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CONTESTING EUROPE'S EASTERN RIM. CULTURAL IDENTITIES IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE. ED. BY ŠARIĆ, LJ., MUSOLFF, A., MANZ, S., AND HUDABIUNIGG, I. MULTILINGUAL MATTERS, BRISTOL, UK, 2010, 222 PP.

The history of the world has witnessed a myriad of political projects so far, the latest being the European Union formally established on 1 November 1993. The formation of this new political entity effectuated by the dramatic changes in Europe's political landscape (the fall of the Berlin wall, the disintegration of the former Eastern bloc, the break-up of SFR Yugoslavia) has resulted in new political space moulded by the enlargement and more or less successful top-bottom integration. This latest division of Europe into the European Union and non-European Union has brought the issue of national and cultural identity into sharp focus. Besides subjective basis that identities exist in our minds as rather vague notions of who we are collectively, they are also objectively grounded, "in the sense that there are always "membership criteria" […] that enable the members of a community to recognize each other as belonging to the same community, and by the same token recognize non-member as not belonging." (Bakke, 1995: 3) The book *Contesting Europe's Eastern Rim. Cultural Identities in Public Discourse* (2010), edited by Lj.Šarić , A. Musolff, S. Manz and I. Hudabiunigg, is about all pervasive dichotomies between belonging and non-belonging, Us and Them, insideness and outsideness, presence and past, democracy and barbarism, viewed from a media discourse perspective. Although the stated

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differences qualify to a great extent the intra-European discourse, as the first part of the book shows, they are particularly accentuated when designating the identities of the remaining European space which falls outside the current borders of the European Union. One such space rich in its own diversities still in search of defining relations not only among the countries which make it up but also with the rest of Europe is what editors of the book metaphorically label *Europe's eastern rim* so as to specifically direct their research to those countries of the former Yugoslavia which have not yet obtained European Union membership, and to Turkey.

The vehicle through which the aspect of national identity is elucidated in this volume is public or media discourse, as "socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned" (Wodak, 2002: 8) – discourse which constitutes the relations between people, religious and ethnic groups (in and out of the European Union), but which is at the same time affected by the political transformations that have been occurring in the countries dealt with in the book. "Discursive modes of identity construction", as the editors point out in *Introduction* (p. xii) operate on various theoretical and methodological frameworks, such as Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Conceptual Blending Theory, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Critical Metaphor Analysis. The language which epitomises the dynamics between old and new insiders and outsiders in the EU is heavily multimodal and hinges on rhetorical figures, primarily metaphors and metonymies, viewed as a blend of conceptual and linguistic aspects (see Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), then visual images and symbols, intertextuality, grammatical and lexical choices (personal pronouns, adverbs), etc., all of them serving to underlie the on-going strife between perpetuating, stereotypical divisions into "the centering WE concept" versus "the othering THEY concept" (p. 21), and redefined cognitive and lexical solutions, which should contribute to re-evaluated and enhanced national and international relations.

The book *Contesting Europe's Eastern Rim* is a collection of research papers comprising thirteen chapters which are topically divided into three parts. The first part of the volume, which contains three chapters, tackles the

issue of the EU enlargement and the relationship between so-called core European countries and the newcomers, and the ensuing different perceptions of this process in respective countries. **Stefan Manz** recounts the relations between Germany and Poland upon Poland's joining the European Union by studying articles in the German press referring to post-Second World War expellees and the EU voting structure. The author shows that the quest for cultural identity neither ceases with the EU accession nor it can be smoothly replaced by still vaguely defined supranational identity. "The presence of the past" (p. 5) seems to be a pivotal point which still qualifies German-Polish relationships. The aspect of reconciling the disparities that exist between the old and new members of the EU and the integrative capacity of new members is also dealt with in the two remaining chapters of the first part by **Steffen Buch/Uta Helfrich** and **Sandra Petraškaitė-Pabst**, respectively. In both chapters, the question of the fifth enlargement of the EU in 2004 and the reception of this in the media is researched via conceptual metaphors, which, being highly pervasive and persuasive, once again prove to be a powerful ideological tool for creating a particular social reality. Thus, metaphors together with deictic devices qualify both the self-perception and the other image creation, generating "two conflicting identities" (p. 44), the one perceived as European and the other as non-European. The European identity, as witnessed by these two studies, is conceptually realised as *a leader, an engine/motor, a teacher, a rich groom*, i.e. as positively evaluated WE concept which embodies democratic values, while the non-European identity is perceived as being *a follower, a brake, a pupil, a submissive bride*, i.e. as negatively evaluated THEY concept which nonetheless opens the door to a change in conceptual labelling depending on an integrative potential of any (new) member of the EU.

The central, second part of the volume consists of seven chapters which, except the one referring to Turkey, depict still a very sensitive region of the Western Balkans that has undergone tectonic shifts in the 1990s due to the violent ethnic conflicts in Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo, and is slowly and cautiously rebuilding and recreating its national identities, together with

value systems. Besides, all former Yugoslav countries, except Slovenia, are embarking with more or less success on a process of joining the EU, which, as the authors of contributions show, even more urgently calls for clear definition of not only national identity but the extent of their Europeanness as well. These sometimes contentious issues have been highlighted from diverse discursive perspectives. **Ljiljana Šarić** investigates different perceptions of the Balkans on the basis of texts in the German, Croatian and Serbian press compiled in the period 2007/2008 which coincides with the Slovenian presidency in the EU and the aim to foster the EU accession prospects for the Western Balkan countries. Her study reveals that the concept of the Balkans has become the metaphorical construct whose high evaluative content depends on the media account of the given country. In the Croatian press, for example, *the Balkans* bears negative identity connotations, particularly reflected in the term *Balkanism* which epitomizes undesirable internal and external societal phenomena. On the other hand, the ideological connotations of the Balkans appear to be greatly suppressed in the Serbian press, and the role of this metaphorical construct in either self-identity definition or other-identity presentation is not so conspicuous. **Dubravka Kuna** and **Branko Kuna**, who compiled a corpus of Croatian media texts in 2007, show how onomastics, viewed from a broad perspective via different name transformations and renaming strategies, uncovers the way Bosniaks, Serbs, Slovenians, and Montenegrins are seen in the eyes of their Croatian neighbours. Giving ample evidence, such as proper names (*Srbadija, Bosančero*), toponyms (*Srboslavija, Balkanistan*), spatial perspectivisation (*the nation below Lovćen*, etc.), the authors convincingly unveil that given naming strategies are highly evaluatively loaded, and the names themselves derogatory with the aim of "discrediting" (p. 81). **Daphne Winland** analyses political discourse in contemporary Bosnia (the Posavina region) in the aftermath of the September 11 events, and equalisation of the term *Islamic* with terrorism. Her study displays how language practices which dwell on, *inter alia*, the exploitation of the romantic epic tale heroes, *hajduks* and *uskoks*, are viewed as a vehicle for political aspirations of local leaders

who, by linking past and present and trying to equate Bosnia's Muslims with Muslim terrorists, tend to promote reality based on anti-Muslim feelings of which the local population is mostly unaware. **Tatjana Radanović Felberg** studiously investigates different visual solutions of media text, such as layout and photographs and their contribution to creating different political identities. Contextually placing her research in a very sensitive period of the NATO bombing of the FRY, the author focuses on the two most influential and pro-government media – *Politika* in Serbia, which was pro-Milošević oriented and *Pobjeda* in Montenegro as pro-Đukanović newspaper, and shows how subtle semiotic features give rise to promoting different ideological stances. **Andreja Vezovnik**, drawing her analysis on intertextuality, finds parallels between metaphors and symbols used to shape the issue of Slovenian identity in two historically remote periods – the one around 2003 when Slovenia was about to join the EU and the nineteenth century Krekism period within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The study shows how discourse models the issue of identity reconstruction when the efforts of trying to build the country's European identity and thus distance from negatively perceived Balkans identity conflate with the fear of being servile and marginal echoed in the former Krekist discourse when Slovenia also tried to establish its pro-European self-image. Applying a descriptive approach and detecting specific stylistic characteristics, **Paweł Bąk** analyses how the process of becoming the EU country in case of the former outsiders, Romania and Bulgaria, and the present outsiders, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, is regarded in the Polish press. Even though the metaphorical themes are similar to the ones we mentioned above in the chapters by Steffen Buch/Uta Helfrich and Sandra Petraškaitė-Pabst, the study indicates that the Polish discourse about the EU candidates resorts to the EU *integration* metaphorical model at the expense of the EU *expansion* model, with the aim of pinpointing an active approach of the new accession countries to become a part of the EU and distance from the gloomy past. This second part of the volume is completed with the chapter by **Andreas Musolff** who focuses his research on Turkey and its still contradictory relationship with the EU ever since 1963 when Turkey has been

acknowledged the candidacy for the EU membership. Musolff's study shows once again the power of conceptual metaphors to shape the public opinion and affect the social reality and political decision making. The results obtained from the German press metaphorically qualify Turkey via the OUTSIDER and the CONFLICT scenarios rather than via the PROGRESS scenario, which is in line with the present anti-Turkish immigration prejudices, hence with framing Turkey as a still unwelcome member of the European family.

The final, third part of the volume comprises three chapters which offer literary account of the issue of contested national identities so as to consider it in all its complexity. The dichotomies identified in linguistic analyses in the previous two parts between insideness and outsideness are critically illuminated by **Ingrid Hudabiunigg** in her study which examines the works of the renowned Croatian writer, Miroslav Krleža, whose forward-looking ideas about a unified Europe, with equally represented West and East poles serve as a reminder to those policy makers who still tend to create reality based on a stark contrast between 'civilised' West and 'uncivilised' East. The clash between traditional and modern, democratic values and its reflection in Montenigrin society portrayed through the relationship of the main hero with several women is dissected by **Biljana Jovanović Lauvstad** in her review of Balša Brković's novel *Private Gallery*. Finally, the aspect of the self and the other is once more viewed in the chapter by **Knut Andreas Grimstad**, who tackles another moot question – Jewishness and its presentation in contemporary Polish literature, which tends to rest on departing from the xenophobic trends in the previous Polish discourse and on the overall deconstruction of hostile images of minority nations.

The book *Contesting Europe's Eastern Rim. Cultural Identities in Public Discourse* shows the power of discourse and its inherent characteristic according to which the way we think and talk about some social issues may influence and reflect the way we act in relation to these issues. Set in the latest theoretical and methodological frameworks, it presents an invaluable contribution to disentangling the complex and past-ridden cultural and national issues of Europe's eastern rim, and to comprehending the

endeavours of defining, redefining, constructing and deconstructing the identities of this area, so as to alter the still present perception of this part of Europe as peripheral. This book, together with similar research of intra- and inter-European discourse, is one step further in approaching the European Union as the space of a real, not proclaimed, unity in diversity.

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