

# **Representing the Western Balkans, post-war understandings**

A discourse analysis of contemporary representations of  
Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia in UK press media

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Submission: May 2018

## **Abstract**

During the war in Bosnia in the 1990s, and the Wars of Yugoslav Succession more widely, ‘balkanist’ views, which hold the people of the Balkans as backwards and violent, were widespread in debates in the UK.

Using theories of ‘balkanism’ as developed by scholars such as Maria Todorova, Andrew Hammond, and Lene Hansen this thesis explores how the countries heavily involved in the Bosnian War–Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia–are represented in the UK press media in a post-war context between 2011 and 2018, and how these representations are used in arguments about the position of these countries in relation to Europe and the EU. The study uses methods of discourse analysis to assess 12 articles chosen from the opinion and editorial pages of major UK broadsheet newspapers.

It finds that many of the ‘balkanist’ representations that appeared in the 1990s are now actively resisted in the material studied. However, the ideas of failed reconciliation and rising nationalism in the countries under study introduce new openings for ‘balkanist’ ideas to emerge in debates. Furthermore, this thesis finds that ‘balkanist’ discourses can be used when promoting the institutions of the West, such as the EU, and can problematically assume the superiority of Europe.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

“Prime Minister... the first thing you have to know about these people is that they like going around cutting each other’s heads off”

- Sir Peter Hall, British ambassador to Yugoslavia 1989-1992.<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

During the war in Bosnia in the 1990s, and the Wars of Yugoslav Succession more widely, views such as the above, (reportedly) offered by Sir Peter Hall, proliferated and were used in debates over whether and how the United Kingdom should participate in the war. This kind of opinion, of the Balkans and its people as cruel, brutal and violent permeated all levels of debate.

The UK media, even well-respected broadsheets, used ideas of “ancient hatreds” to analyse fighting in the wars.<sup>2</sup> This example comes from an editorial in *The Independent*, published on 13 November 1991, before the outbreak of the Bosnian War, but during the Croatian War of Independence:

there seems to be little that anyone in western Europe can do to bring the combatants to their senses... This is a war in which the intensity of ancient hatreds has the effect of alienating support for both sides... in inflicting so much suffering, hardship and damage, [the Serbs] have wrecked their own cause in the eyes of much of the civilised world. Europe’s existence is not at stake in Yugoslavia. Yet what is going on there diminishes Europe.<sup>3</sup>

Many critical studies, such as that of Balkans scholar Andrew Hammond, situate this kind of statement in a long history of representation in which “accusations of discord, immorality, savagery, violence and congenital backwardness have littered the works of travel writers, novelists, diarists and historians, presenting the Balkans as one of the primary ‘others’ of Western civilisation.”<sup>4</sup>

Works such as Hammond’s can be placed within a ‘balkanist’ tradition. Key in said tradition is Bulgarian scholar Maria Todorova’s seminal work *Imagining the Balkans*, in which she

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Anthony Seldon and Lewis Baston, *Major: A Political Life* (London: Phoenix, 1998), 306.

<sup>2</sup> Editorial, “Impotence Amid Destruction,” *The Independent*, 13 Nov. 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Hammond, “Balkanism in Political Context: From the Ottoman Empire to the EU,” *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 3, no. 3 (2006).

coins the term “balkanism”<sup>5</sup> to theorise representations of the peninsula, through which “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.”<sup>6</sup>

Following this interpretation, when one represents the Balkans as violent or backward, one also creates this representation in relation to some idea of the West. In *The Independent’s* article this dynamic is clear: “*Europe’s* existence is not at stake... Yet what is going on there diminishes *Europe*.”<sup>7</sup>

After the war in Bosnia, as well as that in Croatia, was brought to an end in 1995 this kind of representation of the conflict had not vanished. In 1998 the BBC’s annual Reith Lectures were given by British military historian John Keegan. Published under the title *War and Our World*, Keegan gives his view of the wars of the time, stating:

The most intransigent conflicts of all have arisen in regions of very ancient mixed ethnicities, as in former Yugoslavia and Caucasia. There the withdrawal of superordinate authority has cast the populations back into a condition which, though anthropologists disagree over whether what they call primitive warfare is primordial or not, is certainly a regression from civilised order.

The practices of territorial displacement, massacre, deliberate desecration of cultural symbols and systematic mistreatment of women, all evidently rife in the recent non-state warfare in the Balkans and Transcaucasia, undeniably resemble those of the surviving Stone Age peoples of the world’s remote regions, at their most savage.<sup>8</sup>

Two things are in effect here. On top of characterising the wars in the former Yugoslavia as “savage,” “Stone Age,” “ancient,” ethnic and regressive (images firmly within the balkanist lexicon), this is represented as a return to normality. The break-up of Yugoslavia is not stated as the real cause of the war, rather the removal of the “superordinate authority” simply “cast the populations back”<sup>9</sup> into their regressive, uncivilised, and to put the quote firmly within the theorisation of Todorova, decidedly *Balkan* state. In the pithier example from Sir Peter Hall, because of their Balkan nature, these people need no other motivation; they “*like* going around cutting each other’s heads off.”<sup>10</sup> At the levels of policy and media, and as exemplified

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<sup>5</sup> Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, Updated ed. (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2009), 8 of 654. Adobe Digital Editions EPUB.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 391 of 654.

<sup>7</sup> Editorial, “Impotence Amid Destruction.” My emphasis.

<sup>8</sup> John Keegan, *War and Our World: The Reith Lectures 1998*, The Reith Lectures (London: Pimlico, 1999), 67-8.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. My emphasis.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Seldon and Baston, *Major: A Political Life*, 306. My emphasis.

here, in serious academia we can see evidence of the wars in the former Yugoslavia being characterised as regressive, and due to “ancient” ethnic problems.

Of course, to state that a certain people are destined to fall into war does not forward a view of what the West, or Europe should do and referral to these types of ideas, something that was exhibited throughout the debate, cannot be seen to advocate one approach to events in the region. One of the strongest and most consistently drawn links, however, is between this balkanist language and non-intervention into the wars. Bridget Robison, in her article “Putting Bosnia in Its Place: Critical Geopolitics and the Representation of Bosnia in the British Print Media,” makes this link, arguing that some actors articulated the “notion that Bosnia was part of an ongoing Balkan nightmare which had frequently erupted into chaotic, ethnic violence and any involvement should be kept to a minimum or better still avoided at all costs.”<sup>11</sup> *The Independent’s* article, written in the context of the Croatian War of Independence in 1991, could be used to support this argument, as it despairs that in the face of such senseless violence “there seems to be little that anyone in western Europe can do.”<sup>12</sup>

It does not take much imagination to see a possible alternative. Keegan argues that it was the “withdrawal of superordinate authority” which pre-empted the fighting, so one argument could be, that if you do not want a vicious, Stone Age war on the borders of Europe, it may be a good idea to install a “superordinate authority.”<sup>13</sup> This is precisely what Hammond argues happened in a post-War Bosnia, with the end of the war involving “the deployment of peacekeeping forces, of enforced negotiations, of summary air strikes and, after the Dayton Accord, of the West’s eventual mandate for economic and political reconstruction.”<sup>14</sup> Hammond argues that “balkanism manages both to vindicate imperial interference and to blame the ‘natives’ if interference goes wrong.”<sup>15</sup> To extrapolate from this, we can argue that balkanist discourse should be seen as flexible; it can be used to justify interference *and* non-intervention. Importantly though both positions see the West, or Europe, as fundamentally superior to the Balkans. A key question then becomes, not only when and why do balkanist representations appear, but also to what ends is balkanism used?

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<sup>11</sup> Bridget Robison, “Putting Bosnia in Its Place: Critical Geopolitics and the Representation of Bosnia in the British Print Media,” *Geopolitics* 9, no. 2 (2004): 379.

<sup>12</sup> Editorial, “Impotence Amid Destruction.”

<sup>13</sup> Keegan, *War and Our World: The Reith Lectures 1998*, 67-8.

<sup>14</sup> Hammond, “Balkanism in Political Context: From the Ottoman Empire to the Eu,” 18.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 21. (note 1).

Using theories of balkanism as developed by scholars such as Todorova and Hammond, as well as a methodology and discursive typology developed by Lene Hansen in her book *Security as practice: Discourse analysis and the Bosnian War*,<sup>16</sup> this thesis will aim to explore how these dynamics appear in the UK broadsheet press between 2011 and 2018, two decades after the Bosnian War.

### **Research area and research questions**

This study will focus on the representations of the countries involved in the Bosnian War (Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia) that appear in the UK broadsheets during the period 2011-2018. The reason for focussing specifically on these countries is three-fold. Firstly, it is widely theorised as an example of balkanist discourse being used to support an idea of non-intervention. Secondly, this non-intervention and is widely denounced in both media and academic accounts. One prominent example comes from British historian Brendan Simms and his work *Unfinest Hour: Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia*,<sup>17</sup> in which Simms sees the lack of intervention in the Bosnian War as a catastrophic failure of UK foreign policy which holds the UK partially responsible for “the destruction of Bosnia” and “the worst crimes in Europe since the Holocaust and the Second World War.”<sup>18</sup> Lastly, during this period two of the highest profile military and political leaders of the Bosnian-Serb side in the war, Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić,<sup>19</sup> were tried and convicted for war crimes (including Genocide in Srebrenica in 1995) at the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

In the two decades since the wars in the former Yugoslavia the relationship of Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia with Europe, and especially the European Union, has changed substantially. Croatia became an EU member in 2013, whilst Serbia is a candidate country, and Bosnia is a potential candidate.<sup>20</sup> The period of study chosen was from 14 October 2011 until 3 April

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<sup>16</sup> Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2006). Adobe Digital Editions EPUB.

<sup>17</sup> Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour : Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Penguin Books, 2002). Kindle.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 4 of 464.

<sup>19</sup> Many English sources use variations of these spellings, omitting foreign characters, I have endeavoured to replace these spellings throughout this thesis for the sake of consistency.

<sup>20</sup> “Countries,” European Union, [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries_en).

2018. These dates were selected to cover important events in the relationship between the EU and the region, starting with Croatia signing the accession treaty on 9 December 2011,<sup>21</sup> and lasting until the Western Balkans strategy was announced on 6 February 2018 (with 8 weeks added on either side).<sup>22</sup>

The aim of the collection of sources was to find a variety of viewpoints on events both directly concerning the fall-out of the Bosnian War as well as other events which are held as politically important for the relationship between Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia with Europe in general. The thesis will aim to examine how balkanist representations appear in the material, as well as instances of these representations being resisted. Furthermore, it will look at how these representations are used in arguments to support different approaches to the region, and how these uses compare to other academic accounts on balkanist discourse.

Based on selected material gathered from editorial and opinion pages of the studied UK broadsheet newspapers (the empirical material) this study will answer the following questions:

- 1) How are Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia and their people represented in the empirical material in articles dealing with both the Bosnian War and other political issues?
- 2) How can these representations be related to previous academic discussions on balkanist discourse?
- 3) How are these representations employed for use in the material?

## **Thesis outline**

This thesis will first explore some possible definitions of ‘the Balkans,’ before briefly outlining existing literature on balkanist discourse relevant to debates in the UK. It will then introduce the theoretical underpinnings of the study and outline the version of discourse analysis that will be employed in the research. It will then summarise the sources of material before explaining the specific method of data collection used. This will be followed by an in-depth discussion of balkanism as a theory and a discussion of accounts of its use throughout

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<sup>21</sup> “European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations: Croatia,” European Union, [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/croatia\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/croatia_en).

<sup>22</sup> “A Credible Enlargement Perspective for and Enhanced EU Engagement with the Western Balkans,” European Commission, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/strategy-western-balkans-2018-feb-06\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/strategy-western-balkans-2018-feb-06_en).



history. The results will then be presented and analysed, and relevant conclusions drawn and related back to the theoretical discussion.

## **Defining the Balkans**

‘The Balkans’ as a geographical term is itself contested. It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss in detail where the Balkans begins and ends, but it is important to outline some basic definitions of the term ‘The Balkans,’ as well as ‘the Western Balkans,’ and how they relate to the countries under study here—Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia.

Todorova’s description of the Balkans draws on two main aspects in defining them: the geography of the “Balkan Peninsula” in South-eastern Europe and culturally the “Ottoman legacy.”<sup>23</sup> She considers the Balkans as covering: “Albanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Romanians, and most of the former Yugoslavs. Slovenes... are not included, but Croats are... [and] with some qualification, Turks.”<sup>24</sup> Todorova also argues that definitions used by others are not steadfast, for example noting that the Yugoslav Wars were “generalized as a Balkan war, although none of the other Balkan countries... were in danger of entering it.”<sup>25</sup>

The EU defines the “Western Balkans Six” as “Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo... Montenegro and Serbia.”<sup>26</sup> This definition includes the former Yugoslav states (as well as Albania) but not the present members of the EU, Croatia and Slovenia. Croatia is, however, often considered as part of the Western Balkans, and the EU clearly uses membership as its defining principle. In these differing definitions Croatia variously falls inside and outside of ‘the Balkans’ and ‘the Western Balkans.’ The important point to take from this brief discussion is that neither term has a fixed meaning.

This thesis will focus on Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia and will consider them all countries in

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<sup>23</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 74-5 of 654.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 74 of 654.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 396 of 654.

<sup>26</sup> “International Relations; Western Balkans,” European Commission, [https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/international/enlargement/westernbalkans\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/international/enlargement/westernbalkans_en).

the Western part of “the Balkans” as defined by Todorova.<sup>27</sup> It should be noted however, that articles in the UK press may use different definitions, and (due to their form) may give no precise description of the definitions they do use. How articles conceptualise ‘the Balkans’ and ‘the Western Balkans,’ whether definitions are generalised, or specific, will therefore be questions held in mind whilst the analysis is conducted.

## Literature Review

Throughout the thesis this study will critically engage with other academic accounts on balkanist discourse. Studies such as Todorova’s, Hammond’s and Hansen’s (as previously discussed) form a key point of comparison for my own primary material. Here then I will briefly overview other relevant research in this topic area, beginning with works that focus on the study of discourse or rhetoric in relation to the Bosnian War to highlight a dearth in post-war analyses.

Critical studies of the Bosnian War, and the UK’s role in it, often focus on the quality and qualities of debates over taking military action. Specialist on the wars in the former Yugoslavia Tom Gallagher characterises the British response as “high level ignorance about the worst conflict to erupt in Europe since 1945.”<sup>28</sup> Gallagher chastises the British government for arguments based on “the ‘equivalence of guilt’, with responsibility spread across all ‘the warring factions.’”<sup>29</sup> Whilst Simms argues that this “argument of moral equivalence went right back to the beginning of the [Bosnian War]; indeed, to the Croatian war of 1991.”<sup>30</sup> Both Simms and Gallagher, approaching the topic from outside the parameters of discourse, see problematic arguments used in the debates in the UK to avoid further intervention in the conflict.

The idea that language played some role in the war in Bosnia is seen in historical accounts. Historians Steven Burg and Paul Shoup argue that, in discussing why different people may name the war as either a “Civil war” or war of “aggression,” “for external actors, to accept any one interpretation as definitive was to... mandate certain policies and actions on moral or

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<sup>27</sup> *Imagining the Balkans*, 74 of 654.

<sup>28</sup> Tom Gallagher, *The Balkans after the Cold War : From Tyranny to Tragedy* (London: Routledge, 2003), 41.

<sup>29</sup> Tom Gallagher, “Milošević, Serbia and the West during the Yugoslav Wars, 1991-1995” in *The Balkans and the West, Constructing the European Other, 1945-2003*, ed. Andrew Hammond (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 167.

<sup>30</sup> Simms, *Unfinest Hour : Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia*, 25.

political grounds.”<sup>31</sup> This idea of naming, is developed in many works (and not least Todorova’s own). What is important to understand here is that certain discourses have been argued as being used within the debate as part of a wider argument against involvement in the former Yugoslavia.

Two accounts that deal with discourse in the Bosnian war in a British context will be discussed here. Political scholar Riikka Kuusisto, in “Savage Tribes and Mystic Feuds,” studies rhetorical “justifications for non-interference” offered in British, French and American foreign policy statements, arguing that “the West’s representation of Bosnia in the early 1990s... portrayed its inhabitants as irrational, aggressive and obsessed by historical grudges,”<sup>32</sup> and that this created an image of “cruel and senseless slaughter [which] left little room for well-meaning attempts to interfere.”<sup>33</sup> Kuusisto clearly theorises a link between rhetoric and non-involvement in Bosnia. With a similar theme, but instead focussing on the representations of Bosnia appearing in UK newspapers, Robison’s article “Putting Bosnia in Its Place” (as previously mentioned) argues that in the 1990s there were contending depictions of “Bosnia as part of a civilised Europe, Bosnia as a site of genocide and Bosnia as a place of ancient ethnic tensions” in the debate, but that they all had an impact upon the UK’s policies in Bosnia.<sup>34</sup> Whilst it is difficult to prove the concrete impacts of such representations on policy these accounts are valuable as they and other similar ones, offer a useful comparative basis for the present study, which in turn will be able to test their conclusions in post-war context. These accounts focus on the period of the Bosnian War itself (1992-1995), it is the contention of this thesis that it is important to focus on the post-war period and attempt to see what changes may have occurred. The development of these discourses post-war, in the context of the UK media, is an under-explored area.

This thesis will make use of theories of balkanism to analyse articles in the UK press dealing with Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia. Media studies scholar Zlatan Krajina conducted a 2009 analysis of BBC documentaries dealing with Croatia’s accession to the EU using theories of balkanism. He argues that Croatia was represented as “Other” and that “the EU-accession

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<sup>31</sup> Steven L. Burg and Paul Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina : Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention* (Armonk, N.Y.: Routledge, 1999), 190-1.

<sup>32</sup> Riikka Kuusisto, “Savage Tribes and Mystic Feuds: Western Foreign Policy Statement on Bosnia in the Early 1990s” in Hammond, *The Balkans and the West, Constructing the European Other, 1945-2003*, 183.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>34</sup> Robison, “Putting Bosnia in Its Place: Critical Geopolitics and the Representation of Bosnia in the British Print Media,” 384.

process was implied throughout the analysed news coverage as both inevitable for Croatia's prosperity and problem-causing for the 'Western' evaluators."<sup>35</sup> The current study will explore a similar area to that which Krajina analyses, however will aim to pay more attention specifically to how past representations of the region and particularly those of the war are navigated or recreated in the material studied.

## **Chapter 2. Methodology**

This thesis will involve discourse analysis carried out on newspaper editorial and opinion pieces found in UK broadsheets between 2011 and 2018. This section will outline the theoretical underpinnings relating to discourse analysis. It will then introduce the method of textual analysis that will be used, before outlining the sources and material chosen for analysis.

### **Discourse analysis**

This thesis will follow a "constructivist approach," which holds (as defined by cultural theorist Stuart Hall) that people "use the conceptual systems of their culture... to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others."<sup>36</sup> These "systems" are "representational" and therefore are an "essential part of the of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture."<sup>37</sup>

Hall defines "discourse" as "ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice," and the study it as the examination of "how the knowledge which a particular discourse produces connects with power, regulates conduct, makes up or constructs identities or subjectivities, and defines the way certain things are represented."<sup>38</sup> Discourse analysis then is not only the study of language, but it also entails analysing how

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<sup>35</sup> Zlatan Krajina, "'Mapping' the 'Other' in Television News on International Affairs: BBC's 'Pre-Accession' Coverage of EU Membership Candidate Croatia," *Politicka Misao: Croatian Political Science Review* 46, no. 5 (2009): 164.

<sup>36</sup> Stuart Hall, *Representation, Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: SAGE Publications, 1997), 25.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

that language can effect “conduct” and actions in the world.<sup>39</sup>

Critical discourse analysts Norman Fairclough, Jane Mulderrig and Ruth Wodak argue that discourse is “a form of ‘social practice’” with “a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and... the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s), which frame it... discourse is socially *constitutive* as well as socially shaped.”<sup>40</sup> Importantly discourse here is seen as something used to form ideas about the “social” world, and thus can have effects on “social” realities.<sup>41</sup> It is in the framework as put forward by Hall, and Fairclough *et al.* that this thesis will understand discourse; it is a type of knowledge which is drawn upon in as well as created through language use.

## Methodology

This thesis will follow the framework set out by critical discourse analysts Wodak and Martin Reisigl in their discourse historical approach, in which “context” is crucial for the reliable interpretation of texts,<sup>42</sup> and a thorough consideration of it involves four aspects:

1. the immediate language, or text-internal co-text and co-discourse, of utterances and the local interactive processes of negotiation and conflict management; 2. the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres, and discourses; 3. the language-external social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific ‘context of situation;’ and 4. the broader socio-political and historical context that the discursive practices are related to.<sup>43</sup>

The analysis in this thesis will cover each of these areas. The first, through textual analysis, the second, by relating this to other examples (in my material and those found in previous studies), the third, through assessing the role of the sources used, and the fourth, through comparing results to the conclusions of previous studies and theoretical works. This is a useful framework, as it encourages use of substantial reference to other works of discourse analysis.

The textual analysis will focus on the representation of Balkan identity. It follows Hall’s

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>40</sup> Norman Fairclough, Jane Mulderrig and Ruth Wodak, “Critical Discourse Analysis,” in Teun A. van Dijk, *Discourse Studies : A Multidisciplinary Introduction*, (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011). 357.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl, “Discourse and Racism,” in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. Deborah Tannen, Heidi Ehnberger Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin, Blackwell Handbooks in Linguistics (Malden, MA ; Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 585.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

suggestion that “language and representation produce meaning” and that discursively made “knowledge... constructs identities.”<sup>44</sup> Further, this thesis relies on the idea theorised by Rudolf De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak that “national identities—conceived as specific forms of social identities—are discursively, by means of language... produced, reproduced, transformed and destructed.”<sup>45</sup> Whilst, here De Cillia *et al.* deal specifically with national identities, this thesis considers, as implied in the above quote, that all “social identities” can be “produced, reproduced, transformed and destructed” within texts.<sup>46</sup> Texts in short can actively and passively interact with identities in different ways.

### Textual analysis

A further methodological question is how to study identity within texts. Wodak argues that “discourses of identity and difference” have “the discursive construction of ‘us’ and ‘them’ as the basic fundamentals.”<sup>47</sup> Critical discourse analyst Teun A. van Dijk similarly argues that “ideological discourse is generally organized by a general strategy of *positive self-presentation* (boasting) and *negative other-presentation* (derogation).”<sup>48</sup> These arguments both are based around analysis of discriminatory discourses. Whilst balkanism is a discriminatory discourse, one important aspect in its theorisation is that the Balkans are, as argued by Todorova, because of their relationship to Europe, “culturally constructed as ‘the other’ *within*.”<sup>49</sup> For this reason the analysis will seek to assess the Balkans not just as an ‘other,’ but how they are constructed in relation to Europe. It is important here to draw out a distinction between studying discourses about national identities (as De Cillia *et al.* do) and this study, which is that the newspapers included here host a range of contributors speaking from different perspectives.<sup>50</sup> In the sample gathered there may be voices speaking from a British perspective, a Western perspective, a Serbian perspective, a Bosnian perspective, a Croatian perspective, a European perspective and so forth.

For these reasons, this thesis will follow a modified version of textual analysis developed by

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<sup>44</sup> Hall, *Representation, Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, 6.

<sup>45</sup> Rudolf De Cillia, Martin Reisigl, and Ruth Wodak, “The Discursive Construction of National Identities,” *Discourse & society* 10, no. 2 (1999): 153.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Ruth Wodak, Michael Meyer, and Sage Publications., *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, (London: SAGE, 2001), <http://methods.sagepub.com/book/methods-of-critical-discourse-analysis>. 73.

<sup>48</sup> Teun A. van Dijk, “Ideology and Discourse Analysis,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 11, no. 2 (2006): 126.

<sup>49</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 390 of 654. My emphasis.

<sup>50</sup> De Cillia, Martin Reisigl, and Ruth Wodak, “The Discursive Construction of National Identities.” 153.

political scholar Lene Hansen in relation to studying the Bosnian War.<sup>51</sup> Hansen argues that it is essential to view identity construction in terms of a spectrum of the self and ‘the other,’ and that analysis should be based around “degrees of difference and Otherness.”<sup>52</sup> Textual analysis, according to Hansen’s method, should follow three steps, focussing firstly on “explicit articulations” of “Selves and Others.”<sup>53</sup> Secondly, a particular instance of language should be analysed according to “the location of this sign within a larger system... [through] processes of linking and differentiation.”<sup>54</sup> Finally, Hansen argues that “reading political identity” should be done through analysing “spatial, temporal and ethical constructions,” which she argues “are analytical lenses that bring out the important political substance of identity construction, not explicitly articulated signs.”<sup>55</sup>

To expand upon this last step, Hansen contends that: “space, time, and responsibility are the big concepts through which political communities—their boundaries, internal constitution, and relationship with the outside world—are thought and argued.”<sup>56</sup> According to Hansen examples of spatial constructions may be references to “the nation state...[or] regional constructions, such as ‘Africa,’ ‘Europe,’ ‘the Orient,’ ‘the Balkans.’”<sup>57</sup> Examples of “temporal” constructions may be “themes such as development, transformation, continuity, change, repetition, or stasis;” Hansen gives the example of “the construction of the Other as temporally progressing toward the (Western) Self [as] a central component of development discourse.”<sup>58</sup> And lastly, the idea that “foreign policy discourses always involve a construction of responsibility, even if only implicitly as applicable toward a national citizenry.”<sup>59</sup> In this way Hansen argues that the following aspects can be drawn out of texts:

which Selves and Others are constituted in foreign policy discourse? How radical is the difference between them? And how is difference constituted through the articulation of spatial, temporal, and ethical identity?<sup>60</sup>

The textual analysis conducted in this thesis will focus on these three aspects as outlined by Hansen: words, phrases and images representing the self or ‘other’ in language, the

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<sup>51</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 37-41.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 42. My emphasis.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

relationships of these representations to other examples (found in other texts and previous studies) through either “linking [or] differentiation”<sup>61</sup> and the implied “political identity” given in the text.<sup>62</sup>

Following Hansen’s method this thesis will explicitly look at “Selves and Others,”<sup>63</sup> “processes of linking and differentiation,”<sup>64</sup> and “spatial, temporal and ethical constructions...[of] responsibility” in the source material.<sup>65</sup> Hansen’s concerns are roughly equivalent to those previously outlined of van Dijk and Wodak (who study discriminatory discourse), however they provide a flexible approach in which the many different self/‘other’ combinations that appear may be analysed, and importantly also focus on analysis in terms of the political outlook adopted within a text.

### **Selection of sources**

The study aims to look at texts which substantially articulate positions in relation to Europe and the Balkans, therefore it is focussing on opinion texts, editorial and opinion pieces (sometimes “Op-ed”), published in broadsheet newspapers. As discussed, the period of study was from 14 October 2011 until 3 April 2018. Although this is a long period of time for a study, the countries and region only received marginal coverage in the opinion and editorial pages of the papers included. The long timespan allowed enough material to be gathered. The most important aim was to find a wide range of texts, so that they could be read through to generate themes that were important for the coverage. This paper analyses material found in four UK newspapers: *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Independent*. The Sunday editions (including *The Guardian*’s sister paper *The Observer*) were considered alongside their daily titles.

The newspapers selected share a large proportion of the readership in the UK. In April 2018 *Press Gazette* quotes estimated “monthly readers” for *The Guardian* and *The Observer* at over 24 million, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Telegraph* at over 23 million, *The*

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 41-6.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 37-41.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 45. (The concepts of *linking*, *differentiation*, *spatial*, *temporal* and *ethical* will be used in this paper in reference to how they are laid out here by Hansen.)



*Independent* at over 20 million and *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* at over 8 million.<sup>66</sup> Most readers access the articles online, with figures for print circulation significantly lower, peaking at 5,417,000 (per month) for *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*,<sup>67</sup> *The Independent* has been out of print (available online only) since 2016.<sup>68</sup>

The separation between broadsheet and tabloid newspapers is widely accepted and was used as an organisational tool in similar research projects such as Duncan Light and Craig Young's study (in which they distinguish between "'tabloid' and populist" papers on the one hand and "'broadsheet' or quality press" on the other).<sup>69</sup> Whilst tabloid newspapers have larger audiences, the broadsheet newspapers were selected as this study wishes to avoid papers deemed to be sensationalist. These papers represent views from different points in the political spectrum, from centre-left (*The Guardian*), centre (*The Independent*) to centre-right (*The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*). This categorisation is again broadly agreed with, Robison's study uses the same scheme, but labels *The Independent* "centre-left."<sup>70</sup> Light and Young define *The Guardian* and *The Independent* as "relatively pro-EU, whilst *The Times* is Euro-sceptic."<sup>71</sup> *The Telegraph* too is Euro-sceptic, but interestingly the picture regarding *The Times* is not so clear, as *The Times* backed 'remain' in the EU-referendum, whilst *The Sunday Times* backed 'leave.'<sup>72</sup>

## Editorials and opinion pieces

In a basic definition of their functions van Dijk defines editorials as "public, mass communicated types of opinion discourse par excellence."<sup>73</sup> He further argues that "together

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<sup>66</sup> Freddy Mayhew, "Sun Is Most-Read Uk Newsbrand and Dominates on Mobile but Guardian Top on Desktop New Readership Figures Show," *Press Gazette*, 19 April 2018. <http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/sun-is-most-read-uk-newsbrand-and-dominates-on-mobile-but-guardian-top-on-desktop-new-readership-figures-show/>. Accessed 10 May 2018.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> "Independent to Cease as Print Edition," *BBC News*, 12 February 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-35561145>.

<sup>69</sup> Duncan Light and Craig Young, "European Union Enlargement, Post-Accession Migration and Imaginative Geographies of the 'New Europe': Media Discourses in Romania and the United Kingdom" *Journal of Cultural Geography* 3, no. 26 (2009): 286.

<sup>70</sup> Robison, "Putting Bosnia in Its Place: Critical Geopolitics and the Representation of Bosnia in the British Print Media," 378.

<sup>71</sup> Light and Young, "European Union Enlargement, Post-Accession Migration and Imaginative Geographies of the 'New Europe': Media Discourses in Romania and the United Kingdom": 286.

<sup>72</sup> Louise Ridley, "Which Newspapers Support Brexit in the EU Referendum?," *Huffington Post*, 22 June 2016. Accessed 10 May 2018

<sup>73</sup> Teun A. van Dijk, "Opinions and Ideologies in Editorials" (paper presented at the 4th International Symposium of Critical Discourse Analysis, Language, Social Life and Critical Thought, Athens, 1995).

with the Op-Ed articles... of columnists and other writers” they are amongst “the widest circulated opinion discourses of society.”<sup>74</sup> This study will focus on editorial and opinion pieces, as it considers this form of article as one which expressly adopts an opinion, or employs an argument. In the case of the newspapers studied these opinions are widely broadcast, and include those of many politicians, writers and academics.

Hansen, in her study, points out important differences between editorials and opinion pieces, arguing that whereas editorials “constitute the authoritative political voice” of the newspaper, in opinion pieces “the media might also provide space for opinion and commentary by a host of writers... media outlets separate themselves from opinion pieces’ stances.”<sup>75</sup> Whilst this should be held in mind, all the texts will be conceived of as opinion texts which are to varying extents endorsed by the newspapers. The different political view of the newspapers, and the different contributors that they include, will give the study a wide variety of viewpoints to analyse.

### **Collecting and processing material**

The texts were found using the *LexisNexis Academic* database.<sup>76</sup> A search was conducted to find all editorials, Op-ed, leading article (a form of editorial) and opinion pieces in the time-period from 2011-2018 including the search terms ‘Bosnia’, ‘Croatia’, ‘Serbia’ or ‘Balkans’ (or a form of each term, e.g. Bosnia/Bosnian[s]/Bosniak[s]/Bosnia’s) in the title or sub-title. It should be noted that whilst the news searching function of *LexisNexis* has a filter for “Editorials & Opinions” this is not always accurate, and various outlets title sections in their newspapers differently.<sup>77</sup> For this reason an additional search was conducted to find articles labelled as “comment” and “voices.”

The results of the initial search were narrowed by a reading of the articles to find texts dealing with either the Bosnian War or other political issues concerning the region and its relationship to Europe. A lot of the articles dealt with the region under study to advance an argument about a different topic. Examples of this include arguments along the lines of *we*

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 77.

<sup>76</sup> “Lexisnexis Academic,” LexisNexis, <http://academic.lexisnexis.eu/>.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

*failed to prevent atrocities in Bosnia, therefore we should act over the war in Syria.*<sup>78</sup> These articles were not ignored, but the focus was put on how Balkan identity is understood within these constructs, and how it is operationalised for use in arguments. To make the study manageable the articles were organised into themes. These themes were generated by reading through the articles, and selecting common issues, as well as particularly important issues (an example of an important, but uncommon, theme is *Croatia's position in the EU*). The selection of themes also involved a background reading of previous studies of balkanist discourse. Interviews and sports articles were also excluded. The final number of texts read for the study was 54.<sup>79</sup> These articles were used to help construct themes for the analysis, before 12 texts were selected for deeper discourse analysis. The themes selected for analysis are set out in table 1.

Table 1. Selected themes from articles

Theme	Key ideas and events
Genocide or “ancient hatred”	War remembrance, war crimes trials, international justice, contemporary wars
Failed reconciliation	The war’s legacy on Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia
Croatia’s position in the EU	Croatia’s 2013 accession to the EU, rising nationalism in Croatia
The Balkans on the edge of Europe	The region as a site in geopolitical games, the region during the refugee crisis

The theme of *Genocide or “ancient hatred”* was derived from wider reading about the debates of the 1990s. Hansen’s book *Security as Practice*, provides the clearest example, in which she categorises the opposite sides of the debate as:

‘the Balkan discourse,’ which constitutes the war in Bosnia as the product of ancient Balkan hatred and hence a conflict that the West could and should not solve. [And t]he opposing basic discourse, ‘the Genocide discourse,’ [which] challenges this

<sup>78</sup> Ed Vulliamy, “I’ve Seen the Horrific Result of Western Paralysis. It Mustn’t Happen in Syria: No Wars Are the Same, but Echoes from Previous Conflicts Are Inescapable,” *The Observer*, 17 Mar. 2013.

<sup>79</sup> 23 articles came from *The Guardian* and *The Observer*, 15 came from the *Independent*, 9 from *The Times/Sunday Times* and 7 from *The Daily/Sunday Telegraph*.

representation by arguing that the war was a genocide committed by Serbian military and political.<sup>80</sup>

The theme *Balkans on the edge of Europe* is a recurrent idea in balkanist scholarly works, such as those of Todorova,<sup>81</sup> and Hammond,<sup>82</sup> and in this study often found expression in articles dealing with geopolitics as well as the refugee crisis. The themes *Genocide or “ancient hatred”* and *Failed reconciliation* were prevalent in articles dealing directly with the fall-out of the war, whilst the other themes were found in articles dealing with a wider range of topics. The theme *Croatia’s position in the EU* included articles about Croatian accession in 2013, and their place in the EU after that.

## Limitations

The aim of the study is not to make a representative view of the studied newspapers; neither does it aim to deal with every issue covered in the newspapers, as articles dealt with a multitude of different issues in different ways. Instead it seeks to assess how Balkan identity is constructed in specific instances and used to make arguments in the material selected.

Whilst the selection of themes and texts are subjective processes, they were carried out to find moments in which balkanist representations were used or resisted. The study gains validity assessing how these representations compare to each other, and across topic areas, as well as how they can be situated into the wider academic debate. In this way it intends augment current knowledge in the field by commenting upon the tangible examples which appear in the material studied.

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<sup>80</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 11.

<sup>81</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*.

<sup>82</sup> Hammond, “Balkanism in Political Context: From the Ottoman Empire to the EU.”

### Chapter 3. Theoretical considerations

#### *Imaginative geography*<sup>83</sup> from Orientalism to Balkanism

In *Orientalism* post-colonial scholar Edward Said theorises Orientalism as “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.”<sup>84</sup> Said argues that through representation of the Orient in a specific form—Orientalism—the West constructs and enjoys power over the East, key to Said’s theory is that as an “Other... the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience.”<sup>85</sup> Europe, he argued, defined itself against what is it not: the East.

This intellectual tradition has been, since the publishing of *Orientalism*, negotiated, challenged and worked upon in different ways. Intellectual historian Larry Wolff theorises in his 1994 book *Inventing Eastern Europe* that Eastern Europe was initially constructed as a “complement” to Enlightenment civilisation.<sup>86</sup> Wolff argues that this worked both similarly and differently to Orientalism, manifesting itself in the “construction of Eastern Europe as a paradox of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion, Europe but not Europe. Eastern Europe... [was] made to mediate between Europe and the Orient.”<sup>87</sup> Following Said, Wolff furthermore argues that this sustained an inegalitarian order: “the study of Eastern Europe, like Orientalism, was a style of intellectual mastery, integrating knowledge and power, perpetrating domination and subordination.”<sup>88</sup> The scope of repercussions of these representations is difficult to measure, however, in Said and later Wolff, there is a long history of deconstructing these representations to reveal their ideational and ideological bases. Said’s concern, and relatedly Wolff’s, was “imaginative geography and its representations;”<sup>89</sup> their focus was on the study of how a place and its people become the subjects of geographically formed knowledge. Cultural geographers Christian Sellar, Caedmon Staddon and Craig Young further define “geographical imaginaries” as “representations of place and space that play a role in structuring people’s understanding of

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<sup>83</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1st Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 73.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

<sup>86</sup> Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe, the Map of the Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, ed. Larry Wolff (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1994), 4.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>89</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 49.

the world and which, in complex ways, influence people's actions."<sup>90</sup> It is in this way that balkanism too, as involved in geographical mechanisms of understanding, should be understood.

Balkanism has its roots in Orientalism, but rather focuses on the specific role of the Balkans as an "'other' of Europe."<sup>91</sup> Todorova herself draws out the differences to Said's theory. One key difference, mirroring Wolff's conceptualisation of Eastern Europe, is that Todorova sees the Balkans as "geographically inextricable from Europe" and importantly "culturally constructed as 'the other' *within*."<sup>92</sup> Todorova argues that "unlike orientalism, which is a discourse about an imputed opposition, balkanism is a discourse about an imputed ambiguity... This in-betweenness of the Balkans, their transitional character, could have made them simply an incomplete other; instead they are constructed not as other but as incomplete self."<sup>93</sup> The Balkans then is perceived of as a backwards version (or re-version) of Europe, always behind.

### Theorising Balkanism

The word 'balkanism' should be understood in two ways. Balkanist critic Dušan I. Bjelić explains the two meanings: "sometimes it refers to the body of knowledge about the Balkans, and sometimes to the critical study of this very discourse."<sup>94</sup> Balkanism then can be alternatively understood as stereotypical knowledge about the region and the analysis of this knowledge and particularly its expression. Bjelić adds "Balkanism in the first sense delivers substantive knowledge about the Balkans without examining the presuppositions upon which this knowledge has been generated."<sup>95</sup> Here we will explore briefly the academic literature on balkanism to expand upon this idea that the discourse relies upon and uses *presupposed* knowledge.<sup>96</sup>

Todorova's basic definition of balkanism is "a specific discourse... [which] moulds attitudes

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<sup>90</sup> Christian Sellar, Caedmon Staddon, and Craig Young, "Twenty Years after the Wall: Geographical Imaginaries of 'Europe' During European Union Enlargement," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 26, no. 3 (2009): 253.

<sup>91</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 18 of 654.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 390 of 654. My emphasis.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 45 of 654.

<sup>94</sup> Dušan I. Bjelić, *Balkan as Metaphor, between Globalization and Fragmentation*, ed. Dušan I. Bjelić and Obrad Savić, [Reprint] ed. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2002), 5.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

and actions toward the Balkans and could be treated as the most persistent form of ‘mental map’ in which information about the Balkans is placed.”<sup>97</sup> This is a dense quote which warrants unpacking. Firstly, Todorova theorises balkanism as a “mental map;”<sup>98</sup> in this formulation we can see the roots it has in Said’s conceptualisation of “imaginative geography.”<sup>99</sup> The “map” suggests that people’s conceptions about the physical Balkans itself are important to how they think about it, but also implies that it can act as a guide for their opinions or “attitudes and actions.”<sup>100</sup> It should be seen as not only existing in language. In this way it can be related to wider theories of discourse; it is a way of representing, and giving, as Hall describes “cultural meanings.”<sup>101</sup> These meanings, as Hall argues, “organize and regulate social practices, influence our conduct and consequently have real, practical effects.”<sup>102</sup> Thirdly, it is considered the “most persistent form.”<sup>103</sup> It is necessarily understood here as influential and pervasive, not marginal. Lastly, and importantly, it is a “specific” discourse.<sup>104</sup> This can help to differentiate between other discourses, such as Orientalism, and balkanism, and refers to a certain supply of balkanist language, themes and images.

Cultural historian Alexander Kiossev adds that the use of ‘Balkan’ “indicates that the Balkans exists as a region with a certain identity established by certain common features.”<sup>105</sup> To further augment our understanding of balkanism, we can say that it should also be considered as an “essentialist” discourse, which emphasises the similarities of the countries and people in the region with the label of ‘Balkan.’<sup>106</sup>

Balkanism, Todorova furthermore argues, uses a “frozen image” of the Balkans; the effect of this is that “while historians are well aware that dramatic changes have occurred on the peninsula, their discourse on the Balkans as a geographic/cultural entity is overwhelmed by a discourse utilizing the construct as a powerful symbol conveniently located outside historical time.”<sup>107</sup> The most common realisation of this “frozen image” is that Balkan history is

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<sup>97</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 397 of 654.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 49.

<sup>100</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 397 of 654.

<sup>101</sup> Hall, *Representation, Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, 3.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 397 of 654.

<sup>104</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 397 of 654.

<sup>105</sup> Alexander Kiossev, “The Dark Intimacy: Maps, Identities, Acts of Identifications” in Bjelić, *Balkan as Metaphor, between Globalization and Fragmentation*, 165.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 26 of 654.

brought to bear on contemporary events.<sup>108</sup> The most relevant example for this thesis being the idea that the wars in the former Yugoslavia were due to “ancient hatreds.” This is explained here by Serbian writer and literary theorist Vesna Goldsworthy: “because of their ‘ancient hatreds,’ the Balkan peoples, irreconcilably divided by different religious and cultural affiliations, are forever fated to be at each other’s throats.”<sup>109</sup> In this way the Balkans are “trapped in their own history.”<sup>110</sup> These representations of the Balkans can be linked to ideas of the start of the First World War (and earlier) through images such as “the continent’s powder-keg.”<sup>111</sup>

Balkanism is argued to be problematic, insofar as it is used to *explain* events related to the Balkans. Todorova argues that balkanism “expresses the idea that explanatory approaches to phenomena in the Balkans often rest upon a discourse or a stable system of stereotypes that place the Balkans in a cognitive straightjacket.”<sup>112</sup> Goldsworthy provides a similar view, which is that “whatever merits such metaphors might have as a shorthand for particular aspects of Balkan history, their uncritical repetition has ensured that conflicts of very different origins and outcomes could blur into a generic ‘Balkan’ war.”<sup>113</sup> We can argue then that the use, or repetition, of balkanist stereotypes is problematic when it works in precluding proper analyses of situations (for instance the causes of wars).

The final aspect of balkanism which is important to consider here is that it is ideological. As alluded to earlier, representing the Balkans also entails representing Europe. Bjelić describes balkanism as working through the processes of “cultural exorcism” and “self-beautification.”<sup>114</sup> In this way he argues that Western and European societies represent the Balkans to rid themselves of their own “inner conflicts... but more importantly, to fall in love with themselves, with a face-lifted capitalism without conflicts.”<sup>115</sup> The important idea to

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Vesna Goldsworthy, “Invention and in(ter)vention: the rhetoric of Balkanization” in Bjelić, *Balkan as Metaphor, between Globalization and Fragmentation*, 26.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>112</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 398 of 654.

<sup>113</sup> Vesna Goldsworthy, “Invention and in(ter)vention: the rhetoric of Balkanization” in Bjelić, *Balkan as Metaphor, between Globalization and Fragmentation*, 28.

<sup>114</sup> Bjelić, *Balkan as Metaphor, between Globalization and Fragmentation*, 9.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.



take from this is that problems which are not ‘Balkan’ in origin are projected on to the peninsula in order to present a cleaner (more beautiful) idea of the West.<sup>116</sup>

It is in this context that Todorova argues that whilst European horrors “especially the Holocaust... are seen as extreme aberrations and not typical consequences of the otherwise rational, liberal, and predictable polity of the West... Yugoslav atrocities, and in general Balkan atrocities, on the contrary, are the expected natural outcomes of a warrior ethos.”<sup>117</sup> The idea expressed here is that European and Balkan actions are explained differently, unequally and unfairly. We can relate this framework back to Keegan’s analysis of the war to see this process in action. Keegan chooses to describe the war as “primitive” because of the actions of “territorial displacement, massacre, deliberate desecration of cultural symbols and systematic mistreatment of women,” however, these actions seem equally applicable to more recent wars, as they are to Stone Age societies.<sup>118</sup> Read in this way Keegan’s representation of the war as a “regression from civilised order” ignores the idea that the war may result from problems that are part of the “civilised order.”<sup>119</sup> In a lecture titled *Can There Be an End to War?* ignoring Western or European histories, and emphasising Balkanist viewpoints over alternative explanations, can become problematic.

### **A typology of balkanism**

Balkanism, as theorised by Todorova, has a long history. She traces the discourse from the use of ‘Balkan’ from a name for a “mountain chain”<sup>120</sup> in 1794 to the Greek War of Independence (from the Ottoman empire) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>121</sup> to the Balkan Wars of 1912-13,<sup>122</sup> and the start of the First World War in 1914.<sup>123</sup> In order to make this history usable in the analysis this thesis will use a typology of balkanism developed by Hansen (Hansen’s work, used to develop the methodology for this thesis, also provides a detailed study on the debate of the 1990s). Hansen’s typology outlines three historical pictures of the Balkans (which are built on “conceptual histories” such as that of Todorova) and two conceptions

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 287-8 of 654.

<sup>118</sup> Keegan, *War and Our World: The Reith Lectures 1998*, 67-8.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 56 of 654.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 169 of 654.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 24.

from the 1990s that she theorises herself from primary materials.<sup>124</sup> The three historical viewpoints on the Balkans are:

a Byronian Romanticism that constituted ‘the Balkans’ as different from the West, as an object of admiration that should not be transformed, but supported by the West in its struggles for independence; a civilizational Enlightenment discourse that constituted ‘the Balkans’ as different from the West but with the capacity for liberal political and economic transformation, a transformation for which the West had a moral responsibility as well as a financial and geopolitical interest; and, finally, a Balkanization discourse that constructed ‘the Balkans’ as radically different and threatening in its capacity to bring chaos and war to the West, as incapable of transformation, and to be isolated and deterred rather than supported.<sup>125</sup>

The “civilizational” and “Balkanization” discourses both hold the West as superior, whilst the “Romantic” discourse, rooted in ideas of Greek independence (hence the name “Byronian”) sees the Balkans as either equal or superior.<sup>126</sup>

Further to these historical viewpoints Hansen theorises two which came to be used in the debates over Bosnia in the 1990s, which were an understanding of the war as “ancient hatred” with one which understands the war as a “genocide.”<sup>127</sup>

‘the Balkan discourse’... constitutes the war in Bosnia as the product of ancient Balkan hatred and hence a conflict that the West could and should not solve. The opposing basic discourse, ‘the Genocide discourse,’ challenges this representation by arguing that the war was a genocide committed by Serbian military and political leaders and that the West had an ethical obligation to come to Bosnia’s rescue.<sup>128</sup>

The key idea behind Hansen’s theorisation of a “genocide discourse” as countering arguments to the “Balkan” discourse in the 1990s is that by understanding the war as a genocide: “the issue is moved out of the realm of the strategic and ‘selfishly national’ and re-located within the ‘higher grounds’ of the morally good.”<sup>129</sup> It works on the idea that in the post-Holocaust world *never again* should be a defining moral principle. The key specific aspects are that this discourse challenges balkanist conceptions “of a uniform ‘Balkan’ space of ‘three factions’ by separating a multicultural and democratic ‘Bosnian victim’ from a ‘Serbian aggressor,’”<sup>130</sup> and furthermore “articulates the war as a genocide, ‘Bosnia’ as a

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<sup>124</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 47.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 85.

multicultural identity, and ‘the West’ as morally responsible yet failing to honour this ethical demand.”<sup>131</sup> A “genocide” discourse then, does three important things in the debate. Firstly, it separates victim and aggressor, therefore abolishing the idea of one warlike Balkan identity. Secondly, it labels one side as to blame for the conflict, and the West as culpable as they failed to stop genocide.

This typology will provide one theoretical vantagepoint from which to view the material gathered.<sup>132</sup> We can already see reflections of the 1990s “genocide” viewpoint in many of the critical works we have already covered.<sup>133</sup> Simms, for example, argues that in the Bosnian War “a European country was destroyed. Tens of thousands of its inhabitants were murdered... the primary and original transgressors were the Serb radical nationalists led by Radovan Karadžić and General Ratko Mladić, and their sponsors in Belgrade.”<sup>134</sup>

One relatively simple, but important problematisation to introduce to this typology is that it only covers events up until 1995, and therefore stops short of this study, and the important context of European enlargement into the Balkans. As we have seen, balkanist arguments were used in the debates on the Yugoslav Wars. The Yugoslav Wars began in 1991, and they mark clearly one instance of balkanist discourse being used. Another key context for understanding balkanism, closely related in time to the beginning of the Yugoslav Wars, is the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War. Hammond argues that this is a key moment in the reappearance of ‘Balkan’ as an idea in the West, stating “there were parts of the old Eastern bloc, most notably the Balkans, which by the early 1990s were already being reviled as an irredeemable other of Western civilisation... The Bosnian War became the defining trope of the post-1989 discourse.”<sup>135</sup> Whilst the Bosnian War played a key part in the proliferation of balkanist discourse, it is important to understand that the impact of the end of the Cold War has also had long-lasting implications on how the peninsula is represented.

Sedef Arat-Koç argues, in “Contesting or Affirming ‘Europe’” that in the context of the end

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>132</sup> The terms *civilizational*, *Romantic*, *Balkanization* and *Genocide discourse* and *Balkan discourse* are used in reference to the definitions outlined here, by Hansen. Ibid., 11.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>134</sup> Simms, *Unfinest Hour : Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia*, xv.

<sup>135</sup> Hammond, *The Balkans and the West, Constructing the European Other, 1945-2003*. xi-xii.

of the Cold War and EU enlargement “there has been an overwhelming preoccupation, even an obsession, with the meaning and boundaries of Europe,” in which balkanism has become increasingly important.<sup>136</sup> Speaking specifically in relation to the 2004 and 2007 enlargements Sellar *et al.* state that in such a context questions arise, such as: “What is ‘Europe’ when its original historico-geographical origins in the oppositions between East and West, between Capitalist and Communist, between Catholic/Protestant and Orthodox have been largely if not completely erased?”<sup>137</sup> This post-Cold War context opens a space in which the Balkans can once again function as an ‘other’ on the outskirts of Europe, against which Europe and its identity can be defined. So, whilst many critical works have aimed to deconstruct arguments stating that “ancient hatreds” caused the Yugoslav Wars, other scholars see a rise in balkanist discourses being used in different ways, linked to a post-1989 Europe.

Hammond, in his essay “Balkanism in political context: From the Ottoman Empire to the EU,” compares the discourses used when representing EU enlargement into the region, and those surrounding the interests of the UK and other great powers in the context of the demise of the Ottoman empire.<sup>138</sup> Hammond’s work, theorises the Balkans (as represented) in both time periods as “a borderland available for Western intervention and control;” he argues that expansion of the EU is underwritten by “a symbolic ordering of the continent that positions the region at a lower level on the evolutionary scale.”<sup>139</sup> Hammond relates this use of the discourse to historical context of the fall of the Ottoman empire, and the fears which the “threat of Russian expansion” into the region caused.<sup>140</sup> Hammond’s argument fits uneasily into any of the types as theorised by Hansen and perhaps is best seen as a differing version of Hansen’s historic concept of a *Balkanization* discourse, which sees the region as problematic, but instead of suggesting it should be “isolated,”<sup>141</sup> suggests a form of colonisation.<sup>142</sup> If we treat Hammond’s work as an alternative “conceptual history” to those used by Hansen, we

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<sup>136</sup> Sedef Arat-Koç, “Contesting or Affirming ‘Europe’? European Enlargement, Aspirations for ‘Europeanness’ and New Identities in the Margins of Europe,” *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 18, no. 2 (2010): 182.

<sup>137</sup> Christian Sellar, Caedmon Staddon, and Craig Young, “Twenty Years after the Wall: Geographical Imaginaries of ‘Europe’ During European Union Enlargement”: 255.

<sup>138</sup> Hammond, “Balkanism in Political Context: From the Ottoman Empire to the EU.”

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-9.

<sup>141</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 42.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

can argue that it can be used to complicate Hansen's "ideal-type" categories.<sup>143</sup>

Hammond and other writers clearly see echoes of balkanism in the EU's expansion.

Todorova, here writing in 2009, offers a theory as to what change has undergone understandings of the region since the end of the Yugoslav Wars:

Now journalists too are becoming more careful of how they articulate opinions about the Balkans. We even have a new politically correct designation: the Western Balkans. While during the Cold War Yugoslavia was neatly exempt from any connection to the Balkans, its civil war in the 1990s was generalized as a Balkan war, although none of the other Balkan countries—Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, even Albania—were in danger of entering it. Now, with the changed political conjuncture, one speaks only about the Western Balkans as a problematic zone, and the rest of the Balkans are exempt from the designation. Thus, while the balkanist rhetoric is still with us, conveniently submerged but readily at hand, it no longer serves power politics. Balkanism has not disappeared, but has shifted, for the time being, from the centre stage of politics.<sup>144</sup>

In a post-Bosnian (and at this point post-Yugoslav) war context Todorova sees balkanism as latent, but always still there, now in a more "politically correct" form.<sup>145</sup> This thesis contends that it is important to study contemporary representations of the region, in order to assess what changes have taken place, how such discourses and representations appear, and to what ends they are used in arguments.

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<sup>143</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 46-7.

<sup>144</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 396 of 654.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 4 Results and Analysis

### An overview of articles

Despite that the war in Bosnia occurred over two decades ago, individual events continued to inspire engagement in the material from 2011-2018. Articles which dealt with the war can be split into three broad subjects: ICTY trials, war remembrance and Bosnia as a foreign policy example. One main area of engagement was war crimes trials at the ICTY. The ICTY was set up in 1993 to prosecute crimes committed during the Yugoslav Wars.<sup>146</sup> Cases at the court that received special attention in the material were those of Bosnian-Serb general Ratko Mladić, and President of Bosnian-Serb Republika Srpska Radovan Karadžić. Remembrance also inspired comment, with specific occasions being the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the commencement of the Bosnian War (April 2012) and the coincidental release of American actor and director Angelina Jolie's war film *In the Land of Blood and Honey*.<sup>147</sup> Bosnia was also used as an example in foreign policy discussions. This was particularly pronounced in relation to the Syrian war, but Bosnia was also used as a parallel to the conflict in Ukraine in 2014 (for example in *The Daily Telegraph*).<sup>148</sup>

Articles found that dealt with Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia and their relationship to Europe dealt with a wider proliferation of subjects. Comment was made on events such as Serbian presidential elections in 2012,<sup>149</sup> civil unrest in Bosnia in 2014,<sup>150</sup> and parliamentary elections in Croatia in 2016.<sup>151</sup> *The Independent* also engaged with Serbian relations with Kosovo throughout the period, publishing, for example, an article dealing with news of Serbian Prime Minister of the time Iвица Dačić agreeing "to cede Serbia's claim of legal authority" over Kosovo (April 2013).<sup>152</sup> Other topics of coverage included the refugee crisis, which brought the region into focus because of the so-called "Balkan route,"<sup>153</sup> and articles dealing with the

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<sup>146</sup> United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, "The Tribunal - Establishment," <http://www.icty.org/en/about/tribunal/establishment>. Accessed 30 Apr. 2018.

<sup>147</sup> Slavenka Drakulić, "Comment: War, Truth and Angelina: A Film About the Bosnian Conflict Was Bound to Draw Controversy When People Still Live in Denial," *The Guardian*, 18 Feb. 2012.

<sup>148</sup> Charles Crawford, "Ukrainians Are the Loser in a Game of Chicken," *The Daily Telegraph*, 27 Aug. 2014.

<sup>149</sup> Editorial, "Balkan Odyssey; Presidential Elections on Sunday Will Be Crucial for Serbia's Journey to Normality," *The Times*, 4 May 2012.

<sup>150</sup> Slavoj Žižek, "Comment: Bosnians Are Crossing Ethnic Lines to Find Justice," *The Guardian*, 11 Feb. 2014.

<sup>151</sup> Paul Mason, "Croatia's Election Is a Warning About the Return of Nationalism to the Balkans," *Ibid.*, 12 September 2016.

<sup>152</sup> Editorial, "A Landmark Deal in the Balkans," *The Independent*, 23 Apr. 2013.

<sup>153</sup> Editorial, "The Guardian View on the Balkans: Hold out a Hand," *The Guardian*, 3 Oct. 2017.

growing influence of Russia as a geopolitical actor in the region, for example in *The Times*.<sup>154</sup> Croatia's 2013 accession to the EU also was commented upon in various ways.

To focus the analysis, the final study was limited to the themes previously outlined: *Genocide or "ancient hatred," Failed reconciliation, Croatia's position in the EU and The Balkans on the edge of Europe*. Whilst the analysis cannot be wholly representative of the range of issues contained in the articles, it will provide insight into specific views which appear pertinently across debates concerning the relationship between Europe and post-war Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia. In the analysis this thesis will trace the general outlines of each theme where relevant by looking at several representations from the body of articles, before assessing how the Balkans are represented in language, and how conceptions of the region and its people are used in advancing arguments in 12 specific examples.

### **Genocide or "ancient hatred"**

The most conspicuous result from an initial reading of the articles is that the conception of the war as "ancient hatred" is rare. The war is resoundingly represented as either a genocide against the Bosnian people, or as a series of crimes perpetrated by leaders against civilians. Articles, particularly those dealing with court cases, attribute violence to specific actors and perpetrators, for example "Mladić's hurricane of violence,"<sup>155</sup> or Karadžić "ordered and authorised murder on a mass scale."<sup>156</sup> To fit this concretely into Hansen's paradigm, the war and its violence, while often discussed in the articles is not understood as typical to the Balkan people, but instead as crimes "committed by Serbian military and political leaders."<sup>157</sup>

Images of "ancient hatred" are not used, and in many cases, are actively resisted. A 2012 editorial from *The Times* argues "from an early stage, Western diplomacy treated the Bosnian war as an explosion of ancient and intractable ethnic hatreds. And that was a fundamental misreading."<sup>158</sup> In other examples these ideas are distanced; *The Times* in another 2012

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<sup>154</sup> Smith, "Putin's Night Wolves Roar into Balkans."

<sup>155</sup> Ed Vulliamy, "Ratko Mladić Will Die in Jail. But Go to Bosnia: You'll See That He Won," *The Guardian*, 22 November 2017.

<sup>156</sup> Vesna Maric, "With Radovan Karadžić Sentenced, Bosnia-Herzegovina Must Move Forward," *Ibid.*, 28 March 2016.

<sup>157</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 11.

<sup>158</sup> Editorial, "Balkan Ghosts; Hague Rightly Compares Assad's Assault to Bosnia," *thetimes.co.uk*, 12 June 2012.

editorial states “they were widely interpreted as a recrudescence of ancient hatreds,”<sup>159</sup> whilst Conservative Member of Parliament Rory Stewart argues in 2013 that “the West was reluctant to intervene because people feared a second Vietnam; or that ‘centuries of ethnic hatred’ would make the situation unresolvable.”<sup>160</sup> Here these arguments are distanced and ascribed to others such as “the West” and “Western diplomacy.”

During the war, Hansen argues, one counter argument to representing the war as a genocide was to argue that “Serbian conduct, while perhaps amounting to ethnic cleansing, did not... amount to ‘genocide.’”<sup>161</sup> It is worth situating this idea in a post-war context. The ICTY in its verdicts has deemed the massacre at Srebrenica to be a genocide, but as Vulliamy argues in *The Observer* in 2016, has not labelled the entire war to as genocide: “What happened to the razed towns of Vlasenica, Bijeljina, Kljuc, Sanski Most, Brcko... was not genocide.”<sup>162</sup> Although genocide as a conviction has only been technically given for crimes in certain areas in Bosnia this idea is not used in arguments. Instead, Srebrenica appears as a representative idea for the whole war: “Mladić’s crimes almost defy imagination. The most infamous is the genocide of 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys at Srebrenica in 1995.”<sup>163</sup> The war is commonly explained in the formulation of *crimes including genocide*, for example, as “a campaign of mass expulsion, torture, rape, murder and genocide of Bosnian Muslims”<sup>164</sup> and as “Genocide and crimes against humanity.”<sup>165</sup> Despite that the whole conflict is not defined as a genocide, it can still be found to be represented in *The Times* as “a *genocidal* assault;” i.e. a war characterised by its genocidal nature.<sup>166</sup>

Within the “genocide discourse” of the 1990s, Hansen argues that the lack of appropriate response from governments in Europe and the US found expression in the idea of the “the failure of the West.”<sup>167</sup> In the material studied the West’s role is often characterised by its

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<sup>159</sup> “Balkan Ghosts; the 20th Anniversary of the Bosnian War Recalls the Terrible Price of the West’s Failure to Oppose Racist Aggression,” *thetimes.co.uk*, 9 April 2012.

<sup>160</sup> Rory Stewart, “A Negotiated Peace Is the Best Solution,” *The Sunday Telegraph*, 8 September 2013.

<sup>161</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 96.

<sup>162</sup> Ed Vulliamy, “I Saw Karadžić’s Camps. I Cannot Celebrate While Many of His Victims Are Denied Justice,” *The Observer*, 27 March 2016.

<sup>163</sup> Editorial, “Butcher of Bosnia; Ratko Mladić’s Conviction Shows That Perpetrators of Genocide Will Be Pursued” *The Times*, 23 Nov. 2017.

<sup>164</sup> “Balkan Ghosts; Hague Rightly Compares Assad’s Assault to Bosnia,” *The Times*, 12 June 2012.

<sup>165</sup> Steve Crawshaw, “Two Decades on, Bosnia’s War Crimes Should Haunt Europe,” *The Independent*, 6 Apr. 2012.

<sup>166</sup> Editorial, “Butcher of Bosnia; Ratko Mladić’s Conviction Shows That Perpetrators of Genocide Will Be Pursued”. My emphasis.

<sup>167</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 120.



inability to prevent genocide. Historian Timothy Garton Ash writes in *The Guardian* “‘Never again!’ we cry. After the second world war. After Rwanda. After Bosnia.”<sup>168</sup> This failing, and the chastisement of the West for its shortcomings draws on its own analogies of the Holocaust, as Hansen argues “‘one’ cannot respond passively to a ‘genocide’ knowing what happened in Auschwitz, the pinnacle of the genocide discourse.”<sup>169</sup> This development is not a new one, after journalist Ed Vulliamy helped to broadcast images of detention camps around the world in 1992, *The Daily Mirror* famously had as its headline “Belsen 92.”<sup>170</sup> And Robison argues that historical comparisons to the Holocaust were common in the 1990s, however they were set against alternative histories, such as those of ancient wars, or Vietnam; she states that “despite the evocative comparisons with Nazis and calls for something to be done it was the historical which said ‘stay out of the Balkans’ which informed policy makers.”<sup>171</sup> In the first example we will see an how language of “ancient hatreds” is actively rejected. Importantly here, in comparison to the 1990s, “ancient hatreds” are not considered as having the potential to account for the violence.

Example 1: In 2017 *The Times* editorial “Butcher of Bosnia; Ratko Mladić’s conviction shows that perpetrators of genocide will be pursued” provides an example illustrating many of the above points.<sup>172</sup> It argues that “Western governments understood too late that the Bosnian conflict was not an inexplicable reassertion of ancient hatreds but a genocidal assault on a captive population.”<sup>173</sup> There is a clear demarcation, just as Hansen theorises, between understanding the war as “ancient hatred” and understanding it as a genocide.

The article argues that the war “was pursued with a savagery unparalleled on this continent since the defeat of Nazi Germany. Yesterday one of the principal agents of that barbarism [Mladić] belatedly met justice.”<sup>174</sup> The description of the war’s violence is made in language that can be considered balkanist (*savage* and *barbaric*). Mladić is furthermore named the

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<sup>168</sup> Timothy Garton Ash, “Comment: We Glimpse in Syria the Ghost of Wars to Come,” *The Guardian*, 25 Apr. 2013.

<sup>169</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 98.

<sup>170</sup> Rainer Schulze, “Why Bergen-Belsen’s 1945 Liberation Is Ingrained in British Memory,” *The Conversation*, 15 Apr. 2015.

<sup>171</sup> Robison, “Putting Bosnia in Its Place: Critical Geopolitics and the Representation of Bosnia in the British Print Media,” 398.

<sup>172</sup> Editorial, “Butcher of Bosnia; Ratko Mladić’s Conviction Shows That Perpetrators of Genocide Will Be Pursued”.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

“butcher of Bosnia,” a common nick-name for him in the UK press. One interpretation to consider is that this naming of Mladić reflects what literary theorist Tomislav Z. Longinović calls a “perverse fascination” with Balkan violence in the West, which he links to the “vampiric myth of exemplary cruelty.”<sup>175</sup> Such signs when used in relation to the Bosnian War, can certainly be related to balkanist representations. However, if we look at the “linking” of these signs, we can see that they are not linked to Mladić’s Balkan identity, but instead to his identity as a General intent on genocide and completely responsible for his actions (he is the “principal agent”).<sup>176</sup> The violence is importantly not linked to a history of tribal warfare, or Balkan vampirism, but instead to a worldwide history of genocide through comparison to “Nazi Germany,” and later in the article to “the depraved rule of President Assad in Syria.”<sup>177</sup> This history is further emphasised by the echoing of the idea of “never again” in the phrase “Bosnia’s torment needs always to be remembered.”<sup>178</sup>

Ethically the article situates itself from what Hansen terms “universal” perspective, where the ultimate concern is to humanity.<sup>179</sup> It advises that “western democracies... cannot afford to allow the planners of genocide to escape consequences.”<sup>180</sup> It labels the war one of aggression (Milošević’s “inflammatory campaign against other nationalities”) and a genocide, carried out by specific actors.<sup>181</sup> From this human perspective the article argues that “the worst of humanity is exemplified in Mladić, Karadžić and Milošević.”<sup>182</sup> To fit this back into Hansen’s theory, the ‘other’ represented in the article is not an generalised tribal other, but is instead the “genocidal leaders.”<sup>183</sup>

In this example we can see representations which follow extremely closely those seen in Hansen’s history of the debate of the 1990s as well as Robison’s ideas of “competing representations” of Bosnia made through different historical analogies.<sup>184</sup> One important

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<sup>175</sup> Tomislav Z. Longinović, “Vampires like us: gothic imaginary and ‘the serbs,’” in Bjelić, *Balkan as Metaphor, between Globalization and Fragmentation*, 52-4.

<sup>176</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 11.

<sup>177</sup> Editorial, “Butcher of Bosnia; Ratko Mladić’s Conviction Shows That Perpetrators of Genocide Will Be Pursued”.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 43.

<sup>180</sup> Editorial, “Butcher of Bosnia; Ratko Mladić’s Conviction Shows That Perpetrators of Genocide Will Be Pursued”.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 100.

<sup>184</sup> Robison, “Putting Bosnia in Its Place: Critical Geopolitics and the Representation of Bosnia in the British Print Media,” 380.

extension that can be made of Hansen's ideas is that this article directly comments on the debate of the 1990s and its failings. In this way, that debate becomes a key "intertextual" reference for this article.<sup>185</sup>

The idea of the war as a genocide is strongly asserted in this article. One important way though to add to Hansen's theorisation of the debate is that the article continues to use balkanist tropes. Violence is termed "wickedness" and "horrors" and *The Times* argues that "Mladić and Karadžić were the *creatures* of Slobodan Milošević."<sup>186</sup> The idea of Balkan violence comes to be embodied by these men (Serb, German and Syrian alike) and can be seen in other examples; Vulliamy in *The Guardian* describes Mladić as "the most bloodthirsty warlord to strut European soil since the Third Reich."<sup>187</sup> In this way previously Balkan violence is "transformed" and neatly attributed to criminal leaders.<sup>188</sup> Here this is rather unproblematic, particularly because of the larger history of genocide it is related to, however the language use does, to some extent, also "reproduce" balkanist tropes.<sup>189</sup>

### **Failed reconciliation**

It is important to further complicate the dichotomy of "ancient hatreds" and genocide.<sup>190</sup> To do so we will look at a key theme which emerged from the articles studied, particularly those dealing with war-crimes trials and war remembrance, which is the idea of failed reconciliation in the region. Focussing on the headlines of articles to assess briefly their topics we can draw out some examples. The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Srebrenica prompted *The Sunday Telegraph* to publish "Haunted by the memories of Srebrenica; Twenty years after the worst massacre of the Bosnian conflict, the process of reconciliation is proving slow."<sup>191</sup> Similarly, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the war proceeded Croatian novelist Slavenka Drakulić writing in *The Guardian* "A film about the Bosnian conflict was bound to draw controversy when people still live in denial."<sup>192</sup> Reactions to the convictions of

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<sup>185</sup> Wodak and Reisigl, "Discourse and Racism," 585.

<sup>186</sup> Editorial, "Butcher of Bosnia; Ratko Mladić's Conviction Shows That Perpetrators of Genocide Will Be Pursued."

<sup>187</sup> Vulliamy, "Ratko Mladić Will Die in Jail. But Go to Bosnia: You'll See That He Won."

<sup>188</sup> De Cillia, Reisigl, and Wodak, "The Discursive Construction of National Identities," 153.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 11.

<sup>191</sup> Dispatch Tom, "Haunted by the Memories of Srebrenica; Twenty Years after the Worst Massacre of the Bosnian ; Conflict, the Process of Reconciliation Is Proving Slow," *The Sunday Telegraph*, 14 June 2015.

<sup>192</sup> Drakulić, "Comment: War, Truth and Angelina: A Film About the Bosnian Conflict Was Bound to Draw Controversy When People Still Live in Denial."

Karadžić and Mladić also included Vulliamy arguing that “Ratko Mladić will die in jail. But go to Bosnia: you’ll see that he won,”<sup>193</sup> and journalist Will Gore writing in *The Independent* “The legacy of the vicious Bosnian war still haunts the region nearly two decades on.”<sup>194</sup>

Failed reconciliation should be taken to mean the inability of different communities to live peaceably together in Bosnia, or within the region more widely. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines reconciliation as both “the action of restoring estranged people or parties to friendship” and “the result of this.”<sup>195</sup> So, alternatively reconciliation can be an *action* and a *result*. ‘Reconciliation’ itself then does not imply either the West, or Bosnia, or the Balkans are responsible as it could refer variously to the West’s “action of restoring estranged people,” the action of the estranged people restoring themselves to peace, or simply the result of the action—a reconciled Bosnia/Balkans. In the following articles (examples 2-5) we will see how differing conceptions of reconciliation can reveal different outlooks on the region, which in turn has certain implications on the Balkan identities presented.

Example 2: *The Times*’ 2012 editorial titled “Balkan Ghosts; The 20th anniversary of the Bosnian War recalls the terrible price of the West’s failure to oppose racist aggression” is rooted in the debate of the 1990s.<sup>196</sup> *The Times* actively rejects theories of “ancient hatreds,” representing them as the “fears” of politicians:

Because the Balkan wars of the 1990s accompanied the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation, they were widely interpreted as a recrudescence of ancient hatreds... Western politicians and generals feared that defending the integrity of Bosnia risked a “quagmire” comparable to US intervention in Vietnam... The roots of the conflict were less abstruse than these sophisticates supposed. They came down overwhelmingly to one man, Slobodan Milošević.<sup>197</sup>

The ethical perspective in the article, once again mirroring closely Hansen’s analysis, is that of a human responsibility to stop genocide.<sup>198</sup> The failing to oppose what the article explicitly labels as “racist aggression” is put down to the over-analysis and failed sophistication of the

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<sup>193</sup> Ed Vulliamy, “Ratko Mladić Will Die in Jail. But Go to Bosnia: You’ll See That He Won,” *Ibid.*, 22 November 2017.

<sup>194</sup> Will Gore, “Ratko Mladić Has Been Brought to Justice - but His Atrocities Should Have Been Prevented in the First Place,” *The Independent*, 22 November 2017.

<sup>195</sup> “Oxford English Dictionary, the Definitive Record of the English Language,” (S.l.: Oxford University Press, 1990). s.v. “reconciliation.”

<sup>196</sup> Editorial, “Balkan Ghosts; the 20th Anniversary of the Bosnian War Recalls the Terrible Price of the West’s Failure to Oppose Racist Aggression,” *The Times*, 9 Apr. 2012.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 11.

West.

The article's focus, however, is on the present situation. Its explicit warning is that the "leadership of the Republika Srpska... now threatens to secede, in effect completing Milošević's malign vision."<sup>199</sup> Western governments, it argues, "remain complacent about atavistic forces that threaten to carve an irredentist Serb enclave from Bosnian territory."<sup>200</sup> Here, the Balkan violence of the wars is given a clear successor in the leadership of Republika Srpska, whose views are labelled "atavistic" (from atavist: "of or pertaining to a remote ancestor.")<sup>201</sup> Thus the genocidal nature of the Bosnian-Serb leaders of the Bosnian War is brought to define the current Bosnian-Serb leaders.

*The Times* makes the point that the actions undertaken by the West "did not then, and cannot now, approximate to anything recognisable as Britain's national interest or the ideals of the European family of nations."<sup>202</sup> The article is critical of Europe and the West and implies that the ethical responsibility now is to keep Bosnia intact in the face of those it sees as fundamentally a continuation of Milošević, Karadžić and Mladić. The article reflects the image of the past onto the present leaders. With a perceived continuation of nationalism, this article takes the possibility to link the Bosnian-Serb leaders of today with those of the past and represent them as their natural heirs.

Example 3: The following example also deals with the idea of contemporary Bosnian leaders and their similarities to those of the 1990s. Vesna Maric writes in 2012 in *The Guardian* that "Bosnia must move on: As picnicking war tourists ingest tales from two decades of horror, it's time to change the story."<sup>203</sup> The article was occasioned by the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the war, and the release of *Blood and Honey*, and it subverts balkanist understandings in order to criticise the current leaders of Bosnia.

The article focusses firstly, through a critical appraisal of war tourism, on how tourists wish

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> "Balkan Ghosts; Hague Rightly Compares Assad's Assault to Bosnia."

<sup>201</sup> "Oxford English Dictionary, the Definitive Record of the English Language." s.v. "atavic."

<sup>202</sup> "Balkan Ghosts; the 20th Anniversary of the Bosnian War Recalls the Terrible Price of the West's Failure to Oppose Racist Aggression."

<sup>203</sup> Vesna Maric, "Comment: Bosnia Must Move On: As Picnicking War Tourists Ingest Tales from Two Decades of Horror, It's Time to Change the Story," *The Guardian*, 6 Apr. 2012.

to consume Bosnia; saying that the “curious traveller” can have “a picnic *en route* to Srebrenica, dinners with local genocide survivors, plus bus tours along the old front lines.”<sup>204</sup> Maric continues by representing Jolie’s film as one which perpetuates balkanist stereotypes, arguing Jolie: “vacuum-packs the clichés that put the country, and the region, in the ‘beyond help’ category... [and] renders her Serb protagonist a reluctant villain overpowered by a father made rotten by the historic ethnic hatred.”<sup>205</sup> Balkanist stereotypes are conceived of as mere “clichés,” “labels” and products of the Western imagination.<sup>206</sup>

Maric, however, takes this further and suggests that this Balkan identity is performed and perpetuated by local politicians: “at a visit to the parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina, local politicians introduce the current political crisis as the continuation of the 1990s war, which itself was a product of the region’s previous wars, and will probably be a forefather of many wars to come.”<sup>207</sup> Maric’s argument is similar to that employed by Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, who argues that filmmakers since the Yugoslav Wars have offered “to the Western gaze what it likes to see in the Balkans—a mythical spectacle of eternal, primordial passions, of the vicious cycle of hate and love.”<sup>208</sup> Maric indeed argues that the Bosnian politicians show the West what they want to see of Bosnia: a war-torn mess. Maric’s article gives a clear example of identity being “deconstructed” through discourse.<sup>209</sup> Maric deconstructs the idea of Balkan identity, and reconstructs it as composed of “those interested in progress and true reconciliation” whose best efforts are frustrated by those who perform a Balkan, nationalist identity; “flag-wavers whose rhetoric permeates every aspect of life.”<sup>210</sup>

Maric divides Bosnian identity between the nationalist politicians and “the people” of Bosnia, destroying images of a nationalist Balkan ‘other’, perpetuated by Jolie, and recasting the problem as one of bad politicians (Hansen argues that “a split between leaders and people” is common in foreign policy discourses).<sup>211</sup> Finally, she warns that the leaders may end up

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Slavoj Žižek, “Underground, or Ethnic Cleansing as a Continuation of Poetry by Other Means,” *InterCommunication* 18 (1997). [http://www.nttcc.or.jp/pub/ic\\_mag/ic018/intercity/zizek\\_E.html](http://www.nttcc.or.jp/pub/ic_mag/ic018/intercity/zizek_E.html). Accessed on 1 May 2018

<sup>209</sup> De Cillia, Reisigl, and Wodak, “The Discursive Construction of National Identities,” 153.

<sup>210</sup> Maric, “Comment: Bosnia Must Move On: As Picnicking War Tourists Ingest Tales from Two Decades of Horror, It’s Time to Change the Story.”

<sup>211</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 166.

actually ‘balkanising’ Bosnia themselves by being so out of touch: “If the politicians of Bosnia-Herzegovina don’t do anything to change their divisive rhetoric and tackle the perception that its people are warmongering nationalists, the idea that the only spark that is flickering 20 years on is that of ethnic hatred may well prove to be true.”<sup>212</sup>

Bosnia is represented as having potential for change which is frustrated by its politicians. It is their performance that has, in Maric’s simile, “meant Bosnia-Herzegovina’s history is like a pair of cement shoes its people have to wear.”<sup>213</sup> The failure of reconciliation is not down to inherent Balkan identity, but capering politicians, and the Bosnian people are represented as having the ability to realise their own future. Whilst the previous example from *The Times* represents current leaders as a natural continuation of those in the 1990s, Maric’s article complicates and contests this notion by representing stereotypical Balkan identity as performed and unnatural.

Gallagher argues of the debate of the 1990s that “the view that desperate of criminally minded leaders simply reflected the outlook of the populations they ruled... became an article of faith for leading Western statesmen.”<sup>214</sup> In the previous two examples dealing with failures of reconciliation we can begin to see how the argument in *The Times* (example 2) becomes problematic. It does not, as Maric does, consider any role of the Bosnian citizenry, and instead represents the country as one in which the “atavistic forces” of nationalism can operate if left unchecked.<sup>215</sup> Whilst both articles assess Bosnia’s future, the article appearing in *The Times* focusses on a solution from without (defending Bosnia from secessionist Serbs), whereas Maric’s article focusses on building reconciliation from within and the possibility of “transformation” of Bosnia.<sup>216</sup> The examples 4 and 5 also deal with reconciliation, and in them the question of whether it should come from within or without reveals differing stances on Balkan identity.

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<sup>212</sup> Maric, “Comment: Bosnia Must Move On: As Picnicking War Tourists Ingest Tales from Two Decades of Horror, It’s Time to Change the Story.”

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Tom Gallagher, “Milošević, Serbia and the West during the Yugoslav Wars, 1991-1995” in Hammond, *The Balkans and the West, Constructing the European Other, 1945-2003*, 157.

<sup>215</sup> Editorial, “Balkan Ghosts; Hague Rightly Compares Assad’s Assault to Bosnia.”

<sup>216</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 43.

Example 4: The following example is from an editorial published in *The Telegraph* after the televised in-court suicide of Bosnian-Croat General Slobodan Praljak in November 2017:

The wider scandal [than the suicide]... is the extent to which the ICTY has failed in its original mission to mete out widely accepted justice and so sow reconciliation among the Balkans' different ethnic and sectarian groups. The depressing truth is that, almost a quarter of a century on from the fighting which saw so many grotesque crimes committed—on all sides—much of the Balkans is as divided as ever.<sup>217</sup>

Here the responsibility for reconciliation is clearly conceived of as belonging to the international community, embodied here by the ICTY. The people of the Balkans (explicitly defined as “different ethnic and sectarian groups”) are considered passive and not in control of their own fates; justice is to be “mete[d]” out by the ICTY. Their passivity is further emphasised in the agricultural metaphor in which the ICTY acts as farmer, sowing reconciliation, peace and justice, concepts linked to a civilisation and order. We would expect the sowed justice to grow, however the potential implied in the metaphor is not realised.

Whilst the failure is that of the ICTY, no reasons are given for this failure. Instead simply the emotively described “depressing truth” of the region is presented. The article makes repeated use of the passive voice, in sentences such as “in Serbia, convicted war criminals are lauded as heroes” and “[nationalists] have been welcomed back to the Serb parliament.”<sup>218</sup> This has the effect of making nationalism in Serbia seem an ingrained quality of, in this case, Serb identity. The text is punctuated with returns: nationalists “returned to power,” and they are “welcomed *back*.”<sup>219</sup> Here, importantly viewed in the context of the article, the Balkans are a problematic backwards ‘other,’ they are stubbornly resisting Western attempts to bring reconciliation, and returning to old nationalistic ways.

Whilst individual perpetrators of crimes during the war are named, for instance Praljak himself, present day actions are ascribed to groups of people such as “nationalists,” “many in Belgrade,” “Serbs” or people “across the Balkans.”<sup>220</sup> This creates an interesting division, in which the past violence of the war is conceived of as a crime attributable to specific actors, but where growing nationalism and potential instabilities in the region are attributable to national or regional groups. The article refers to the region simply as “the Balkans,” arguing

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<sup>217</sup> “War Crime Trials Have Failed to Bring Reconciliation to the Balkans,” *telegraph.co.uk*, November 29 2017.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid. My emphasis.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.



that “across the Balkans the refusal to accept culpability for crimes... is both enduring and widespread.”<sup>221</sup> Here, the denial of crimes in Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia is something brought to bear upon the entire region.

On top of conceiving reconciliation as a task for the West, the idea of failed reconciliation provides a clear opening for a balkanist argument—resembling a modified form of arguments seen in the 1990s—that the “ancient hatreds” are resurfacing as nationalism in the Balkan environment. Continuing denial of war crimes is not attributable to any failings in the West, but instead just acts to illustrate the “depressing truth” of the countries in which war criminals are martyrs.

Example 5: An article by Vulliamy “Radovan Karadžić awaits his verdict, but this is two-tier international justice,” published before the announcement of the verdict for Karadžić in the ICTY deals with failed reconciliation, and Balkan identities, in a markedly different way.<sup>222</sup> It deals with facts like those included in the editorial from *The Telegraph*. It assesses reconciliation and the failures of the ICTY and describes a situation in Bosnia where the events of the wars are key to the identities of different communities: “Bosnian Croats whooped and celebrated the liberty of Gotovina while spitting their outrage at that of Perišić; Bosnian Serbs did exactly the reverse.”<sup>223</sup> Importantly though, these facts are interpreted in a different way. Here specific reasons are given for the failure of reconciliation. Vulliamy states “the tribunal’s extra-judicial brief: that it not only judge those accused, but also promote reconciliation... has not happened in a land still riven by partition as dictated by the vanities of the Dayton peace agreement.”<sup>224</sup> This formulation warrants a close comparison with *The Telegraph*’s article: “The depressing truth is that, almost a quarter of a century on... much of the Balkans is as divided as ever.”<sup>225</sup> Vulliamy’s article presents the division of Bosnia not as a result of Balkan stubbornness, but instead as down to Western failures and the “vanities” of the Dayton Accords. Whereas *The Telegraph* refers to “the Balkans” as divided (due to sectarianism), Vulliamy uses the metaphor of Bosnia as “riven,” or ripped to pieces. Vulliamy conceptualises Bosnia’s division in terms of its position as a victim of

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ed Vulliamy, “Opinion: Radovan Karadžić Awaits His Verdict, but This Is Two-Tier International Justice,” *The Guardian*, 1 Oct. 2014.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Editorial, “War Crime Trials Have Failed to Bring Reconciliation to the Balkans.”

Karadžić, (a victimhood which has been enshrined by the West's involvement). Temporally the responsibility for problems in Bosnia are located in 1995 with specific policy mistakes, compared to being found in a return to a Balkans "outside historical time"<sup>226</sup> implied in "as divided as ever."<sup>227</sup>

Furthermore, Vulliamy's article turns the shortcomings of international justice into a critical tool with which to attack Western regimes:

The most severe doubt about the ICTY... is who gets prosecuted in the brave new world of human rights... The questions remain, beyond Karadžić; Why Charles Taylor and not Blair, Bush or the Israeli bomber command that targeted schools in Lebanon and civilian shelters in Gaza?<sup>228</sup>

Here too, Vulliamy writes from a "universal" perspective of human rights, the important difference, however, comes in how the West is viewed.<sup>229</sup> *The Telegraph's* article takes an uncritical stance to international modes of justice, Vulliamy on the other hand is critical and sees them as Western modes of justice. In terms of Bjelić's idea of balkanism as a process of "self-beautification" of the West, we can say that whilst *The Telegraph* ignores the faults of the West, and writes them onto the Balkans, the second does not rely upon the assumption of its superiority.<sup>230</sup>

This difference can have important implications. Longinović's argument that "the supposedly unbiased and universal system of international justice, exemplified by the work in the [ICTY] displays a clear moral double standard," is one that can clearly be used to sustain denial or revision of crimes.<sup>231</sup> Both articles depict reconciliation in Bosnia as a failure, however *The Telegraph* assumes the superiority of Western institutions and the turning of "Balkan" people to nationalism, whilst Vulliamy's article is clearly critical towards the West and argues it undermines itself in its hypocrisy.

In the necessarily few examples given here of articles which deal with the fall-out of the Bosnian War, we can see that the impact of the debate of the 1990s is a key point of

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<sup>226</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 26 of 654.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Vulliamy, "Opinion: Radovan Karadžić Awaits His Verdict, but This Is Two-Tier International Justice."

<sup>229</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 43.

<sup>230</sup> Bjelić, *Balkan as Metaphor, between Globalization and Fragmentation*, 9.

<sup>231</sup> Tomislav Z. Longinović, "Vampires like us: gothic imaginary and 'the serbs,'" in Ibid., 55-6.

reference. However, while past violence is almost exclusively interpreted as a genocide, representations of contemporary Bosnia reveal balkanist viewpoints appearing, or being resisted in different arguments, especially when dealing with the idea of returning nationalism. Whether nationalism is considered a continuation of Balkan problems becomes a key issue in these accounts. The remaining examples will move away from articles which deal directly with the war in Bosnia to those which deal with political developments in Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia since the war.

### **Croatia's position in the EU**

One theme picked out for specific attention because of its importance is the position of Croatia in the EU. It is important to study here because Croatia's membership marks a radical change in the relationship between Europe and the region in the 1990s. Selected for close analysis are two conflicting viewpoints on Croatian accession in 2013: *The Independent's* 2013 editorial "A welcome day for the champions of Europe;"<sup>232</sup> and Conservative politician (and eventual foreign secretary of the UK) Boris Johnson's 2012 article in *The Daily Telegraph* "A beautiful nation is placing its head in the Brussels noose;"<sup>233</sup> as well as author and journalist Paul Mason's article for *The Guardian* on Croatia's 2016 elections "Croatia's election is a warning about the return of nationalism to the Balkans."<sup>234</sup> Examples 6 and 7 will deal with Croatia's 2013 accession, and example 8 will assess Mason's opinion of it three years on.

Example 6: *The Independent's* article "A welcome day for the champions of Europe; in Croatia, Brussels Is a Beacon Standing for Higher Standards of Governance" represents the EU as a positive influence on the Balkans.<sup>235</sup> Croatia is described as being located in "the opposite corner of our continent," and the Balkans as "Europe's south-east corner."<sup>236</sup> The UK and the Balkans are both represented as European, but the Balkans appears as an 'other'

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<sup>232</sup> "A Welcome Day for the Champions of Europe; in Croatia, Brussels Is a Beacon Standing for Higher Standards of Governance," *The Independent*, 30 June 2013.

<sup>233</sup> Boris Johnson, "A Beautiful Nation Is Placing Its Head in the Brussels Noose," *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 Sept. 2012.

<sup>234</sup> Paul Mason, "Croatia's Election Is a Warning About the Return of Nationalism to the Balkans," *The Guardian*, 12 September 2016.

<sup>235</sup> "A Welcome Day for the Champions of Europe; in Croatia, Brussels Is a Beacon Standing for Higher Standards of Governance."

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

on Europe's outer edges, or in Todorova's terms the "other within."<sup>237</sup>

The article uses several spatial metaphors which conjure up images of the outside being brought to the centre. It argues that the "popular confidence in the transforming power of the 'EU magnet' is not misplaced."<sup>238</sup> The EU here is perceived of as not only having the power to draw what is on the periphery to the centre, but also as having the power to transform. Croatia is represented as moving towards Europe: it is "tempted *into*" the "EU tent" and "*joining*" the EU "club."<sup>239</sup> Croatia is depicted not only as moving through metaphorical space towards Europe and away from its outskirts, but also as temporally moving away from its violent past: "this is a remarkable development given that this is a country that was in the news two decades ago for all the wrong reasons. Then it was still in the throes of the bloody war that followed the dissolution of Yugoslavia."<sup>240</sup> A dual movement is constructed which shows Croatia as moving away from the fringes of Europe and temporally away from past violence towards European peace.

This movement towards the centre is one that other Balkan countries (here referred to simply as "the Balkans") are represented as "striving" for.<sup>241</sup> It is constructed with a metaphor of "the EU finishing line" which portrays the EU as the ultimate endpoint for other Balkan countries.<sup>242</sup> The movement in the article is also away from qualities such as corruption and the article further argues: "If nationalism and ethnic and religious hatred are no longer the powerful forces in the Balkans that they were, it is largely down to the healing effect of a joint striving towards a shared European goal."<sup>243</sup> In this construction the people of the countries become passive and subject to different forces; twenty years ago, it was the forces of ethnic hatred, now instead they pursue European goals. The force of ethnic and religious hatred is considered as something simply replaced by the attraction of the EU.

The article is written in response to "Eurosceptics" and suggests they should try to see the EU from a Balkan viewpoint: "Incredibly, from the perspective of Britain, where the EU has

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<sup>237</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 390 of 654.

<sup>238</sup> "A Welcome Day for the Champions of Europe; in Croatia, Brussels Is a Beacon Standing for Higher Standards of Governance."

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

become a byword for waste and over-regulation, the word ‘Brussels’ has opposite connotations in the Balkans.”<sup>244</sup> The argument here is that Eurosceptics in Britain do not appreciate the EU, however it is couched in a highly Eurocentric (or Western-Eurocentric) construction which holds the Balkans as inferior to Britain as bureaucracy, for the Balkans (but not Britain) is better than that which “people can expect from their own leaders, if left to their own devices.”<sup>245</sup>

The overarching metaphor in the article is that of “the European flame” and the “Brussels beacon.”<sup>246</sup> These representations clearly conceive of the Balkans from a “civilizational”<sup>247</sup> viewpoint, using classic civilising language reminiscent of Joseph Conrad’s colonial fiction where in the Congo, colonists have the vision that “each station should be like a beacon on the road towards better things, a centre for trade of course, but also for humanizing, improving, instructing.”<sup>248</sup> The metaphor of the title—“Brussels is a beacon”—can be best analysed as Europe having ethical responsibility towards Croatia and by extension the rest of “the Balkans” (a particularly problematic label in this case considering Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Greece are all EU members). Brussels, a shining light, should help Croatia navigate potential dangers, and bring it out from the darkness.

Example 7: Johnson’s article in *The Daily Telegraph* adopts a different view of Europe and the Croatia. Johnson uses a “Romantic”<sup>249</sup> perspective to describe Croatia, lamenting the introduction of the Euro (currency) and referring to “beautiful, innocent banknotes” (Kuna).<sup>250</sup> He describes the people and the scene in highly romanticised terms: “the people were friendly, and somehow combined all the virtues of Slavic and Mediterranean culture and physique. You could see why Roman emperors had chosen to build their palaces on the coast of Dalmatia.”<sup>251</sup> Croatia is termed as a victim to the EU, it is “a lamb being led to the slaughter” and Johnson argues that “this new, proud sovereign state... must place her neck in the noose of the single currency.”<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 11.

<sup>248</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 1899 ed. (New York: Global Classics, 2014), 33. Kindle.

<sup>249</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 11.

<sup>250</sup> Johnson, “A Beautiful Nation Is Placing Its Head in the Brussels Noose.”

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

Johnson's language and conception of the Yugoslav Wars recalls the debates of the 1990s. His article is the only one observed in the material that overtly states that the breakup of Yugoslavia "was certainly about the revival of 'ancient ethnic hatreds', in the sense that there was plenty of latent poison to be potentiated by maniacs like Milošević," and furthermore re-asserts an idea roughly relating to the equivalence of guilt, by stating "there were no good guys in that psychotic conflict... members of all religious and ethnic groups... exhibited varying degrees of awfulness."<sup>253</sup> Whilst the article is difficult to penetrate because of the sacrilegious tone (it refers to, for instance, the highly sensitive issue of Operation Storm as "the operation that booted the Serbs out of the Krajina"), it is important to highlight that the debate over the EU in Britain is projected onto Croatia.<sup>254</sup> As Johnson later emerged as a key figure in securing the UK's exit from the EU, we can consider this as a pre-cursor to similar Euro-sceptic arguments.

The key to understanding Johnson's article is to consider his conception of the nation and national identity; for Johnson national self-determination is key. He states the war "was also about nationalism—the furious desire of one group of people not to be subject to another. It was about the rights of national minorities... and their struggle against the majoritarian tyranny—whether from Belgrade, Zagreb, or even Sarajevo."<sup>255</sup> Whilst Johnson is speaking of the Yugoslav Wars as a whole, his reference to Sarajevo means we can infer he is speaking about, at least in part, the Bosnian War, and in that way, he offers a completely different reading to those seen in previous examples by representing the war as one of various wars fought by national minorities for their freedom.<sup>256</sup>

Johnson's main argument is that "the euro makes an absolute mockery of independence, self-determination—all the things so many Croats fought and died for" and that "to submit to the euro would be a stunning refusal to learn the grim lessons of recent Balkan history."<sup>257</sup> Johnson argues that trying to impose a federation (Yugoslavia) onto national peoples is what is to be avoided at all costs. In this way he argues that the Euro represents a repetition of the

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Editorial, "Balkan Ghosts; the 20th Anniversary of the Bosnian War Recalls the Terrible Price of the West's Failure to Oppose Racist Aggression."

<sup>257</sup> Johnson, "A Beautiful Nation Is Placing Its Head in the Brussels Noose."

Dinar in communist Yugoslavia. The natural state of Croatia, it is assumed, should be the idealised and romanticised nation. Johnson stresses the Croatia's national continuity, since medieval times—"the Kuna is named after the word for a pine marten, whose pelt was used in medieval Croatia"—and Yugoslavia as a disastrous break from this.<sup>258</sup>

Johnson's example, is very much an outlier within the articles studied, however it does show that balkanist language of "ancient hatreds" remains a discursive instrument in contemporary debates and can be mobilised in a Euro-sceptic (pro-nationalist) argument. Similarly, the article from *The Independent* (example 7) gives an example of civilising logics underpinning understandings of the region and its place in relation to Europe and the EU to make a point about the UK.

Example 8: Mason's 2016 article "Croatia's election is a warning about the return of nationalism to the Balkans; With xenophobia and regional tensions on the rise, the EU has to get tough with the new Croatian government—all cultural nods and winks towards second world war fascism must go" deals with Croatia's position in Europe three years after their accession to the EU.<sup>259</sup>

He argues that in 2016:

What's new is the return of nationalism. By 2013, Croatia's conservative nationalist politicians had made enough liberal noises to convince Brussels they could meet the basic criteria for EU membership. Since then, they've been sucked into the surge of nationalist rivalry that's gripped the Balkans.<sup>260</sup>

Croatia's politics is represented as a continuation of its Second World War fascist history. Its accession to the EU is represented as down to fraudulent "liberal noises."<sup>261</sup> The situation now is described as a "return of nationalism," and a time when "regional tensions [are] on the rise" and "nationalist rivalry" grips "the Balkans."<sup>262</sup> The article only explicitly references Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia, however speaks repeatedly of "the Balkans" and "the region" in general terms. Whether this "nationalist rivalry" is present across the whole region is a question the article does not engage with. That nationalism is represented as returning implies

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Mason, "Croatia's Election Is a Warning About the Return of Nationalism to the Balkans."

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

that it is the norm for the region and what is happening in 2016 is represented as an extension of the 1990s. Mason argues that:

If this were just a recrudescence of the Balkan ethnic conflict of the 1990s, it would be bad enough. But it comes on top of years of economic failure, amid growing geopolitical tension, and rising xenophobia in the face of the refugee crisis.<sup>263</sup>

More than just a recrudescence, or continuation, of the fighting of the 1990s, this Mason argues is potentially worse. Furthermore, “rising xenophobia” could be argued as a Europe-wide issue, however here it is considered only as in terms of Croatia and as a Balkan phenomenon.

The article also represents the region as the frontline with higher stakes than the 1990s:

Meanwhile, Croatia has joined the EU. As a result, the Balkans today have become a more clearly diplomatic and systemic frontline than they were in 1995, when the wars ended.<sup>264</sup>

The ultimate ethical responsibility expressed in the article is one of European security and this is expressed through the balkanist “fear of European great power entrapment.”<sup>265</sup> Mason posits, that if violence was to break out again, or as he terms it “if the Balkans goes wrong again” then “Croatia as an EU member would have the right to call for support under the mutual defence clause of the Lisbon treaty, and all EU members would have the obligation to support it.” In short Croatia, the Balkan “other within,” may drag the entire EU into a (typical) Balkan, nationalist war.<sup>266</sup>

Temporally the article’s position is that there has been no change in Croatia, or for the Balkans countries more widely, who are portrayed as duping the EU for membership: “the region’s politicians, be they corrupt, chauvinist or simply incompetent, know that by ticking a few boxes on an EU checklist they can advance the process of accession with only paper reforms.”<sup>267</sup> The anxiety revealed here is that backwards Balkan nations may trick their way into the EU. Rather than presenting the EU membership as an equal organisation of states, the EU has been tricked into lowering its “accession standards” by canny “Balkan” politicians

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 96.

<sup>266</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 390 of 654.

<sup>267</sup> Mason, “Croatia’s Election Is a Warning About the Return of Nationalism to the Balkans.”



(Croatian or otherwise).<sup>268</sup> The region is represented as an “other within,” that has even tricked its way in by hiding its backwardness.<sup>269</sup>

That the region is conceptualised as stuck in time is further emphasised by its inability to “heal” after the wars: “the assumption that globalisation, economic growth and time would heal the region is looking more uncertain than at any point since the peace deal.”<sup>270</sup> The use of the bodily metaphor of healing (a natural process which should be expected) holds the expected outcome of the “peace deal” (as well as economic growth) as reconciliation. Importantly in this construction the peace deal is not critically engaged with, and neither is the West’s role in the war of the 1990s.<sup>271</sup> Using phrases such as “If Europe wants to make the Balkans work” the Balkans is clearly represented as something that Europe must control. Mason finally argues “what is vital is for western European democracies to engage with the Balkans and promote democratic culture and institutions. It was, ultimately, US diplomacy that imposed the peace of 1995. Today it is squarely the EU’s task to maintain it.”<sup>272</sup> In this logic the only stop to the violence of the 1990s was an “imposed” peace, and this is what the EU must “maintain.” Croatia, and “the region” are represented as frozen into peace by external actors and if the EU does not carry out its task, the natural conclusion will be war once more.

Importantly in this article the engagement is not one of dialogue but instead entails robust action to bring Croatia up to European standards: “the EU must be prepared... to trigger the Article 7 processes that can see member countries... ultimately be suspended from membership.”<sup>273</sup> The article reflects Hansen’s conceptualisation of a “Balkanization discourse” in which the Balkans are “incapable of transformation, and to be isolated and deterred.”<sup>274</sup> If Croatia does fall back into what are represented as its old ways, it is to be ostracised from the EU.

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 390 of 654.

<sup>270</sup> Mason, “Croatia’s Election Is a Warning About the Return of Nationalism to the Balkans.”

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Mason, “Croatia’s Election Is a Warning About the Return of Nationalism to the Balkans.”

<sup>274</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 42.

## The Balkans on the edge of Europe

The theme of the *Balkans on the edge of Europe* can be split into two similar parts. That is articles dealing with the region as a site in geopolitical games, and those dealing with the region during the refugee crisis. Many of the articles examined here share similarities with the “civilizational” perspective seen in *The Independent*’s treatment of Croatian Accession.<sup>275</sup> However, where the moment of accession for Croatia was represented there as a celebration, the following examples tend more towards dealing with the region as a site of anxiety on Europe’s edges, much as Mason’s example does.

Turning firstly to the sub-theme of *the region as a site in geopolitical games* we can see that many articles deal with the influence of geopolitical actors in the region, mainly, but not always Russia. The Balkans here can be represented as an area of weakness on the “doorstep” of Europe,<sup>276</sup> a place in which Russia can flex its muscles and a potential “frontline” between Russia and Europe.<sup>277</sup> In these representations, the Balkans are defined by their position in-between the East and Europe.

The Balkans appear as an area that causes anxiety in many articles in *The Times*, in which Russia in particular is shown as having influence in the region. This positioning is taken up in articles in such as “Putin’s Night Wolves roar into Balkans” in which Hannah Lucinda Smith represents the region as one scene of competition “as Russia and the EU vie for influence along Europe’s eastern fringe.”<sup>278</sup> The UK’s former Minister of State for Europe, for the Labour Party, Denis MacShane writes in *The Independent* in 2017 that “the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, stoked up the tension by warning of ‘a new armed conflict’ in the region,” using the metaphor of the region as a fire, and Russia as adding the fuel.<sup>279</sup> MacShane further emphasises Serb susceptibility to Russian influence: “The Serbs remain close to their fellow Orthodox believers in Russia and are hoping that President Trump will side with Russia and Serb nationalists against the rest of the region,”<sup>280</sup> whilst an editorial in *The Times* in 2012 states that “Mr Nikolić [President of Serbia from 2012-2017]... once

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Editorial, “The Guardian View on the Balkans: Hold out a Hand,” *The Guardian*, 3 Oct. 2017.

<sup>277</sup> Edward Lucas, “Russia Has Stolen a March in the Arctic Race,” *thetimes.co.uk*, May 19 2017.

<sup>278</sup> Smith, “Putin’s Night Wolves Roar into Balkans.”

<sup>279</sup> Denis MacShane, “Tension Is Growing between Kosovo and Serbia, and Now Trump Might Make It Worse,” *The Independent*, 24 Jan. 2017.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

declared that he would prefer to see Serbia become a province of Russia.”<sup>281</sup>

The following two examples will show how the Balkans appears as a cause for anxiety because of its geographical position. Whilst the examples can be said to “reproduce”<sup>282</sup> this image of the Balkans to varying degrees they also operationalise this representation to make an argument for expansion of Western institutions (NATO and the EU). The analysis focusses on articles insofar as they express an opinion on Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia, however, it is common in the articles studied to incorporate these countries into a wide picture of “the Balkans” as a region of anxiety.

Example 9: In “Russia has stolen a march in the arctic race; After meddling in western elections with impunity, Moscow is not outflanking us in the far north and the Balkans” (*The Times*, 2017) author and journalist Edward Lucas imagines a Western self composed of the UK, France, Germany and the US, and a geopolitical ‘other’ of Russia, summed up in the formulation: “Moscow is now outflanking us.”<sup>283</sup> Spatially the countries of the Balkans are imagined as “frontline states;” emphasising the position of the Balkans as between East and the West.<sup>284</sup>

The West’s ethical responsibility is perceived as to defend itself against Russia. This conception is revealed in the military image of “outflanking”, and the anxiety that in Serbia “Russia could regain a serious *bastion* of influence in the region.”<sup>285</sup> Serbia is highlighted as a place where Russia can gain influence most easily, but no reason is given for this apart from that it is the “most pro-Russian country.”<sup>286</sup> Serbia is constructed as susceptible to Russia, which “is dangling the possibility of gas and weapons deals;” in this metaphor Serbia is made passive and not represented as able to choose, but rather following, as a donkey may do for a dangled carrot.<sup>287</sup>

Furthermore, the West is chastised for being inattentive: “sheltered by a cloak of western

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<sup>281</sup> Editorial, “Balkan Ghosts; Serb Voters Revive a Nationalist Cause That Has Served the Region Ill,” *The Times*, 22 May 2012.

<sup>282</sup> De Cillia, Reisigl, and Wodak, “The Discursive Construction of National Identities,” 153.

<sup>283</sup> Lucas, “Russia Has Stolen a March in the Arctic Race.”

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

apathy and inattention, the Kremlin is also making mischief in parts of the former Yugoslavia.”<sup>288</sup> In this conception, the Balkans (here defined by Lucas as the former Yugoslavia) is reduced simply to a front-line between East and West, where Russia can cause problems and the West has not paid attention. In another article for *The Times* Lucas reiterates this conceptualisation of the situation, stating: “In the western Balkans, Russia backs the Serb nationalists in Bosnia and pumps money into media and politics in Serbia itself” and that “as a result, NATO and EU enlargement, the best route to stability in ex-Yugoslavia, has stalled.”<sup>289</sup> In these examples, the main argument is that Russia is causing trouble for the West, and in them “the Balkans”<sup>290</sup> act mainly as evidence to support this theme, although there is a moral responsibility for the West to bring the countries closer to NATO and the EU.

Goldsworthy writes that in representations of the war in Kosovo the Balkans were “defined not by identity traits of their own but by their position on the fault line, their fate predetermined by their explosive ‘in-betweenness.’”<sup>291</sup> The region here is represented as stuck in-between Russia and Europe, and this logic works throughout the article. Serbia is furthermore represented simply as a passive receptacle into which Russian money is “pump[ed],” or in another account “poured.”<sup>292</sup> Importantly in the examples given above we can argue that the countries are passive and malleable and an object to be enticed.

Example 10: In a 2017 editorial in *The Guardian* titled “The Guardian view on the Balkans: hold out a hand; A renewed effort to reach out to the countries that make up the EU’s poor and worrying south-eastern flank is long overdue” the newspaper sets out its opinion on the region.<sup>293</sup> The article uses a European, rather than a Western perspective, and spatially the Balkans are considered in relation to Europe: “the Balkans matter to Europe not just because of the migration issue, but also for energy routes, security, and the fight against organised crime.”<sup>294</sup> This representation can be compared to that of a “‘bridge’ between East and

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> Edward Lucas, “Putin Has the West Exactly Where He Wants It; Kremlin’s Campaign of Bullying Is Designed to Smooth the Path for More Interference in the Balkans and Baltic States,” Ibid., 16 Mar. 2018.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Vesna Goldsworthy, “Invention and in(ter)vention: the rhetoric of Balkanization” in Bjelić, *Balkan as Metaphor, between Globalization and Fragmentation*, 25.

<sup>292</sup> Mason, “Croatia’s Election Is a Warning About the Return of Nationalism to the Balkans.”

<sup>293</sup> Editorial, “The Guardian View on the Balkans: Hold out a Hand,” Ibid., 3 Oct. 2017.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

West,” a metaphor that Bjelić points out is common in representing the region.<sup>295</sup>

In a similar formulation to that used in Lucas’ article the Balkans is constructed as neglected, and this is an oversight on the part of Europe; it has been “given insufficient attention,” and as the title suggests “a renewed effort... is long overdue.”<sup>296</sup> This idea of neglect is emphasised using the metaphor of a map with a hole in it: “20 years after the Balkans wars ended, there’s a gaping hole on the map, bounded by members including Croatia, Romania and Greece.”<sup>297</sup> The image of the map relies on a basic conception of geography in order to make the argument that “the European Union’s task of enlargement remains starkly incomplete.”<sup>298</sup> To represent any country as a gaping hole, suggests their future outside of Europe is non-existent and chaotic. This argument implies that this oversight is dangerous for Europe and suggests the article’s ultimate ethical consideration is European security. The anxiety over the area is further emphasised with a bodily metaphor in which the Balkans is “the EU’s poor and worrying south-eastern flank.”<sup>299</sup> Here it is clearly seen as an “other within,” and a threatened weak point of Europe, as well as a route into it.<sup>300</sup>

The article argues that the Balkans is open to invasive “external powers” which are “seeking to secure footholds on [the EU’s] doorstep and capitalise on the region’s weaknesses. Russia plays on orthodox and Slavic ties, and Turkey seeks to promote a ‘neo-Ottoman’ vision. But more distant actors, including China and Saudi Arabia, are increasingly active.”<sup>301</sup> Here we can see classic balkanist formulations: the Balkans are weak, they are Europe’s “doorstep” and risk bringing it problems, and they are prone to Slavic, orthodox, Ottoman and *oriental* influences. The argument is offered that to “stabilise the Balkans” “EU funds should be directed towards the region as enticement.”<sup>302</sup> This example essentialises the region, making the Balkans into a susceptible space, too confusing to master and with too many weaknesses to assess individually. Europe’s superiority is presumed and ‘the region’ is again conceived of as something to be enticed, rather than having the agency to choose.

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<sup>295</sup> Bjelić, *Balkan as Metaphor, between Globalization and Fragmentation*, 15.

<sup>296</sup> Editorial, “The Guardian View on the Balkans: Hold out a Hand.”

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

<sup>300</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 390 of 654.

<sup>301</sup> Editorial, “The Guardian View on the Balkans: Hold out a Hand.”

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

The final paragraph of the article uses balkanist tropes familiar from the 1990s most explicitly:

Churchill once said that ‘the Balkans produce more history than they can consume’. If left unaddressed, bad governance and old feuds could backfire on everyone. The consequences would be felt beyond the region. The lesson from its history is surely that the rest of Europe has a key interest in making sure the Balkans are not left to become a backwater simmering with tensions, but are helped to modernise, and are one day brought into the club.<sup>303</sup>

The ultimate anxiety in the article is that Balkan problems could “backfire on everyone,” which closely resembles the historical image of the Balkans as “the continent’s powder-keg.”<sup>304</sup> The Balkans here is represented temporally as behind Europe (a “backwater”) and it is in this backwardness that their potentially explosive violence is situated. The interest for Europe, considered in terms of security, is to help “modernise” the backwards Balkans by bringing them “into the club.”<sup>305</sup> Importantly it is considered problematic if the Balkans are “left” alone. The language used in this example can be understood as somewhat close to a “civilizational” view wishing to bring the countries of the region into the EU.<sup>306</sup> However, this is subsumed in a discussion of security, in which terms closely mirroring those used in the 1990s can be seen. The Western Balkans here are represented as a place in need of (what Hammond terms) “external guidance to avoid slipping into the mistakes of the past.”<sup>307</sup> The article refers mainly to “the Balkans” and “the region,” however its referents are clearly the same as the EU’s “Western Balkans Six.”<sup>308</sup> This conceptualisation is an interesting one as it suggests EU membership as a distinguishing feature.

Anxiety towards the Balkans is particularly prevalent in articles which deal with the refugee crisis. With the “Balkan route”<sup>309</sup> becoming a “path from Macedonia to western Europe”<sup>310</sup> for refugees, the region is defined by the fact it is between Western Europe and the countries generating refugees. Furthermore, it is shown as unable to cope with the political problems stemming from a large amount of people moving through. Writer and journalist Marcus

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<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

<sup>304</sup> Vesna Goldsworthy, “Invention and in(ter)vention: the rhetoric of Balkanization” in Ibid., 27.

<sup>305</sup> Editorial, “The Guardian View on the Balkans: Hold out a Hand.”

<sup>306</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 11.

<sup>307</sup> Hammond, “Balkanism in Political Context: From the Ottoman Empire to the EU,” 19.

<sup>308</sup> “International Relations; Western Balkans.”

<sup>309</sup> Editorial, “The Guardian View on the Balkans: Hold out a Hand.”

<sup>310</sup> Marcus Tanner, “The Refugees Have No Clear Route to Germany - but They Will Keep Going,” Ibid., 18 Sept. 2015.

Tanner writing in *The Guardian* argues that the EU holds responsibility for the crisis in the article “No leadership, no money—the EU has left the Balkans with a refugee crisis.”<sup>311</sup> Whilst the ultimate responsibility is that of the EU to provide assistance to the refugees, the Balkans are also represented as incapable of finding appropriate answers to their problems. Serbia’s successes in dealing with refugees are represented as fleeting and temporary: “Serbia has *so far* been hospitable,”<sup>312</sup> and Croatia’s are explained with reference to the idea that maybe their “historic rivalry with neighbouring Serbia—aside from any other humanitarian impulse—dictated that Croatia would not wish to behave any less hospitably to incomers than Belgrade has done.”<sup>313</sup> Their successes are marked by potential failure, and additionally associated with Balkan nationalistic rivalries.

Example 11: The article “Refugees aren’t to blame for the chaos in the EU; Europe—and that includes Britain—has a duty to ensure they don’t starve or freeze on Balkan borders” by *The Telegraph’s* Defence Editor Con Coughlin, published in October 2015, creates a picture of the Balkans as the harsh borders of Europe.<sup>314</sup>

Whilst the article is mainly critical of “Armies of Eurocrats” for their response to the refugee crisis, the picture it presents of the Balkans is one of a hostile environment where one cannot expect compassion towards refugees.<sup>315</sup> Ethical responsibility rests wholly on Europe to protect refugees, and the article argues: “Brussels has abandoned the huddled masses to the raw elements of a Balkans winter.”<sup>316</sup> Here actions are ascribed to Brussels, and the agency of those on the “Balkan borders”—only Serbia and Croatia are mentioned—is unaccounted for.<sup>317</sup> In this construction it is presupposed that the ‘Balkan’ countries will not help refugees, and thus they have been “abandoned” to “starve or freeze.”<sup>318</sup>

This conception is more explicit as the article continues:

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<sup>311</sup> “No Leadership, No Money - the EU Has Left the Balkans with a Refugee Crisis,” *The Guardian*, 2 Sept. 2015.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid.

<sup>314</sup> Con Coughlin, “Refugees Aren’t to Blame for the Chaos in the EU,” *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 Oct. 2015.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

most border officials have resorted to the happy expedient of dumping any refugee problems on their nearest neighbour's doorstep. Thus, the Serbs allow refugees to cross into Croatia, and the Croatians happily encourage their latest arrivals to continue with their journey into Austria, which has now become the gateway to the European heartland.<sup>319</sup>

Here, not only are Serbia and Croatia represented as a “gateway” into Europe, the use of “happy” to describe this solution represents the officials as uncaring and unscrupulous, a representation which the article leaves unchallenged. Coughlin is critical of Europe, blaming it for its poor response, but not of the Balkans. Of Europe better is expected, and Coughlin states that “Europe’s leaders... must accept they have a moral obligation to end the abject spectacle of homeless families trudging through the mud of European border crossings.”<sup>320</sup> Nothing better, however, seems expected of Serbia and Croatia, whose morality is not held to the same standards.

Coughlin’s article is clearly highly Euro-sceptic, and the EU’s handling of the situation is heavily criticised. What is most notable though is that even though the “Eurocrats” are represented as incapable, the governments of Serbia and Croatia are held in even lower regard. Their European-ness in this way is never considered in the article, and the image of harsh “Balkan borders” on Europe’s outskirts is created.

Example 12: Natalie Nougayrède’s article in *The Guardian* published in November 2015, titled “We should heed Angela Merkel’s warning of a new Balkans war; Talk of armed conflict is clearly an exaggeration, but the refugee and migrant crisis is testing Europe’s borderlands and values” engages more directly with issues in the region.<sup>321</sup> Similarly to the previous article, Nougayrède’s expresses the idea that “Balkan states” cannot deal with the number of refugees arriving. The article presents similar facts to that of Coughlin’s, describing “nasty squabbling and disarray among Balkan states” and “worrying exchanges of insults between political leaders.”<sup>322</sup> However, importantly rather than simply conceptualising the Balkans as a freezing borderland, Nougayrède argues instead they risk becoming “a buffer zone where thousands of refugees and migrants are blocked or sent back

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<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

<sup>321</sup> Nougayrède, “We Should Heed Angela Merkel’s Warning of a New Balkans War.”

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.



to from richer European countries.”<sup>323</sup> Whilst Coughlin does not engage with the effect that Europe and the EU’s policies have on the Balkans, Nougayrède envisages a relationship of cause and effect—“if borders close in Germany and elsewhere huge numbers of people will end up camped in these countries, and a bad situation risks becoming very volatile indeed”—with the Balkan countries feeling the effect of Western Europe’s explicitly described actions.<sup>324</sup>

The article uses a more inclusive ethical perspective than Coughlin’s. The ultimate responsibility suggested in the article is that of Europe towards refugees. However, importantly this responsibility is not expressed in terms of abandonment into the freezing Balkans, instead it is conceptualised as a mutual and shared responsibility of the countries of Europe, arguing: “even if only two western Balkan states, Slovenia and Croatia, are EU members, the whole region should be included in European discussions about forging mechanisms to address the refugee crisis.”<sup>325</sup> This construction invokes a more inclusive idea of Europe (including the “western Balkan states”) coming together in “European discussions.” The idea of dialogue importantly expresses a view that both Europe *and* the Balkans should undergo transformation to reach a solution.

This idea of a transformation is one that is backed up through an analysis focussing on the construction of the Balkans temporally in the text. Nougayrède reproduces images from Balkan history, but importantly to “transform” their meanings.<sup>326</sup> The article invokes a canonical Balkan trope in asking the question “Is Europe’s old flashpoint, the Balkans, rearing its head as a worry once again?”<sup>327</sup> The metaphor is interrogated rather than left as subject to a balkanist “uncritical repetition.”<sup>328</sup> Nougayrède goes on to state that:

It’s not as if we were back in another era, when Otto von Bismarck declared: ‘If there is ever another war in Europe it will come out of some damned silly thing in the Balkans’... Nor are the Balkans today where they were in the early 1990s...Times have changed. Peace accords, democratisation, efforts towards political reform and

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<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> De Cillia, Reisigl, and Wodak, “The Discursive Construction of National Identities,” 153.

<sup>327</sup> Nougayrède, “We Should Heed Angela Merkel’s Warning of a New Balkans War.”

<sup>328</sup> Vesna Goldsworthy, “Invention and in(ter)vention: the rhetoric of Balkanization” in Bjelić, *Balkan as Metaphor, between Globalization and Fragmentation*, 28.

Euro-Atlantic integration have transformed the region since the Balkan wars ended 16 years ago.<sup>329</sup>

“Balkan” histories are not deconstructed but *are* represented as in the past; temporally the “the Balkans” are constructed as an area that has undergone change and is no longer the same as it was before the First World War, nor during the “Balkan wars.”

The article suggests the possibility of a return to war in the region. Temporally this war can be read as a regression or a reversion to the warlike state of the Balkans. However, as outlined, the ethical and temporal constructions within the article create a much more complex picture of “the Balkans” than simply an eternal site of war. The article finally argues that:

Twenty years ago the Balkans needed to be pacified with the deployment of 50,000 NATO troops... going back to the deployment of military hardware and troops—this time to control Europe’s external borders—is the kind of nightmare Merkel may be warning about.<sup>330</sup>

In this way a return to war and to the situation of the 1990s would not only be a regression for the Balkans, but also for Europe. They would be marked by their failure to introduce dialogue into the region and would ultimately end up pacifying the region as it did “twenty years ago.” This “nightmare,” however, seen in the context of the article’s notion of cause and effect, is not a typical Balkan nightmare, but is instead a regression that could be caused by European policies and a failure of European dialogue. Nougayrède represents the Balkans as no longer requiring “deployment of military hardware” and to reach this situation would be a failure, which would reflect badly on the Europe who would have failed the “testing” of their “values.”<sup>331</sup>

Nougayrède’s article both reproduces images of Europe’s “flashpoint,” and transforms them to emphasise that this is a different situation, and promote European discussions.<sup>332</sup> Rather than using a negative image of the Balkans to construct a “self-congratulatory” image of Europe, Nougayrède represents both Europe and the Balkans as capable of changing for the better through discussions.<sup>333</sup> The final two examples presented show some of the discursive

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<sup>329</sup> Nougayrède, “We Should Heed Angela Merkel’s Warning of a New Balkans War.”

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> De Cillia, Reisigl, and Wodak, “The Discursive Construction of National Identities,” 153.

<sup>333</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 391 of 654.

options open to writers during the refugee crisis. Whilst Coughlin uses an image of the Balkans as a freezing borderland to chastise the EU, Nougayrède attempts to transform previous images to suggest that Europe and “the Balkans” can find a solution together.<sup>334</sup>

## Chapter 5: Discussion and conclusion

### **Balkanism as *Self-Beautification***<sup>335</sup>

Todorova argues that the Yugoslav Wars, unlike the Holocaust, were considered “Balkan atrocities [and] the expected natural outcomes of a warrior ethos.”<sup>336</sup> As discussed earlier, this can be seen as part of a process, theorised by Bjelić, of the West’s “self-beautification” through balkanist discourse.<sup>337</sup> The material studied suggests that in the post-war context whilst the Bosnian War is more clearly seen in terms of genocide, rather than as tribal or “Stone Age” violence,<sup>338</sup> different processes of “self-beautification” are present.<sup>339</sup> A key idea to hold in mind when assessing these processes is how the texts studied consider Europe and the West, as well as their institutions.

One of these institutions is the EU, and many of the articles bear similarities to what Hansen terms a “civilizational” discourse, which stresses that whilst the Balkans are behind Europe, they are capable of “transformation.”<sup>340</sup> An interesting example of such a discourse, comes in *The Independent*’s article “A welcome day for the champions of Europe” (example 6).<sup>341</sup> Here, Croatia is represented as able to move away from its history towards the EU. One idea that could be introduced to complicate the image used in the article, is that of what German political scholar Claus Leggewie calls “Europe’s negative founding myth,” the Holocaust.<sup>342</sup> Leggewie argues that the Holocaust should be considered as the key part of Europe’s

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<sup>334</sup> Rudolf De Cillia, Martin Reisigl, and Ruth Wodak, “The Discursive Construction of National Identities,” *Discourse & society* 10, no. 2 (1999): 153.

<sup>335</sup> Bjelić, *Balkan as Metaphor, between Globalization and Fragmentation*, 9.

<sup>336</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 287-8 of 654.

<sup>337</sup> Bjelić, *Balkan as Metaphor, between Globalization and Fragmentation*, 9.

<sup>338</sup> John Keegan, *War and Our World: The Reith Lectures 1998*, The Reith Lectures (London: Pimlico, 1999), 67-8.

<sup>339</sup> Bjelić, *Balkan as Metaphor, between Globalization and Fragmentation*, 9.

<sup>340</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 42.

<sup>341</sup> “A Welcome Day for the Champions of Europe; in Croatia, Brussels Is a Beacon Standing for Higher Standards of Governance,” *The Independent*, 30 June 2013.

<sup>342</sup> Claus Leggewie, “Seven Circles of European Memory,” *Eurozine*, 20 Dec. 2010.

memory.<sup>343</sup> *The Independent*'s article chooses to emphasise an image of the EU's "healing" power to reduce Balkan "ethnic and religious hatred," rather than depicting the EU in the post-genocidal terms of the Holocaust.<sup>344</sup> In this way it emphasises 'Balkan' histories, while not considering their similarities to the Europe's own.<sup>345</sup> Here, the EU is considered a superior entity representing "higher standards of governance" and is not thought of in terms of its own violent past in the same way that Balkans are.<sup>346</sup>

The analysis shows that questions of what causes the failure of reconciliation become a new point of tension in the articles. In this way 'Balkan' nationalism can be represented as a form of continuation of the 1990s in accounts such as Mason's article in *The Guardian* warning of "a recrudescence of the Balkan ethnic conflict" (example 8).<sup>347</sup> In this way it can be argued that nationalism can function in a similar way as "ancient hatred" did in the 1990s. It is a quality that is used to imagine 'Balkan' politicians and in some cases entire communities in the region who might return to nationalism. *The Telegraph*'s article on Praljak argues that despite the West's efforts to promote justice "much of the Balkans is as divided as ever," (example 4)<sup>348</sup> and Mason notes the lack of the region's ability to "heal... since the peace deal."<sup>349</sup> Whilst these articles suggest that reconciliation is failing due to some ingrained quality of the Balkans, Vulliamy's article which criticises Western hypocrisies of human rights and the "vanities of the Dayton peace agreement" (example 5), opens up an alternative path where there is a possibility of changing the West and the Balkans for the better by extending and altering international justice structures to also assess Western leaders for their actions in war.<sup>350</sup>

The question of reception of these kind of balkanist discourses remains an interesting one open for further study. How such accounts are interpreted in Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia is something that could provide further insights into the topic. One example of such a study which attempts something similar is Light and Young's 2009 study on the representation of Romanian migrants, which compares images appearing in the UK press with "how the

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<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> "A Welcome Day for the Champions of Europe"

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Paul Mason, "Croatia's Election Is a Warning About the Return of Nationalism to the Balkans,"

<sup>348</sup> Editorial, "War Crime Trials Have Failed to Bring Reconciliation to the Balkans."

<sup>349</sup> Mason, "Croatia's Election Is a Warning About the Return of Nationalism to the Balkans."

<sup>350</sup> Ed Vulliamy, "Opinion: Radovan Karadžić Awaits His Verdict, but This Is Two-Tier International Justice," Ibid., 1 Oct. 2014.

Romanian press has contested such discourses.”<sup>351</sup> This could be one potential frame-work to use in order to analyse, in particular how representations appearing in the UK press of failed reconciliation and returning nationalism are received in the region.

As the analysis shows, an extremely wide variety of representations of Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia appear in the material studied, which are used to support multiple different arguments. The results suggest that the broadsheet newspapers offer an ambivalent, fragmented view on the region. The most obvious comment to make is that as opinion pages publish material from a variety of academics, politicians and journalists, a wide selection of views will necessarily be encountered in such a study. Interestingly this reflects some commentators’ views on the role of the media in the Bosnian War in the 1990s. Simms argues that: “there was... no shortage of excellent information reaching the principal broadsheets. What was in short supply was sensible analysis.”<sup>352</sup> One explanation for the ambivalence found within accounts then can be the continued existence of the “mental map,” theorised by Todorova, through which balkanist knowledge can be used to interpret, analyse and represent events.<sup>353</sup> This is a useful way to consider balkanist discourse, as it remains something available for use by different actors in the UK press. All of the accounts in some way navigate their way through a long history of representation of the Balkans, including the wars of the 1990s and many use balkanist stereotypes in doing so. None of the accounts studied refer to a tendency to chopping off heads, however, the body of stereotypical knowledge as defined by many balkanist scholars still emerges and is furthermore operationalised by different writers. This is perhaps the best way to understand Boris Johnson’s use of “ancient hatred” to advance a Euro-sceptic argument (example 7).<sup>354</sup> The fact that this kind of statement is voiced by someone who went on to hold office in the top levels of British government shows the persistence of the discourse.

Articles which invoke the image of ‘the Balkans’ as a place of anxiety on Europe’s edges, to argue for an extension of Western institutions (specifically the EU and NATO) are problematic. Whilst they can be argued to be “civilizational,”<sup>355</sup> Hammond provides a very

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<sup>351</sup> Light and Young, “European Union Enlargement, Post-Accession Migration and Imaginative Geographies of the ‘New Europe’: Media Discourses in Romania and the United Kingdom”: 281.

<sup>352</sup> Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour : Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 300-1.

<sup>353</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 397 of 654.

<sup>354</sup> Johnson, “A Beautiful Nation Is Placing Its Head in the Brussels Noose.”

<sup>355</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 11.

interesting frame to problematise this idea and draw out the colonial overtones of such a discourse; arguing that balkanism characterises the entire relationship between the EU and the Balkans, as it serves to “vindicate a politico-cultural condition in which some countries’ Europeaneity is a given, while others have to work for it.”<sup>356</sup> With further expansion of the EU still an open issue, the self-image of the EU as superior is a problematic Eurocentric one. If Europe uses balkanist discourse for its “self-beautification” this can have negative effects not just on the Balkans, but also on a Europe that does not question itself when faced with issues such as its own history, or rising nationalism in countries considered core elements of ‘Europe.’<sup>357</sup> The alternative Hammond suggests, is a more shared process of European expansion where Europe “learn” from the Balkans.<sup>358</sup> In Nougayrède’s (example 12)<sup>359</sup> and Vulliamy’s articles (example 5),<sup>360</sup> we can see the possibility for such a dialogue opened up through criticisms of the West and encouragement of “discussions.”<sup>361</sup>

## Conclusion

Todorova argues that in the post-Yugoslav Wars era “while the balkanist rhetoric is still with us, conveniently submerged but readily at hand, it no longer serves power politics. Balkanism has not disappeared, but has shifted, for the time being, from the centre stage of politics.”<sup>362</sup> The present study has made findings which support and contest this notion in different ways. In accounts dealing directly with the war, war crimes trials, or war remembrance there is often a careful explanation of the Bosnian War as a genocide. Hansen’s paradigm of the war as being represented as either “genocide” or as “ancient hatreds,” is still a key dividing line.<sup>363</sup> However, the idea of failed reconciliation is an important element in the debate which was not present during the 1990s and introduces new balkanist ideas of a returning nationalism. Where Todorova’s statement should be problematised is that these representations do not play a role in “power politics.” Whilst the debate about the war in Bosnia shows that balkanist representations and knowledge do not appear in debates in the

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<sup>356</sup> Hammond, “Balkanism in Political Context: From the Ottoman Empire to the EU,” 9.

<sup>357</sup> Dušan I. Bjelić, *Balkan as metaphor, between globalization and fragmentation* 9.

<sup>358</sup> Hammond, “Balkanism in Political Context: From the Ottoman Empire to the EU,” 21.

<sup>359</sup> Natalie Nougayrède, “We Should Heed Angela Merkel’s Warning of a New Balkans War,” *Ibid.*, 6 Nov. 2015.

<sup>360</sup> Ed Vulliamy, “Opinion: Radovan Karadžić Awaits His Verdict, but This Is Two-Tier International Justice,” *The Guardian*, 1 Oct. 2014.

<sup>361</sup> Natalie Nougayrède, “We Should Heed Angela Merkel’s Warning of a New Balkans War,” *Ibid.*, 6 Nov. 2015.

<sup>362</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 396.

<sup>363</sup> Hansen, *Security as Practice : Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 11.

same way, it still appears as a way of understanding Western Europe and its relationship to the Balkans. The Balkans are often represented as a problematic “other within,” or on the edge of, Europe.<sup>364</sup> These representations can be particularly problematic when they assume the superiority of Western institutions be they judicial (The ICTY), military (NATO), or political (the EU) and are used in arguments to call for their uncritical extension. Said defines *Orientalism* as a “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority” over the East.<sup>365</sup> It is in this way we should understand balkanism too as always about “power” politics in some way.

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<sup>364</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 390 of 654.

<sup>365</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1st Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 3.

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