Getting to know Europe

by Helmut Walser Smith,
Director of European Studies

Asked if he believed in the Bible, the French statesman Talleyrand answered, “I believe in it first because I am Bishop of Autun; and, secondly, because I know nothing about it at all.” I am a German historian whose principle training is the history of one country, namely Germany. It would be too modest to say about Europe that “I know nothing about it at all,” but linguistic abilities keep me from claiming too much. I read French, but cannot lecture in it, and even elementary conversations are taxing. I tried desperately to learn Russian, along with Vanderbilt undergraduates, and ended with a slightly above average grade. In Kiev, I ordered pancakes and got ice cream. And I unfortunately belong to that generation of Americans that did not fully realize how central Spanish would be to the modern world.

I suppose the Bishop of Autun, at least for the three years he held the office, had to learn something after all. But where to start?

The Max Kade Center has a generous grant from the EU called “Getting to Know Europe.” But how do I get to know Europe?

Historians, as is well known, like old things. We also tend to think one can understand something by looking at it closely at the moment when it first comes together. With Europe, however, this is not so easy. When did it first come together?

The ancients, it is true, knew about Europe. Greek mariners, we are told, divided the world into Europe and Asia, with Europe the land to the west and Asia to the east of the waters that run from the Sea of Azov through the Dardanelles and to the Aegean. With Africa added later, this made for three continents, often depicted in so-called T-O (terra-oceanus) maps, which showed the continents in barest outline, separating by a line and artistically encased in an undefined water.

But to Europeans themselves, Ptolemy’s precise knowledge was largely lost until the end of the fourteenth century. It was at this time that the Italian humanist Jacobo d’Angelo discovered in Constantinople that the Muslims possessed a copy of Ptolemy’s Geography. This was a remarkable find. For when the coordinates of Ptolemy were plotted on a map, the earth was suddenly flattened into equal areas of space, and modern Europeans could for the first time see an accurate picture of the relative size of Europe. It was the smallest and coldest part of the world. Dwarfed by Africa, Europe seemed on the map hardly more than a peninsula of Asia.

But save for on T-O maps, the term “Europe” had fallen into disuse during the high Middle Ages. Even Albertus Magnus, perhaps the greatest geographical mind of the period, preferred the designation “the western quarter of our inhabitable world.” More commonly, men simply used the term Christendom (Christianitas) or Christian territories (terra Christiana). The usage, I understand, reflected the dominance of religious over spatial geography, but also the fact that to the east and south lay Islam, not only a superior civilization but a universal religion with an expansionist history. Significantly, the “we”
of Europe relative to Asia and Africa first occurred in the context of a humiliating defeat: the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. "We have been defeated and thrown down in Europe," Enea Silvio Piccolomini wrote in response to the calamity on the Bosporus, "in our fatherland, in our own house, in our homeland." Piccolomini, who would soon become Pope Pius II, was the first to compose a history of Europe whose principal purpose was to describe the continent and its people.

This may well be the best place to "get to know Europe" for the first time: with the first book that claims in its title to be a book about Europe.

Piccolomini's Europe goes from east to west, starting with Hungary, which is described in detail, then Transylvania, Thrace, and European Turkey. The starting point of his Europe is not the Atlantic but the land between the Danube, the Bosporus, and the Aegean. For Piccolomini, this was the part of Europe that cradled ancient civilization, which Piccolomini, one of the foremost humanists of his day, considered more authoritative than scripture. Southeastern Europe, like southern Spain, was also the main space in which Islam and Christianity overlapped and influenced one another. And, of course, it was the part of Europe that desperately needed military support against the superior forces of Sultan Mehmed II.

The spatial center of gravity is important. We are used to seeing Europe in a transatlantic context, as looking, in the first order, across the Atlantic. But in Piccolomini's time, the Mediterranean was still the sea that mattered, even if by the time of the book's first printing, the Portuguese had travelled far down the African coast. The north of Europe was by contrast less populated and the influence of paganism more marked, especially in the northeast, in Lithuania, Livonia, and Prussia, lands literally at the edge of Piccolomini's Europe. Places still farther north, such as current day Finland, were to Piccolomini, and many of his contemporaries, "extra Ptolomaeum," outside the mapped world. The northern parts of Europe also command his attention because of its gripping nature, with Piccolomini often commenting on the vastness of the forest and the abundance of animals. The Poles, for example, hunt wild game, including "wild horses that aside from their horns resemble deer," and wild cattle, which the ancients called "Ur." As Tarapan and Aurochs, as these animals were also called, have since been driven to extinction in central Europe—the horses in the eighteenth century, the oxen already in the seventeenth—reading Piccolomini reminds us that Europe is also a continent where the balance between nature and man have dramatically changed during the half millennium that separate us from Piccolomini.

Piccolomini writes extensively about Germany, and there are surprises here too. He writes "that there is in the Mark Brandenburg a city, not very important, which is surrounded by waters," it is not however Berlin, but instead the village of "Havelberg." In the time of Piccolomini, Berlin existed, though not on a map. The great cities of Germany were Cologne, Nuremberg, and Strasbourg. Most of the urban centers were south of the River Main, and indeed Piccolomini was the first to see the river running through Frankfurt as the dividing line between Upper and Lower Germany. It is quite clear that the center of German civilization is in Upper Germany, the south, though he writes favorably about such northern cities of Erfurt, Magdeburg, and Breslau, a city of magnificent tiled roofs that marks the border of German and Slavic speakers. Piccolomini also considers Utrecht to be one of the Germany's lusituous cities, as Germany includes Holland, and Utrecht can field an army of 40,000 soldiers. The observation recalls for us that in Piccolomini's Europe, cities, not just countries, are political and military actors, and many regions, like Holland, had yet to assume the status of independent nations. In the southwest corner of Germany, Piccolomini describes Freiburg, the city in which I was born, "as the place where the German language has its border." He also puts it in the country of Savoy, which, had it not disappeared from the map of Europe as an independent nation, would have made me not a German but a Savoyard. Perhaps more important is Piccolomini's sense for borders. He sees them as indistinct, marked by cities, and not drawn as a sharp line circumscribing territories. That there were no walls between countries goes without saying, and while there were differences in government between the Republic of Venice and the principalities of Germany, there was as yet no competition between economic or political systems.

Piccolomini has a great deal to say about other countries, like France, and England, to which he had travelled, and "Spain, a great country, comparable with the very best, and rich in arms and men." But
Lectures and Conferences

- The Honorable Klaus Scharioth, German Ambassador to the United States, gave the Vanderbilt community “A German Perspective” on the “The Transatlantic Agenda” and met with Governor Bredesen as well as officials from the University (January 9).
- Dr. Tanel Kerikmäe, Jean Monet Professor of Law and Head of the Law School, International University, Audentes, Tallin, Estonia: “The EU Charter of Human Rights” (January 13).
- The Honorable Victor Ashe, U.S. Ambassador to Poland: “Poland’s Role in Today’s Europe” (March 26).
- Round table on “Integrating an EU Perspective in the Curriculum” with Professor Gerrit Die lensen, EUSir Visiting Scholar and Sociology Professor at Utrecht, Netherlands, Judge George Paine (secretary of the Nashville Committee on Foreign Relations), and Mr. Doug Berry (a local attorney) and members of the Max Kade Center’s Advisory Committee (March 11).
- Professor Gerrit Die lensen, EUSir Visiting Scholar, spoke about the European Union at University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee (March 6-9); University of Kentucky, in Lexington, Kentucky (March 25-28); University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi (April 5-6); Greeneville City Schools, Greeneville, Tennessee (April 29).
- Professor Justus Fetscher, Visiting Max Kade Professor, lectured to classes on the European Union, at the University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee (April 10).

Events

- Professor John McCarthy addressed the Gifted Program, at Greeneville Middle School, Greeneville, Tennessee (March 1 and May 22).
- A Campus Workshop for policy makers from the Mid South to enhance knowledge about the EU and its organization, activities, and significance for transatlantic relations was facilitated by John A. McCarthy (German/European Studies), Henning Grunwald (History/European Studies), M. Donald Hancock (Political Science/European Studies), Virginia Scott (French and Italian), and Pearl G. Sims (Leadership Studies); Gerrit B. M. Die lensen (EU Scholar in Residence from University of Utrecht). (April 3-4, 2009).
- Following this event, ten educational policy leaders from Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana (representatives from Governors’ Offices as well as leading education oriented NGOs) for a week/long study trip to the EU headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, to learn about its organization, objectives, and language and culture policies with special emphasis on developments since 1989/1990 (May 31 – June 6, 2009). They also visited the International Court of Justice in The Hague (see photo above) to listen to lectures on minority education/integration by Mary Tupan Wenno, CEO of ECHO (Higher Education in the Netherlands and Policies of Inclusion/Diversity) and by Seren Dalkira, Founder of the NGO ‘Lost Faces,’ Utrecht University student and documentary maker (Honor Killings).

Group picture at the Directorate General of the EU in Brussels with Commissioner Leonard Orban.

www.vanderbilt.edu/euro
Fall 2009 Events

- Ambassador John Bruton, September 25 University Club at the invitation of the Nashville Committee on Foreign Relations.

- Peter Fritzsche, “National Narrative and Untimely Death: Journeys into the Nation-State in an Age of Globalization”, December 3, 4:10 p.m. with reception to follow. Buttrick 205.
  Professor Peter Fritzsche is one of the most prolific, innovative and wide-ranging historians of modern Europe. A former Guggenheim and Humboldt Fellow, he has written a score of works, including Rehearsals for Fascism: Populism and Political Mobilization in Weimar Germany (1990); A Nation of Fliers: German Aviation and the Popular Imagination (1992); Reading Berlin 1900 (1996); and Germans into Nazis (1998). His most recent books are entitled Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History (2004) and Life and Death in the Third Reich (2008).

Getting to Know Europe

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after he wanders us through Europe, it is to Italy that he returns, and describes in great detail, telling us about its great cities, Rome, Florence, Venice, Milan, and Siena, his home. He also tells us about Bologna, which some call the “mother of scholars” but of which Piccolomini had a more jaundiced view. It is clear that the Italian Peninsula is the center of wealth and power in Europe, even if Piccolomini pays more attention to the deeds of war and diplomacy during the Italian Renaissance than to the achievements of arts and letters.

Piccolomini wants Europeans to act as one against the Sultan who has conquered Constantinople. It was, then, precisely Europe’s lack of unity that prompted its first description as a coherent continent. Works, however, have a life of their own. And by the time of its first printings, scholars in one nation after the next plagiarized Piccolomini’s descriptions of their countries and pasted his words into panegyrics not to Europe but to their own nations. This plagiarism, an accepted practice in the fifteenth century, tells us that from the start the continental conception coexisted with the division of Europe into nations and regions. Although it would change in form and meaning, this tension would accompany the history of the continent for the next five hundred years; and while historians shy from axiomatic pronouncements, it seems naïve to suppose that tensions with histories that stretch out for more than half a millennium are easily resolved. For the study of Europe, this means that nations and regions constitute the starting point for understanding what Europe is and what it can possibly achieve. First its diversity, then its unity: this, it seems to me, was a central insight of the first book on Europe. The other, of course, is that Europe looked east before it looked west.

As the new director of European studies, I look forward to “Getting to Know Europe”—a great deal more, I suspect, than

The Max Kade Center has been awarded a grant from the Delegation of the European Commission in Washington, DC, in order to support activities and events dedicated to broadening knowledge and awareness about Europe, the European Union and the importance of transatlantic relations. Details can be found on our website http://www.vanderbilt.edu/euro.

Talleyrand looked forward to being Bishop of Autun. 1789, after all, was not a good year for bishops in France. But in the fall of 2009, we have a rich program of activities, including lectures and projects commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, which occurred, as Europeans east of the Oder well knew, two hundred years after the fall of the Bastille. We also have a wide range of exciting classes and a number of new professors, so that “Getting to Know Europe” might not only be instructive, but also fun. Certainly for me—and I hope, too, for fellow students and teachers.

The text of the “Europe” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, or Pius II, is available in a German, Spanish, and Latin edition. It is unfortunately not available in English.

HELMUT WALSER SMITH is a German historian who writes about nationalism, religious conflict, and anti-Semitism. He is author or editor of six books, most recently the prize-winning *The Butcher's Tale: Murder and Anti-Semitism in a German Town* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), and *The Continuities of German History: Nation, Religion and Race Across the Long Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), which will appear with Reclam Verlag in Germany in March 2010.

He is the editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History*, likewise to appear in 2010, and is currently working on a book for W.W. Norton and C.H. Beck about the the conception and experience of nationhood in Germany, 1500-2000. At Vanderbilt, he holds the Martha Rivers Ingram Chair of Modern History.

ARI JOSKOWICZ is an historian of modern Jewish and European history. He is especially interested in thinking about European history from the margins and about the interplay between Jewish history, secularization, and transnational minority politics since the Enlightenment. In his current book project, he explores how German and French Jews defined their own modernity and national belonging by criticizing the anti-modern politics of the Catholic Church. He has published articles on Jewish anticlericalism in the *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* (2005) and the *Leipziger Beiträge* (2005), two book chapters on the politics of remembrance ceremonies in 1950s Austria and contributed to two EU studies on racism and antisemitism in contemporary Europe, including “Manifestations of Antisemitism in the EU 2002-2003” for the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Together with Stefan Nowotny, he recently finished a translation of G. C. Spivak’s essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” into German (Vienna: 2007). He has been awarded fellowships from the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center (Hebrew University, Jerusalem), the Lady Davis Fellowship Trust, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Simon-Dubnow Institute (Leipzig), and the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies of the University of Pennsylvania. At Vanderbilt, he teaches courses on European history, including EUS 203, the core course on the Idea of Europe.

ZEYNEP SOMER-TOPCU joins Vanderbilt as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science with a joint appointment in the Max Kade Center for European and German Studies. She recently completed her Ph.D. in the Department of Political Science at the University of California at Davis. She spent the 2008-2009 academic year at California Institute of Technology as a student researcher. Her research and teaching interests include political parties, elections and political behavior in established and developing democracies (with a focus on the member countries of the European Union). She has published several articles in the *Journal of Politics, Comparative Politics* as well as in the *British Journal of Political Science*. She received the 2008 Weaver Award for a co-authored paper “Moderate Now, Win Votes Later” presented to the American Political Science Association. Currently, she is working on a book that will examine whether and how political parties in established democracies respond to changes in public opinion. This research has theoretical implications on spatial modeling, and will contribute to the literature on representation and political parties. She is also involved in collaboration with other scholars in several projects. These focus on the effects of party policy shifts on public opinion, cabinet durations and election outcomes as well as on the reasons and consequences of party leader changes. She is particularly interested in the inter-relationship between European and national level politics. At Vanderbilt, she will be teaching Comparative Political Parties, European Politics and the European Union and will bring her experience and expertise on EU-Turkey relationships and on EU enlargement towards Eastern and Central Europe. Outside work, Zeynep enjoys swimming and dancing.

Faculty Books

Cyrus, Cynthia J. *The Scribes for Women’s Convents in Late Medieval Germany*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009

While there has been a great tradition of scholarship in medieval manuscripts, most studies have focused on the details of manuscript production by male copyists. In this study, Cynthia J. Cyrus demonstrates the prevalence of manuscript production by women monasteries and challenges current assumptions of how manuscripts circulated in the late medieval period. Drawing on extensive research into the surviving manuscripts of over 450 women’s convents, the author assesses the genres common to women’s convent libraries emphasizing a social rather than a codicological understanding of how manuscripts of women’s libraries came to be copied. An engaging mix of biography, women’s history, and book history, *The Scribes for Women’s Convents in Late Medieval Germany* will change the way medieval manuscripts are understood and studied.


Andrea Mirabile’s “Scrivere la pittura” ("Writing Painting"), explores the relationships between literature and the visual arts in Post-Renaissance Italian culture, from the 17th to the 20th century. ‘Ekphrasis,’ i.e. the literary description of a work of art, is a dominant (continued on page 6)
theme in Italy from the Baroque (Marino) to 900 authors (Pasolini). Particular emphasis is given to Roberto Longhi (1890-1970) and his followers: with their Florence based journal—"Paragone"—they created poems, novels, movies, in which words and images share an original inter-semiotic agenda. The book includes several unpublished letters from important contemporary Italian writers, and a note by Alberto Arbasino.


This book offers an interdisciplinary synthesis, combining a philosophical theory of dialogue, a literary-critical interpretation of poetic language in the apocalyptic tradition, and a negative theology that renews certain fundamental impulses and insights of revealed religion. It is concerned with finding the premises for dialogue between cultures, especially between religious fundamentalisms, like the Islamic, and modern Western secularism. The thesis is that dialogue in general, in order to be genuinely open, needs to be able to open up to such a possibility as religious apocalypse in ways that can be understood best through the experience of poetry. The book interprets the Christian epic and prophetic tradition as a secularization of religious revelation that nevertheless preserves an understanding of the essentially apocalyptic character of truth and its disclosure in history. The usually neglected negative theology that undergirds this apocalyptic tradition provides the key to a radically new and open understanding of apocalypse as inextricably religious and poetic at the same time.

German translation: Dichtung und Apokalypse: Theologische Erschliessungen der dichterischen Sprache (German translation) Salzburger theologische Studien interkulturell (2009)


This analytical essay, theoretically informed, paints the broad brushstrokes of New Labour's decade in power, while grappling with its larger meaning. The book focuses primarily on domestic policy and governance and draws out the implications for left-wing parties that are seeking to adapt to a world of neoliberal globalization—in particular, the implications for policy, governance, and party organization. New Labour has pursued two main goals: a) to improve social justice in what is essentially a neoliberal economic order without disturbing the mechanisms that allow that order to function; b) to transform the Labour Party into a cross-class party, able to appeal beyond its shrinking working-class ghetto to Britain's middle class. The authors show that in order to achieve these goals New Labour has sought to bend the population to the logic of the market, to create what Karl Polanyi would call a "market society."

Berlin Wall Poetry Project

The MKC arranged with internationally published poet Ms. Beatrix Brockman to organize a poetry and essay competition on the topic "post 1989 Europe." Ninety-seven submissions came from Austria, Germany, and Israel. Ms. Brockman chaired a panel of peer jurors that selected 49 texts for publication. The volume's publication will coincide with our marking of Europe Day and the 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall in fall 2009. It will have a public hearing and be available in a print run of 400 copies as well as be accessible online.

Auflösung by NJKahlen

An einem Mauerelement stand vor der einigenden Spaltung etwas von Lenin: "Die Freiheit ist so wertvoll, daß man sie nur portionsweise vergeben darf."
Dieses Stück Mauer wurde verwahrt und zur Schau gestellt.
Mit den Jahren mißelste sich jeder seine Portion heraus.
Nicht einmal der Sockel blieb.

Resolution by NJKahlen

Onto one section of the wall prior to the unifying separation somebody sprayed something by Lenin:
"Freedom is so precious, it must be carefully rationed"
This piece of wall has been preserved and exhibited. Year after year everybody carved his own portion.
Not even the plinth remained.
November 1989 marked the end of the Cold War, the commencement of a fully united Europe and provides evidence that peaceful change is feasible, even in the most implausible moments. Student leaders at Vanderbilt University have been orchestrating the Freedom Without Walls Campus Week since the fall of 2008. Students are collaborating with Vanderbilt faculty and administration to organize events during the week of November 1st to the 6th.

The student leaders and faculty members involved continue to spread the word on campus and throughout the Nashville area. For more information, please visit Freedom Without Walls on Facebook, the German Embassy’s website at http://www.germanyeconomyembassy.org/press/facts/03_focus/04_without_walls/main_s.html, and Vanderbilt’s upcoming website www.freedomwithoutwalls.webs.com.

Curtains for the Curtain: A Film Series Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall and Its Aftermath.

The Fall of the Berlin Wall (USA 2007) On November 9, 1989, after nearly three decades of separation, East and West Berliners breached the wall that forced them apart. As East Germany’s Communist leadership opened the gates, crowds clambered atop the wall, tearing chunks away from this iconic image of the Iron Curtain.

Ode to Joy and Freedom (Germany 1990 - Dir: Beate Schubert). This documentary film chronicles the Berlin Wall from its construction in August 1961 through its demolition in November 1989 with footage of the Leipzig demonstrations and other events foretelling the demise of the Communist government.

Funding provided by “Getting to Know Europe,” a grant from the European Union with additional financial support provided by the Max Kade Center for European & German Studies. Presented by: Helmut Smith, Director of The Max Kade Center. Wednesday, October 28

NOTE: screened at 7 p.m. in The Commons Multipurpose Room 237. Immediately following the screening everyone is invited to attend a dessert reception hosted by The Commons at the Dean’s Residence.

Graffiti Wall competition and Exhibit between the Commons and Main campus - November 1 to 6

The Fall of Communism (80 minutes, 1990) Documentary introduced by Frank Wislo and Kostya Kustanovic, The Commons MPR, November 3rd at 7pm.

Panel Discussion: Germany and Europe Twenty Years after the Fall of the Wall. With John Kornblum (former US Ambassador to Germany), Victor Ashe (former US Ambassador to Poland), Luc Véron (Minister Counselor and Head of the Political and Development Section of the Delegation of the European Commission in Washington DC). Moderated by Florence Faucher-King. November 5, 4-6 pm See Page 8 for more information.

Speech competition: The speaking contest’s theme, Tear Down this Wall, can be understood as a focus on the fall of the Berlin Wall as well as an allusion to other contemporary “walls” in society (i.e. racism, sexism, etc.). Students from the entire university are invited to submit a 5 to 10 minutes recorded speech via Youtube. The winner, chosen by a panel of students, will receive a prize and present his or her speech at the Gala Event.

A Gala Event will gather European Studies Majors, Minors, Faculty, and Vanderbilt University administrators for an entertaining evening of music and poetry. John Kornblum, former US Ambassador to Germany (1997-2001), will deliver the keynote address—November 5—Buttrick Atrium 7 pm.
ow that I have safely returned to my home institution of Utrecht University, I write to express my deep appreciation for the diverse and many opportunities the MKC gave me while serving as their EU Scholar in Residence from January through April 2009. As per my Fulbright-Schuman grant my responsibilities were to be focused on consulting with faculty and students and giving an occasional lecture on the EU, its organization, mission, and initiatives. I am happy that my involvement went beyond the limited job description of a Scholar in Residence with no teaching responsibilities. The Outreach EU grant “Getting to Know Europe” proved a happy coincidence that gave me ample opportunity to contribute my time and talent in helping to achieve the teaching and outreach objectives of the MKC. For instance, consulting with each of MKC seventeen seniors on their senior thesis projects, acting as main advisor for one of them. Additionally, I gave over a dozen guest lectures on the European Union and on European immigration/integration at Vanderbilt, Belmont University, Brown University, University of Mississippi, Sewanee—University of the South, University of Alabama at Huntsville, University of Kentucky, University of Texas at El Paso, Hendersonville High School, Greenville City Middle School, and Greenville City High School. On some occasions, I even gave multiple lectures at one institution and consulting with colleagues at the visited institutions on how to integrate EU studies into the curriculum. I have fond memories of organizing and hosting a side trip to The Hague as part of MKC EU grant Getting to Know Europe that entailed a study trip to Brussels by high level policy makers from the Mid South in early June. In my conversations with the Dean of the College of Arts and Science as well as with colleagues in Education, Sociology, Political Science, and History, I have tried to make myself helpful in making a case for a stronger European Studies program at Vanderbilt University.

I have to thank and commend many colleagues and new friends at the MKC that made my academic and social life at Vanderbilt so rewarding, to mention just a handful: Virginia Scott, Tom Schwartz, Pearl Sims, Nina Warnke and Don Hancock. To Henning Grünwald and Kurt Johnson I am grateful for their camaraderie, the great lunches we enjoyed all over town and the occasional late afternoon, but far too little beers we drank together over high brow gossiping — and I salute, of course, the indispensable Ann Oslin for her unwavering administrative support. Last but not least I would like to applaud John McCarthy who ‘worked me hard’ but never expected more than he was putting in twice as much himself. As director he served the MKC well and I wish generations of students and colleagues to know and truly appreciate the immense load of work, love, fundraising and bridge building across departments he has put into his directorship. I bring to my home university first hand knowledge of the potential of research and educational collaboration between the humanities and social sciences that I have experienced at the MKC.

A decided long-term benefit of my stay at the MKC is the prospect of future research collaboration between Professor McCarthy and myself as well as more generally between the University of Utrecht and Vanderbilt University. We will apply for a grant to advance the collaboration between Utrecht and Vanderbilt on such topics as the Notion of Borders in Europe and another project on Black Europeans. The latter will hopefully also involve Vanderbilt’s Center for African-American Studies.

Panel Discussion: Germany and Europe Twenty years after the Fall of the Wall. With John Kornblum (former US Ambassador to Germany), Victor Ashe (former US Ambassador to Poland), Luc Véron (Minister Counselor and Head of the Political and Development Section of the Delegation of the European Commission in Washington DC).

Moderated by Florence Faucher-King. November 5, 4-6 pm

JOHN KORNBLUM is an American Diplomat and businessman. He entered the American Foreign Service in 1964 and served for thirty five years in Europe and at the State Department in Washington, taking part in key negotiations including German reunification. He was US Ambassador to Germany 1997-2001 and has since established himself as an investment banker and international business consultant.

VICTOR ASHE is a lawyer by training and a Tennessee politician. He was first elected to Tennessee House of Representatives in 1968 at age 23 but only took office 7 years later. A State senator for ten years, he later served as mayor of Knoxville 1988-2003. He was appointed US Ambassador to Poland by President Bush in 2004, a position he left earlier this year.

LUC VÉRON joined the European Commission in 1989 after a career as a naval officer and an economist at the French Central Bank. He has held several political and diplomatic positions for the European Commission and serves, since August 2007, as Minister-Counselor (Political) and Head of the Political and Development (PDS) Section- Delegation of the European Commission in Washington DC.