

Presenting SPIN

Study Platform on Interlocking Nationalisms

Funded by the 2008 NWO-Spinoza Award, SPIN (*Study Platform on Interlocking Nationalisms*) is a research hub established under the auspices of the Huizinga Institute (Dutch National Research Institute for Cultural History) at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Amsterdam.

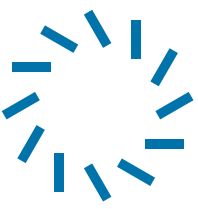
SPIN is coordinated by Joep Leerssen, Professor of Modern European Literature at the University of Amsterdam. The Advisory Board includes internationally renowned scholars Patrick Geary, Miroslav Hroch, John Hutchinson, Tom Shippey and Anne-Marie Thiesse.

SPIN is formally operative as of 19 November 2008.

SPIN aims to chart the cultural and historical root system of European nationalisms and to bring into focus those intellectual networks which carried and disseminated the emerging ideals of cultural nationalism in the Romantic period and in the long nineteenth century (1770-1914). These networks and their concerns with cultural consciousness-raising should not be explained away as mere side effects or passive 'reflections' – either of a presumed 'timeless' or transhistorical nationality or ethnicity asserting itself, or else of 'underlying' socio-economic or political processes. They should be studied in their own right, as historical phenomena with their own causes and effects, with their own power of shaping attitudes and events, and with their own historical dynamics. The dynamics on which SPIN will focus in particular are twofold:

- *transnational* (thematizing exchanges between cultural nationalisms in different areas and societies within Europe); and
- *intermedial* (thematizing transfers between different cultural fields, genres and media, from language revivalism to national opera and from folklore festivals to nineteenth-century medievalism in literature and the arts).

In order to pursue this agenda, SPIN will itself work on an international and interdisciplinary basis. Its main purpose is to gather into a network scholars in different European countries and in different disciplines, and to facilitate and focus cooperation between them.



SPIN's proposed activities

1. *Establishing a network*

Much excellent work on the cultural roots and rhetoric of European nationalisms, and on the role of intellectuals in articulating and propagating a sense of national identities, has been done and is being done in recent decades. In many cases, however, the cases studied are from a particular country or region (from Iceland and Catalonia to Finland and Bulgaria), and/or from a particular cultural endeavour (e.g. folklore, the historical novel, history painting, public monuments or commemorations).

A transnationally comparative framework would benefit scholars working in (or on) different countries or regions by highlighting transnationally structural patterns and international exchanges (transfers, influences, confrontations etc.). Likewise, an interdisciplinary framework would bring into focus the tendency of cultural nationalism to manifest itself in a variety of cultural fields and genres.

SPIN hopes to gather scholars, current projects and research teams into a network and establish a research community, by means of a database, a webspace and more concretely by a number of self-funded or co-funded initiatives, which are listed below.

2. *Establishing a webspace: platform, resource, factory*

Not only does the SPIN webspace aim to offer the usual services of noticeboard, on-line accessible information container, announcement platform and news forum, it is also intended to provide

- a space for informal 'working paper' publications and preprints in PDF form
- a portal for access to primary sources in digitized form (cf. below, point 5)
- a resource with a searchable, interactive bibliography and a database of historical figures (philologists, artists and intellectuals) possibly linked to a portrait gallery and image base.
- a 'factory' workfloor where initiatives for research projects, from funding applications to the preparation of publications, can be worked out in workgroups, and where materials can be pooled in WiKi form towards SPIN's core project, the Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe (see point 9, below).

3. *SPIN workshops*

Over the period 2006-2011, SPIN will host 2-3 workshops annually at Amsterdam with the expressed aim of bringing scholars from different European countries together. These workshops will offer hospitality within Holland, and will also refund travel costs for researchers without adequate home-funded research budgets. The workshops are intended to explore topics of a cross-European, international or intermedial nature relevant to SPIN's research focus.

4. *Publication/dissemination support*

SPIN will assist in the publication of relevant research findings, be they in the form of doctoral theses, monographs, collections and workshop/conferences proceedings, or individual working papers. Contacts with reputable publishing houses have been established, and web publishing in PDF form on (or linked to) the SPIN webspace is also envisaged.



5. *Supporting source access and source availability*

Important materials, from obscure publications to unpublished correspondences and notebooks, are as yet inaccessible to the international research community. In many cases, available sources are in languages which are of limited international currency and thus unusable by outside scholars for comparative purposes. SPIN wishes to facilitate the availability and international-comparative usage of these sources and will therefore offer funding for

- source research to make archival material, or published material in a lesser-used language, available to the international research community, by means of inventories, translations or digests;
- publishing, in book form or on the web, transnational anthologies and readers of relevant material in English translation or in English digest;
- digitizing and web-publishing important printed sources.

6. *Seeding, matching and co-sponsoring outside-funded research projects*

SPIN hopes to generate more research ambitions than it can finance from its own reserves. An important part of its task will be to help researchers unlock the resources offered by national and international funding organizations. This can be done by helping to improve research proposals tendered to third parties, and (where opportune) by offering matching co-funding for projects partially financed by other organizations.

7. *Financing dedicated research projects*

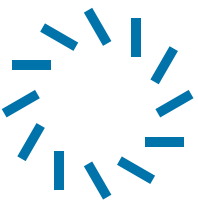
While SPIN seeks to facilitate rather than to take entire research projects into its own financial planning, the possibility is envisaged to finance, in their entirety, two or three particularly promising and deserving research projects for which no subvention from the major funding agencies is forthcoming. These projects will commence in the course of late 2009 and 2010 and will each consist of two or three postdocs and/or PhD students supervised by a team of three to five senior researchers and a central coordinator.

8. *SPIN stipends*

Travel grants and stipends for dedicated research purposes will be available for promising scholars with relevant research plans but lacking an adequate support infrastructure at their home institutions. These stipends are earmarked for activities that mesh with other SPIN initiatives.

9. *Core Project: The Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe*

SPIN's various activities, including the facilitation of work done by its various affiliates, are meant to redound to the benefit of a core project which provides a gravitational centre to it all. In line with SPIN's interest in charting the dynamics of international and intermedial exchange in cultural nationalism, an encyclopedic project is placed at SPIN's core. Its working title is *Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe* – ERNIE for short. A working outline will be established in early 2009, including areas of emphasis, proposed collaborators, proposed mode of publication (book and/or searchable web database) and a preliminary list of lemmata and collaborators. The preparation will be in the hands of the SPIN coordinator, Joep Leerssen, and will in practice take the form of a members-only Wiki in SPIN's webspace 'factory'.



Further details and background information concerning SPIN's underlying theoretical and methodological assumptions can be found on the SPIN website:

WWW.SPINET.EU

(Please note: the website is in a rudimentary and preliminary stage until the end of 2008)

All those interested

- in finding out more,
- in suggesting topics or projects,
- in joining their research with like-minded others through SPIN,
- in participating in SPIN activities,

are cordially invited to make themselves known to the SPIN office:

SPIN

attn. Dr Anne Hilde van Baal, executive secretary

Huizinga Instituut

c/o Universiteit van Amsterdam

Spuistraat 134

1012 VB Amsterdam

Netherlands

info@spinnet.eu



UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

HUIZINGA
INSTITUUT

Onderzoeksschool
voor
Cultuurgeschiedenis

Research Institute and
Graduate School of
Cultural History