

European Media Programme: The Role of 'Language' and 'Visual Images' in the Processes of Constructing European Culture and Identity

Senka Božić-Vrbančić^{1,3}, Mario Vrbančić^{2,3} and Olga Orlić⁴

¹ School of Philosophy, Anthropology and Social Inquiry, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

² School of Culture and Communication, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

³ Department of Sociology, University of Zadar, Zadar, Croatia

⁴ Institute for Anthropological Research, Zagreb, Croatia

ABSTRACT

Questions of diversity and multiculturalism are at the heart of many discussions on European supranational identity within contemporary anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, linguistics and so on. Since we are living in a period marked by the economic and political changes which emerged after European unification, a call for a new analysis of heterogeneity, cultural difference and issues of belonging is not surprising. This call has been fuelled by the European Union's concern with »culture« as one of the main driving forces for constructing »European identity«. While the official European policy describes European culture as common to all Europeans, Europe is also seen as representing »unity in diversity«. By analysing contemporary European MEDIA policies and programs this article attempts to contribute to a small but growing body of work that explores what role »language« and »visual images« play in the process of constructing European culture and supranational European identity. More specifically, the article explores the complex articulation of language and culture in order to analyse supranational imaginary of European identity as it is expressed through the simple slogan »Europe: unity in diversity«. We initially grounded our interest in the politics of identity within the European Union within theoretical frameworks of »power and knowledge« and »identity and subjectivity«. We consider contemporary debates in social sciences and humanities over the concepts of »language«, »culture« and »identity« as inseparable from each other (Ahmed 2000¹; Brah 1996², 2000³; Butler 1993⁴, Derrida 1981⁵; Gilroy 2004⁶; Laclau 1990⁷). Cultural and postcolonial studies theorists (e.g. Brah 1996²; Bhabha 1994⁸; Hall 1992⁹, 1996¹⁰, among others) argue that concepts of »culture« and »identity« signify a historically variable nexus of social meanings. That is to say, »culture« and »identity« are discursive articulations. According to this view, »culture« and »identity« are not separate fields from economic, social and political issues, on the contrary »culture« and »identity« are constructed through social, economic and political relations. Issues of »language« and »images« are central to both of them. By questioning the role that »language« and »visual images« play in the construction of European identity and culture, we are considering »language« as well as »visual images« not just as representations, but also as forms of social action. In addition to that, inspired by discourse theory (Laclau 1985¹¹, 1994¹², 2007¹³) and psychoanalysis (Žižek 1989¹⁴, 1993¹⁵, 1994¹⁶; Stavrakakis 1999¹⁷, 2005¹⁸, 2007¹⁹) we explore the libidinal dimension of identification processes. We focus on the European MEDIA Programme in order to analyse how different languages and images are being used to create a sense of »European unity in diversity«. Along with Stavrakakis we argue that due to the lack of libidinal investment into discourses of Europeanness, Europe is failing to create a strong supranational identity. However we also show that there have been recent attempts by European policy makers to try and fill this gap through various projects which focus entirely on emotions; which appears to reinforce new possibilities of identification with Europe.

Key words: European MEDIA programm, language, visual images, European culture, identity

European Identity

Since the 1970s, the question of »European identity« has become one of the most important issues for European Community politicians (Jamieson 2002²⁰; Shore²¹ 1995²², 2000²³, 2006²⁴; Stavrakakis 2005¹⁸; Torfing 2005²⁵; Wodak 2005²⁶). The declaration »Concerning European Identity«, agreed on in 1973, stresses the rule of law, social justice, respect for human rights and the common market as the main characteristics of Europe. According to Shore (2006²⁴), it is clear that during the 1970s the traditional »neofunctionalist« approach to integration prevailed, an approach based on the assumption that the integration process (based on free trade and human rights) would enact many small steps which would harmonise different national policies (see also Vanhooenacker 2003²⁷; Wiener 1998²⁸; and Prodi 2001²⁹). However, the focus on the economy and democracy failed to create a European identity. In the 1980s this continued failure was seen as a threat to the development of a single European market (it was at this time that the concept of common symbols was introduced – see for example the Adonino reports³⁰). During the 1990s, economic and political goals were enriched with the idea of building »European culture« and »European identity« (see for example the De Clerq report in 1993³¹ or Romano Prodi's speech in 2002 when he appointed a group of intellectuals to look into the shared spiritual, religious and cultural values that would continue to drive the process of European integration)³². The 2006 Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council to create the Culture Programme (2007–2013) (Decision No 1855)³³, sums up clearly the role of culture in the creation of unity in diversity, along with the political identity of Europe:

It is essential to promote cooperation and cultural exchanges in order to respect and promote the diversity of cultures and languages in Europe and improve knowledge among European citizens of European cultures other than their own, while at the same time heightening their awareness of the common European cultural heritage they share. Promoting cultural and linguistic cooperation and diversity thus helps to make European citizenship a tangible reality by encouraging direct participation by European citizens in the integration process. An active cultural policy aimed at the preservation of European cultural diversity and the promotion of its common cultural elements and cultural heritage can contribute to improving the external visibility of the European Union. For citizens to give their full support to, and participate fully in, European integration, greater emphasis should be placed on their common cultural values and roots as a key element of their identity and their membership of a society founded on freedom, equity, democracy, respect for human dignity and integrity, tolerance and solidarity, in full compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. It is essential that the cultural sector contribute to, and play a role in, broader European political developments (Official Journal of the European Union, volume 49, 27 December 2006)³³.

It is possible to say therefore that in contemporary EU discourses »cultural and linguistic differences« are assumed to be differences that can co-exist peacefully, free of contradictions. Different cultural (or national) styles mark the diversity of Europe, and at the same time it is stressed that there is something underlying all of these differences which is the same – that is, the notion that all of them are assimilable into the body of the supra-nation; they do not threaten the European »we« of the supranational being, on the contrary they construct European identity as essentially diverse.

Cultural diversity is a very highly valued asset that is largely seen as being a distinctive European characteristic and that gives rise to other specific values such as tolerance and open-mindedness (Commission Staff Working Document, Brussels SEC, 2007 (570)³⁴

In this context new symbols of Europeanness (sameness) have been created such as the European passport, the European driver licence, the European anthem, the European flag, the European metric system of weights and measures, European statistics, European courses at the universities, European educational initiatives such as the exchange of scholars and students (educational programmes such as Erasmus, Socrates and Tempus), European initiatives to encourage knowledge of foreign languages (see reports by *Eurydice*)³⁵ and various cultural initiatives such as, »Active European Remembrance«³⁶, »European City of Culture Project«³⁷, town-twinning, »Euroimages«³⁸, »European Film Awards«³⁹, »Europe: a common heritage«⁴⁰, etc.

These initiatives intensified after 2004 (Accession of the Eastern European States), creating more and more European symbols which represent European diversity (see for example project »Enlargement of minds«⁴¹). All of these initiatives have a double purpose, to create a sense of belonging (individual and collective) to the European Union which will in turn fuel the economic growth. Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission recently said:

Culture and creativity are important drivers for personal development, social cohesion and economic growth. Today's strategy promoting intercultural understanding confirms culture's place at the heart of our policies⁴².

Some critics argue that in their attempt to build a common European culture, European Union politicians and policy makers are building a European supranational identity by using practices similar to those that influenced the rise of the nineteenth-century nation state (Laffan 1996⁴³; Sassatelli 2002⁴⁴; Shore 1996⁴⁵, 2004⁴⁶, 2006²⁴). Anderson (1991⁴⁷) maintained that all ideas of community are »imaginary« and that two forms of imagining a community flowered in Europe in the eighteenth century: the novel and the newspaper, both contributing directly to the rise of national consciousness. Influenced by this perspective, the politicians and policy makers argue that European cultural initiatives, such as European TV or European MEDIA do for the European Union what the novel and the newspaper once achieved for the nation state. Indeed, for the contemporary European ad-

ministrators and politicians, cultural and educational projects are seen as instruments for reinforcing European identity. Special attention is given to broadcasting⁴⁸.

Audiovisual works represent a most important vector for the transmission of our cultural, social and democratic values. European audiovisual policy seeks to provide a framework favourable to the development of the audiovisual sector and to support the trans-national dimension of this essentially cultural industry.

Apart from its economic implications, the European audiovisual sector also plays an important role in the emergence of European citizenship. To this end, Community support is designed to enable the European audiovisual sector to promote intercultural dialogue, increase mutual awareness amongst Europe's cultures and develop its political and cultural potential⁴⁹.

Clearly, Anderson's theory of the phenomenon of identification through text can be applied to the analysis of identification through audiovisual works. However, as some scholars note (Brah 1996², 2000³; Laclau 1994¹²; Stavrakakis 2005¹⁸; Žižek 1989¹⁴, 1996⁵⁰, 1999⁵¹) what is not recognized by Anderson is the reason for such identification. The creation of »European culture« is important for the process of building a collective identity but does not automatically »identify« the reader or viewer within the subject positions they prefer; the European cultural symbols and their positions are objects to be interpreted. Indeed, Eurobarometer surveys show that European citizens are sceptical of the European Union and its cultural policy (Beck 2007⁵²; Bidelux 2001⁵³; Pagden 2002⁵⁴; Wintle 1996⁵⁵). (See also the final paper produced by the Reflection Group on the Spiritual and Cultural Dimension of Europe in October 2004 and *Eurobarometer* statistical data⁵⁶.)

In 2006, a qualitative Eurobarometer study on cultural values of Europeans helped to learn more about how Europeans view culture and its contribution to developing a sense of European citizenship. For the study, about 25 participants in each Member State were asked about their perceptions on aspects linked with »culture« and »European culture«... A slight majority (53%) say that their views correspond well with the statement that European countries are too diverse to speak of a common continental culture.

Here, it is important to point out that some authors disagree with these arguments about the failure of European collective identity due to the impossibility of Europe to create a common cultural identity. According to Delanty⁵⁷ (2000:115) Europe lacks the core components of a national identity (language, a shared history etc.), but a supranational identity is emerging around constitutional patriotism – identification with democratic norms. European identity is a new kind of identity where traditional national ties such as territory and cultural tradition do not play the same role as in the identification with nation. Furthermore, Delanty argues that in current Europe, »despite the apparent rise of nationalism and xenophobic sentiment« which is based on national cultural values, there is much to suggest that na-

tional identities are increasingly taking on a post-national form; they are compatible with multiple identities and require identification only with the limited values of the demos. That is to say that Europeanization and globalization are changing national cultures, they already include diversity, and this post-national nationalism is the dominant force in »Europe in the making« (Delanty & Rumford 2005: 105)⁵⁸. However, it is not clear from Delanty's work how this identification with democratic and globalised cultural values happens. Is this identification the same for different localities in Europe? What about power relations between different member-states? What about various minorities and immigrants? How do they position themselves and are positioned by others in relation to this post-national community merged around a clear reference to non-Europeans (internal and external)?

We agree with Delanty and Rumford⁵⁸ that Europeanization is partly changing national identities – it hybridises them – but just as the position of all groups in Europe is not equal, so too hybridisation reflects relationships of power. In that context we can also analyse European language policies. As already mentioned at the beginning of this article on the one side there is the idea of one European culture which corresponds with the concept of Europe as a single market and the idea of citizenship of the Union, and on the other side the emphasis that the European Union is »keen to preserve« many cultures and languages and to celebrate »unity in diversity«. On the official level there is a desire to protect Europe's linguistic heritage (more than 40 native languages)^{59, 60}, however, as a number of authors state, the most-spoken first foreign language in Europe is English, followed by French, and German. How do the various people of Europe identify with these languages? Do they see them as hegemonic languages, or, as lingua franca, or, politically and economically the most important languages? Etienne Balibar (2004)⁶¹ argues that the issue of language, together with issues of justice, social affairs and borders, is one of the most crucial European problems. Furthermore, in terms of European media policy, minority languages are encouraged. However, there is no clarity concerning various immigrant groups' languages which are not protected by national policies. Can these languages represent the diversity of contemporary Europe? Or do these languages, as Everett⁶² (2005) argues in her analysis of European film, represent all ambiguities which surround concepts of European culture and identity.

In order to analyse the complexity of the processes of the formation of European identity, or to be more precise, the processes of identification with Europe, the theory of discourse as elaborated by Laclau and Lacanian psychoanalysis could be of great help. According to Laclau (1985¹¹, 1994¹², 2007¹³) identities and the social do not exist as givens at any moment in time, but are always processes, always incomplete – a fissure. All societies and identities are constructed within specific discursive formations, and they are results of articulatory practices. The practice of articulation consists of different discursive attempts to fix the meaning of the social. Laclau and

Mouffe¹¹ call these partial fixations of the social »nodal points«. Laclau and Mouffe¹¹ here use the Lacanian notion of *points de captation* (nodal points) as privileged signifiers that fix the meaning of a signifying process to analyse the social. Lacan argues, in opposition to theories of language in which a unity between signified and signifiers is stressed, that signifiers and signified are not united. He gives priority to the signifier over the production of the signified. Signifiers are not representations, as argued by realist representationalism, in producing the meanings of the signified, they produce the signified itself. In this context, then, the signified does not have a meaning outside of language, it is lost as a real point of reference: »Every signification refers to another one and so on and so forth, the signified is lost in the metonymic sliding characteristic of the signifying chain. Signified disappears because it is no longer associated with the concept« (Stavrakakis 1999:26)¹⁷. *Points de captation* are particular signifiers that halt this movement of signification, fixing the meaning of the whole chain by linking signifiers to signifiers. However, *points de captation*, although they produce stability and fullness, cannot make an entirely stable meaning. Therefore Laclau and Mouffe¹¹ (1985:113), borrowing this concept of *points de captation*, argue that all identity is relational and »all discourse is subverted by the field of discursivity which overflows it, [and] the transition from 'elements' to 'moments' can never be complete. The status of elements is that of floating signifiers, incapable of being wholly articulated to a discursive chain. And this floating character finally penetrates every discursive (i.e. social) identity.« In short, the multitude of floating signifiers is structured into a unified field through the intervention of the privileged discursive nodal points. This intervention of the nodal point, this fixation of the social, always implies certain exclusions.

Inspired by this theory, we recognise the European Union concept of »Europe: unity in diversity« as one of the nodal points, a master signifier which tries to fix some meanings in the »emerging« European society. Seen from this point of view, European cultural policies present »European identity and culture« in a specific way to construct a picture of Europe understood as the harmonious coexistence of different cultures. What is excluded from this story are complex histories, which are bound up with the history of different nation states and political movements, including the movement for minority rights. It is well known, as Edward Said puts in his *Orientalism* (1978)⁶³, that »representations of the other« have been constantly used in Europe to reinforce and strengthen European (Western) identities. Martin Bernal, in his *Black Athena*⁶⁴ (1987), outlines the ways European historians, especially the nineteenth century historians, systematically excluded particular memories – non-white memories – of Europe's past in order to put emphasis on Ancient Greece as the cradle of Western culture. In a similar way the new master signifier »unity in diversity« systematically excludes non-European immigrants from its policies. According to some authors, as

for example Etienne Balibar⁶⁵, current European policies essentialise European culture in the same way as the idea of 'race' was essentialised in the nineteenth century, and this leads to Eurocentrism, marginalisation of immigrants and exclusionary policies. Balibar introduces a thesis whereby there is racism without races; neo-racism or differentialist racism is an attempt to essentialise and naturalise differences in culture rather than in biology and race. The new nodal point of 'unity in diversity' quilts the inversion between nature and culture by naturalising culture, in the sense that culture functions like a previous racial classification based on nature as a way of locking individuals and groups a priori into a genealogy, into a determination that is immutable and intangible in origin (1991:22).

Here is important to stress that for Laclau and Mouffe¹¹, nodal points are always relationally constituted through the interplay of the logic of equivalence and difference. The logic of equivalence functions by »splitting a system of difference« and creating equivalent identities. Through the system of equivalence (something identical that underlines differential positions) the social is usually divided between two opposing camps, but through the system of differences, which dissolves existing chains of equivalence and antagonistic polarity, the differentiation expands. In the social there is always a complex interaction between the logic of difference and equivalence. Clearly, in contemporary Europe there is the interplay of these two logics: through the logic of equivalence, which European politicians and administrators try to establish, »Culture« is taken as a signifier of a wider universality. Culture embraces through the equivalent links concepts such as civil freedoms, free economy and so on. It produces empty signifiers (words and images – as for example »European heritage« or »European history«) which refer to the equivalent chain as a totality, the European Union freed from all problems. Of course, differentiation which exists between European nation-states is not eradicated, and, in addition, differentiation of European citizens is also based on distinction according to ethnicity, class and gender. However, through the chain of equivalence and a fantasy frame of the supra-nation, European politicians and administrators try to subvert these differences, or to show Europe as essentially diverse, in order to create a homogeneous notion of the whole.

Various scholars who have analysed European identity have shown that, in spite of its efforts reflected through various policies and cultural projects, Europe is failing to forge a strong sense of European identity. For example the 2004 Eurobarometer survey shows that only 47 % of EU citizens saw themselves as citizens of both their country and Europe. In general, people felt more attached to their country (92 %), region (88 %), and city (87 %) than to Europe (67 %). According to Stavrakakis (2007)¹⁹ the main reason for the relative failure of European identity is European inability to make affective appeal to its citizens. By focusing on institutional arrangements, different cultural and educational policies as well as actions (financing different projects), Europe is failing

to construct affective libidinal bonds, which are necessary in the constitution of any (totalizing) identity. As Žižek explains in his analysis of national identity, some discourses, like national and ethnic discourses, are powerful and people are attached to them because they are libidinally invested. Other authors also write about affective dimensions of identity (Ahmed 2004⁶⁶; Bourdieu 1997⁶⁷; 1998⁶⁸; Freud 1922⁶⁹; Hage 1998⁷⁰; Jenkins & Sofos 1996⁷¹; Laclau 2007¹³; Shore 2004⁴⁶). For example, Bourdieu claims that it is clear »that agents' attachment to their country of origin is never reducible either to the set of positive attributers possessed by that country or to a set of rational arguments which have convinced those agents to love their homeland« (Lane 2006: 47⁷²); on the contrary, there is »something ineffable« there, there is a »social libido«, an affective bond which cannot be reduced to any discourse about nation produced by policy makers, political parties and so on.

For Žižek (1993)¹⁵ the nation is much more than a discursive device for unifying difference through the equivalent chain or through identification. Nation is a fantasy space, and such a space always appears to members of a given community as something accessible only to them. For example, when members of a given community (country or ethnic group) identify with 'nation', they usually talk about the way of life which is specific for that community, history, language, culture etc., in short, they talk about all the details by which is made visible the unique way a community *organizes its enjoyment*. But this enjoyment »is not reducible to the so-called set of values that offer support to national identity« (Žižek 1993:201)¹⁵, there is »something more there«, something that is »present« in these values, something that »appears through them«, something that nationalists see as if it is in them, what defines their being (e.g. »Britishness«, »Frenchness«, »Australianness« etc.). For Žižek, this something is the Lacanian »Thing« – it cannot be fully represented in the symbolic, but nevertheless, invests meaning. Here it is important to stress that the Lacanian concept of »Thing« belongs to the real. For Lacan the real is a phase of the subject before or »after« being written and overwritten with signifiers, or it is an impediment, an inherent obstacle in signification. The real is not just something that precedes language, it cannot be grasped by temporal terms: »Before, now, later; its traces are always here, we may say, it is something that has not yet been symbolised, it resists symbolisation and yet is created by the symbolic; something that cannot be signified and yet is shining through the very impossibility of a signifier« (Žižek 1989:170)¹⁴. The point where the symbolic fails to represent the real Lacan calls *objet a*. The signifier, the word, the symbolic, offers to the subject stable representation, but this representation is not capable of representing the »unity« of the subject. With an entering into the symbolic the subject sacrifices something, it sacrifices an immediate access to the real, it becomes alienated and this »alienation constitutes the subject as such«. This lack of the subject is productive since the subject continuously tries to fill it, to close it with dif-

ferent identifications, but there is no identification in the symbolic, in the social that can restore the real. The real is lost forever, sacrificed or castrated when the subject enters the symbolic, the world of language, but nevertheless it is exactly this loss of fullness that forces the subject to try to find it in the symbolic. For Lacan, this lack of the real is the lack of a pre-symbolic, real enjoyment, a lack of *jouissance*. The sacrifice of *jouissance* causes desire for it and in that context the primordial »Thing« becomes posited as an external object, the »first outside«, which remains desirable but still impossible. This first apprehension of reality through the desiring of the impossible »Thing« forever obscures intersubjectivity. For Žižek, nation is the »Thing« par excellence. It is a fantasy space through which we experience the social as the whole objective reality. It constructs the frame enabling the subject to desire national »Thing«, but paradoxically this search for national enjoyment is never fulfilled completely. This is exactly the reason why members of the particular community cannot express what it means to be for example »French« or »Australian«. They can only talk about different ways of life, the unique things they enjoy and others cannot grasp. But even though the nation always appears to nationalists as something accessible only to them, nonetheless they believe that it is something constantly threatened by »others«, they believe that the »others« want to »steal their enjoyment« (by ruining their way of life). And it is exactly because of the impossibility to satisfy their national desire (their enjoyment is always partial, traces of the primordial *jouissance*) that their dissatisfaction is fuelled and projected on somebody else – to the nationalist the »other« is always either a workaholic stealing their jobs or an idler living on their labour (1993:203). In other words, the obverse of the harmonious community is always the production of disconnected piles or fragments, stereotypes that try to conceal the lack in »reality« itself. In contemporary Europe the national attachment is very strong (the distinction between »us« and »them« operates on two levels creating external and internal »others«).

According to some critics, in contrast to national projects, all European initiatives are lacking substance (De Witte 1987⁷³; Shore 2004⁴⁶), therefore they cannot put closure around differences, they cannot fix and stabilize the meaning of European identity, and consequently they are unable to create libidinal attachments. In other words, affective aspect of the new nodal point of »unity in diversity« is missing. The crucial question here is why and how some nodal points, for example national discourses, successfully function as objects of investment and European discourses fail to interact with enjoyment in that way. According to Shore⁴⁶ (2004: 40) the factors that give the nation-state substance are historical and they are embedded in the fabric of everyday culture. In other words they are repeatedly libidinally invested. Different social forces (civil rights campaigners, opposition parties, unions etc.) have created spaces of resistance and democratic structures. Europe by contrast has no effective spaces of popular resistance, political parties and

so on. In addition to that, as many scholars point out, construction of group identity always happens through reference to others. Europe has not effectively defined itself in relation to others. Stavrakakis (2007)¹⁹ points out that European policies and documents are »full of big words and boring jargon about a 'common European civilization', assurances of progress ... even when it is accepted that identity presupposes asserting the difference of Europe in relation to other countries and parts of the world... this is expressed in a more or less naïve, neutral, 'objective' language« (2007: 216). Perhaps this is one of the main reasons why Europe is failing to create an emotional attachment of belonging. For Stavrakakis (2007: 100)¹⁹, affects cannot be reduced to language (representations/ discourses), nor can language be reduced to enjoyment. It is very important to distinguish between them, but at the same time to focus on the complexity of their interrelation. European master signifiers make partial hegemonic appeal, they do not do »the work of withdrawing desire from representations« and »discursive shifts presuppose the 'unbinding of libido' and the re-investment of *jouissance*« (Stavrakakis 2007: 167)¹⁹. National discourses have a temporal stability because of the dialectics of dis-investment and re-investment. Even though European discourses are constructed as a copy of national discourses, they have not managed to establish such fixity because of their limited hegemonic appeal. As Laclau (2007)¹³ explains, a hegemonic totalization requires the interplay of the logic of equivalence and the logic of difference. »Equivalence and difference are ultimately incompatible with each other; nonetheless they require each other as necessary conditions for the construction of the social« (Laclau 2007:78)¹³. In Europe, at the moment, the policy makers and politicians are trying to establish the logic of equivalence, making it compatible with the logic of difference, by stressing the possibility of multiple identifications (local, national, supranational), underlined by »common culture«. In other words, European administrators and politicians are trying to posit the demand for European unity (identity, culture) as a »popular« one, as a nodal point of sublimation, but, as Laclau argues, for the certain demand to achieve its universality »something qualitatively new has to intervene«, the radical investment which belongs necessarily to the order of affect (2007: 110)¹³. To put it simply, the logic of equivalence which is not drawing on the antagonistic frontier, which excludes signifiers associated with passion cannot create emotional attachments of belonging.

In the next section we will show that European policy makers seem to be aware of their failure to create this sense of belonging to the community. While in 2007 they established new programmes which continue to insist that Europeans are able to have multiple identifications (local, national, European), the »banal« and »benign« jargon of sameness, of what is »common« to all Europeans, has been replaced with images and language which aim to eroticise Europe, to make it desirable. In our analysis we will focus on the European Media Programme.

Some critics argue that the current political (and academic) focus on processes of identity formation which stress the possibility to negotiate is offset by the fact that local, national and European identity is oversimplified. Not all identifications are equal and the question of power is completely ignored in many contemporary research projects on multiple identities in Europe.

European MEDIA Programme 2007

The European Media Programme was launched in 1991 with the intention of promoting cultural diversity in the audiovisual sector. Programmes like MEDIA Plus and MEDIA Training have been created as support programmes that help in particular small medium-sized audiovisual enterprises. Cinematographic work such as feature films, documentaries, drama and other moving image material have been represented as reflections of reality, through which citizens of Europe can learn a lot about themselves and their own histories. They can experience visually what it means to have »Unity in Diversity«. Since its inception then, the MEDIA Programme has suggested a link between cinematographic work and the creation of European identity:

The diversity of European cultures should be reflected in films in which young people can see themselves and find their own experiences and daily lives. Such an initiative would make young people more aware of the diversity of European cultures and of the world (Council of Europe: Project Europe of Cultural Cooperation, Cinema and Young People)⁷⁴

In addition to their cultural value, cinematographic works are a source of historical information about European society. They are a comprehensive witness to the history of the richness of Europe's cultural identities and the diversity of its people. Cinematographic images are a crucial element for learning about the past and for civic reflection upon our civilisation.... In order to ensure that the European film heritage is passed down to future generations, it has to be systematically collected, catalogued, preserved and restored.... Cinematographic works are an essential component of our cultural heritage and therefore merit full protection (European Parliament and the Council of European Union)⁷⁵

The MEDIA Programme was created and is used by European policy makers as one of the top-down strategies for building collective identity. Together with other strategies, such as »Born in Europe«⁷⁶, »Culture and Neighbourhoods«⁷⁷, »Mosaic«⁷⁸, »Captain Euro, Europe's Super Hero«⁷⁹ and many others, the MEDIA programme is building European supranational identity.

In 2007 the Commission employed a team of experts who were asked to prepare a draft text on multiple multicultural belonging which will go:

beyond the approach based on fixed cultural identities and the debate on recognition for minorities, [it] will show how the *feeling*, on the part of certain individuals or groups, of belonging simultaneously to several cul-

tural traditions can be reconciled with a European citizenship now in the making, based on mutual recognition of different cultures and a shared attachment to common values (Council of Europe: Towards a »manifesto« for multiple cultural belonging⁸⁰).

In line with the aims of this new Programme that stresses more than ever the fluidity of European culture, but still insists on a common heritage and multiple belonging, in 2007 special attention was given to the production of five video clips which capture the feelings of Europeans and promote the Programme (the clips can be seen on EUtube). On the occasion of the Berlin Film Festival (»Berlinale«) the new video clips (around 45 seconds each) were distributed as DVDs to the ministers of Culture, officials, professionals and media (each DVD contained all 5 clips in all 23 official EU languages). They were again distributed as DVDs at the Cannes Film Festival in May 2007. The videoclips were on-line on the MEDIA site and on the EUROPA website from mid February and were also posted on YouTube at the same time (before the new channel EUtube was launched in June 2007). The first clip is titled »MEDIA/Cultural Heritage« and the other four clips show »Strong European emotions« as presented in European films and cinemas. Emotions presented as European are: Friendship, Love, Joy and Sadness.

The first clip: »MEDIA/Cultural Heritage« starts with a young female walking in between different screens which show different faces of European people, faces symbolising European cultures, languages, in short European diversity. She is confused by the faces; she cannot absorb all of them. The screen then becomes one huge screen with a collage of different European landscapes, cities, industries and so on, all of them seen from the lens of a camera. Then we are given »bird vision« in order to experience the beauty of the filming. Finally we are told that the Media Programme supports European Film; preproduction, postproduction, different trainings, festivals etc. In the middle of the clip we see a young man who tell us: »I am a director, I am Belgian, so I live in a very small country, a small community, and I have to find funds outside of my country, so obviously in other European countries. Thanks to the Media Programme I have done cinema, made films.« Then we see the process of preserving film roles, the creation of the digital library and finally we are told we can have access to European film heritage at home, simply by using the internet.

Over the last two decades, in Europe as in all Western countries, government intervention and investment in culture has increased (the creation and support of many new cultural centres, new festivals and awards, support for cultural tourism). Culture, apart from being seen as a tool to construct collective identities^{23,24}, has also become recognised as an industry.

When it comes to economic growth and employment, sustainable development and social cohesion, the European cultural industry has a lot to offer.... In 2003, the turnover of the cultural and creative sectors in Europe amounted to EUR 654,288 million. In terms of value

added to the European economy as a whole, it represented 2.6% of Europe's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The relative importance of the cultural and creative sectors becomes more apparent when its value added to Europe's GDP is compared with that of other industries. For instance, real estate activities (including the development, buying, selling and letting of real estate), one of the driving sectors of the European economy in the last years, accounts for 2.1% of Europe's GDP – a figure that is inferior to the cultural and creative sectors' contribution. The economic contribution of the cultural and creative sectors is also higher than that of the sector of food, beverages and tobacco manufacturing (1.9%), the textile industry (0.5%) and the chemicals, rubber and plastic products industry (2.3%). (Commission Staff Working Document 2007)⁸¹

So, the first video »MEDIA/Cultural Heritage« speaks to its audience about European film in terms of an industry, distribution, and a market. It also reflects on the EU MEDIA approach which sees film as a heritage. However, since the beginning of the Programme, there has been special attention given to emotions: »Strong European Emotions: Love, Friendship, Sadness, Joy«. All the clips have in common an intense mixture of different scenes from various European films that highlight particular emotions. In addition to these clips there is a further clip titled »Film lovers will love this⁸³« which presents a mixture of sexual scenes from different European films. Like the clips which present emotions, it finishes with the slogan »Let's come together.... Europe supports European Film«.

These video clips about European emotions then, speak to viewers about their identity, or even better, about their identities (unity in diversity). Behind the message of strong European emotions is, of course, the message that Europeans, despite their many differences, have similar emotions and express these emotions in their unique way. Oddly enough, viewers are not expected to identify with scenes from the different films (these scenes change very quickly), but with the process of viewing. Here, it is helpful to return to the Lacanian concept of identity or, identification as it is developed by Laclau. According to Laclau the subject is the subject of lack, it is the impossibility, but this impossibility is »active and productive«, it constitutes the desire to identify (Laclau & Zac 1994:35)¹². The incorporation of the subject into the social order, into the symbolic, occurs through the act of identification whereby the subject recognises herself or himself as being this or that. The subject seeks the fullness of her or his identity in the symbolic, but this fullness which the subject seeks is impossible since, as Laclau and Mouffe¹¹ (1985) explain, the symbolic by itself is a lack. It does not exist as an objective system, on the contrary it exists on the level of meaning for the subject. And the meaning of the social is offered through different discourses which provide the imaginary framework through which the subject interprets the symbolic order. In other words, as Žižek explains, there is no reality without its phantasmic sup-

port. Fantasy structures reality itself, »it is support that gives consistency to what we call 'reality'« (Žižek 1989: 44)¹⁴. There are two types of fantasy construction, which cause two types of identification, both based on the relation between imaginary and symbolic identification, between the ideal ego and the ego-ideal. The ideal ego (imaginary) emerges when we »appear likeable to ourselves«, when we identify with the image representing »what we would like to be«. The ego-ideal (symbolic) is the point »from where we look at ourselves«, it is identification »with the very place from where we are being observed« (1989:105). The discourse on »Unity in Diversity« acts as the ego-ideal of European culture, a nodal point that quilts »heterogeneous material into a unified ideological field«. Film and TV often recreate for us fantasies of perfect ego ideals. In the case of new clips created by the MEDIA Programme we can say that the perfect »Ego ideal« is perceived as plurality underlined by »common« European culture; plurality which is reflected in the European insistence on playing in many different languages, not giving priority to any of them, thereby resulting in a unified audience. In this context, we can say that language plays a special role in the attempt to create a European sense of belonging. The Commission website states:

Language is the most direct expression of culture. Together with respect for the individual, openness towards other cultures, tolerance and acceptance of others, respect for linguistic diversity is a core value of the European Union. Our many mother tongues are a source of wealth and a bridge to greater solidarity and mutual understanding. Our policies focus on preserving and fostering this linguistic diversity and promoting language learning...⁸³

According to Shohat and Stam (2006)⁸⁴ every language is a set of languages, and every speaking subject opens onto a multiplicity of languages – to the idioms of different generation, classes, races, genders and locals which often compete. Thus, translation is never just translation, it is a dialogue between diverse communities. Therefore, it is not surprising that the EU cultural policy makers are insisting on translation as a means of intercultural dialogue. It is possible to see the new Film Award »Prix LUX« by the European Parliament in this context, an award which from autumn 2007 offered the winner the chance to subtitle their film in the EU's 23 languages. Gérard Onesta, a French Green MEP, who initiated this idea, said that he believes that subtitling will remove linguistic barriers and »it will prove that diversity is not an obstacle but an opportunity«. So, translation is deployed for many different purposes: to create a sense of belonging to the European Union; to create a sense of diversity in unity; to create a sense of better understanding and tolerance; to create one market and increase profit; and to stop domination of Hollywood movies and Americanisation of European culture. It is also not surprising that 2008 is dedicated to dialogue and declared by the European Commission as the European

Year of Intercultural Dialogue⁸⁵. In 2007 the Commission stated that it would:

»create an expert group of artists, intellectuals and cultural personalities during 2007 in order to examine the specific contribution that languages can make to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue«⁸⁶.

With their insistence on intercultural dialogue, EU cultural policy makers try to define European Film and European identity not as a threat to national films or national identities, not as a market where varied national films compete with each other, but as a »real« community where filmmakers from small countries can have financial help, in other words as »Unity in Diversity«. Guided by this new »master signifier«, or in Laclau's words »nodal point«, the most important thing the EU must prove is the uniqueness, not just of European film, mostly identified in its relation to Hollywood, but of the European viewers becoming »one« – »Let's come together... Europe supports European Film«.

At first glance therefore, this new initiative is no different from other European initiatives designated to create the category of a »European public«. However, in opposition to other initiatives, clips produced by the Media Programme have gained considerable interest. Seen by 5,015,758 Europeans, more than any other European Union video clip (for example, the clip titled »What will the European Union be in the future?«, a speech by Jose Manuel Barroso, has been seen by just 7,346 people)⁸⁷ the erotic images portrayed in »Film lovers will love this« mobilize the pleasures of fantasmic identification with the embodied agents of love and sex that viewers enjoy as consumers of popular culture. The following are some viewers' comments on the YouTube site:

HOT!!!! video... haha, its really wonderful to live in such a place as Europe!!

Europe Rocks!

That's Europe☺. That's exactly the reason why we are special. You couldn't show something like that in the US but here in »the old world« we are just more open-minded and tolerant. I think it's funny but as I said most Americans wouldn't understand that kind of humour.

The images chosen for this clip (sexual scenes ranging from homosexual to heterosexual) offer viewing pleasure and succeed in their attempt to create an audience that sees itself, at least for a moment, as distinctively European. It will be interesting to analyse who this audience is. Some critics have already pointed out that the majority of European initiatives are directed towards the European youth. Even though the clip is described by some viewers as a vulgar and inappropriate representation of Europe, it is precisely the aim that this presentation of »erotic« images fortifies the power of fantasy through its investment in the eroticization of Europe. Interestingly, the mixture of erotic scenes from different European movies also generates fantasies about European values such as tolerance and open-mindedness, which are seen as distinctively European (mostly in relation to the USA).

We can say therefore, that overall the Media Programme clips have, at least partially, succeeded in creating a sense of enjoyment at the supranational level. What the European policy makers forget is that the social force of language and images cannot be separated from all other meanings and libidinal investments that could unsettle the very forging of European identity (as for example the histories of racism, exclusion of immigrants, inequality and injustice). The repression of signifiers invested with libidinal value never leads to disappearance. As Shore (2004)⁴⁶ argues, »Unresolved issues will return to haunt Europe in the future.«

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S. Božić-Vrbančić

School of Philosophy, Anthropology and Social Inquiry, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia
e-mail: senkab@unimelb.edu.au

EUROPSKI MEDIA PROGRAM: ULOGA »JEZIK« I »VIZUALNIH PRIKAZA« U PROCESIMA KONSTRUIRANJA EUROPSKE KULTURE I IDENTITETA

SAŽETAK

Pitanja raznolikosti i multikulturalizma nalaze se u središtu brojnih rasprava o europskom nadnacionalnom identitetu u suvremenoj antropologiji, sociologiji, kulturalnim studijima, lingvistici i dr. S obzirom na to da živimo u razdoblju koje je obilježeno ekonomskim i političkim promjenama, nimalo ne iznenađuje potreba za novom analizom heterogenosti, kulturnih razlika i pitanja pripadnosti. Ovu je potrebu potaklo zanimanje Europske Unije za »kulturu«, kao jednu od glavnih pokretačkih sila u stvaranju europskog identiteta. I dok s jedne strane službena europska politika opisuje europsku kulturu kao zajedničku svim Europljanima, s druge se strane Europa promatra kao »jedinstvo u raznolikosti«. Analizirajući suvremenu Europsku MEDIA politiku ovaj je članak pokušaj doprinosa malom, ali rastućem skupu radova koji istražuju ulogu koju »jezik« i »vizualni prikazi« imaju u procesu konstruiranja europske kulture i nadnacionalnog europskog identiteta. Točnije, u ovom članku istražujemo kompleksnu artikulaciju jezika i kulture kako bismo analizirali nadnacionalno zamišljanje europskog identiteta, onako kako je izraženo jednostavnim sloganom: »Europa: jedinstvo u raznolikosti«.