



first publication

in cooperation with the *Institute for Strengthening Democracy in BiH* / Presentation at the Sixth International Seminar *Democracy and Human Rights in Multiethnic Societies*, Panel *Publishing a New Europe*

It is a commonplace that Europe – while it remains unclarified which one of the many Europes – is about to build her new identity, invent her traditions. Within that logic again, it is evident that this Europe – and again which Europe and whose Europe? – will need all types of media, including sciences, to broad- and narrowcast her new identity. This has always been like that in Europe – with different media, different transmitters and different outcomes. These newly constructed traditions are very much a matter of present-day politics, therefore the building of Europe out of one of the many poles of this continent can be just a showcase for how powerful institutions function to select particular values from the past and to mobilise them in contemporary practices. It is a fundamental question of power which poles, whose values and which practices come into command. In the end, this identity could be very restricted and particular, based on specific features that distinguish the continent from everything which Europe has always projected outside herself or conquered or denied. There is also a danger that – once the old ›other‹ has overcome – the result of any publishing and identity policies could be a mere construction of new frontiers and boundaries towards a new ›other‹ – and that the constant talk about diversity within unity is just smokescreen-policy to conceal these efforts. There is not only a »new« and »old« Europe in the sense of the call for papers, but there are also »old« and »new« ones regarding position, power, access to publishing resources.

Regarding science and publishing, it is the cultural and publishing communities of the North-west of Europe which are transmitting their traditions on networks that are ruling all over Europe now, and it is the understanding of Western European history, culture and science which is to rule the historical, cultural and academic understanding of the whole continent. East Central, Eastern, and South East European networks have collapsed for various reasons, and cultural, academic and publishing approaches have to be viewed almost solely through Western European hegemonic discourses, the nodes and hubs of these networks located almost exclusively there. Just one example: The region that was traditionally referred to as Southeastern Europe for political and economical reasons is renamed and referred to as »Western Balkans« within this hegemonic discourse of the EU.

Evidently, we have had and still have different publishing and science cultures and traditions in Europe, according to the different functions publishing and science had in the process of nation-building. If we follow the proposal of British historian Ernest Gellner, one of the primary aims and the function of national educational policy was the creation of homogenous cultural conglomeration and language area. The essential task of this policy was the development of large, nation-state, territorial and thus spatial units, whose standard language, socialisation and cultural integration was to be homogenised in order to provide the rising industrial society with a united production and market area under similar »cultural« conditions. But within that there are major differences: We have text-oriented science cultures within Europe, visual ones, rational and very symbolic science cultures who operate with different institutions, different networks. Publishing in a narrow sense with its clear objectives, conceptions and guidelines, arose in the more strongly Protestant-oriented north-western European area, and at the same time the strongly national-oriented cultures of the northern area, though they organised their cultures linguistically, never understood them as so ethnic as the states of east-central Europe, where the emerging publishing industry and science had a very different function. It is a fundamental difference whether a society decides to build a national theatre to signal its young nationhood or invest into an Academy of Sciences or use television to do so – and the outcome in the *longue durée* will also be different. At the same time, the essential question remains unanswered why it is precisely those states that relatively early became open to the mass publishing industry that are the most protectionist of today's culture industries, and the least ready to transnationalise.

We could simply describe the situation of today's Europe in the same manner: the invention of a new homogenous publishing, scientific and cultural sphere is on the agenda, or rather said to be there. It is again a simple economic need: For that matter, the application forms to be filled in for instance in the scientific framework programs of the EU – which have to be comprehensible from the Atlantic to the Ural – serve as an example: There is no scientist any-

1 Sher, Anna: A Di-Vision of Europe: The European Union enlarged. In: Böröcz, József/ Kovács, Melinda (Eds.): *Empire's New Clothes. Unveiling EU Enlargement*. Central Europe Review (2001), pp. 235-272, here p. 235.

2 Wolff, Larry: *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford: Stanford UP 1994.

3 Todorova, Maria: *Imagining the Balkans*. New York et. al.: Oxford UP 1997.

4 Bakić-Hayden, Milica: Nesting Orientalism: The Case of Former Yugoslavia. In: *Slavic Review* 54/4 (Winter 1995), pp. 917-931.

5 Kideckel, David A.: What's in a Name. The Persistence of East Europe as Conceptual Category. In: <http://www.replika.hu/english/01/03ckid.htm>.

6 Robins, Kevin: Interrupting Identities. Turkey/Europe. In: Hall, Stuart/du Gay, Paul (Eds.): *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage 1996, pp. 60-86, here p. 80.

7 Ugrešić, Dubravka: Ich und mein Gepäck. Die europäische Literatur als Wettbewerb um den Eurosong [Me and My Luggage. European Literature as Competition around the Eurosong]. In: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* v. 12.04.2003.

8 Stadler, Bettina: »Eastward Expansion« in the Cultural Sector. Reports from Central and Eastern European Members of Cultural Networks. Vienna 1998, p. 18 [downloadable at <http://www.eicpc.net>].

9 Kideckel.

10 Ibid.

more on this continent who would not understand the words »work package«, »deliverable« and »overhead costs«. And the announcement of something like the »European Research Area« has the same direction. In this sense, the EU has homogenised the scientific communities: evidently with other rules, much more distinct than in the early modern period, »diversity« is its key word, moreover »diversity within unity«. Again it is not clarified where the limits of these diversities are, what diversity is acceptable, what not, and who decides?

Let us face it: The vision, and therefore the description of a united Europe very often, not only in popular, but also in scientific publishing is – besides so many subdivisions – mainly also a di-vision of Europe¹ – and from the Balkans' point of view, sometimes even a tri-vision. The region east of some imaginative north-south borderline across Europe, mainly along the late Iron Curtain has long been a source of wonder and surprise. The perception of the East as »exotic other« originates in the »long 16th century«, and carries on in the pre-judicial imagination of the Balkans² in the 19th century, and culminates in the imagination of the malevolent anti-world in the era of the Cold War. Then, the East became defined as standing outside the range of European qualities and themes, considered mainly in terms of political threat, social problems, collective phobias, ethnographic exotica, and contrastive difference. The perspective on the Eastern part of Europe has been shaped by narratives about the politics of backwardness, lateness, misery and disillusionment that characterize(d) the region in mainstream political (and academic) discussions.⁴ The East's otherness is taken for granted.⁵ The European centre – actually the northwestern periphery – has always dictated its periphery in the southeast and east, because this part of Europe has never been able to imagine modernity on the basis of any pattern other than its own universalism. »Other influences, particularly western Islam, have been dispelled from the collective memory.«⁶

The example of the neglected literary mastery discourse by the Croatian author Dubravka Ugrešić indicates the big divide we are confronted with:

After my novel had been published in England in 1991, the critic finished his review with the question: »Anyway, is it this, what we need?« Only later did I understand, what he wanted to say with that. Always on travel, I did not realise that the label »Made in Balkan« was tucked upon me. And if somebody comes from the Balkan, we do not expect that she or he presents literary sovereignty, but that he or she complies with the stereotype that we have of *them*, of the Balkan or the places where they all come from. I completely had forgotten where I had come from, or in other words, I failed to notice the fixed codes between cultural centre and periphery. I was expected to certify the stereotypes of the periphery not to spoil them. I could forget about my literary sovereignty, in only irritated the foreign milieu.⁷

East Central and Eastern Europe – culturally – always had and have to comply with the cultural expectations of the West – or it was simply ignored.

So, explaining these regions as something different, sometimes even based on something inexplicable like the »differences in mentality«⁸ always has the danger of thinking within the framework of »categorical orientalism«⁹: As Edward Said suggested, authors writing in an orientalist mode devalued their subjects relative to the West while denying them their voice and the validity of their perceptions.

This is not totally the case, however, as it applies to Eastern Europe. In categorical orientalism subjects retain their voice, though those voices that devalue their own lives, or at last those aspects of them organized by the state, have the greatest credence. Furthermore, the devaluation of Eastern life is not because »they« are totally different, but rather because »they« have fallen into difference over time. The orientalist assumes the enduring difference between the West and Orient. The categorical orientalist holds out the possibility of redemption for the fallen through capitalism, democracy, civil society, privatisation, and the like.¹⁰

Due to radical changes after 1989 East and Central Europeans had to learn diverse roles in the cultural, social, political, gender and economic sphere: Once they were versatile actors, making choices, enjoying media and cultural variety, later they were nostalgic, remembering the socialist welfare state, retreated to passiveness; and sometimes they felt and feel close to developments in the West, while their distance to their own locality is growing or seems to be unbridgeable.

11 Hadas, Miklós/ Vörös, Miklós: Representing Euroanxieties. An Introduction. In: Replika. Ambiguous Identities in the New Europe. Special Iss. (1997), pp. 5-13, here p. 6.

12 Deltecheva, Roumiana: East Central Europe as a Politically Correct Scapegoat: The Case of Bulgaria. In: CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture. A WWWeb Journal 6/7 (June 1999).

In this everyday carnival, we realise that we live in a liminal phase and in a transitional space and inhabit a world in which definitions of identity seem to be painfully necessary and inherently problematic at the same time.¹¹

It would be a commonplace or a dull reiteration to say that science and the whole publishing industry had to be re-arranged. I think in a way everybody had – in the sense of this panel – to re-publish him- or herself. But at the same time, there was nothing to be re-invented since all these various identity projects already took and take place in rather binding EU institutional contexts and settings, which do not provide too much space for their own experiences and challenges, since the main guidelines are already defined.

Altogether, we can easily label this process as »democratisation«. But at the same time we are witnessing the establishment or imposing of another hegemonic discourse – and this is already a very local and regional setting – which carries the external label of »democratic« but refuses to enter the dialogue with the past¹² – so crucial for coming to terms with history rather than to find new paths. Instead, a new grand narrative, equally epic and autocratic, writing itself on an illusory *tabula rasa* is constructed: an »ahistorical historicism«, a simulation of looking back in history.

But what does this di-vision of Europe mean here? Seen from a scientific point of view, traditionally socio-cultural trends and innovations were co-formulated, co-published, from the Eastern edges of the continent as well, and we have to ask the question why this is blocked today. Why this multi-faceted inability of East Central and Eastern Europe to talk-back, to contribute to the discussion, the discourse on constructing, imaging, and imagining? Might that simply be the result of decades of isolation? The di-visioning of Europe does not only result from the – geographically seen – northwestern peripheries of the continent, although, the speech on publishing and transmission policies in a broader sense is dominated by these – structurally seen – European centres.

Maybe the reason for the diverse approaches to describing and understanding Europe is an important historical reminiscence diametrically different in Western Europe on the one side and East Central and Eastern Europe on the other: The experiences of the European societies in respect of the great overseas properties and colonies of the empires and consequently contact with »exotic« civilizations are fundamentally different. Without doubt, the history of colonialism and the process of de-colonisation have (had) a strong impact on the current approaches towards various discourses. And one can certainly apply it to all forms of ideas.

While Western European societies were colonising, East Central and East Europe were surfing between a status of a-wannabe-half-colonisers and a status of being colonised by landlocked empires – a fundamental discrepancy in shaping so many mentalities, practices, and discourses. Much of Central and Eastern Europe's (non-verbalised and often imagined) anxieties and reservations towards the European Union and the construction, scientific or not of this new Europe – not in George Bush's sense – result from the experience of having been a periphery within hegemonic empires with imperial habits and behaviour, independently from the actual discourse and communication within the Union herself.

Much of Western Europe's understanding of the continent in the last forty years derives from external intentional immigration, that mostly but not exclusively are the result of a colonial past – which evidently means an ethnically marked understanding of the continent and its diversity – a transnationalisation in the description and image of the continent, an approach towards a new Europe. In this process, the mainstream societies also have renegotiated their own heritage, history and habits, in a way starting to dismantle the concepts of minority and majority. But obviously it is still unclear, how the mainstream societies should deal with groups that are not ready to accept these terms or any term of integration, exclude themselves from widely accepted value systems. And it is still unclear how policies should handle population factions not ready to accept the given rules of diversity (which still are set up according to the demands of the – still existing – majority societies and their élites). And after all, representation of identity of any subculture or minority group still has to express itself in the symbolic order according to the discourses of the principal culture(s).

Much of East Central and Eastern Europe's understanding of the continent derives also from some kind of negative reminiscence of a multi-ethnic society, or more exactly of internal migration, non-migration or often forced resettlement on ethnic grounds – which in the end evidently is also an ethnically marked understanding. While in Western Europe the scientific



13 Bronfen, Elisabeth/Marius, Benjamin: Hybride Kulturen. Beitr. zur anglo-amerikanischen Multikulturalismusdebatte. In: Bronfen, Elisabeth/ Marius, Benjamin/ Steffen, Therese: Hybride Kulturen. Beiträge zur anglo-amerikanischen Multikulturalismusdebatte. Tübingen: Stauffenberg 1997, pp. 1-30, here p. 8.

14 Barša, Pavel: Ethnocultural Justice in East European States. In: Kymlicka, Will/ Oplaski, Magda (Eds.): Can Liberal Pluralism be Exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe. Oxford: Oxford UP) 2001, pp. 243-258, p. 248.

cultures are beginning to be co-produced from the perspectives of the new ›rainbow-coalition‹ minorities, and something like postcolonial history very slowly becomes inherent to Western scientific identities¹³, in East Central and Eastern Europe a very different setting is launched under the multiculturalistic paradigm. In a way this is exactly the flipside of the colonialistic paradigm: As East Central and Eastern Europe do not share the memory of colonialism, these regions are missing the recognition and appreciation of the process and necessity of decolonisation, the experience of coming to terms with a colonialist, racist past, a mass influx of immigrants from the former colonies, and the familiarity and almost everyday experience of (ethnic and therefore visual) cultural diversity in a post-colonial meaning: In this vague sense, any small town in Northwest Europe shows more diversity than any metropolis of East Central Europe – which might be at the same time superficial but also real, somehow. The lack of historical encounters or contacts of non-European countries shapes a fundamental difference in publishing cultures between countries with and without overseas colonies.¹⁴

On the other hand, East Central and Eastern Europe hardly ever were confronted with migrant waves, it was rather the East Central and Eastern European lower classes who provided the masses for transcontinental, less intra-continental migration. That is the flipside of the flipside, paradoxically, since these men and women handed down the next generations – the ones who left, and the ones who stayed – a specific perspective on questions not only of integration and assimilation, and – since emigration flows never have been a one-way street – the possibility to form early transnational communities. Looking at these century-old emigration flows from a transnational angle, one can clearly state that the émigrés themselves also influenced their home countries. In the socialist era, while being cut off from the official information streams by controlled media, most of the East Central and Eastern European countries obtained their information about the latest developments mostly from émigré groups and family ties in Canada, the USA, Australia or Western Europe. The cultural and consumer needs and desires of these regions were not only formed by official media, but also by very early forms of these communities – forming early information networks without net. These transnational networks initiated modernisation processes in the European peripheries, and commenced border-crossing europeanisation at a very early stage – in this respect East Central and Eastern Europe were even more inventive than its Western counterpart. The best examples for the so far presented arguments might be both countries I am coming from: A large part of Austria's scientific community was forced to emigrate after the *Anschluss* in 1938, but after her liberation Austria never called these émigrés back, nor ever tried to communicate with them, which for a long time had disastrous effects on Austrian science. In opposite, the Hungarian scientific communities – especially regarding the humanities – started to communicate with their émigré scientists abroad very early, thus forming some kind of transnational community which proved to be very rewarding for the innovation of Hungarian social sciences.

On the one side, we find a ›brain-drain‹ area, on the other the possibility of rapid modernisation through new methods of communication. The flipside of this reciprocal cultural enrichment, in East Central and Eastern Europe, again is ahistorical historicism, in this case the phenomenon of self-victimization which prevents a reasonable discussion on migration, forming of innovative and culturally bargaining transnational communities, accepting others and working with them in their own societies. Only the re-evaluation of this traditional self-image of East Central and Eastern European societies (which also means the hard work of reassessment and re-interpretation of many classical cultural masterpieces of the national high cultures) will bring about new approaches and policies in such a large field of future policy within the Union.

Western European discourse is describing Europe from its starting points. But publishing or inventing a new Europe is a concept which cannot be simply imposed exterritorially (without losing its meaning). The future and inexorable economic cohesion of the continent will without doubt, contribute to overcome these gaps again, as do scientific programs, platforms and projects may in the long run redefine the periphery-centre relationship. But the social and mental cohesion of the entire European continent will be achieved only by developing adequate standards of intra-European communication, among others in the field of science and publishing, by providing transmission space and spheres for the Eastern part of the continent – not only limited to its own area – and by working for a more vibrant scientific exchange be-



15 Benhabib, Seyla: Kulturelle Vielfalt und demokratische Gleichheit. Politische Partizipation im Zeitalter der Globalisierung. Frankfurt/M.: Fischer 1999, p. 68.

tween Eastern and Western Europe. There has to be a recognition of the necessity to balance out the current unequal ability to speak, publish and broadcast from different positions within Europe, and the question why an adjustment to local (and very often innovative) cultural traditions to East Central and Eastern European regional perspectives has been rejected for such a long time within these regions themselves – independently of the hegemonic discourses from the West.

Undoubtedly, European traditions and approaches which have to be abandoned or overcome in inventing and building many new Europes even though they have to be a part of describing these or other Europes: If it is our goal to retain ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity and rights to publish and speak just for itself, we risk to subordinate moral autonomy under the aesthetics of plurality. Lifestyles which are unjust, brutal or authoritarian can be beautiful, interesting and fascinating. But traditional lifestyles are very often based upon racist, euro-centric or provincial and patriarchal structures – including suppression and sometimes physical violence. It cannot be the task to maintain the beauty of traditional lifestyles for the sake of diversity, the state rather may provide spaces for the realisation of rights, in which the civil societies and the public spheres could enter in disputes, dialogues, and discourses enabling all players and participants to (re)present their narratives of identity, congruency, difference, and diversity on their own – thus creating new hegemonies of scientific power (which again have to be overcome). These forms of communication are risky and unforeseeable. They cannot be pre-designed, and it is unpredictable whether they will improve the understanding of cultures as well as ethnic and linguistic communities or they will aggravate the already existing and arising polarisations. They can lead to the complete termination of traditional environments and lifestyles or can result in their revival, rejuvenation and renewal.¹⁵

Publishing in the sense of this panel is just a tool to make sure that all kinds of differences and identities come into the process of negotiating the terms of communication. So, publishing, broad- and narrowcasting in a new Europe will only have a chance to be successful and to build not only to describe a new Europe, in order to overcome hegemonic powers and reflect on the historical, scientific, cultural and mental diversities within the continent.

Dr. Béla Rásky, geb. 1957, ist Historiker und Leiter des *Austrian Science and Research Liaison Office* in Budapest.

Kontakt: bela.rasky@univie.ac.at