *Asherah* that he had made he set in the house of which the LORD said to David and to his son Solomon" (NRSV, NJPS, ESV; KJV translates 'grove')

2 Kings 23:4
"The king commanded the high priest Hilkiah, the priests of the second order, and the guardians of the threshold, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels made for Baal, for *Asherah*, and for all the host of heaven; he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel." (NRSV, NJPS, ESV)

However, in other texts there is still no consensus whether or not the biblical references are to the goddess Asherah or some sort of wooden object ("sacred pole") used at cultic sites ("high places") in conjunction with standing stones and altars. Some examples are:

Exodus 34:13
"But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves" (KJV)
"You shall tear down their altars, break their pillars, and cut down their *sacred poles*" (NRSV)
"No, you must tear down their altars, smash their pillars, and cut down their *sacred posts*"(NJPS)
"You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their *Asherim*" (ESV)

Judges 6:25
"That night the Lord said to him, "Take the young bull belonging to your father, and another bull seven years old; pull down the altar of Baal which belongs to your father, and cut down the *sacred post* which is beside it"
"That night the Lord said to him, "Take your father's bull, and the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the *Asherah* that is beside it" (ESV; KJV 'grove', NRSV 'sacred pole', NJPS 'sacred post')

Judges 6:28

"When the men of the town rose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the *Asherah* beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar that had been built."
(ESV; KJV 'grove', NRSV 'sacred pole', NJPS 'sacred post')

Judges 6:30

"Then the men of the town said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has broken down the altar of Baal and cut down the *Asherah* beside it."
(ESV; KJV 'grove', NRSV 'sacred pole', NJPS 'sacred post')

Based on the data set of 40 usages of *asherah* in the Hebrew Bible, the following hypotheses (abduction) are formulated: (1) this word either refers to the goddess Asherah or to its representative (cultic object), (2) this word corresponds to beliefs of the people at the time written about or is a polemic redefinition by later biblical authors or redactors, and (3) the notion of a female deity Asherah or its representative was present as a mental concept in the minds of ancient Israelites.

In addition to biblical texts, we have other data. Archaeologists have excavated thousands upon thousands of female figurines in the area called Canaan, ancient Israel or Judah, Samaria, Palestine or modern Israel, respectively. Female figurines (*figures 3a, 3b*) were found, often near altars. Many had large breasts and displayed symbols of fertility, such as the tree of life or a pubic zone in the form of the tree of life. Until recently archaeologists tended to see these as belonging to Canaanite culture, since official Israelite cult would never have allowed these kinds of images. However, the large number of figurines found and a growing awareness that biblical texts were (re-)written by authors and redactors who defended the official religion and cult in Jerusalem, has made many scholars aware of the contrasts between the official cult and folk religion spread over the land. The abduction was made that these figurines signify the existence of a dynamic folk religion that was oppressed by the official literature transmitted in the Hebrew Bible (see F. Stavrakopoulou 2010, 2013).

Ancient inscriptions were discovered that provided even more information. First, at Khirbet el-Qom in the Judean Mountains near Hebron, an inscription was found that dates from ca. 750 BCE. The inscription is written in Early Hebrew script and offers three lines in which Yahweh and Asherah are mentioned side by side.

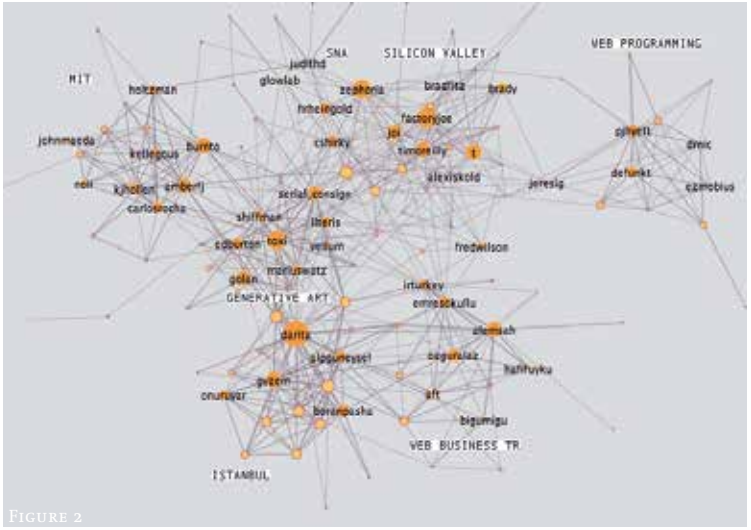


Figure 2

Figure 3a

Figure 3b

Figure 4

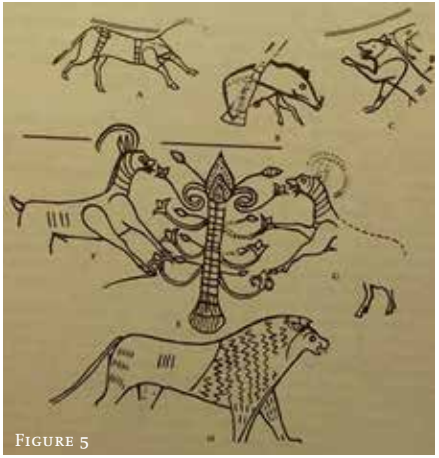


Figure 5

1. "Uriyahu the rich wrote it.
2. Blessed be Uriyahu by Yahweh
3. by Asherah/ his asherah for from his enemies he has saved him."

The chief (or wealthy person) Uriyahu presents himself as the writer of the text and asks for Yahweh's blessing and calls upon Yahweh's *asherah*, or Yahweh and Asherah for deliverance from his enemies. Whereas in biblical texts Asherah or asherah is often connected with idols or deities such as Baal, in this inscription the *asherah*/Asherah is closely connected with Yahweh. The scholarly discussion focusses on the possessive pronoun 'his' (expressed by a pronominal suffix in Hebrew at the end of the word *a.sh.r.th.*) which is conveyed in ancient Hebrew script by a short vertical line. Because the stone surface on which the text was inscribed is in a poor condition and has long scratches on its surface, the strokes of the letters are sometimes barely distinguishable from the cracks and striations in the rock. So, to consider a short vertical line as a sign of a letter that expresses a possessive pronoun is already an inference on which two hypotheses are formulated: if the inscription reads 'to Yahweh of Samaria and to Asherah', it refers to Yahweh and to his consort Asherah; if the inscription reads 'to Yahweh of Samaria and his *asherah*', it refers to Yahweh and a cultic object that represents him. However, in both cases, Yahweh and Asherah/*asherah* are mentioned in one breath and the two appear to be closely linked.

An even more revolutionary find was made in Kuntillet 'Ajrud in the Northern Sinai where various Pithoi or large storage containers were discovered that dated from the end of the 9th century and the beginning of the 8th century BCE. On Pithos A we have texts and pictures on both sides (*see figure 4*).

The picture on the foreground of *figure 4* shows a cow with a suckling calf, which is a common representation of the mother goddesses in several cultures, representing her fertility and nurturing. The male figures are commonly understood to represent Egyptian Bes figures while the female figure is playing the lyre while sitting on a feline throne. The lion throne chair is a sign of royalty. The accompanying inscriptions that are in a mix of Phoenician and Hebrew script read:
"I bless you [by] Yahweh of Samaria and by Asherah/ his asherah."

Again the discussion concerns a pronominal suffix expressing the possessive 'his'; does the Hebrew text contains such a sign or does it

not? In order to draw a conclusion the image on the other side of Pithos A has to be taken into account (*see figure 5*).

The picture in *figure 5* shows the Tree of Life, a representation of the mother goddess that feeds and sustains life, with the typical caprids eating from the Tree on either side. The tree goddess stands on a lion that carries her. This imagery is very typical of statues and amulets of Asherah. The combination of both sides of Pithos A has led to the formulation of the hypothesis that the female figure represents Asherah, the consort of Yahweh. In this abductive reasoning, the text and pictures are taken together: they express a close relationship between Yahweh, the God of Samaria, the capital city of the state of Israel in the 9th and 8th century BCE, and the goddess Asherah or, some scholars would say, between Yahweh and his *asherah*.

On Pithos B found in Kuntillet 'Ajrud the text reads:
"I bless you by Yahweh of Teman and by Asherah/ his asherah. *May he bless you and observe you and be with my lord."*

Again the question is whether or not a possessive pronoun can be detected in the letters *a.sh.r.th*. Those who claim that there is, translate the text as "and by his *asherah*" and conclude that *asherah* is an object, such as a wooden pole. Those who translate without a possessive "his", read the text as a sign of the ancient concepts of Yahweh and his consort Asherah.

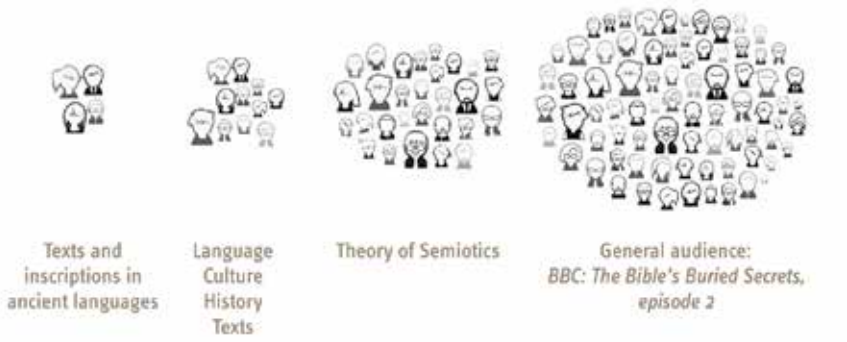
Last, but not least, during the summer of 1990, 15 inscriptions on pottery shards were found in Khirbet el-Muqanna (biblical Ekron). The relevant inscription written on a storage jar of the 7th century BCE reads: "for (the goddess) Asherah". There is no doubt here, because no possessive pronoun is attached to Asherah. Hence, only the name of the goddess was found on the jars.

All these data sets together led to the abduction that the term *asherah* refers to the goddess Asherah who is closely related to Yahweh, and is more and more tested by iconographic, epigraphic and textual material. This testing stage is based on inductive reasoning, in which the various sets of data are described, compared, and discussed. The discussion is still going on; see for two contesting views *http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/Hadley_Asherah.shtml*, and *http://www.lebtahor.com/Archaeology/inscriptions/kuntillet ajrud inscriptions.html.*

Abductions and inductions will lead in the end to the formulation of concluding views.

This last stage, then, is based on deductive reasoning. It might go like this. There is evidence that a goddess called Asherah, who stood by Yahweh's side, was worshipped in ancient Israel in the 9th-8th century BCE. In biblical texts we find traces of this goddess, but it can also be shown that the term *asherah* shifted from denoting a goddess and her image to merely referring to an object (for an extensive discussion, see Hadley 2000). It may be that religious reformers wanted to eradicate the worship of Asherah, whether it was the wooden cultic symbol or the goddess herself. But during the centuries before this, Asherah has appeared paired with Yahweh in positive ways.

Figure 6: Humanities Research of Asherah



4. Eco and the Humanities

Research in the humanities is based on semiosis and on verifiable or falsifiable inference making: that is, on abductions, inductions and deductions. The results of these inferences cluster into networks of meaning, in which the nodes are associated via logical links. In this way, knowledge grows through a dynamic process of unlimited semiosis. It became clear in this study of Asherah that the devil is in the detail. In fact, the entire western history of the understanding of a God as a deity with or without a wife depends on the interpretation of a small vertical scratch on some ancient pottery!

The research presented here is similar to Umberto Eco's research on the Middle Ages in small student seminars.

The illustrations (*Figure 6*) show us how detailed examination of texts and inscriptions written in ancient languages, of material artefacts and archaeological finds are conducted in the framework of academia, in which experts investigate and teach languages, ancient and new, history, archaeology, iconography, philology, etc. The theoretical background of this kind of research is explained by Umberto Eco in his theory of semiotics. His

model Q showed us how we are continuously extending our networks of meaning by attaching new nodes to already existing nodes of thinking.

This is the modern university. Detailed research studies based on sign driven inferences and nodal networks lead to results and knowledge that is taught in schools of higher education and transmitted to the general public. Umberto Eco can be considered as the sign or token of the university professor in the humanities. An audience of readers, film-watchers, and internet users become acquainted with the acquired insights and are thus challenged to elaborate on their own networks of meaning. Our task as scholars in the humanities is data mining and to formulate new inferences and new information, in order to feed the unlimited processes of semiosis of scholars, students and the general audience.

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Treaties
of
Nymegen
Medal

Speech

Mayor Wim Dijkstra

Eccellenze, signore e signori,

The history of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa runs like a red line through the relationship between Alessandria, Nijmegen and you, Mr Eco. In Nijmegen, the emperor was the architect of the imposing Valkhof castle that stood here until 1797, but in your birthplace, Alessandria, he was the aggressor who wanted to besiege the city. Those of us who are familiar with Eco's novel *Baudolino* will know the ruse that pathological schemer used to deter his stepfather from making a further siege on Alessandria.

With your consent, Mr Eco, I would like to take a moment to discuss your fascination with 'lies and deceit', a central theme in many of your novels. In your latest novel, *The Prague Cemetery*, and in *Baudolino*, this theme is explored to its fullest extent.

From a young age, the protagonist, Baudolino, elevates the lie, turning it into truth. He applies this 'truth' to everyone around him, including Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, with whom you are so fascinated. Baudolino's tutor, bishop Otto, had raised him on lies. I quote: "Se tu vuoi diventare uomo di lettere, e scrivere magari un giorno delle Istorie, devi anche mentire, e inventare delle storie,

altrimenti la tua Istoria diventerebbe monotona. Ma dovrai farlo con moderazione. Il mondo condanna i bugiardi che non fanno altro che mentire, anche sulle cose infime, e premia i poeti, che mentono soltanto sulle cose grandissime."

It is no lie, however, that Frederick Barbarossa had his famous castle built at the Valkhof. He did have an untruth – a lie, if you wish – carved on a commemorative stone, naming Julius Caesar as the founder of the original castle. The text that we find here could just as well have been whispered into his ear by your Baudolino, Mr Eco. It was Baudolino's wish to secure a place in history for the emperor as important as that of Julius Caesar. In your novel, Baudolino says the following to the emperor: "... l'imperatore esiste proprio per questo, lui non è imperatore perché gli vengono le idee giuste, ma le idee sono giuste perché vengono a lui, e basta."

Baudolino was a pathological liar who had never known true happiness apart from the all-consuming lie which brought him great pleasure. He had known love, however. His fifteen-year-old wife Colandrina, for whom he cared deeply, died a year after their marriage with their unborn child. In your novel, Baudolino expresses the essence of his life and your book with the following words: "... ero bugiardo e avevo vissuto da bugiardo a tal punto che anche il mio seme aveva prodotto una bugia. Una bugia morta."

Mr Eco, in your novel *The Prague Cemetery*, which is set in the nineteenth century, your protagonist, Simone Simonini, seems related to Baudolino. I would like to take a moment to look at this book, because here too we find a link to Nijmegen.

Lies and deceit are again a major theme in *The Prague Cemetery*. In the epilogue, you suggest that Simonini is – and I quote – 'still among us'. It is up to the reader to draw their own conclusions here about modern times and society. In an interview, you once said that fraud and lies were much better organised in the past, whereas today the fabrication of lies only takes a matter of days. You also said that the effect of lies lasted longer in the past than it does today, and that modern lies follow one another at a faster pace. It is alleged that Simonini did, or does, exist. Whatever the case may be, Italians have a beautiful expression: 'Se non è vero, è ben trovato'; 'Even if it isn't true, it makes a good story'.

I would like to return to your book *The Prague Cemetery*. In an interview you gave to the Dutch magazine *HP De Tijd* on the ninth of March last year, you said that most readers are not careful readers. Well, anyone who has carefully read *The Prague Cemetery* will know that Nijmegen is mentioned on page 230. I quote: "Fracastoro ci dice che solo gli ebrei si sono salvati dall' epidemia di tifo del 1505, Degner ci dimostra come gli ebrei siano stati i soli a sopravvivere all'epidemia dissenterica a Nimega nel 1736..."

These few, almost inconspicuous, lines contain a whole history in themselves. There was, in fact, an outbreak of dysentery in Nijmegen in 1736. Also it is written that Nijmegen Jews were least affected by this epidemic – as was also the case during other epidemics. In 1925, an explanation was found in the fact that the Jews generally lived in the same part of the city and dysentery couldn't spread without contagion. It was also assumed that they did not fall victim to dysentery because of their kosher households and better personal hygiene. And so Mr Eco, fact and fiction are merged in your work, and it is up to the careful reader to decide what is 'Truth', what is 'Poetry' and the relationship they have with one another.

It was not my intention to give a literary account of Mr Eco's work this afternoon, but the red line between you, Mr Eco, your work and the city of Nijmegen was too good a theme to ignore. Did you know, by the way, that Karl Marx, who is of Jewish descent and who is blamed in *The Prague Cemetery* for the uprising against the authorities, has roots here in Nijmegen? His mother was born in Nijmegen, the daughter of a rabbi, and his parents were married here.

Mr Eco, former mayor Thom de Graaf initiated the Treaties of Nijmegen Medal in collaboration with Radboud University Nijmegen, Royal Haskoning and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2010, the medal was awarded for the first time to Jacques Delors, who needs no further introduction here. The origins of the prize lie in the Treaties of Nijmegen, which were negotiated in our city between 1678 and 1679. You could say that the Treaties of Nijmegen were one of the first forms of European agreement and cooperation. After years of negotiations, Spain, Sweden, France, the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands and the Holy Roman Empire, among others, signed the peace agreements that became known as the Treaties of Nijmegen.

In many European countries, these treaties earned a place in the history books. However, although it was a crucial moment in European history, the treaties are largely unknown to the general public in the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, and even more so abroad, Nijmegen and the treaties are irreversibly linked.

The Treaties of Nijmegen marked an important moment in European history. Along with the Roman period and the Middle Ages, the peace treaty negotiations were an essential element in our city's international, cultural and historical profile. The Treaties of Nijmegen Medal, which is awarded once every two years, fits seamlessly into this profile.

Mr Eco, you are a true European. Your work has been translated into practically every European language and has a wide and varied readership. You are considered to be the contemporary Italian author who has had the most influence on European literature.

Your novels address crucial moments in European history: *The Name of the Rose* is set in a medieval monastery; *Baudolino* is set in the Middle Ages, when Europe first began to take shape; and *The Prague Cemetery* takes place during the turbulent dawn of nineteenth-century Europe.

Europe features heavily in your academic work as well. This is highlighted by your 1993 study entitled 'The search for the perfect language', in which you examine the quest throughout the centuries for one single, artificial, European language.

Perhaps the clearest example of your interest in Europe, Mr Eco, is your involvement in the project 'Old Europe, new Europe, core Europe', the 2005 initiative by Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida. The project invited prominent European intellectuals to reflect together on the global position of the European Union. Your contribution, 'An uncertain Europe: between rebirth and decline', discussed European unification. You argued that this unification is not so much a wish as an inevitability. It is neither the past, nor the collective European awareness, but rather the shifting global balance of power in the world today that will determine whether 'Europe will […] become European, or […] will fall apart'.

Mr Eco, it gives me great pleasure and great honour to present you with the Treaties of Nijmegen Medal for your contributions to Europe, where we all belong. May I invite you to come forward so that I can present it to you.

Treaties
of
Nymegen
Medal

Speech

Secretary of State Ben Knapen

Professor Eco,
Mr Mayor, Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

When I heard that Umberto Eco had been awarded the Treaties of Nijmegen Medal, I immediately thought of a little story that I read once in a newspaper. The Russian writer Vladimir Makanin, on tour in Spain, goes to the seashore with his publisher. On the first beach he comes to, everybody is naked, everybody is wearing sunglasses, and everybody is reading the same book in a different language: Umberto Eco's *In the Name of the Rose*. On the second beach, everyone is wearing bathing suits, but here too they're all reading a book by Umberto Eco. Only this time it's *Foucault's Pendulum*.

This little story in a newspaper not only shows what a high reputation Mr Eco has in Europe. The fact that the tourists on those Spanish beaches are all reading his books in their own languages also highlights the focus in his thinking on ties among European nations. Since Europe's problem is to find political unity across a multilingual culture, Mr Eco has argued that translations or translators symbolise the future of Europe. In his view, a translator is someone who has a profound respect for the original text and a deep love for his mother tongue. 'Now there is my idea of

Europe,' Mr Eco has said. 'Through translation our own language becomes richer and gains a better understanding of itself.' His future of Europe is a community of people who can relate to the spirit, the flavour and the atmosphere of different languages. Because when they understand the languages, they understand the cultural universe behind them as well.

And Mr Eco practises what he preaches. For example, he wrote the preface to the Italian edition of Homo Ludens by the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga, whom he delicately described as someone who 'affrescava, e non scavava': who painted frescoes rather than writing in-depth history. As it turns out, Mr Eco and Johan Huizinga have a common view of language. Huizinga once wrote that a national language provides us with a mirror to absorb foreign influences.

In Mr Eco's view, the real unity of Europe is a multilingual unity. Or, in more political terms: Europe is indivisible, but it will never be a United States of Europe. Simply because our continent has too many languages and cultures. And because nationality remains an extremely deep-rooted part of people's sense of identity. This message may be more important now than at any time since the early years of European integration. The euro crisis has caused friction between – on the one hand – a growing army of politicians and pundits who are announcing the death of the nation-state and – on the other hand – a large number of citizens who won't sign the death certificate.

I feel that this antagonism is mostly artificial. Every day, we move back and forth between identities. You're part of a small family and an extended family; you have colleagues and friends; you're part of a neighbourhood, a town, a region and a country. These different identities are not in conflict; they flow smoothly into one another. Mr Eco already underlined this twenty years ago. I quote: 'Richelieu shaped the French nation, but he did not prevent a Marseillais being aware of the fact that he comes from Marseille with all its southern traditions and culture, and even his accent and dialect, nor a Breton from being deeply aware of being Breton.' So, Mr Eco reminded us that there is no reason why we can't be Dutch in a united Europe. Or German, or Italian. For this reason – and many, many others – Mr Eco is more than worthy of the medal he just received.

Ladies and gentlemen, today's medal is named after the Treaties of Nijmegen, which are seen as one of the first examples of European cooperation. One interesting feature of the Treaties was the encounter between Catholics and Protestants at the negotiating table. I read somewhere that Dutch Calvinists came to Nijmegen as tourists during the talks, eager to see what the Pope's representative looked like. Although they regarded the Pope as the Antichrist, the tourists were impressed by the envoy's noble bearing, his splendid attire and his pleasant manners.

The contrast between Catholic and Protestant Europe, or more generally between Northern and Southern Europe, has a long history. In his famous work *L'esprit des lois*, Montesquieu argued that the laws of different European countries reflect their climates. The French philosopher drew some radical conclusions from his theory. 'If we travel towards the north,' he wrote, 'we meet with people who have few vices, many virtues, and a great share of frankness and sincerity. If we draw near the south, we fancy ourselves entirely removed from the verge of morality.' So much for Montesquieu. Allow me to give you another example. Johan Huizinga once published a nationally famous book on the Dutch mentality. He wrote that 'our strength and *raison d'être* lie in being Western. (…) The Western peoples form our circle.' To put it a bit simplistically: Huizinga faced the Atlantic and turned his back towards the East and the South of Europe.

Today's Europe is still influenced by northern and southern stereotypes. Northern European countries are often depicted as stolid, and frugal and boring – Huizinga, for example, called frugality one of my compatriots' worst vices. Southern Europe, by contrast, is commonly described as sanguine, pleasure-loving and prodigal. In many cases, these images are innocent enough. The euro crisis, however, has shown us the ugly side of classic European stereotypes, supplemented with vulgar images of recent history. In German newspapers the Greeks have been depicted as lazy slackers; in Greek newspapers the Germans have been depicted as foreign occupiers.

Europe needs to move beyond these and other stereotypes. Mr Eco gives us food for thought. In a recent interview, he said that one of the great advantages of living in Europe is that he gets birthday greetings from the German president as well as from the Spanish prime

minister, neither of whom he knows. ‘After being at each other’s throats for years in fratricidal wars, we’re now all culturally European’, Mr Eco says. Unfortunately, he continues, our European identity today is ‘shallow’. Earlier European leaders acknowledged this problem, of course, and tried to find common ground in history. The EU’s six founding countries tried for example to found their unity on the historical figure of Charlemagne – a household name of course here in Nijmegen – since Charlemagne was called the ‘father of Europe’ in some old manuscripts. Later, in 1990, the European Commission supported the publication of a book by Jean Baptiste Duroselle, which gave Charlemagne a prominent place in ‘European’ history. Obviously, Charlemagne’s supporters didn’t succeed, mainly because the idea of him as a European founding father is way to artificial.

Mr Eco knows too much about European history to make the same mistake. He puts forward two surprisingly practical, one could almost say trivial, proposals for a deeper European identity. First, the Erasmus exchange programme should in his view be compulsory – not just for students, but also for cab drivers, plumbers and other workers. Second, men of culture who have united Europe – from Dante to Shakespeare, from Balzac to Rossellini – should perhaps be printed on our banknotes. Signs and symbols do matter. But this of course is nothing new for anyone who is familiar to the work of Umberto Eco. For me, Mr Eco is a source of hope, hope for the future of a united and prosperous Europe.

Therefore, Mr Eco, it is an honour to stand before you today. I congratulate you very much on behalf of the Dutch government on your Treaties of Nijmegen Medal, which you richly deserve.

Thank you.

Treaties
of
Nymegen
Medal

Address

Professor Umberto Eco

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel obviously highly honored and deeply grateful for being here to receive such a prestigious award and to celebrate such a crucial historical event like the Nijmegen Treaties, but let me add that I also feel touched to be in the city of the Limbourg Brothers, that is, of artists that have belonged since a long time to my imaginary museum, and to whom I have devoted some of my writings. In 2015 a series of events dedicated to those great brothers will be organized in this country and I have proudly accepted to become a member of the Recommendation Committee.

But let me come back to the event that today inspired our meeting.

In 1678 and 1679, Nijmegen hosted delegates from dozens of European countries and city-states in order to bring to an end a series of wars that devastated our continent. The Treaties of Peace of Nijmegen ended various interconnected wars among France, the Dutch Republic, Spain, Brandenburg, Sweden, Denmark, the Prince-Bishopric of Münster, and the Holy Roman Empire. Thus this town was the meeting place for mediators from across Europe who cooperated in order to terminate the wars ravaging our continent in the 17th century. Even though these treaties were later

disregarded, this effort was (after the horrors of the Thirty Years War) the first example of an effort to establish peace through dialogue and negotiations. This event could be seen as one of the first examples of European cooperation and accord and can be considered as a key event in European history.

More than 250 years passed from the Treaties and 1945, but we can say that the utopia born in Nijmegen was realized at the end of the Second World War.

It is a matter of continuous excitement for people of my generation to realize (as well as for our sons and grandchildren to accept as an obvious idea) that it is today unconceivable (if not ridiculous) to think of a possible war between France and Germany, Italy and Great Britain, Spain and the Low Countries. A young person – if he or she is not a student in history – cannot think that such a kind of conflict was the norm in the course of the last two thousand years. Sometimes even old people are unable to consciously realize it, except perhaps when they feel a thrill at the moment they cross European borders without passport, and more and more frequently without being obliged to change their money – while not only our remote ancestors but even our fathers were used to cross the same frontiers with a gun in their hands.

Slightly, from 1945 onward, every European felt to belong not only to the same continent but to the same community, in spite of many unavoidable linguistic and cultural differences.

I am not a candid idealist and I know very well that while Europeans are no more shooting one against the other there are many forms of no less violent competition that are frequently dividing our countries – and the present economic crisis is not producing a new sense of fraternity but rather an atmosphere of mutual distrust. Perhaps the sense of a European identity has not the same format and the same evidence for all the citizens of the various nations, but at least among the more responsible citizens, and particularly among cultivated young people (for example among the new community of students that through the Erasmus Program are living with mates of other countries and frequently marry each other thus preparing a future bilingual generation) the idea of being a European becomes more and more widespread.

Maybe we do not feel European enough when travelling inside Europe and are still disturbed by the different habits of our neighbors, but it is sufficient to visit another continent to realize that, even when we like these distant countries, when we meet another European we have the sudden sensation of returning home and to speak with somebody that we understand better than our hosts. Suddenly we smell something familiar and an Italian can feel more at ease, let me say, with a Norwegian than with an American.

Infinite are the reasons why a Frenchman can think differently from a German but both have been shaped by a series of common experiences, from affluence conquered through labor disputes rather than by an individualist ethics of success, to the old pride and then the failure of colonialism, not to speak of the phenomenon of dreadful dictatorships (and not only did we know them but by now we are also able to recognize their premonitory symptoms). We were vaccinated by the experience of many wars on our territories: I sometimes think that if two airplanes had crashed against Notre Dame or against the Big Ben we would have been certainly devastated, but without the sense of inexplicable astonishment, desperate incredulity and the depressive syndrome that took the Americans aback for being attacked by an enemy at home, for the first time in their history. Our tragedies have made us wise and ruthless, more prepared to face the horror. We look for peace because we have known too many wars.

But we must be realistic and recognize that, in spite of all this, Europe is still experiencing war, hatred and intolerance inside its own borders. We must be aware of the fact that new forms of conflict are obsessing us, even when we do not perceive them in all their magnitude and significance.

We still are, inside our frontiers, involved in a form of warfare (sometimes a subterranean one) with people who are living in Europe but whom we (or at least many of our countrymen) are considering as non European (or, as in some country they use to say, as extra communitarians).

We must have the honesty to admit that many Europeans are still unable to stand the growing presence of foreigners not only of different color but in any case coming from less developed countries.

We are not yet prepared to accept the idea that in the forthcoming years every European city will be like New York or like some Latin American countries. In New York we witness the negation of the 'melting pot' utopia: instead of merging together, different cultures coexist, from Portoricans to Chinese, from Koreans to Pakistanis: some groups have partially amalgamated with the descendants of the Pilgrim Father (like Italians and Irish, Jews and Poles), others have kept themselves separate (living in different districts, speaking different languages and following different traditions), and all succeed in cohabiting on the basis of some common laws and a common lingua franca, which each group speaks insufficiently. I ask you to bear in mind that in New York, where the so-called 'white' population is on the way to become a minority, 42% of the whites are Jews, the other 58% are of the most disparate origins, and the number of Anglo-Saxon Protestants are by this time the minority in any case.

In Latin America, depending on the country, sometimes the Spanish colonizers interbred with the Indians, sometimes (as in Brazil) with the Africans, and it is very difficult, if we think in racist terms of "blood", to say whether a Mexican or a Peruvian are of European or Amerindian origins.

So, the future of Europe holds a phenomenon of this kind, and no racist or backward-looking reactionary will be able to prevent it.

The real problem is that a distinction must be drawn between the concept of *immigration* and that of *migration*. *Immigration* occurs when some individuals (even many individuals, but in numbers that are statistically irrelevant with respect to the original stock) move from one country to another (like the Italians and the Irish in America, or the Turks today in Germany). The phenomenon of immigration may be controlled politically, planned, encouraged or restricted.

This is not the case with migration. Violent or pacific as it may be, it is like a natural phenomenon: it happens and no one can control it. *Migration* occurs when an entire people, little by little, move from one territory to another (and the number remaining in the original territory is of no importance; what counts is the extent to which the migrants change the culture of the territory to which they have migrated). There have been great migrations

from East to West, in the course of which the peoples of the Caucasus changed the culture and the biological heredity of the natives. There were the migrations of the so-called 'barbarian' peoples that invaded the Roman Empire and created new cultures and the new 'Romano-Germanic' kingdoms. There was European migration towards the American continent, on the one side from the East coast and gradually across to California, and on the other from the Caribbean islands and Mexico all the way to Cono Sur. Even though this was in part politically planned, I use the term migration because the European whites did not adopt the customs and the culture of the natives but founded a new civilization to which even the natives (those who survived) adapted.

There have been interrupted migrations, like those of the Arab peoples who got as far as the Iberian Peninsula. There have been forms of migration that were planned and partial, but no less influential, like that of European colonialists toward the East and the South, where the migrants nonetheless changed the culture of the autochthonous peoples – hence the birth of the so-called 'post-colonial' cultures.

I don't think that anyone has so far described a phenomenology of the different types of migration, but migration is certainly different from immigration. We have only *immigration* when the immigrants (admitted according to a political decision) accept most of the customs of the country into which they have immigrated, while *migration* occurs when the migrants (which no one can stop at the frontiers) radically transform the culture of the territory they have invaded.

Today, after a nineteenth century full of immigrants, in a climate marked by pronounced mobility, it is very difficult to say if certain phenomena are of immigration or of migration. There is certainly an unstoppable flow from the South toward the North (with Africans and Mid-Easterners coming to Europe); the Indians have invaded Africa and the Pacific islands, the Chinese are everywhere, and the Japanese are present with their industrial and economic organizations even though they have not moved physically in any significant numbers.

Is it possible to distinguish immigration from migration when the entire planet is becoming the territory of intersecting movements of

people? I think it is possible: as I have said, immigration can be controlled politically, while, just like natural phenomena, migration cannot. As long as there is immigration, people can hope to keep the immigrants in a ghetto, so that they do not mix with the natives. When migration occurs there are no more ghettos, and cross-breeding is uncontrollable.

The phenomena that Europe is still trying to tackle as cases of immigration are instead cases of migration. The Third World is knocking at the doors of Europe, and it will come in even if Europe is not in agreement. The problem is no longer to decide (as politicians pretend it is) whether students at Paris university can wear the chador or how many mosques require to be built in Rome. The problem is that in the next decades (and since I am not a prophet I cannot say exactly when) Europe will definitely become a multiracial continent or a 'colored' one, if you prefer. If you like, that's how it's going to be; and even if you don't like it, that's how it's going to be just the same.

This meeting (or clash) of cultures could lead to bloodshed, and I am persuaded that to a certain extent it will – and somewhere it is already a reality. Such an outcome cannot be eliminated and will last a long time. However, racists ought to be a race on the way to extinction. Was there a patrician class in ancient Rome that could not tolerate the idea of Gauls, or Sarmatians, or Jews like St Paul becoming Roman citizens, or of an African ascending the imperial throne, as indeed happened in the end? The patricians have been forgotten, defeated by history. Roman civilization was a hybrid culture. Racists will say that this is why it fell, but that took five hundred years – and the final result was not the collapse of every civilized society but rather the birth of Europe, with its languages and its new born nations.

In the course of such a process of migration Europeans must face new forms of fundamentalism, expressed by different cultures and religions. But we must pay attention not to oppose to foreign fundamentalism our own forms of fundamentalism. An evil cannot be defeated by another symmetrical evil.

The present problem of a peaceful Europe, which can optimistically celebrate the triumph of the spirit of Nijmegen Treaties, is to be able to sign a new virtual treaty against intolerance.

The fight against our intolerance does not only concern the so called extra communitarians: it is a form of wishful thinking to take the new phenomena of anti-Semitism as a marginal disease that concerns only a lunatic fringe. Recent episodes tell us that the ghost of this millenary obsession is still among us.

Today in Nijmegen, while celebrating the first utopia of a European peace, we must declare war to racism. If we will not be able to defeat this eternal adversary we will be always at war, even though we have put our guns in our attics – and many guns are still around as it was shown recently by the Utoya Island butchery or the massacre in the French Jewish school.

Intolerance is a perpetual menace for our state of presumed peace, and it is difficult to eliminate it. Intolerance has biological roots, it manifests itself among animals as territoriality, it is based on emotional reactions that are often superficial – we cannot bear those who are different from us, because their skin has a different color, because they speak a language we do not understand, because they eat frogs, dogs, monkeys, pigs, or garlic, because they tattoo themselves…

Intolerance for what is different or unknown is as natural in children as their instinct to possess all they desire. Children are educated gradually to tolerance, just as they are taught to respect the property of others, and, even before that, to learn to control their own sphincters. Unfortunately, while everyone learns to control his own body, tolerance is a permanent educational problem with adults, because in everyday life we are forever exposed to the trauma of difference. Cultural anthropologists often deal with the problem of acknowledging and respecting the differences, but devote insufficient attention to uncontrolled intolerance, because it eludes all definition and critical consideration.

Yet it is here that the challenge lies. To inculcate tolerance in adults that shoot at one another for ethnic and religious reasons can be a waste of time. Too late. Therefore uncontrolled intolerance has to be beaten at the roots, through constant education that starts from earliest infancy, before it is written down in a book, and before it becomes a behavioral ‘skin’ that is too thick and too tough.

However, the fight against intolerance has its own limits. To fight against our intolerance does not mean that we must accept every

world view and make of ethical relativism the new European religion. While educating our people and especially our children to an open minded tolerance, we must at the same time recognize that there are habits, ideas and behaviors that are and must be for us intolerable. There are values, typical of the European world view which represent a patrimony we cannot get rid of. To decide and recognize what, in a tolerant vision, would remain intolerable for us, is the kind or borderline that Europeans are called to trace every day, with a sense of equity and with the constant exercise of that virtue that, since Aristotle, philosophers have called Prudence.

In this philosophical sense, prudence does not mean reluctance to take risks, and does not coincide with cowardice. In the classical sense of phronesis, prudence is the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason, and as such it was considered one of the four Cardinal virtues and it is often associated with wisdom and insight, with the ability to judge between virtuous and vicious actions, not only in a general sense, but with regard to appropriate actions at a given time and place.

It must be possible, in the course of our common war against intolerance, to be always able to distinguish between the tolerable and the intolerable. It must be possible to decide how to accept a new plurality of values and habits without renouncing the best of our European heritage. I am not here today to propose solutions for the main problem of a new European peace, but to assert that only by facing the challenge of this ubiquitous war we shall really have a peaceful future.

We must sign today a new Nijmegen Treaty.

Henri Gascar(d) The signing of the peace treaty between France and Spain on 17 September 1678/1679

On 17 September 1678, in the illustrious Doddendaal residence of the Van Bijlandt-Palstercamp family in the western part of Nijmegen, the peace treaty was signed by the kings of France and Spain.

After months of negotiation, the definitive peace terms were drawn up and signed by the ambassadors of the Republic of the Seven United Provinces in their vast and temporary residence on the Doddendaal. This event was immortalised on canvas by Gascar.
The shrewd Dutch negotiators used the royal reception hall of their palatial estate as neutral negotiation grounds, draping distinctive elements such as mantelpieces and podiums in

Henri Gascar(d) Paris 1635 - Rome 1701 | *The signing of the peace treaty between France and Spain on 17 September* 1678/1679
Oil on canvas, 161 x 274.5 cm, Museum Het Valkhof Nijmegen, acquired with the support of the Rembrandt Association.

tapestries to ensure that both parties had an identical space at their disposal. In the middle of the room stood a long table with the Dutch ambassadors and mediators Hieronymus van Beveringk (seen from behind) and Willem van Haren seated at either end. The French were seated to the left, headed by the Marshal of France Count d'Estrades, Marquis Colbert (brother of the esteemed minister to Louis XIV) and Count d'Avaux. To the right the Spaniards Don Spinola, Marquis de la Fuenta and the Dutchman J.B. Christyn. The men were flanked on either side by a large group of diplomats and courtiers, pages and court chaplains. It is clear that the artist struggled to capture the likeness of each individual. In terms of portraiture, the similarities with other well-known representations of these main characters are rather striking. This is also true of the slightly marginal figure of Johan Hulft, secretary to the ambassadors, who stands behind Van Haren near the window.

The stiff and somewhat listless nature of this immense group portrait is understandable when one considers the origins of the painting. Henri Gascar began painting portraits at an early age in his native France, later moving on to Italy and England. He acquired fame as a skilled portrait painter of fashionable courtesans in decadent costumes. In April of 1679, more than six months after the treaty was ratified, he was sent to Nijmegen at the behest of King Louis XIV to paint the peace conference. He never witnessed the signing of the treaty. To visualise the events, he was given a fairly detailed description and paid several visits to both the hall and all of the individuals present that day. He also took this opportunity to paint individual portraits of several ambassadors. Upon his return in November of 1679, he was given permission to travel by sea from Rotterdam to France via Antwerp with two large chests: one with the group portrait of the ambassadors ('our' portrait) and one with the individual portraits.

Gerard Lemmens, former director at Museum Commanderie van St. Jan, Nijmegen, and responsible for the acquisition of the painting.

Our past and our present make the Treaties of Nijmegen Medal part of the DNA of our city. In order to ensure lasting peace within Europe and tolerance between countries, we will need to keep the development of Europe as a topic of discussion. By awarding the Treaties of Nijmegen Medal, we want to make our own contribution towards that debate.

The city of Nijmegen has strong networks in Brussels and links with our German neighbours. The municipality is involved in various projects and networks with European cities. Roads, parks and squares are given a facelift using European funds. We are working closely with our German neighbours on projects which include improving the accessibility of our city. Twinning has been arranged with towns in Europe to stimulate economic, social and cultural exchange.

Royal Haskoning was established in Nijmegen in 1881. Following the merger with DHV in 2012, Royal HaskoningDHV now has 8,000 staff, working from 100 offices in 35 countries around the world. Royal HaskoningDHV has strong roots in The Netherlands, the United Kingdom and South Africa. The company is over 200 years old and is fully aware of the fact that this would not be possible without the opportunities offered in the past by a strong Europe. Collaboration with clients and partners, sharing knowledge with students and knowledge institutes have all contributed to its leading position within the various areas of its expertise in and outside Europe. This would not have been possible without a healthy European home market and base.

Radboud University's goal is to become one of the top universities in Europe. It has already gone a long way towards achieving this, as we can see from the numerous European grants which have been awarded to its researchers. The Heyendaal campus is becoming increasingly international: almost 20% of the academic staff at radboud University now come from abroad. In addition, more and more foreign students are coming to study in Nijmegen. Radboud University also encourages its own students to gain experience within Europe. The university's aim is for one third of its students to spend some time in another country. In order tpo make that possible, it has established the IRUN international network which brings together nine European universities.

The Treaties of Nijmegen Medal has been initiated in close collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands.

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