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Eastern Europe – What Is in a Name?

Abstract

It is widely considered that the term Eastern Europe is nothing more than a geographical category denoting the eastern part of the European continent. The paper challenges this understanding by uncovering the ideology of the Enlightenment that is embedded in the name Eastern Europe. First, it explores the epistemology that invites us to approach and scrutinise Eastern Europe as the problematic part of the European continent. Second, the paper will identify some of the mechanisms that make Eastern Europe particularly suitable for absorbing various ideological discharges. Finally, the paper will illustrate how the epistemology that approaches Eastern Europe as a domain of backwardness is also unreservedly perpetuated in the fantasmatic territory of Eastern Europe.

Keywords

Eastern Europe, ethnicity, exclusion, inclusion, mimeticism, race

Introduction

Every idea has its history. The history of ideas is unfortunately a rather marginal discipline in contemporary academia. Nonetheless, the history of particular ideas, for example sexuality or madness, has slowly but surely gained a decent amount of well-deserved attention. This has, at least to a certain extent, changed the way we think of these ideas nowadays. Whether we as a society have organised ourselves in a way that would take into account the history of these ideas is a highly debatable issue that does not have much to do with the history of ideas itself. The history of ideas, let us not forget, is not the management of ideas. Instead of coming up with idea management tips and tricks, the history of ideas provides us with “an experience that might permit an alteration, a transformation, of the relationship we have with ourselves and our cultural universe: in a word, with our knowledge”.¹ This is the most that the history of ideas, as a discipline, can offer to us while staying within its limits. It is then up to us to engage or disengage with this experience or, in other words, it is up to us to engage or disengage with the history of ourselves. The history of some ideas has been largely ignored. This is not because they do not deserve any attention or because these ideas are not important for the relationship that we have with our cultural universe. One of such ideas is the idea of Eastern Europe. We quite often come across news on Eastern Europe or East Europeans in media and, in academia, there is a significant tradition of East European studies. The academic study of problems in Eastern Europe is surely not lacking in popularity or, to put it in more honest terms, capacity

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Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx. Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, transl. James

Cascaito – R. James Goldstein, *Semiotext(e)*, New York 1991, p. 37.

to attract research funding. Studying history of the idea of Eastern Europe, on the other hand, is not something fashionable. It has never been fashionable, to be more precise. Thus, we do not find all that many authors and studies dealing with Eastern Europe as an idea.

In his study *Inventing Eastern Europe*, that has sadly been long-forgotten, Larry Wolff unearths the relation between the idea of Eastern Europe and the Enlightenment:

“It was Western Europe that invented Eastern Europe as its complementary other half in the eighteenth century, the age of Enlightenment. It was also the Enlightenment, with its intellectual centers in Western Europe, that cultivated and appropriated to itself the new notion of ‘civilization’, an eighteenth-century neologism, and civilization discovered its complement, within the same continent, in shadowed lands of backwardness, even barbarism. Such was the invention of Eastern Europe.”²

Tracing the idea of Eastern Europe all the way to Voltaire, Wolff argues that Eastern Europe has had a peculiar ideological role ever since its invention in the 18th century. Framed as backward and barbaric, Eastern Europe has served as a counterbalance to progressive and civilised Western Europe. Eastern Europe, let us be clear, has *never* been some sort of innocent cartographic category. In his study, Wolff demonstrates how “the map of civilization in Europe was marked on the mind of the Enlightenment”,³ thus reminding us that the very act of mapping brought the idea of Eastern Europe into existence with a particular ideological purpose. Western Europe needed Eastern Europe, so that it could constitute itself as the norm from which other, less civilised and progressive territories, deviate. The invention of Eastern Europe allows Western Europe to engage in some finger-pointing and invent itself in contrast to the ignorance of Eastern Europe. It allows Western Europe to establish itself as the bearer of the Enlightenment and proudly proclaim its motto:

“*Sapere aude!* Have courage to use your *own* understanding!”⁴

The thing is, you cannot really make this dramatic claim if everyone else also dares to know – the heroic pathos would be lost – so you anxiously look to recognise – well, to invent – those who are, unlike you, ignorant in their blessed stupidity. The ideology of Knowledge needs those who have, as the story goes, locked themselves into the ideology of Ignorance. Eastern Europe, therefore, was by no means simply excluded from the mind of the Enlightenment. It was included, but as a counterbalance to Western Europe. History of the idea of Eastern Europe enables us to see that there would be no Eastern Europe without the Enlightenment and its politics of civilisation.

The idea of Eastern Europe thus had a rather significant role in constituting our cultural universe and, as this article will show, it still does. Studying the idea of Eastern Europe is to engage with history of the present. What we find in the name “Eastern Europe”, to put it succinctly, is the ideology of the Enlightenment in its present forms. Following a brief discussion on the Balkans as understood by the scholars associated with the Ljubljana school of psychoanalysis, the article will explore the epistemology that frames Eastern Europe as the problematic part of the European continent. The article then proceeds to identify and analyse some mechanisms that allow the invention of Eastern Europe to thrive today as conceived by the mind of the Enlightenment. Adopting a critical view on whiteness, it is argued that the pan-ethnic identity “East European” keeps those who are seen as East Europeans in a subordinate

position within the category of whiteness. Fully acknowledging that East Europeans are simultaneously excluded from and included in Western society by being recognised as “ethnic”, the article aims to make the logic of exclusion *qua* inclusion – that is paramount for understanding how “ethnicity-management apparatus” operates nowadays – explicit.⁵ Finally, taking particular care not to succumb to the seductiveness of oversimplifications, I will make it apparent that the discourse of Eastern Europe as a domain that is relieved of any contemporaneity is not produced and perpetuated solely in the West.

Despite the fact that I would be thrilled if this article also gets in the hands of those who are not strictly academics, and I honestly believe that it can be understood by a non-specialist audience, I am aware that it will be read mainly by academics. For this reason, while examining the forms of the Enlightenment that frame the notion of Eastern Europe these days, the article will *not* shy away from exploring the role that the academic study of Eastern Europe has had in maintaining the invention of Eastern Europe. This is not a conformist choice, to be sure, but I am certain that an academic journal should be the most suitable place for taking a critical view on the rules of scholarly discourse. If my take on the epistemology that stands behind East European studies induces some academic soul-searching, so much the better. Even if it is an unsettling one, researchers should not be spared of learning more about the history of ideas that constitute the present of their academic disciplines.

The Problems of Eastern Europe

While discussing Eastern Europe, it is just a matter of time when we will stumble upon the notion of the Balkans. This is where certain unease appears. Basically, referring to the Balkans uncritically could be taken as a sign that you are harbouring the illusion that nasty things happen only in the Balkans. It might also turn out that those to whom you are speaking find themselves offended as they come from, or have family ties with, what you consider to be the Balkans. For such reasons, “the Balkans” has become one of those terms that might as well prove to be insulting, so avoiding it seems to be somewhat advisable. Although this terminological change is still on its way, a highly suitable substitute has been found in the term “Eastern Europe”; with “Eastern Europe” you get the same ideological charge as with “the Balkans” *and*, as barely anyone is questioning history of the idea of Eastern Europe, you can rest assured that no one will be suspicious of your intentions.

The study of Eastern Europe as an idea benefits from taking into account existing research on the Balkans as an idea. Slavoj Žižek and a group of researchers, often referred to as the Ljubljana school of psychoanalysis, have provided us with a productive take on the Balkans. Their main contribution

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Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1994, p. 4.

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Ibid., p. 35.

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Immanuel Kant, “An Answer to the Question: ‘What Is Enlightenment?’”, in: Hans S. Reiss

(ed.), *Kant. Political Writings*, transl. Hugh B. Nisbet, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2015, pp. 54–60, here p. 54.

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Rey Chow, *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Columbia University Press, Chichester 2002, p. 126.

to critically examining the notion of the Balkans could be summarised by the following claim: “the Balkans is the unconscious of Europe”.⁶ Indeed, as Žižek argues, “the Balkans are Europe’s myth, they have been the screen onto which the Europeans projected their dreams”.⁷ The psychoanalytic flare of Žižek’s idea of the Balkans as Europe’s myth, however, is not here because psychoanalysis has always been keen on putting forward a novel perspective on the Balkans. Quite on the contrary, as Žižek explains in one of his interviews, “the idea came to me when my friends and I here [Ljubljana] – we all have a psychoanalytic orientation – were reading Freud and we noticed how, whenever there is an obscene, dirty, corrupted, morbid dimension to be indicated, he regularly uses examples from the Balkan region”.⁸ Freud was by no means innovative in his perspective on the Balkans. He simply adopted the logic of reasoning that has permeated the idea of Eastern Europe since its birth in the era of Enlightenment. The Balkans is there for Western Europe to hide from its consciousness those thoughts that are considered to be obscene, dirty, corrupted, etc. and which we all, to be sure, share. In repression, as psychoanalysis teaches us, affect is not what gets repressed; rather, the link between thought and affect is cut off and the thought is repressed.⁹ In this way, phenomena such as nationalism, racism, sexism, etc. are projected onto the screen of Western Europe’s dreams, namely the Balkans. The audience might as well use the affect that has been detached from the repressed thoughts to express its moral outrage at such barbaric events that take place in the Balkans. Alternatively, the audience could show patronising compassion for those stuck in their self-incurred immaturity. In any case, once displaced from the consciousness of Western Europe, these nasty phenomena, by now widely considered to be specific to the Balkans, can be analysed and dissected in just about every possible way.

The scientific eye has allowed us to see the problems of Eastern Europe in great detail. The academic study of Eastern Europe is in high-demand these days, so it is not too difficult to provide examples that illuminate the epistemology on which this area study is based. That is, of course, if you look at contemporary academia with history of the idea of Eastern Europe in mind, while being fully aware that area studies have a rich tradition of providing a refuge for “what, in spite of claims of interdisciplinarity, remains the untheorized stable point of reference for area specialists – the notion of a fixed geographical ‘area’ itself”.¹⁰ The Centre for the Study of the Balkans at Goldsmiths, for example, introduces the focus of its research in the following way:

“We think creatively and radically about the Balkans, and conduct world-leading research. [...] The Balkans provides a fertile ground for further exploration of issues relevant to research carried out across Goldsmiths, such as the study of past and present cultures, societies and identities, nationalism, ethnic conflict, transitional justice, multiculturalism, relationship between faiths – issues that are also relevant for an understanding of today’s world and challenges it is facing.”¹¹

Highlighting its radical thinking, the centre nonetheless adopts a rather conservative perspective on the Balkans. The Balkans is introduced as “a fertile ground” for exploring a wide range of issues. With the study of the Balkans you get to deal with identities, nationalism, ethnic conflict, multiculturalism and other “juicy” research topics that are best not to be seen in the West. In the description quoted above, it is indeed argued that these issues “are also relevant for an understanding of today’s world”. Note, however, that these problems are introduced as relevant for an understanding of today’s world

and *not* as the problems of today's world. Let us not confuse two different worlds, namely research on today's world with the world-leading research on the Balkans conducted at the centre. The Balkans, at least the way they see it in the centre, is "a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-confessional mosaic that survives despite numerous ethnic and religious conflicts that have shaped the region, together with as numerous examples of coexistence and interaction".¹² Studying the Balkans as a fertile ground for problems thus allows you to become a sort of an archaeologist of passions who unearths different layers of ethnic, religious and other conflicting desires patched into this mosaic or image known as the Balkans. The image so tortuous that one is even prompted to express a pleasant surprise that the region has somehow managed to survive up to this day.

The Centre for the Study of the Balkans at Goldsmiths, however, is just an example. It allows us to learn more about the epistemology behind the discipline that is present in today's academia under a number of similar names – East European studies, Slavonic studies, South East European studies, Balkan studies, etc. – but is ultimately focused on examining the area that is considered to be Eastern Europe. There are many other examples that could be used to show the vigour of the Enlightenment in the contemporary research on Eastern Europe. For instance, in its "At a Glance" section, the Institute for East European Studies at the Free University of Berlin informs us:

"The institute's research and teaching on the Dahlem campus reflect the diverse processes of change on the Eastern part of the European continent. The region is heterogeneous, conflict-ridden, and very important, and with regard to the expansion of the European Union, there are many issues and challenges to be addressed. [...] The institute's research focuses on contemporary issues, especially those related to the processes of transformation in East Central, Southeastern, and Eastern Europe as well as the underlying historical conditions."¹³

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Slavoj Žižek, in: Dušan I. Bjelić, "Is the Balkans the Unconscious of Europe?", *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society* 16 (2011) 3, pp. 315–323, here p. 315, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1057/pcs.2011.11>. The notion of the Balkans as the unconscious of Europe is most often associated with Žižek, however Bjelić (pp. 316–317) argues that Mladen Dolar had introduced it first in his unpublished paper, "Freud in Yugoslavia", where Dolar formulated the following question: "Can one venture to say that Yugoslavia is the *Schauplatz* of the European unconscious, or that *the unconscious is structured like Yugoslavia*?" It would maybe be the least misleading to say that the idea of the Balkans as the unconscious of Europe is a result of collaboration between the psychoanalytically inclined scholars based in Ljubljana.

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Slavoj Žižek, "Interview", *Lürzer's Archive* (2018) 2. Available at: <https://www.luerzer-sarchive.com/en/magazine/interview/slavoj-zizek-181.html> (accessed on 15 December 2023).

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Ibid.

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See, in particular, Jacques Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis. Book XVII*, Jacques-Alain Miller (ed.), transl. Russell Grigg, Norton, New York 2007.

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Rey Chow, *Writing Diaspora. Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies*, Indiana University Press, Indianapolis 1993, p. 201.

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"About the Centre for the Study of the Balkans", *Goldsmiths*. Available at: <https://www.gold.ac.uk/csb/about-us/> (accessed on 15 December 2023).

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Ibid.

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"Institute for East European Studies. At a Glance", *Free University of Berlin*. Available at: <https://www.fu-berlin.de/en/einrichtungen/fachbereiche/zentralinstitut/oei/index.html> (accessed on 15 December 2023).

Now, it is true that the eastern part of the European continent is heterogeneous, conflict-ridden and the region is certainly facing many issues and challenges with regard to the expansion of the European Union. However, there is nothing that would make these issues specific to Eastern Europe. The social, in general, is heterogeneous and conflict-ridden and to highlight that the eastern part of the European continent is heterogeneous, conflict-ridden, etc. is to imply that there is a certain part of the European continent that resides in its homogeneity, blissfully relieved of any conflicts. The implied part of the European continent is, of course, Western Europe. By looking away from the problems in Western Europe and towards the problems in Eastern Europe, *our* problems have become framed as the problems *of* Eastern Europe. Western Europe, invented as a region where differences and conflicts have peacefully yielded to the principle of social order, is portrayed as a realisation of “the conception of ‘society’ as founding totality of its partial processes”.¹⁴ There is not much to examine in such a consensual environment, so it is only normal to focus on this other, and problematic, part of the European continent.

This epistemology is not specific to the Institute for East European studies at the Free University of Berlin or the Centre for the Study of the Balkans at Goldsmiths. Such an epistemology is characteristic of East European studies in general. The point here, therefore, is not to say: “look at the Free University of Berlin and Goldsmiths, this is precisely what the discipline of East European studies should not be”. Rather, we should say: “look at the Free University of Berlin and Goldsmiths, this is precisely what the discipline of East European studies is”. The fact that we might not be able to see this highly problematic epistemology at a glance should not surprise us; history of the idea of Eastern Europe that would enable us to recognise what is at stake here has been severely neglected. We should, however, do what is long overdue, namely focus on the very focus of East European studies and expose its enlightened epistemology.

Eastern Europe, as mentioned in the institute’s “At a Glance” section, is very important. More precisely, it is very important for the performativity of Western Europe. Eastern Europe acts as a constitutive outside in the process of performatively constituting Western Europe as the enlightened part of the European continent or, in other words, the norm. Eastern Europe is what deviates from the norm and, in view of this, it becomes more comprehensible why research and teaching of the aforementioned institute “reflect the diverse processes of change on the Eastern part of the European continent”. Let us not fail to notice that there are no West European studies at the Free University of Berlin or Goldsmiths in London. Western Europe is considered to be the norm from which the eastern part of the European continent deviates. It would be beneath the dignity of the norm to be subjected to academic study and perhaps even exposed in its frailty. One is therefore advised to look away from Western Europe and towards Eastern Europe.

In this spirit, Eastern Europe is sometimes explicitly conceptualised as a laboratory. For example, the research group East European Studies at the University of Vienna, as one of “the four principles guiding of the research group”, lists: “LABORATORY – The comparison to Western Europe is a crucial element of their research, too. In times of growing inequality and post democratic tendencies, Eastern Europe can be understood as a ‘laboratory’ for the resilience of democracy in a positive and negative way”.¹⁵ The outline of this research principle is quite confusing. The third-person view style

of presentation is not the most reader-friendly, it is not really clear how a laboratory can be a principle that guides one's research and, to be honest, the usage of quotation marks around the word "laboratory" is a tad arbitrary. However, we get the message: Eastern Europe is what is compared to Western Europe. What deviates, in a positive or negative way, is compared to the norm. Growing inequalities, post democratic tendencies, etc. are best to be examined not in Western Europe but in a controlled environment that Eastern Europe as a laboratory offers – and, please, no lab-leaks!

Looking at the map of Eastern Europe that is provided on the research group's website, we can see that the scholars in East European Studies at the University of Vienna do not think of Austria as a part of Eastern Europe.¹⁶ On the map, Eastern Europe conveniently begins just above (Czech Republic), just below (Slovenia) and just to the right of Austria (Slovakia and Hungary). Despite the fact that, as Leon Marc argues, Austria "through both its name and its geographical position, could actually be claimed as an Eastern European country: Österreich means 'Eastern Kingdom' and, if you are travelling from Prague or Ljubljana, you have to head *east* if you want to get to Vienna".¹⁷ Such a creative practice of mapping, whereby Austria manages to keep the problems of Eastern Europe at bay, might as well appear surprising to those unacquainted with the history of Eastern Europe as an idea. However, any confusion is dispelled when we take into account that Eastern Europe has always been ideological rather than geographical category. Eastern Europe is there to be marked and measured against Western Europe, thus maintaining the construction of Western Europe as the benchmark for the Enlightenment of the European continent.

Reflecting on the importance of Eastern Europe for the Enlightenment's self-understanding, Wolff argued that "the construction of Eastern Europe was invested with enormous intellectual energy precisely because the complementary construction of Western Europe was so unstable."¹⁸ Performativity, however, is never resolved once and for all; it is a set of practices, most notably exclusions and repetitions, which always amounts only to "work-in-progress". Accordingly, the performativity of Western Europe is never accomplished and the construction of Western Europe cannot but remain unstable. The construction of Eastern Europe, therefore, is *still* invested with enormous intellectual energy. While the idea of Eastern Europe cannot be understood without exploring its history, the invention of Eastern Europe is by no means

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Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, Verso, London 2001, p. 95. Laclau and Mouffe argued in favour of abandoning such a conception of society, making it apparent that it is based on a flawed understanding of the social.

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"East European Studies", *University of Vienna*. Available at: <https://sowi.univie.ac.at/en/research/research-groups/east-european-studies/> (accessed on 15 December 2023). For yet another example of overtly framing Eastern Europe as a laboratory, see the working group Eastern Europe as Laboratory of Change at European University Institute in Italy: <https://>

www.eui.eu/research-hub?id=eastern-europe-as-a-laboratory-of-change (accessed on 15 December 2023).

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For the map, see "East European Studies", *University of Vienna*.

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Leon Marc, *What's So Eastern about Eastern Europe. Twenty Years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall*, Oldcastle Books, Herts 2009, p. 84.

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L. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, p. 361.

a thing of the past. When the invention of Eastern Europe is discussed, it would thus be most accurate to say that “it has flourished as an idea of extraordinary potency since the eighteenth century”,¹⁹ backed by the symbolic authority of science.

Exclusion *qua* Inclusion

Be that as it may, the following question still remains unanswered: how come has this notion of Eastern Europe remained as unchallenged? Well, if the Balkans is the unconscious of Europe, we could argue that it is no wonder that unconscious eludes our intellectual apparatus, especially in the era of cognitive behavioural therapy that denies the very idea of unconscious. But there are limits to extending psychoanalytic concepts, and such explanations would obscure what is at stake here rather than help us to understand why the notion of Eastern Europe has not been met with at least a courteous suspension. The suspension of a sort that we quite often see with the notion of the Orient and that can be nicely exemplified by looking at how has the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) achieved what it presents as its “refreshed visual identity”.²⁰ Apart from improving a tree symbol in its logo, and introducing “the refreshed SOAS tree”, the School of Oriental and African Studies has decided to use “SOAS University of London” as its name. The decision to use solely the acronym SOAS has been further motivated, as SOAS informs us on its website, by the fact that “the word Oriental has some negative connotations (especially in the US)”. Of course, “some negative connotations” is an understatement, to say the least, and I guess that “especially in the US” is yet another way to refer to Said and like-minded scholars. In any case, the notion of the Orient has not been removed from the institution’s name. Rather, suppressed in the acronym, it has been met with a courteous suspension.

With the notion of Eastern Europe, we see no such attempts. “Eastern Europe” in East European studies does not really have any negative connotations, so there is no need for any type of shame management. Quite on the contrary, the energy that was once invested in the idea of the Orient, and now has to be directed elsewhere as it brings about some negative connotations, is readily absorbed by the notion of Eastern Europe. While it is nowadays enjoying a steady rise in popularity, the discourse of “Eastern Europe as Europe’s republic of the Orient” has been perpetuated, that is to say continuously re-invested with energy, since the invention of Eastern Europe in the age of Enlightenment.²¹ Eastern Europe has always been treated as Europe’s *boutique* Orient and, as such, it is particularly suitable for various ideological discharges. In his analysis of the Balkans, Žižek recognised that “because Balkan remains a part of Europe and is inhabited by white people, racist clichés that one wouldn’t dare use in reference to some African or Asian nation can be freely applied to Balkan”.²² The Balkans is this fantasmatic region that will, if all goes as usual, suck up various racist clichés and remain quiet about this. After all, how could the one who is white claim to be subjected to racism by other white people? Maria Todorova, in *Imagining the Balkans*, also stumbles upon this peculiar logic that is entangled with the issue of whiteness:

“Balkanism became, in time, a convenient substitute for the emotional discharge that orientalism provided, exempting the West from charges of racism, colonialism, eurocentrism, and Christian intolerance against Islam. After all, the Balkans are in Europe; they are white; they are predominantly Christian, and therefore the externalization of frustrations on them can circumvent the

usual racial or religious bias allegations. As in the case of the Orient, the Balkans have served as a repository of negative characteristics against which a positive and self-congratulatory image of the ‘European’ and the ‘West’ has been constructed.”²³

Being white, as both Žižek and Todorova argue, does not make the Balkans immune to the racism of other whites. Quite on the contrary, the fact that Eastern Europe is largely inhabited by white people is precisely what allows racism to pass under the radar and become widely acceptable. For racism to perform this act of disappearance, however, whiteness must be understood as a homogenous category. Indeed, if whiteness is considered to be a homogenous category, it is next to impossible to provide a clear reply to the question formulated above: how could the one who is white claim to be subjected to racism by other whites? This, nonetheless, is a rather narrow way to conceptualise whiteness. It is, basically, to take whiteness for granted, accept it as the norm, and stop asking any further questions. For a critical view on whiteness we must do something completely different, that is to break away from the idea of whiteness as a homogenous category and expose it in its heterogeneity by mapping the boundaries that permeate whiteness.

In order to map the figure of “East European” in the English imaginary, in her PhD thesis *Other Whites, White Others. East European Migrants and the Boundaries of Whiteness*, Julia Halej interviewed both English participants and East European migrants to England, in addition to conducting a content analysis of British media. Dwelling in the English imaginary, we get to see Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians, Hungarians, Romanians, etc. miraculously transformed into East Europeans or, as Halej puts it, “the category ‘East European’ is used in the popular imagination in a pan-ethnic way, essentialising the origins of the migrants without taking into account their significant heterogeneity”.²⁴ Drawing on critical whiteness studies, while aiming to “open ‘whiteness’ up to interpretation as a category representing a range of racialised subject positions”,²⁵ Halej argues that we are, in fact, witnessing the process of racialisation *within* the category of whiteness. Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians, Hungarians, Romanians, etc. are racialised by being brought together “in a pan-ethnic way, essentialising the origins of the migrants without taking into account their significant heterogeneity”, and this should really be read in conjunction with Balibar’s point that “*culture can also function like a nature*, and it can in particular function as a way of locking individuals and groups a priori into a genealogy, into a determination that is immutable and

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Ibid., p. 4.

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This and all further references in this paragraph refer to “Visual Identity FAQs”, SOAS. Available at: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/visualidentity/general/faqs/> (accessed on 15 December 2023).

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L. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, p. 278.

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Slavoj Žižek, “The Spectre of Balkan”, *Journal of International Institute* 6 (1999) 2. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.4750978.0006.202> (accessed on 15 December 2023).

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Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2009, p. 188.

24
Julia O. Halej, *Other Whites, White Others. East European Migrants and the Boundaries of Whiteness* (dissertation), University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, London 2015, p. 47.

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Ibid., p. 42.

intangible in origin”.²⁶ Bearing this in mind, it is high time to put all of this bluntly and say that the pan-ethnic identity “East European” is nothing but a race. This, however, is not to say that East Europeans are locked out of whiteness. Rather, by being denied their heterogeneity, East Europeans are locked into the category of whiteness in a particular fashion, as Halej puts it:

“‘East European’ has in fact become a ‘boundary term’ in England, with East Europeans being ambivalently and partially incorporated into the mainstream society, featuring in the English imaginary simultaneously as ‘Other Whites’ and ‘White Others’.”²⁷

East Europeans, thus, are simultaneously excluded from and included in Western society or, to put it differently, they are excluded through their radical inclusion in the category of whiteness *via* the East European pan-ethnic identity.

This peculiar logic that might as well be named “exclusion *qua* inclusion”, where Eastern Europe is recognised as ethnic and therefore granted a special status, can easily be confused for a celebration of diversity and inclusion, thus making the East European pan-ethnic identity not only widely acceptable but also politically avant-garde. Seeing through this apparent inclusivity, Rey Chow clearly articulates what is really at stake here:

“To be classified as ethnic by white society, then, is to be granted a radical – indeed, politically avant-garde – kind of *recognition*, which compounds a straightforward discrimination and intolerance – based on clear-cut, hierarchical boundaries – with an inclusionist, liberalist cultural logic.”²⁸

As one of many examples of this logic that she offers, Chow recalls a white academic adviser who advised a white student not to engage in postcolonial studies as the student was not a person of colour. The adviser, as Chow highlights, thereby promoted the understanding of postcolonial studies as a discipline that is meant to welcome exclusively coloured scholars and, in the form of benevolent advice, exhibited “a racism that was sophisticatedly couched in an enlightened discourse of respect for other peoples’ cultural or ethnic differences”.²⁹ We have a *déjà vu* moment as soon as we notice that East Europeans are particularly well-received in Western European universities when they choose to study the problems of Eastern Europe. Literally the same logic of exclusion *qua* inclusion applies. In light of this, it would be imprecise to say that those subsumed under the pan-ethnic identity “East European” are simply excluded from academia today. East European studies institutes, centres, schools, etc. – with the fantasmatic and racialising East European pan-ethnic identity embedded in their very own name – are flourishing in Western Europe, and this is where East Europeans are more than welcomed. This, after all, is a well-known fact to those considered to be East European and working in the social sciences and humanities in Western Europe. True, it is not often explicitly articulated – as the East is a very lucrative career – though it is a tacit knowledge that, “in order to be, this ethnic must both be seen to own her ethnicity and to exhibit it repeatedly”.³⁰ In purely monetary terms, it surely pays off to be included in academia in this way. Let us be honest and say that it is not by pure chance that we are witnessing the proliferation of PhDs in East European studies – reminding us that the Enlightenment is still going strong – who are looking forward to filling positions for specialists on Eastern Europe. At the same time, as Todorova reminds us, “the rest of Europe, however, is not represented by commensurate categories and the appropriate specialists on ‘Northeastern Europe’, ‘West Central Europe’, nor

even ‘Western Europe’. These are, then, *unmarked* categories. Marked categories become different while unmarked categories retain power as the standard against which the rest must be positioned”.³¹ As I have already argued in this article, Western Europe has taken great care to remain the unmarked standard since the Enlightenment, so it should no longer surprise us that “more often than not, Asian American studies is grouped together with ethnic studies rather than with English studies, even though English studies should, properly speaking, long have been renamed Western European studies or British American studies – indeed, made a subspecialty of ethnic studies itself”.³²

The thing is, if English studies were to become a subspecialty of ethnic studies itself, then this entire ethnicity-management apparatus would be made obsolete. The ethnic studies paradigm “that is designed to keep ‘them’ in their place” would risk a paradigm shift, and this would mean that we are slowly but surely leaving the era of Enlightenment.³³ Until then, however, we are stuck with, or profit from, “an ideological apparatus that actively interpellates the ethnic subject with rewards, the most important of which is that of a compulsory self-ownership, a legitimate, but always subordinate, social and cultural existence.”³⁴ Taking this into account, we should briefly return to and expand Halej’s claim that “the category ‘East European’ is used in the popular imagination in a pan-ethnic way”. This category, as I have mentioned before, is embedded in the very name of East European studies, so we are not dealing only with the popular imagination here. We should not turn a blind eye to the fact that East European studies – the academic face of such an ethnicity-management apparatus – owes its existence to the ethnic studies paradigm that keeps Eastern Europe subordinated in the imaginary of Western Europe. We cannot run away from the fact that “an antiracist project aligned with the elimination of social oppressions and inequalities calls for the gradual phasing out of the Ethnic Studies paradigm as we know it”,³⁵ and Chow herself highlights this claim made by Hattori. In fact, it could be argued that the most productive and subversive insight that East European studies could come up with is a critical re-evaluation of its own pan-ethnic identity. Taken to its ultimate conclusion, this insight would take the discipline of East European studies beyond a courteous suspension, with which the Orient has been met in the refreshed visual identity of SOAS, and into its eventual self-dismissal. To avoid any confusion, let me make it clear that is not my aim here to say that the discipline of East European studies has always and only been at odds with

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Etienne Balibar, “Is There a ‘Neo-Racism’?”, in: Etienne Balibar, Immanuel Wallerstein (eds.), *Race, Nation, Class. Ambiguous Identities*, transl. Chris Turner, Verso, London 1991, pp. 17–28, here p. 22.

27

J. O. Halej, *Other Whites, White Others*, p. 3.

28

R. Chow, *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 29.

29

Ibid., p. 16.

30

Ibid., p. 112.

31

M. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, p. 197.

32

R. Chow, *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 126.

33

Ibid.

34

Ibid., p. 123.

35

Tomo Hattori, in R. Chow, *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 126.

critically reflecting on the notion of Eastern Europe. That would be not only naïve but also incorrect; Julia Halej, for example, completed her PhD thesis *Other Whites, White Others. East European Migrants and the Boundaries of Whiteness* at the University College London School of Slavonic and East European Studies.³⁶ The Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies presented Maria Todorova with the 2022 Distinguished Contributions to Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Award. In 2002, Larry Wolff received the Barbara Jelavich Book Prize for Southeast European/Habsburg Studies for his book *Venice and the Slavs. The Discovery of Dalmatia in the Age of Enlightenment*.³⁷ Moreover, both Todorova and Wolff are advisory board members of the academic journal *East Central Europe*.

However, the fact that the discipline of East European studies occasionally welcomes and rewards those voices that are ready to examine the notion of Eastern Europe should not make us lose our sight of the ethnicity-management apparatus that structures the very discipline that welcomes and rewards those voices. The discipline that, *nota bene*, comes with the fantasmatic and racialising East European pan-ethnic identity embedded in its very own name. Without Eastern Europe ultimately acting as a “stable point of reference” for East European studies – and for which “the notion of a fixed geographical ‘area’ itself” is indispensable – the discipline of East European studies would not be possible.³⁸ Listing the authors who do (or do not) question the idea of Eastern Europe and are not simply on the other side of East European studies, would not alter the fact that, while the discipline of East European studies produces experts in Eastern Europe, “the rest of Europe, however, is not represented by commensurate categories and the appropriate specialists on ‘Northeastern Europe’, ‘West Central Europe’, nor even ‘Western Europe’”.³⁹ This curious mismatch in the attribution of an ethnic status to the production of knowledge should prompt us to see the ideology of the Enlightenment that stands behind epistemology of the discipline that is dedicated to examining the problems of Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, the ethnic studies paradigm “that is designed to keep ‘them’ in their place” will not experience a much-needed shift due to the occasional and commendable criticism of individuals – the phenomena of ethnicity-management apparatus is, above all, structural and it is at this level that my article explores it in its complexity.⁴⁰

Complaisant Mimeticism

It would nonetheless be misleading to claim that the way in which Eastern Europe is comprehended in the popular or academic imagination is deterring us from seeing what Eastern Europe really is. This article is not calling for the discovery of the true Eastern Europe. There is no such thing. As Said reminded some of his critics – who were more eager to dismiss his ideas than to read *Orientalism*:

“I say explicitly that I have no interest in, much less capacity for, showing what the true Orient or Islam really are [...] very early in the book, I say that words such as ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’ correspond to no stable reality that exists as a natural fact.”⁴¹

Europe’s *boutique* Orient, namely Eastern Europe, has always been nothing but a fantasmatic area and trying to pair it with a stable reality and an authoritative or the authentic representation would be to completely misunderstand the idea of Eastern Europe.

We should also not forget that the discursive representation of Eastern Europe as Europe's republic of the Orient is not the sole property of the West. Being a Croatian, with a PhD in Sociology from the University of Manchester and work experience in English academia, I am perfectly aware of this. For the purposes of demonstrating that the author behind the discourse does not exist, let us briefly turn to an example from Croatia, a country that is generally considered to be located in the fantasmatic space of Eastern Europe.

For over a decade, the Croatian National Tourist Board (CNTB), “a national tourist organisation founded with the aim of creating and promoting the identity and reputation of Croatian tourism domestically and internationally”, had been using the following slogan: “Croatia. The Mediterranean as it once was”.⁴² If you are wondering what “the Mediterranean as it once was” is, no worries – the CNTB has got you covered. In its catalogue, potential tourists are attracted by the following image:

“Washed by the precious salt waters of the Adriatic, roused by the intoxicating fragrances of pines, lavender and sage, caressed by the sun and gentle breezes, Croatia's shores are the real hidden garden of Mediterranean beauty.”⁴³

Croatia, therefore, promotes itself as a pseudo-Epicurean experience; a shaded and leafy garden where you can have a glass (or a few glasses) of full-bodied red wine, relish in a chunk of local cheese and some rustic bread, maybe have some dried figs and, what is most important, enjoy the life as it was once. The life as it once was definitely has its charms, but you eventually have to get back to your daily life and the 21st century reality. Croatia, as a pine-scented garden, remains there for you when you choose to have a break from the contemporary life – but it is not a country in which you could ever live. You could not really relocate to the place that is arrested in premodernity and, let us face it, self-incurred immaturity. You visit it just as you would visit a museum, or a zoo, and dream of those lost times and authentic passions.

The CNTB, in short, promotes the identity of Croatia as a country that is anything but contemporary. Looking at such a discursive manoeuvre, I am tempted to propose the notion of “complaisant mimeticism” on top of Chow's “coercive mimeticism – a process (identitarian, existential, cultural, or textual) in which those who are marginal to mainstream Western culture are expected [...] to objectify themselves in accordance with the already seen and

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It should be noted that her PhD project was not funded and that she had struggled quite a bit to push through her argument according to which the way Eastern Europeans migrants feature in the English imaginary has very much to do with race.

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Larry Wolff, *Venice and the Slavs. The Discovery of Dalmatia in the Age of Enlightenment*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2001.

38

R. Chow, *Writing Diaspora*, p. 201.

39

M. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, p. 197.

40

R. Chow, *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 126.

41

Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Penguin, London 2003, p. 331.

42

“About Us”, CNTB. Available at: <https://www.htz.hr/en-GB/general-information/about-us> (accessed on 15 December 2023); *Croatia. The Mediterranean as it Once Was*, CNTB, Zagreb 2014.

43

Croatia. The Mediterranean as it Once Was, p. 12.

thus to authenticate the familiar imagings of them as ethnics”.⁴⁴ When Chow discusses postcolonial ethnic *ressentiment* in *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, she explores the resentful disposition that “those who are stuck at home” develop towards the ethnics who have attained the validation by the West:

“Once attained, however, *their* success tends to be disparaged because, so goes the logic of *ressentiment*, it is what deprives *us* – those who are stuck at home and who are more authentic (by virtue of the fact that we have not been recognized by Westerners in the same way) – of our agency in representing ourselves.”⁴⁵

This no doubt also happens, though we should not forget that those who are stuck at home can be recognised by Westerners in just about the same way as those who have attained their validation in the West. We see that clearly with the discourse of Eastern Europe as Europe’s republic of the Orient, which is *not* produced and perpetuated solely in the West. This discourse is also promoted eagerly in the fantasmatic territory of Eastern Europe. While I have no interest whatsoever in fostering the agency of nationalist arrogance, let me make it clear that tourists would find their way to Croatia without the country belittling itself under the slogan “Croatia. The Mediterranean as it once was”. This sort of self-representative agency really goes beyond coercive mimeticism; the CNTB enthusiastically promotes Croatia as a country that is relieved of any contemporaneity. When you have no contemporaneity, you are basically dead and, as the CNTB is its official tourist body, it would not be much of an exaggeration to say that Croatia internationally promotes itself as a dead but beautiful corpse.

There is something particularly attractive in the dead ethnics and, just as Chow argues, “those ethnics who are dead, it follows, are more safe in their ethnicity than those who are alive – and the more distant in time they are, the more authentic they are considered to be”.⁴⁶ Focusing on the dead ethnics is by no means foreign to East European studies. In fact, it is what stands behind the discipline’s well-established interest in Yugoslavia, a country that used to cover a significant part of Eastern Europe. Browsing through topics that are examined in East European studies nowadays, one comes across generously funded research on, for example, Yugoslav auteur cinema, waste in communist Eastern Europe and Yugoslav partisan poetry. Exotic, hip and safe, right? No matter what you do in such research, no offense could be taken. The dead ethnics tend to be even more silent than those who are alive. You nonetheless might be asking yourself something along the lines of “who on earth is interested in these things?”, thus missing the very important point when it comes to engaging with the dead ethnics; such topics, where the exoticism of dead ethnics shines through the safety of dissecting their ethnicity, are there to satisfy the most material thing there is – the ideology. In this case, of course, the ideology of the Enlightenment.

Within the fantasmatic territory of Eastern Europe, we also come across fully established research centres, institutes, etc. dedicated to examining the Balkans or Eastern Europe, and in particular the eternal traumas of Yugoslav socialism which, as the story goes, haunt Eastern Europe’s “contemporaneity”. “Contemporaneity”, certainly in quotation marks, as these traumas keep the post-socialist Other of Europe securely caged in its own mysterious history, thus making Eastern Europe the alluring object of academic study. If you allow me some irony, I would like to express my regret that one of such units, the Center for Advanced Studies Southeast Europe (CAS SEE) in Croatia,

has not been indexed in the CNTB's catalogue. It would take the CNTB's complaisant mimeticism up a notch and, in all honesty, it should be acknowledged that CAS SEE has had a certain success in fostering Croatian academic tourism. In any case, the epistemology behind CAS SEE is not much different from what you get with your standard East European studies. CAS SEE nonetheless provides additional ideological perks, in particular if you happen to be East European with a strong interest in becoming an expert on Eastern Europe. Sure, as Chow argues, "area-based and identity-based knowledge (and their representatives) are, within the corporate university milieu, thus aligned with an implicit *solution* to the problems that supposedly beset the conventional pursuits of Western knowledge".⁴⁷ But how about an area-based research centre that is also physically based in the area that it explores? CAS SEE is just one of many such options that are available to you. I know, all this excessive complaisant mimeticism must be making you nauseous, but hear me out. Attaining the status of an expert on Eastern Europe in such a research centre, first, you get to engage in complaisant mimeticism that is both financially and symbolically lucrative (academic accolades, very decent salaries, funded summer schools, etc.). Second, as you are literally based in the same fantasmatic area as you are studying, it is less likely that you will be seen as someone who is allowed into academia only "to shoulder what might be called *the white academy's burden* (of filth and guilt)".⁴⁸ How convenient? Of course, in Croatia and elsewhere, you do not need to be East European to take part in East European studies. If you nonetheless are, that is particularly convenient for the discipline as it allows East European studies to dodge those quite rare but still unpleasant charges for racism. Backing up the assumption that an East European would not take part in the discipline that frames East Europeans as a race, the figure of East European engaged in the academic study of Eastern Europe effectively acts as an ideological alibi for East European studies. The native would not be engaged in her own racial inferiority, right? Such an assumption, however, is based on an utter ignorance of the logic of exclusion *qua* inclusion that I have explored earlier in this article. The logic of exclusion *qua* inclusion is productive of the ethnics who are busy exculpating the ethnic studies paradigm "that is designed to keep 'them' in their place".⁴⁹ In what is only a seemingly paradoxical course of events, the ethnic becomes the most efficient agent of her own subordination.

Conclusion

The ethnicity-management apparatus has become incredibly creative and, in order to expose its mechanisms, we should take care to adjust our conceptual apparatus accordingly. The ethnicity-management apparatus, after all, is what ensures that Eastern Europe "remains an extremely powerful idea,

44
R. Chow, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 107.

45
Ibid., p. 189.

46
Ibid., p. 124.

47
Rey Chow, *A Face Drawn in Sand. Humanistic Inquiry and Foucault in the Present*, Columbia University Press, New York 2021, p. 19.

48
Ibid., p. 20.

49
R. Chow, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 126.

deeply embedded in the history of two centuries, so influential in its political consequences that its intellectual origins are barely recognised, hidden in historical camouflage”.⁵⁰ The problems of Eastern Europe are investigated with great vigour today, particularly in the framework of East European studies and its enlightened epistemology, while the logic of exclusion *qua* inclusion results in the proliferation of complaisant mimeticism. Yet, when it comes to critically reflecting on the idea of Eastern Europe, it seems to be a common practice to conclude with some hope. For example, in the epilogue of *What's So Eastern about Eastern Europe?*, Leon Marc injects some hope:

“We still have tourist guidebooks to Eastern Europe, well-known consumer brands sell Eastern European versions of their products, GPS devices come with or without Eastern Europe, there is supposedly an Eastern European art, etc. But this book has been aiming to show that, once we look closer at it, Eastern Europe as a cultural concept becomes highly elusive. Indeed, one begins to question whether there has ever been such a thing as Eastern Europe at all. We can only hope that Eastern Europe as a political, social and cultural construct – built on the foundations of the Berlin Wall and past prejudices – is disappearing in front of our eyes.”⁵¹

Unfortunately, being hopeful would go against just about everything said in this article. I also believe that being hopeful goes against what Marc showed in his book, but that is surely for him to decide. My article aimed to demonstrate that the construct of Eastern Europe is *not* disappearing in front of our eyes. Quite on the contrary, in academia and in the popular imagination, it is thriving in front of our eyes. That surely has a lot to do with the fact that, as Wolff reminds us, the idea of Eastern Europe is far older than the Cold War. Eastern Europe is not built on the foundations of the Berlin Wall. This is just where it had one of its salient points of reiteration, where the construct of Eastern Europe marked yet another achievement in its rich performativity. “Past prejudices” to which Marc refers, that is to say the ideology of the Enlightenment, is where from the idea of Eastern Europe has always drawn its strength. As I have argued in this article, these prejudices are fully contemporary.

For those who are happy enough to be able to engage in a decent amount of naïve optimism and believe that all bad stuff will go away with capitalism, one could try to provide some hope by recalling the ancient leftist wisdom: “The capitalists will sell us the rope with which we will hang them!” If it is true that the end of capitalism will also be the end of the idea of Eastern Europe, we only have to be courageous enough to take part in some revolutionary waiting for the contradictions of capitalism to implode. Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of this article to show that the idea of Eastern Europe was very much alive in socialism, including national-socialism. The article has nonetheless demonstrated that the idea of Eastern Europe is radically present in our contemporary, that is to say neoliberal, society. However, I do hope that no one still really believes that capitalism will sell us the rope from which it will hang. In fact, we could say that the capitalists have sold us the rope with which we have allowed the idea of Eastern Europe to exhibit its remarkable climbing technique.

On his podcast, reflecting on the ethnic food aisle in the supermarket, Chef David Chang argued:

“If you go to the ethnic food aisle, that is sort of the last bastion of racism that you can see in, like, full daylight in retail America.”⁵²

He returned to this point in the interview with *South China Morning Post*:

“Italian products that were once marginalised, such as olive oils and vinegars, are now routinely integrated into grocery store aisles, while Chinese, Japanese and Latino foods remain stuck in their own sections. The ongoing segregation of these foods, Chang says, isn’t about acceptance among the mainstream. Asian and Latino cuisines have long been embraced by Americans of every stripe, he says.”⁵³

Chang stumbles upon the logic of exclusion *qua* inclusion when acknowledging that Chinese, Japanese and Latino cuisines have long been included in the mainstream and, yet, these foods are excluded by being kept in their place, that is to say in the ethnic food aisle. This, however, does not deter him from asking: “How do we help kill the very notion of what is the ethnic food aisle?”⁵⁴ How do we help kill racism? While Chang encourages everyone who displays retail food to mix it all up, the solutions are necessarily more of a collective effort and he cannot provide us with any definite answers on how to dispense with the ethnic food aisle. However, what makes Chang’s take on the ethnic food aisle so important, apart from prompting us to see racism in front of our nose, is that he is actually saying: “It is something that’s got to go.”⁵⁵ The ethnic food aisle has to go.

We could also use some boldness in discussing the idea of Eastern Europe. If we choose to see through historical camouflage, it becomes apparent that “Eastern Europe was constructed as an experimental domain that gave free play to the social theories and political reveries of the Enlightenment”.⁵⁶ While there is literally no excuse for us to maintain the notion of Eastern Europe today – nor has there ever been one, just to be clear – there is *a lot* at stake for colonial reasoning when it comes to losing Eastern Europe as its laboratory. In particular if we choose to see that, “in fact, Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century provided Western Europe with its first model of underdevelopment, a concept that we now apply all over the globe”.⁵⁷ Abandoning the idea of Eastern Europe would be to shake the foundations of colonialism that structures contemporary society. This, unfortunately, kills just about any hope of parting ways with the invention of Eastern Europe any time soon. But it should not prevent us from taking a step further and – based on understanding what is in the name “Eastern Europe” – making it explicit that *Eastern Europe has to go*.

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L. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, p. 15.

51

L. Marc, *What’s So Eastern about Eastern Europe*, p. 160.

52

Bill Simmons, Dave Chang, “Bill Simmons on 2019 Food Trends, Fatherhood, and, of course, the NBA”, *The Ringer* (4 July 2019), podcast. Available at: <https://www.theringer.com/2019/7/4/20682150/bill-simmons-on-2019-food-trends-fatherhood-nba> (accessed on 15 December 2023).

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“Ethnic Food Aisles in Supermarkets. Racist, as Celebrity Chef David Chang Says, or Simply Convenient?”, *South China Morning Post* (3 October 2019). Available at: <https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/food-drink/article/3031273/ethnic-food-aisles-supermarkets->

[racist-celebrity-chef-david](#) (accessed on 15 December 2023). Although Chang is talking about foods and cuisines here, let me take this opportunity to emphasise that the notions such as Asian, Latino, Chinese, etc. food or cuisine, as in singular, encompass an immense variety of cuisines. So immense that, in my opinion, these notions are quite meaningless.

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B. Simmons, D. Chang, “Bill Simmons on 2019 Food Trends, Fatherhood, and, of course, the NBA”.

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Ibid.

56

L. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, p. 359.

57

Ibid., p. 9.

Matko Krce-Ivančić

Istočna Europa – što se nalazi u imenu?

Sažetak

Uvriježeno je mišljenje da termin Istočna Europa nije ništa više od geografske kategorije koja označava istočni dio europskog kontinenta. Ovaj rad osporava to shvaćanje razotkrivanjem ideologije prosvjetiteljstva koja je ugrađena u naziv Istočna Europa. Prvo, istražuje epistemologiju koja nas poziva da pristupimo i pažljivo proučimo Istočnu Europu kao problematični dio europskog kontinenta. Drugo, u radu će se identificirati neki od mehanizama koji Istočnu Europu čine posebno pogodnom za upijanje različitih ideoloških izboja. Konačno, rad će ilustrirati kako se epistemologija koja Istočnoj Europi pristupa kao domeni zaostalosti također bezrezervno perpetuiira na fantazmatskom teritoriju Istočne Europe.

Ključne riječi

Istočna Europa, etnicitet, isključivost, uključivost, mimeticizam, rasa

Matko Krce-Ivančić

Osteuropa – was befindet sich in einem Namen?

Zusammenfassung

Es ist eine landläufige Meinung, dass der Begriff Osteuropa nichts weiter als eine geographische Kategorie ist, die den östlichen Teil des europäischen Kontinents bezeichnet. Diese Arbeit ficht diese Auffassung an, indem sie die Ideologie der Aufklärung aufdeckt, die sich im Namen Osteuropa befindet. Als Erstes untersucht sie die Epistemologie, die uns dazu einlädt, an Osteuropa heranzugehen und es als den problematischen Teil des europäischen Kontinents sorgfältig zu untersuchen. Zweitens, in der Arbeit werden einige der Mechanismen identifiziert, die Osteuropa zur Aufnahme verschiedener ideologischer Ausbrüche besonders geeignet machen. Zum Schluss wird die Arbeit erläutern, wie die Epistemologie, die Osteuropa als eine Domäne der Rückständigkeit betrachtet, ebenfalls im fantasmatischen Territorium Osteuropas rückhaltlos perpetuiert.

Schlüsselwörter

Osteuropa, ethnische Zugehörigkeit, Exklusivität, Inklusivität, Mimetismus, Rasse

Matko Krce-Ivančić

Europe de l'Est - Qu'y a-t-il dans un nom ?

Abstract

Il est largement admis que la notion d'Europe de l'Est n'est rien de plus qu'une catégorie géographique désignant la partie orientale du continent européen. Le présent article remet en question cette compréhension en exposant l'idéologie des Lumières qui se cache derrière le nom de l'Europe de l'Est. Tout d'abord, l'épistémologie, qui nous invite à aborder et étudier attentivement l'Europe de l'Est en tant que partie problématique du continent européen, sera examinée. Ensuite, l'article identifiera certains des mécanismes rendant l'Europe de l'Est particulièrement propice à l'absorption de divers avènements idéologiques. Enfin, l'article illustrera comment l'épistémologie, qui traite de l'Europe de l'Est comme d'un domaine en retard sur son temps, est également perpétuée sans réserve sur le territoire fantasmagorique de l'Europe de l'Est.

Keywords

Europe de l'Est, ethnicité, exclusion, inclusion, mimétisme, race