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Gothic Narratives and European Identity in Crisis

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***Abstract**: On a social constructivist basis, the paper argues that discourse plays an important role in identity construction, and that identities are constructed vis a vis an Other or Others. Discourse on identity may take the form of a narrative, with the Self and Other in clearly defined roles. It is argued here that discourse regarding a (perceived) threatening Other may take on aspects of a Gothic tale - a tale of persecution, horror and terror, often involving the use of the uncanny, or the 'return of the repressed' in order to heighten the sensation of fear. In other words, a Gothic narrative may serve as a securitisation strategy in the sense of the Cambridge school. The EU is facing not only an economic and financial crisis but also a crisis of identity. Tensions have appeared between the 'core' Northern states of the EU and the peripheral south. Moreover, the recent success of Eurosceptic and extreme right parties in the recent EP elections also reveal tensions between a European identity based on integration and national identity on the one hand and between a 'multicultural' and a culturally 'Western' or 'Christian' Europe on the other. This paper, then, examines Gothic narratives of fear and persecution in each of these three contexts.*

Introduction

It can be argued that the crisis in the European Union is not only an economic and financial crisis but is also a crisis of identity. This can be noted, for instance, in the antagonism, particularly in media discourse, between the 'core' and 'peripheral' Eurozone countries, as well as in the rise of Eurosceptic and far-right parties, highlighted by their notable success in the European Parliament elections in May 2014.

According to a constructivist approach *discourse,* particularly elite discourse, is an important factor in social learning and, ultimately, identity construction. As Fearon and Laitin argue, for instance, 'discourses define identities and shape or determine actions' (2000: 853). In particular, discursive attempts to construct national identities, or, for that matter a European identity, can be understood as narrative constructions (Bhabha, 1994: 2) (Levin, 2011). As Levin argues, such narratives can be understood as having three dimensions: the spatial setting, or *where* the story takes place, the social setting, relating to the relationship between the main characters, and the temporal setting, relating to the unfolding of the events of the narrative (2011: 8).

In this context, then, identity may be seen as a collection of roles. Importantly, identities are always constructed against an Other or Others in an opposing role. In other words, the role in which the Self casts itself will determine the role played by the Other. Thus, an examination of how the Other is portrayed in discourse may shed light on how the Self is constructed (Levin, 2011). As Hall notes, for instance;

> Unstated in these narratives representing the Other are counternarratives of the self. Thus, if the Other is an 'infidel', then 'we' are 'the faithful'. If the Other is a 'barbarian' then we must be 'civilized'. If the Other is a 'sick man', then we have 'healthy' and 'robust' regimes and societies. If the Other is 'backward', 'despotic', or a 'laggard', then we are 'modern', 'liberal' and 'progressive'. If the Other is 'Asiatic' and 'Eastern' then we are 'European' and 'Western' (Hall, 2002: 104).

Othering may, thus, vary in nature; the Other may be seen as definitively excluded from or potentially included in the Self, for instance, or it may be viewed as more or less hostile, as inferior or even superior, or be fetishised as exotic. According to Diez, one of the four forms of Othering frequently found in International Relations is that of the Other as existential threat. In this way, it may be *securitized*, in the sense used by the Copenhagen school, through a speech act of securitization, legitimizing extraordinary measures outside the 'normal realm' of politics (Diez, 2005: 628-9). It is argued here that Gothic narratives may be used when the Other is framed as threatening, and may be used to 'securitise' the Other[ii].

The Gothic Narrative in Political Discourse

Gothic stories are built 'around the lived experience of fear; not simply of a single scary incident but of more deep-seated fear, fear as an existential condition or state of being'(Devetak, 2005: 625). As Devetak notes, the Gothic, with its focus on 'death, dread, darkness, unease, terror and fear', has been a form of narrative in politics and International Relations (IR) as well as literature since the development of the Gothic literary genre in the eighteenth century (2005: 1). Beville points out that, in the late 18th century context of the French Revolution and the Enlightmenment, 'Gothic terror and anxiety related to a rapidly changing world defined by violence, disorientation and loss of meaning and faith' (2009: 23). Interestingly, she draws comparisons between the pervasive atmosphere of terror in post-Revolutionary France and in our own 'post-9//11, mass media-induced, terrorised culture' (Beville, 2009: 23). In this context, Devetak, notably, focuses on Gothic narratives in the US 'war against terror' (2005).

For Ng, the Gothic-ness of a narrative lies in the accumulated sensation of threat as the narrative progresses, provoking an increasing sense of horror (Ng, 2007: 16). For Botting, for instance, the defining elements of Gothic fiction include;

> the disturbing return of pasts upon presents … the 'negative, irrational, immoral and fantastic … tales of darkness, desire and power … and 'spectres, monsters, demons, corpses, skeletons, evil aristocrats … madmen, criminals and the monstrous double (Botting, 1996: 1-3)

An early theoretical attempt to understand the Gothic was Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry* (1757), in which he argues that fear is an important source of the sublime, which was associated with 'grand feelings stimulated by obscurity and highly dramatic encounters with the world in which a sense of awe was paradoxically inspired by a feeling of incomprehension'(Smith, 2007: 2). For Burke, the fear of pain and danger, and especially the fear of death, 'the King of terrors' (Burke, 1998: 86), provides the clearest example of subliminity. Burke discusses a series of concepts which articulate these feelings of anxiety, including 'Obscurity, Power, Privation, Vastness and Infinity'; in his view all of these imply feelings in which the subject is diminished; the sublime thus reinforces the sensation of our transience and insignificance (Smith, 2007: 12).

A later theoretical attempt to account for fear which has been influential in Gothic criticism is Freud's 'The Uncanny' (Smith, 2007: 13-14). As Royle suggests, the implications of the uncanny go far beyond psychology and literature; indeed, 'the world is uncanny … Notions of the uncanny provide ways of thinking critically about what is happening all around, across the so-called 'western world' and beyond' (Royle, 2003: vii).

According to Freud, the uncanny, or *unheimlich,* exists in opposition to the *heimlich,* or homely. The uncanny is 'undoubtedly related to what is frightening – to what arouses dread and horror', in contrast to the *heimlich,* which refers to domesticity, family and security. He argues that 'the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar'(Freud, 1955: 340). In this sense, there is a remarkable convergence between that which is *heimlich* and its opposite; Freud argues that '*unheimlich* is in some way or other a subspecies of *heimlich* (Freud, 1955: 340). The uncanny, therefore, is often associated with an experience of 'liminality, margins, borders, frontiers' (Royle, 2003: vii). Thus, for Freud, the home itself, for all its outward appearance of safety is a sinister place; the uncanny, then, is a 'peculiar conmingling of the familiar and unfamiliar' (Royle, 2003: 1). In this sense, the known, or half-known can be more terrifying than the unknown;

> If we are afraid, then more often or not it is because we are experiencing fear of the unknown: but if we have a sense of the uncanny, it is because the barriers between the known and the unknown are teetering on the brink of collapse. We are afraid, certainly; but what we are afraid of is at least partly our own sense that we have *been here before…* the uncanny is occasioned when an event in the present reminds us of something in the (psychological) past, but something which cannot be fully remembered, a past event, or situation, or feeling, which should have been locked away or buried but which has emerged to haunt the current scene (Punter, 2007: 130).

As Bennet and Royle argue, then, the uncanny has to do with making things uncertain; in this sense it may manifest in various forms, including, among others, 'strange types of repetition' such as doubles/doppelgangers and *déja vu,* coincidence and the sense that something is 'fated' to happen, shape and gender shifting, automatism, animism, silence, and death itself (1999: 37).

Although Freud's essay treated the uncanny as a psychological phenomenon, the concept of the uncanny has been extended to political life in the work of later scholars such as Julia Kristeva and Homi Bhaba. Indeed, as Ziarek notes (1995), Freud himself did hint at 'political' examples of the uncanny in his essay, including Protestant rulers who do not feel 'heimlich' among their Catholic subjects, or strangers destroying the 'heimlich'character of one's country. As Ziarek argues, these all 'suggest a crisis of national affiliation, a subversion of political authority, and an erosion of communicability as a consequence of this subversion' (Ziarek, 1995: 7). In this context, then, for Kristeva the uncanny can be understood as the counterpart of the disintegration of religious communities and the subsequent formation of the nation state (1991).

Similarly, Bhabha argues that attempts to create an 'imagined community' based on an essentialist identity are challenged by counter-narratives of the nation that 'continually evoke and erase its totalizing boundaries' (Bhabha, 1990: 300). Thus, according to Bhaba, uncanniness in this context is not only a question of place but also of time, as our sense of national identity is simultaneously both static and changing; although the narratives which underscore national identity appear to be stable and confident, they also involve repression. In this sense, the national bond itself has an uncanny aspect in that it is perpetually threatened by the irruption of difference within the imagined community (Ziarek, 1995: 16).

Thus, as territorial identities also imply limits and borders, it is transgressions of these borders (both psychological and physical) that may destroy the sense of national (or indeed European) 'homeliness'. Therefore, the existence of the foreigner can be uncanny in that he/she not only represents an 'external Other' but can represent the 'repressed' part of national (or, indeed, European) identity. For Kristeva, then, this is connected to the uncanny concept of the double; 'The archaic, narcissistic self, not yet demarcated by the outside world, projects out of itself what it experiences as dangerous or unpleasant in itself, making of it an alien 'double' (Kristeva, 1991: 183).

As Ian Manners argues, then, based on a reading of Kristeva, 'the projection of otherness onto individuals and the social groups they represent is so strong precisely because they are also an abjected and disturbing part of ourselves' (Manners, 2006: 177-178). In this sense, we tend to depersonalise the foreigner, enhancing the feeling of uncanny strangeness (Kristeva, 1991: 191)

In this sense, then, for Kristeva, the return of the repressed is based on a more fundamental impulse that can help to define the cultural, as well as psychological, impulses that form the basis of the Gothic. In Kristeva's view, then, everything that is 'in-between … ambiguous …composite' (Kristeva, 1982: 4) is *abject*; in other words it is 'thrown-off' (Hogle, 2010: 7) or 'ejected, jettisoned, expelled, banished, cast off, thrown away' (Devetak, 2005: 633). Anything, therefore, that 'disturbs identity, system, order' and that 'does not respect borders, positions, rules' (Kristeva, 1982: 4) is thown off or abjected. All that is abjected is then cast off into another figure or figures which are criminalised or condemned by society; the process of abjection is, thus, social and cultural as well as a psychological in nature as it encourages people to;

> deal with the tangled contradictions fundamental to their existence by throwing them off onto ghostly or monstrous counterparts that then seem 'uncanny' in their unfamiliar familiarity while also conveying overtones of the archaic and the alien in their grotesque mixture of elements viewed as incompatible by established standards of normality (Hogle, 2010: 7) .

Thus, while monsters are thought to threaten civilisation and social order (Devetak, 2005: 633), they also fuflill a social function in that they 'define and construct the politics of the 'normal' (Punter and Byron, 2010: 263) through their 'deviance, madness, brutality, violence' (Devetak, 2005: 633) in that they provide us with readily moralised examples of how not to think and act (Ingebretsen, 1998: 26).

Gothic Narratives in the Context of European Crises

It can be argued that in recent years the European Union has experienced a period of perhaps unprecedented crisis. Perhaps most notable of these is the financial and economic crisis in the Eurozone, itself an ofshoot of the global financial crisis of 2008. However, the Eurozone crisis itself is arguably interconnected with a broader crisis of identity within the EU. This can be noted, for instance, in the increased polarisation between 'Northern' and 'Southern', or 'central' and 'peripheral' member states in the media and, to a lesser extent, in political discourse in the context of the Eurozone crisis. According to this discourse, then, while the so-called PIIGS are often portrayed as lazy, irresponsible spendthrifts, the Northern Member states, particularly Germany, have frequently been depicted as imperialists, or even sinster fascists attempting to turn the EU into a Fourth Reich. However, as the European Parliament elections of early 2014 revealed, this is not the only crisis of identity facing the EU; the success of extreme right parties, notably the French Front National, and hard Eurosceptic parties such as the UK Independence Party (UKIP) was notable. It is argued that examples of Gothic narratives can be found in the political discourse of each of these three contexts; in the media and (to a lesser extent) political discourse of the peripheral Member States concerning Germany, in extreme right discourse regarding Muslim migration to the EU and the issue of Turkey's accession, and in Eurosceptic discourse on the EU.

'Southern' discourse on Germany in the context of the Eurozone crisis[iii]

The Eurozone crisis has, arguably, also become a crisis of identity, with German media discourse in particular tending to frame those on the Southern periphery as lazy, profligate and corrupt. Indeed, the German insistence on austerity policies can be seen as reflecting German popular resentment at bailing out southern Europeans, perceived as lazy and profligate. Chancellor Merkel herself, for example, speaking at a rally in May 2011, suggested that 'people in Spain, Portugal and Greece took too many holidays and retired too early while Germans were expected to bail them out' (Mestres, 2012: 17). In addition, as Mylonas, for instance, points out, the German tabloid press constructs Greeks in particular as scapegoats for the Eurozone crisis, villifying them and viewing the Greeks as responsible for the crisis due to inherent national characteristics (Mylonas, 2012).

However, these austerity measures, along with perpetual crisis and continued recession on the periphery of the eurozone, have undoubtedly led to a sense of anger, alienation and even panic among large parts of the population there, leading to numerous protests, demonstrations and strikes in recent years. While some of this anger has been directed towards national governments, or even towards capitalism in general, much of it has been poured onto Germany, which has insisted on increased austerity on the Eurozone periphery in exchange for financial aid. As George Soros perhaps belatedly warned, if Germany continued to be inflexible in its demands on the rest of Europe, 'The result will be a Europe in which Germany is seen as an imperial power that will not be loved and admired by the rest of Europe – but hated and resisted, because it will be perceived as an oppressive power' (cited in Gumbel, 2012: 24). This resentment and sense of crisis has resulted in a Gothic narrative of the resuscitation of the monstrous Third Reich in popular European discourse in the media, Internet and, to a lesser extent, among politicians. Much European resentment, particularly in the Greek, Spanish, Italian and also British and French press (Ehlers *et al,* 2011) has been focused on the figure of German chancellor Angela Merkel herself. This roughly coincides with the Europe of 'decline and impoverishment', which, according to Bongiovanni, is made up of 'the southern part of the continent, the arch stretching from Portugal to Greece, but also comprisisng Ireland, France and the UK' (Bongiovanni, 2012: 5-6). As an article in Time Magazine argues, 'in Europe's popular political imagination, Merkel is already the bogeyman – and worse' (Gumbel, 2012: 24). The *New Statesman,* a left-wing British newspaper, labelled Merkel 'the most dangerous German leader since Hitler' and declared her a greater risk to world stability than Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Kim Jong Un (Hasan, 2012). In addition, she has been depicted in Europe's media as 'a red-eyed Terminator robot, a flabby centrefold pin-up and a fleshy Roman god eating Greeks' (Chambers, 2012) while, in the Greek press, she has been compared to a vampire sucking the life out of the Greek economy (Paterson, 2010).

Most notably, however, particularly in the popular press, as well as on the Internet, Merkel has increasingly frequently been compared to Hitler. A quick Internet search will turn up dozens of images and videos of Merkel with a Hitler moustache and Nazi uniform. As Heyer and Batzoglou note, such images have also appeared in newspapers, particularly in Greece;

> Images of Chancellor Merkel with a grim facial expression now appear almost every day on the cover pages of Greek newspapers. The caricatures depicting her as a sharp-toothed bloodsucker or as a strict schoolmaster with a raised index finger seem almost benign compared to the harsher depictions of her wielding a leather whip and wearing a swastika armband (Heyer and Batzoglou, 2012).

As Devetak argues, Hitler represents both monster and ghost in international relations discourse;

> the monster *par excellence* in international relations is Hitler. He epitomises evil in a way that compares with the Devil. It would be no exaggeration to say that since the Second World War Hitler has displaced the Devil as the personification of evil. All cruel murderous rulers are compared with him. From Pol Pot and Idi Amin to Slobodan Milosevic and Saddam Hussein, monstrosity is measured against Hitler's example (2005: 634).

However, 'Hitler, of course, is not just a monster, he is also an exemplary ghost, an evil revenant. His ghost and the spectre of appeasement have appeared on numerous occasions: Korea, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Iraq' (Devetak, 2005: 634). The current Eurozone crisis may be added to this list. Another Gothic trope, then, that appears in this narrative is that of the uncanny *doppelganger;* Hitler is effectively portrayed as Merkel's evil, gender-shifting double. As Milbank notes, since Freud the doppelganger, representing the 'horror of duality' has been understood 'not as a true spiritual presence but as a figure of repression'; it is linked to the uncanny in that, for Freud, 'it is the home that we refuse to acknowledge and from which we are estranged which causes the double among other eerie manifestations' (Millbank, 2011).

In addition, an urban legend widely circulated on the Internet argues that Merkel is, in fact, Hitler's daughter or granddaughter. According to the story Merkel, born almost ten years after Hitler's death, was the product of an experiment in artificial insemination carried out by Nazi 'death doctor' Dr. Karl Kauberg, who had ostensibly preserved Hitler's semen and impregnated Eva Braun's sister with it (*Project Avalon*, 2011). Here, then, Merkel is portrayed as a kind of 'Frankenstein's monster', an aberration born of the misuse of science that should never have been created. As Hurley argues, Frankenstein's monster, given life yet created from bits and pieces of dead human bodies, can be seen in terms of the abject; it is 'one of Kristeva's composites' … 'one cannot bear to look upon it, but cannot bring oneself to look away from it either' (Hurley, 2007: 138). Merkel, or rather the Merkel-monster created by the urban legend, is also a 'betwixt and between' creature; she is alive yet artificially created by a monster from the semen of another, dead and even more terrifying monster.

As Devetak notes, however, it is not only leaders that are compared to monsters in IR; in addition, he argues, 'monstrosity is also a common metaphor used to describe political systems' and cites examples where the Roman Empire, the feudal system, and the USA have all been compared to monsters (2005: 631-633). If Hitler is the monster figure *par excellance* of IR, the Third Reich is, similarly, the most monstrous of political systems, embodying, like the terrorist attacks of September 11 (Devetak, 2005: 637) the sublime features of destructive power, limitlessness, shapelessness, and obscurity (MacMillan, 2014).

Extreme right discourse on Muslim immigration and Turkish accession

According to extreme right discourse, Europe is under threat of being 'Islamicised' through a combination of immigration from Muslim countries, Turkish EU accession and, in some cases, as part of an international conspiracy between the Arab world and left-leaning European politicians. Thus, as Carr notes, in such discourse Europe is depicted as a 'doomed continent, on the brink of cultural extinction in the face of a relentless and co-ordinated campaign of Islamicisation' eventually leading to a new 'Islamicised' European civilisation in thrall to the Arab world (Carr 2006: 2). On this basis, issues such as Muslim immigration to Europe and Turkey's EU accession are securitised in extreme right discourse, while the Muslim imput to the development of European civilisation either ignored or itself viewed as part of a Muslim conspiracy theory to brainwash Europeans.

Like many Gothic tales, which are often set in decaying castles or mansions, the extreme right narrative on Muslim immigration takes place in a setting of crumbling grandeur. In this case, it is European civilisation itself that is depicted as in ruins. In particular, Europe is depicted as culturally, spiritually and demographically decadent in this discourse, making it ripe for physical and cultural 'occupation' by Muslims. In this context, extreme right parties tend to frame themselves as defenders of Europe against the supposed Muslim incursion. As Flemish Party leader Filip Dewinter, for instance, explained; 'We are the defenders of Western civilization, with its two pillars: Judeo-Christianity and the heritage of Ancient Greece' (cited in Zuquete, 2008: 330).

Such discourse, then, can be understood as a Gothic narrative, in that it is fundamentally a tale of persecution, which takes place in an atmosphere of threat, horror and terror. In some cases, the Islamicisation of Europe is considered to be part of an international conspiracy. This conspiracy theory is often based around the Koran, which, like Hitler's *Mein Kampf* or *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in earlier times, is viewed as the basis of a plan to control the world and colonise others. In this view, the Koran apparently 'leaves no choice but to commit every Muslim to fight an uncompromisingly holy war against non-Muslims' (Nachmani, 2012: 21). In this context, there have been right-wing calls to prohibit the Koran, considered to be the focal point of 'Islamofascism'. Thus, the Dutch

Freedom Party (PVV), for instance, argued that the Dutch parliament should 'Ban the Koran [which] is a *fascist book* … that is why this book, like *Mein Kampf,* must be banned' (cited in Nachmani, 2012: 21).

As Boym argues, like the Gothic itself, 'conspiracy theories flourish at a time of crisis, of political and social change' (1999: 98). Such conspiracy theories may be both a consequence and a cause of uncanny sensations. As Eyre and Page argue, for instance, the concept of an evil, all-controlling genius is itself uncanny (2008: viii). In addition, however, the sensation of the uncanny may *provoke* conspiracy theories; recent psychological research suggests that an uncanny feeling may prime the brain to identify patterns, or even to see patterns where none exist, including conspiracy theories (Carey, 2009).

References to 'Islamofascism' are widespread in extreme right discourse, aiming to provoke terror through referring to the 'return of the repressed' political monsters Hitler and the Third Reich. In 2010, for instance, Marine Le Pen compared Muslim street prayers to the Nazi occupation of France. Geert Wilders has also widely compared the perceived Muslim threat to the Nazis in the Second World War, casting himself and his party in the role of the Allies (Kahn, 2013: 15-21). In his film *Fitna,* for instance, Wilders shows video clips in which Muslims are saying 'God Bless Hitler'' and 'be prepared for the real Holocaust' (Kahn, 2013: 8).

Far right discourse on Muslim immigration contains elements of the uncanny not only in its references to the Nazi regime but also by alluding to the return of another repressed fear, in this case of previous Muslim attempts to dominate Europe, such as the Moorish domination of Iberia starting from the 8th century, and, especially, the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in the 15th century and the Siege of Vienna around two centuries later. Dutch right wing populist leader Geert Wilders, for example, argued in a 2009 visit to Italy that;

> The first Islamic invasion of Europe was stopped at Poitiers in 732. The second Islamic invasion was halted at the gates of Vienna in 1683. Now we have to stop the current – stealth- Islamic invasion. Ladies and gentlemen, once Islam conquered Constantinople, now it wants to conquer Rome. We have to stop the Islamisation of Europe, because if we don't, Europe will become Eurabia (Underhill 2009).

Harald Fiegl, for instance, also argues that 'The Islamisation of Europe (and the whole world) is not only the result of Muslim immigration since WWII, but has been a declared goal of Islam since the time of Mohammed …Without the Crusades, Europe would have been subjugated by Islam centuries ago' (Fiegl, 2010). Thus, these events are used in right-wing discourse to add extra terror to the threat of a third Islamic invasion; in other words Muslims are construed as Europe's bogeyman, a sinister, haunting presence always liable to reappear.

In this context, then, Muslim immigrants are turned into Europe's internal Other. In the sense that migrants are, in effect, 'betwixt and between', and are perceived as disturbing identity and violating borders. Yeğenoğlu argues that negative attitudes to immigrants in Europe can be understood in terms of Kristeva's abject:

> What makes migrants polluting and therefore threatening is their transgresssion of borders. By doing so, they not only threaten an orderly life, life that sets inside and outside, but also threatens to invade the other side of the border, they threaten the mastery of the subject's control over its own space (Yeğenoğlu, 2012: 38).

Turkey's bid for accession to the European Union has also been depicted in these terms. Former EU Commissioner Frits Bolkestein, for instance, argued in 2004 that if Turkey entered the EU Europe risked becoming predominantly Islamic (Evans-Pritchard 2004). Again, the return of the repressed is prominent in this discourse. Harald Fiegl, for instance, compares Europe's current position to that of Constantinople before its fall to the Ottoman Turks; 'The EU is in the same position as Byzantium before its conquest by the Turks. Then as now an opponent fighting with all means at its disposal was facing a disunited, absolutely self-destructive enemy' (Fiegl: 2010). Austrian discourse in particular, especially that of the media, has tended to allude to the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683, and Kösebalaban argues that, over four centuries later, it is still the primary explanation for Austria's exceptionally strong opposition to Turkey's full membership of the EU (Kösebalaban 2007: 99). Similarly, Dutch former Commissioner Frits Bolkestein argued that Turkey's accession to the EU would mean that the efforts of the German, Austrian and Polish troops that resisted the Ottoman Turks' siege of Vienna in 1683 would be in vain (Gow and MacAskill 2004).

Eurosceptic Gothic Discourse: The Monstrous EU

Gothic narratives can also be identified in the discourse of hard Eurosceptic parties. However, in this discourse it is generally the EU itself that is depicted as the Gothic villain. In this sense, Eurosceptic discourse on the EU resembles a dystopian narrative, a form which shares many features with the Gothic (Cartwright, 2005). A dystopia, which derives from the Greek for 'bad place', such as those depicted in Orwell's *1984* or Huxley's *Brave New World* can be described as a utopian society with at least one fatal flaw; it is therefore in some way undesirable or even frightening. Generally, a dystopia involves excessive social control, which may include propaganda, constant surveillance, terror, restriction of information, discouraging independent thought and encouraging the worship of a figurehead or concept. This control may be exerted, for instance, by a totalitarian government, a mindless bureaucracy, technological or scientific means or by large corporationsIndeed, a dystopian narrative can be read as a *warning* on the part of the author who 'depicts a dark future building on the systematic amplification of current trends and features' (Claisse and Delvenne, 2010: 1).

In this sense, according to Frye's theory of archetypal meaning, the dystopia may be characterised by demonic imagery, which is 'the presentation of the world that desire totally rejects: the world of the scapegoat, of bondage and

pain and confusion' (1990: 147). For Frye, the demonic human world is 'a society held together by a kind of molecular tension of egos, a loyalty to the group or the leader which diminishes the individual, or, at best, contrasts his pleasure with his duty or honour' (Frye, 1990: 147).

In the discourse of the British eurosceptic right, then, notably the hard Eurosceptic UK Independence Party, the ethnonationalist British National Party (BNP), and other smaller far-right parties such as the British Freedom Party (BFP)[iv], the EUtopia of democracy, human rights, peace and prosperity has become an EU dystopia characterised by totalitarianism and a lack of freedom and individuality backed up by a mindless bureacracy, and increased impoverishment as a result of misguided, quasi-Socialist economic dictatorship. In the view of UKIP leader Nigel Farage, for instance, the EU was 'a union that despises democracy' (Farage, 2005).

In this context, Eurosceptic discourse has frequently invoked the 'return of the repressed' by comparing the EU to a totalitarian state, particularly a Communist one. Nigel Farage, for instance, argued that 'the EU resurrected the evil system that the people of Eastern Europe had lived under before' (Farage, 2010). Moreover, former BFP leader Weston's description of Europol as the EU's 'sinister state police' also invites comparison with Orwell's 'thought police';

> Is this democracy in action? No, it is totalitarianism, pure and simple … And let us not forget the extraordinary physical power the EU already has over us. Europol, the EU's sinister state police, can travel across borders under diplomatic immunity (Weston, 2012).

While, in dystopian narratives, the citizens of the dystopia generally live in a dehumanised state, the dystopian hero often questions and rebels against the existing society; feeling trapped he/she struggles to escape from the confines of the stifling regime. In this sense, it can be argued that leaders of British Eurosceptic far-right parties depict themselves and their parties as dystopian heroes, willing to rebel against the 'totalitarian' EU and thus to lead Britain to a future of freedom and prosperity. Farage, for instance, suggests that the UKIP can provide an almost 'Utopian' future for the UK by delivering it from the EU;

> UKIP is dedicated to liberty, opportunity, equality under the law and the aspirations of the British people. We will always act in the interests of Britain. Especially on immigration, employment, energy supply and fisheries. We know that only by leaving the union can we regain contol of our borders, our parliament, democracy and our ability to trade freely with the fastest-growing economies in the world (Farage, 2013).

Conclusion

Gothic narratives have been used in an attempt to securitise the perceived threatening Other in all three of the case studies above; Germany in peripheral Eurozone media discourse, Muslim immigration in extreme right discourse and the EU itself in British Eurosceptic discourse. Discourse in all three examples includes a nightmarish narrative of persecution, horror and terror; by German 'austerity Nazis' in Southern European media discourse, by 'Islamofascism' by far right politicians and by a totalitarian, Communist EU in British 'hard' Eurosceptic discourse. Moreover, in each of these three examples, the threat of the 'return of the repressed' of violent or divisive incidents and periods in European history is emphasised; the return of German fascist hegemony in the first example, the return of Muslim domination of Europe in the second, and the return of a Communist 'evil empire' in the third.

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[ii] The Copenhagen School views securitization primarily as a *speech act*; the act of naming a certain development or issue as a security problem. In order to be meaningful, however, such a speech act must be carried out by a security actor, or *functional actor,* that is one (or more) of the actors who affect the dynamics of a sector and significantly influence the decisions in the field of security (Wæver, 1995: 54). Thus, security is viewed as subjective and socially constructed rather than objectively absent or present (Huysmans, 1998: 57). However, for a securitising speech act to lead to a successful securitisation, a certain audience that accepts the issue as a threat should also exist. This, in turn, grants authority to the security actor to put the issue in question in a primary position, by positing it as a threat to the survival of certain things or values, termed the *referent object* (Williams, 2003: 513). This, then, gives the security actor licence to use extraordinary means, such as levying extra taxes or using military means; in other words to break the normal political rules (Buzan *et al*, 1998: 25).

[iii] For an extended version of the argument in this sub-section see MacMillan (2014)
[iv] The BFP was a short-lived offshoot of the BNP which was registered between 2010-2012.

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