

## **Back to Europe?**

### **Framing Romania's Accession to the European Union in the United Kingdom**

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#### **Abstract:**

This paper looks at the framing of Romania's accession to the European Union in the UK media. Images of "Otherness" employed there help to show how the discourse of "justice" vis-à-vis British citizens actually conceals unfounded "security" concerns regarding Eastern European migrants, very much in line with the Balkanist rhetoric. Furthermore, evidence is brought to suggest that Romania is often depicted through a racializing and defamiliarising lens, which comes to question the clear-cut distinctions between the Balkanist and Orientalist discourses put forth by Todorova.

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Migration has become a sensitive matter in the context of the EU's eastward enlargement process (Morawska 2000). While prospective member states are asked to secure their borders and comply with refugee policies established in the Union, the freedom of movement of the "new Europeans" has also been a contentious issue in recent debates. In 2004, the United Kingdom chose to allow free access to the labour market for those joining the EU, yet when it came to Romania and Bulgaria, it sided with most other member states in imposing restrictions to migrant workers from these countries. Their reasons to do so and the overall view of Romania constructed by the British press raise intriguing questions about the place that Eastern Europe, and Romania in particular, holds in the eyes of the West, despite the general rhetoric of inclusion prevailing in the Union.

The present paper engages with this challenge. Specifically, it looks at the framing of Romania's accession to the European Union as presented in political and media discourse in the United Kingdom, with special attention to the migration question. My aim will be to grapple with how Romania is construed as an "Other" in an attempt to show that underlying the "justice" and "equality" arguments put forth to support restricted access to the labour

market for migrant workers there are actually “security” concerns. These, I will suggest, reflect the resilience of stereotypes of “backwardness” and “threat” attached to the Balkans (or, more generally, Eastern Europe), reinforcing the symbolic barriers between “East” and “West.” Nevertheless, while strongly echoing what Todorova (1997) termed “Balkanist discourse,” the British media representations of Romania also question, as I will show, the clear-cut boundaries between Orientalism and Balkanism the author wishes to maintain.

Firstly, I briefly refer to the discourse of “Otherness” attached to Eastern Europe. Secondly, I give a short overview of post-1989 Romanian migration to the West, and show how it fits into the East-West gap. Then, I introduce the UK context, and lastly, I turn to the political and media discourse in the UK to explore constructions of “Otherness” used in framing Romania’s accession to the EU and the much-debated migration issue. The analysis mostly relied on several renowned British media sources, followed over a one year period, from 2006 up to Romania’s recent accession to the Union, in January 2007. These largely comprised *The Sun*, *Daily Express*, *The Mirror*, *The Guardian*, and *BBC News*. I chose to look at a variety of media productions in order to capture both signs of outright hostility towards immigrants, and more veiled condescending rhetoric. The timeframe is motivated by the fact that the effects of the UK open market policy for the 2004 Accession Round were felt quite strongly by 2006, and it was also then that the debates regarding Britain’s stance towards Romania and Bulgaria peaked.

### **The “Other” Europe**

In the early 1990s, the question of “who belongs to Europe” once again emerged with renewed force in the political arena, as soon as the post-communist states started to aspire towards integration into European structures and institutions. Yet, the outburst of ethnic tensions, economic problems, and other haunting legacies of past regimes have raised serious question marks in the eyes of the “civilized” West with respect to their “eligibility” to do so. Pre-existing stereotypes of “backwardness” attached to the former communist space were reinforced daily by “telling facts.” Romania’s street children, ethnic conflicts and bloodshed in the former Yugoslavia, and images of alarming poverty in the region have been powerfully resonant in Western media. In other words, the public discourse and popular attitudes towards the “East” have made it clear that, despite the collapse of physical borders and EU integration prospects, symbolic divisions separating the “Eastern bloc” are likely to remain in place for awhile (Stråth 2000).

This entailed conflicting processes: the advance of the EU eastward enlargement to include the still “backward” but “civilizable” post-communist countries (Stråth 2000:418), compared to more “problematic” cases such as Turkey, has met the closure of West in front of migrants from these “poor,” “underdeveloped” states. In contrast with the language of integration and EU expansion, a new vocabulary of “Balkanisation” has taken root in the West to pejoratively describe processes going on in the “East.”

In her widely read book, Maria Todorova (1997) has offered an insightful account of how the Balkans have long been constructed as “the *Other* of Europe” particularly in non-academic discourse. In her account, “Balkan” constitutes a derogatory label standing for the “the tribal, the backward, the primitive, the barbarian” against which the “civilized” Western Europe has long defined itself (1997:3). While referring to Said’s *Orientalism*, she argues that Balkanism is not merely a version of the former. If the “Orient” is construed as the “absolute Other” of the Occident, Todorova maintains, the Balkans designate a geo-political space characterised by “in-betweenness,” constituting the “dark side” of Europe, its “incomplete self:” “the Balkans are Europe, are part of Europe, although, admittedly, for the past several centuries its provincial part or periphery” (1997:17). While the denigrating discourse on the Balkan space owes much to its economic lag, this could not become, according to Todorova, Europe’s radical “Other” due to what might be called geographical, religious and “racial” proximity (1997:18).

Other scholars preoccupied with the symbolic geography of Europe have underlined the inferior positioning of Eastern Europe more generally vis-à-vis the West. Drawing on Said’s groundbreaking work, Wolff suggested that “Eastern Europe” has been constructed as a “paradox of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion, Europe but not Europe,” persisting after the fall of Iron Curtain “both in economic affairs and in cultural recognition” (1994:7-9). For Wolff as well, Eastern Europe holds an “intermediate” position between the lower and the upper ends of the “civilization scale” (1994:13). Discourses of Otherness have gained particular prominence with the onset of East-West migration after 1989, commonly known to be dominated by low-skilled, often undocumented, labour migrants, human trafficking and “bogus” refugees.

The external negative outlook on the Balkans or the “East” in general has been widely internalized by those upon which it is cast, who employ various strategies to evade it. As Todorova pointed out, it is only Bulgarians who have ever seriously considered self-identifying themselves as “Balkan.” Others strongly repudiate the embarrassing label, mercilessly throwing it onto their neighbours. Romania has been no exception to this. Against the worldwide “bad renown” of the Balkans, it has sought to “return” to the West after 1989, by looking down on its “backward” neighbours and emphasising its contacts with the “civilized” world. The Latin roots of the language and people have been powerfully asserted by Romanian cultural and political elites in an attempt to portray the country as an “island of civilization” in the midst of “barbarian Slavs,” Todorova (1997) emphasises.

Yet, against Romania’s recurrent attempts to escape this derogatory stereotype and emphasise its “Europeanness” instead, migration has constituted a relevant site for the reinforcement of its “Otherness” by “telling facts.” It has also cast a new “stigmatised” identity (Brubaker et al, 2006) upon the country, from which Romanians have made strong efforts to differentiate themselves, by stressing their Latin background: ever since the 1990s, a most common complaint shared by political elites but also ordinary people is, “they think we’re all Gypsies.”

## Romanians on the Move

One of the poorer post-communist states, Romania has long had poor standing in the eyes of the West because of its economic problems, slow transition to democracy, human rights violations, or other features of “backwardness.” In particular, migration from Romania has not been viewed favourably in the West at all, and the country belonged to the “black visa list” for Schengen states up to the lifting of visas in 2002 (Potot 2003:94). In what follows, I will provide a brief overview of post-1989 Romanian migration, and the factors accounting for its “problematic” status.

The opening of borders in the early 1990s made possible the departure of large numbers of Eastern Europeans to the West, despite remaining difficulties related to visa requirements or border controls. Without having traditionally been an out-migration country, Romania itself has suddenly become a major source of westward migration after 1989. The early flows were mainly of an ethnic and political nature, dominated by German *Aussiedler*, ethnic Hungarians, and Jews returning to their “homelands” or by ethnic Roma seeking asylum in Western states. The latter group was particularly singled out for its “deviant” behaviour, and caused serious tensions in receiving states, often subject to discrimination and forced repatriation.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, Romanian migration has shifted towards a “life strategy,” with a clear economic incentive (Sandu 2002). Yet, even after the lifting of visas in 2002, the conditions regarding legal employment in foreign states have remained rather strict, so that the niche opened up for tourism has meant for many a chance to enter the black market or informal economies abroad. Romania has rapidly become widely known for the unskilled workers clandestinely finding their way out of the country, now replacing the “unwanted” refugee waves, mostly of Roma, in the early 1990s (Potot 2003). These have been a hot topic of debate in international media, contributing to negative popular perceptions of Romania abroad, and rendering its citizenship “problematic.” As Brubaker et al (2006) vividly illustrate in their latest book, Romanians and ethnic Hungarians frequently experience their citizenship as “stigmatised” when they travel or work abroad. People, including officials, have often voiced loud complaints about the humiliating treatment Romanians underwent beyond the frontier, often being suspected as “thieves,” “beggars” or “Gypsies.” In this context, low-skilled workers and Roma migrants are heavily blamed for “spoiling” the country’s image abroad.

Asylum seeking and undocumented migration have become top priorities in EU migration matters, and strong efforts have been made to devise strategies to control what is deemed as “unwanted immigration.” It is then hardly surprising that, in trying to manage the “waves of undesirables,” Britain, among others, often lumps together the two categories of asylum seekers and “illegal” workers. For reasons discussed before, Eastern European migrants – and Romanians in particular – are inevitably affected by this “confusion,” their genuineness being

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<sup>1</sup> To give only one example, in 1992, German authorities decided to forcibly repatriate a group of Roma asylum seekers, making an offer of DM 1000 million for the Romanian government to “reintegrate” them back home. This intended agreement was dismissed by the European Parliament on racist grounds (cf. European Parliament, Session Documents, Doc B3-1503/92).

strongly suspected. The British media discourse reflects this tendency quite well, not only by singling out the Roma in discussions about potential Romanian migration, but also by bringing together in the same article the question of “bogus” asylum seekers and Eastern European migration as threatening the UK (e.g. “Fury As Failed Asylum Seekers Stay,” *The Mirror*, 22 August 2007; “750,000 Pour into UK from EU,” *The Sun*, 1 January 2007).

### **The UK Gatekeepers**

Without being one of their main destinations, the United Kingdom has still received significant numbers of Romanian migrants, and is likely to receive even more. In what follows, I will briefly explain why the UK provides a very interesting case study for Western perceptions of Romania, and more generally Eastern Europe.

In 2004, driven by economic needs, the United Kingdom was one of the only three countries, along with Ireland and Sweden, to open up their markets to migrant workers from the new EU member states. The eight Eastern European countries proved to be highly attractive sources to fill in Britain’s labour shortages. Yet, the numbers of migrants from the former Eastern bloc have by far exceeded expectations. Official reports estimated that about 17,000 newcomers would come per year, yet it turned out that 20 times more people showed up at the borders to take up especially low-skilled jobs. Of these, Poles have been the most visible, counting around 60% of the A8 incomers (Drew and Sriskandarajan 2006).

This unpredicted outcome played a decisive role in the position Britain was to adopt towards Romanians and Bulgarians, who entered the Union in January 2007 (*The Economist*, 24 August 2006). In contrast with its earlier liberal policy, Britain sided with most other Western states, and shut out workers from the new EU members, imposing severe restrictions and quotas, which hardly changed the situation before accession. More precisely, apart from the self-employed, a small number of highly skilled people are allowed to request work permits, and only the agricultural and food processing sectors were opened to low-skilled migrants, but not exceeding 20,000 annually. This obviously came as a surprise for Romanians and Bulgarians, who voiced their discontent about being treated differently. Apart from them, it also upset British businessmen lobbying for an open market. Nevertheless, the authorities believed migration ought to be “carefully managed” (*The Sun*, 27 September 2006).

While economic (and demographic) analyses clearly proved the beneficial effects of Eastern European migration to the UK (e.g. Drew and Sriskandarajan 2006), restrictions were supported precisely by social concerns and equality arguments. Specifically, the reasons included the incapacity of institutions to absorb “new waves,” discrimination of British nationals in the competition for jobs, rising unemployment, unfair distribution of benefits (which actually implied that newcomers would rely on benefits but not contribute with paying taxes).

Whereas at first glance the arguments put forth in favour of closure seem to call attention to matters of “justice” and “equality” endangering the lives of British citizens, the language in which they are veiled pertains to a discourse of “security” in regards to Romania, and more generally, Eastern Europe. In one of his articles, Kymlicka (2002) distinguished between the treatment of minority problems within the framework of “justice” in Western Europe, as opposed to the discourse of “security” prevailing in Eastern Europe. While he specifically dealt with the accommodation of national minorities, I borrow his terminology to show how arguments pertaining to justice in the West can actually conceal security concerns in immigration debates. In what follows, I explore in more detail the rhetoric of threat in which Romania’s accession to the EU is situated.

### **The “Romanian Invasion”**

While European integration demanded free movement, economic and demographic analyses clearly favouring immigration (Coleman 2002), a new vocabulary of “invasion” has surrounded Eastern European migrants. Ever since the 1990s, political and media dialogue in the West have abounded in “flooding” or “swamping” metaphors with respect to Eastern European newcomers. Not surprisingly, migration from Romania and Bulgaria has been framed in a similar way. Whereas the two fresh EU members saw a bright future ahead, after accession, it remains questionable to what extent their citizens will be treated like “real Europeans.” By the time Romanian President Bănescu joyfully announced to his citizens that “We arrived in Europe. Welcome to Europe!” on January 1, 2007, big posters reading “You cannot work in Britain without a permit” had already sprung up on Bucharest’s airport walls (*BBC*, 21 December 2006).

In Britain, the approaching accession of the two countries was met with high scepticism translated in a language of “invasion.” As mentioned before, recent flows from Eastern Europe – particularly Polish – have powerfully emerged in immigration debates, as soon as Polish pubs and food stores started to flourish across the UK, posters in Polish began to populate city walls, and Polish became a familiar language on British streets. An unfounded defensive stance was taken up by conservative politicians and the media supporting them, portraying the newcomers as an unpredicted threat. Thus, violent masculine terms such as “the Polish army,” “hordes,” “flood,” “gangs,” “siege,” “assault” are recurrent not only in tabloids, but also in more respectable newspapers. Apart from hinting to the large numbers of migrants, the vocabulary employed also carries connotations of the “barbarian” nature of incomers upsetting the “civilized” British order. The “overcrowding” about which conservative politicians repeatedly complained related to the demand put on public services, transport, and housing is pictured as a sign of sinking into chaos and backwardness, a “disruptive” outcome of Eastern immigration, which, according to the conservative opposition, “harms life quality”:

Overcrowding is a key cause of many of the factors which are destroying quality of life: mortgage slavery, overdevelopment, congested roads, water shortages, flooding

and overstretched public services. We should do everything we can sensibly – and fairly – do to reduce the level of immigration [...] We should also restrict them, as was always the case before, to highly skilled people (Member of Parliament Julian Brazier, *BBC*, 31 July 2006).

A similar rhetoric is obviously used for Romania and Bulgaria. The need for “breathing space” – claimed by the then Home Secretary John Reid who announced the restrictions for the A2 states (*BBC*, 25 October 2006) – turns potential migration from these two countries into a matter of “life and death” for a nation close to being “suffocated” by Easterners.

Furthermore, assumptions about the unreliability of potential Romanian (and Bulgarian) newcomers are strikingly widespread. For instance, as used to be the case with refugees, “proving genuineness” is another key phrase when it comes to self-employed persons, whose access could not be restricted due to EU regulations: “While there is the possibility for people to come and work as self-employed, there is the potential for abuse,” Immigration minister declared (*Daily Express*, 8 December 2006). Migrants choosing this route are strongly suspected of actually being employees without contracts (John Reid, *The Guardian*, 24 October 2006). However, those who rejected restrictions clearly emphasised that these measures will rather encourage people to enter the “black market.”

Crime, prostitution and illegal migration have been the main concerns invoked with respect to Bulgaria and Romania alike. British newspapers published pictures of “desperate” Romanians and Bulgarians “assaulting” UK embassies in Bucharest and Sofia (*The Sun*, 5 October 2006) and warned that travel agencies had tickets to Britain already “sold out.” Potential migrants from the A 2 states were easily categorized as “deviant,” being identified with the countries’ criminals and law offenders. For example, one article announced the pardoning of 1,500 burglars, thieves and “other petty criminals” in Bulgaria, claiming that these, once free, will be able to move to Britain now that the country joined the EU (*The Sun*, 5 February 2007). But Bulgaria did not pose such a great threat due to its smaller size and population, so that Romania became the more obvious target of brutal criticism and xenophobic outbursts in sections of the British press. Thus, if Bulgarians are also likely to face accusations in the same article, Romanians often happen to be singled out in resonant headlines such as, “200 a Day Try to Rom Our Way” (*The Sun*, 2 September 2006), “£ 1000 Fine for Romanian Illegals, £5000 for Their Brit Bosses” (*The Mirror*, 1 January 2007), “Romanian Migrants: So Much for the Flood” (*The Mirror*, 2 January 2007).

In general, images of violence, questionable morality, and other “backward traits” generated a discourse of security regarding Romania in British tabloids, despite invoked questions of fairness towards British citizens and technical incapacity to absorb further migration. Even in more decent newspapers, the overall language in which Romania is presented often reveals condescending superiority. To give only one relevant example, when Romanian town Sibiu became “the European capital of culture,” the British press made disparaging remarks about the old-fashioned, “dubious musical taste of the city fathers” accompanying the event, and

underlined the fact that it was actually German settlers who had built the town, as if to justify the pleasant outlook against the general discourse of alarming poverty hovering over Romania (*The Guardian*, 24 December 2006).

Apart from these, another important feature came out in the analysis of media discourse which raises important questions about the nature and scope of “Otherness” projected to Romania in particular. An important cluster of terms used to portray Romania in the media is that pertaining to “darkness.” Much of this vocabulary is employed to describe the communist past and the “backward” dimension, in opposition with Western Europe, apparently threatened to plunge into the “dark” if the East-West borders become too relaxed. However, there is more to it: in the British press, as elsewhere in the West, Romanians are often racialized by bringing forth the Roma minority as representative of the country. I will give some relevant illustrations in this respect.

As soon as Romania’s accession was approaching, and emigration became a hot topic of debate in the UK, the famous *BBC Europe Diary* published the results of their inquiries in Romania (BBC, 28 September 2006). While not openly against immigration, the choice of sites and language are clear signs of a racialising discourse. The beginning introduces the reader into a typically “primitive” atmosphere: “We are deep in the Romanian countryside, on a dirt track off the main road. Three heavily laden horse-drawn wagons of a type familiar from westerns come to a dusty halt,” recounts editor Markell. The first interview was conducted with a Roma family, whose words and story were accompanied by “telling” photos. The description of the male character emphasises – in sensational language – the dark complexion, barbarian, eroticised and spectacular outlook in a vocabulary very much echoing Orientalist rhetoric:

His teeth flash gold as he tells his story with wide expansive gestures, his grubby white shirt open, exposing a cascade of *black* chest hair. He pauses only to pick another *black* seed from the sunflower head the size of a dinner plate and spit in the *dirt*. He says that they all have passports and have in past travelled to Germany to find work ‘on the *black*,’ but were chased back by the police (my emphasis).

The narrative criminalizes Romanian citizens and opposes – in a binary logic - the white “civilized” West to the dark (-skinned) “uncivilized” Romania. The striking recurrence of images of “blackness” (emphasised in the quote above), together with the visual aids, comes to support the racialising discourse. This is reinforced by the next step taken by the editor, which now presents the most ill-famed, poor slum in Bucharest, *Ferentari*, which is well known for being Roma dominated. The caption “grinding poverty” is not a mere reminder of the economic backwardness attached to the Balkans and its haunting communist legacy. As editor Markell makes quite clear, it construes an alien, non-European setting:

I am really surprised by Ferentari, a part of Bucharest five miles from the centre. I expected dirty and run-down communist era flats. I expected the rather creaking trams



heading out from the city centre. But the trams run past side streets which are dusty and unpaved, littered with single-storey block-like concrete buildings. They're brightly painted, with wires hanging at odd angles and roofs that don't quite fit. It reminds me of Africa, not Europe.

As this excerpt reveals, Romania seems to be Orientalised rather than Balkanised. If Todorova's argument supported the idea that the Balkans are denigrated but still part of Europe, Romania is easily turned here into Europe's "radical Other" in media or political representations, by bringing forth a "visible" minority heavily discriminated against all over Europe, and by casting its "backwardness" into the unfamiliarity attached to the "real East." In contrast with the "semi-developed" condition of the Balkans Todorova was talking about, Romania is described to be at a stage of "underdevelopment" foreign to Europe.

Examples like these have been numerous in British tabloids, where the message was devoid of the subtleties or literary twists present in the *BBC Europe Diary*. To give an example, *The Sun* did not hesitate to quote a "respectable" Italian daily, *Il Tempo*, where Romanians were pictured as "the most dangerous and violent race, capable of murdering for a few pennies" (*The Sun*, 5 October 2006). The criminalizing and racializing representation of Romania and its migrants has upset both political elites and ordinary people, who try to escape the badge of "shame" coming from frequent overlaps of such categories as "Roma" and "Romanian" (Brubaker et al 2006, Lazaroiu 2003). Two strategies have been dominant in contestations: one is to bring up the Latin background to reclaim one's "European" status as opposed to a "non-European" minority, not necessarily the Balkans; the other is to refer to the numerous – yet invisible - high-skilled migrants and cultural achievements in contrast with a particularly "uncivilized" minority (*BBC*, 26 October 2006).

This discourse is hardly new, emerging powerfully in the early 1990s, when the West felt "assaulted" by the large numbers of Roma asylum seekers from the post-communist space, among whom Romanian citizens were over-represented, as Romania has the largest Roma minority in the region (Tanner 2005). For example, as David M. Crowe (1999) notes, more than half of the 35,000 Romanian citizens who immigrated to Germany in 1990 were Gypsies. Two years later, the number of Romani immigrants from Romania in Germany already reached 34,000. Great Britain has also received high numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, many of them Romanian Roma. This minority is strongly prejudiced against and Western media and authorities have constantly exploited the Roma to justify their restrictions and scepticism towards Romania, and also in the case of other Eastern European countries.

The dominant discourse about closing the borders in the face of the "imminent danger" coming from the East may signal more, at least in what concerns Romania, than the "complex windings of cultural prejudice" backing "economic disparity," as Larry Wolff pointed out (1994:3), or than the stereotypes of backwardness contained in Todorova's understanding of Balkanism, where race, religion, and geographical proximity allow for common ground against the "real East." The British media representations presented here rather seem to bridge

the gap between Orientalism and Balkanism in the case of Romania. The entire array of criminalizing, racializing and defamiliarizing imagery echoes – beyond spatial closeness – the sceptical attitude of Nigel Farage, the leader of a party specifically meant to drag Britain away from the EU and immigration “danger,” UKIP. While visiting Bucharest, Farage disdainfully remarked, “we are entering a political union with Romania ... and surely we haven’t got that much in common, have we?” (BBC, 21 December 2006). On the verge of accession to the “European club,” fears of “un-mixing” with their Eastern Others often came to be translated into a “non-European” image of Romania.

## **Conclusion**

In Europe, the emergence of East-West migration after the fall of the Iron Curtain has constituted a new challenge for affluent Western states. While European integration demands “open borders,” legal and symbolic barriers still aim to keep post-communist countries at a distance. A very recent member of the European Union, Romania has proved to be an interesting site for the study of the mismatch between the logic of inclusion underpinning the Union, and exclusionary discourses prevailing in the Western nation-states.

This paper has, then, engaged with the immigration debates surrounding the 2007 Accession Round in the United Kingdom. In particular, within the framework of discourses of Otherness prevailing in Europe, I sought to understand how Romania’s membership in the European Union is represented in public discourse, especially with respect to the migration question, which was key to Britain’s position in negotiation processes. The analysis of media and political discourse explored, more precisely, how Romania is constructed as “Other” to suggest that underlying the arguments from justice and equal chances affecting British citizens lie unfounded fears towards Romanian, among other Eastern European, migrants rooted in the persisting East-West gap. The rhetoric of security and closure discussed here raises interesting questions about the symbolic place of Romania in Europe.

Scholars of symbolic geography have underlined the “intermediary” position of the Balkans, or more generally, Eastern Europe between the West and its “absolute Other,” the Orient. Yet, the exploitation of overlapping images of Gypsies, violent and cunning outlaws, barbarians and “grinding poverty” produces a view of Romania that is both defamiliarizing and provokes race-based categorization, relegating it to a non-European space, right on the point of its entrance into the European Union. In contrast with Said’s Orientalism, Todorova argues that while the former “is dealing with difference between (imputed) types, Balkanism treats the differences within one type” (1997:19). Nevertheless, as media representations often seem to suggest, Romania is more easily Orientalised, than seen as part of Europe, no matter how ambiguous. Having this in mind, one might start questioning the clear-cut distinctions between the discourses of Otherness on the Orient and Eastern Europe.

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