



Origins of Brexit: History at the service of media representation

Leroy Clémentine

Brexit is an ideal media event for analysing the circulation of imaginaries and the identity construction within Europe. The analysis focuses on the history writing as a device in the context of the controversies sparked by Brexit. The device concept allows us to identify the relationships between the media as a framework in which the journalist's writing has the dual objective of informing and arguing, in response to an implicit contract with the readership. The analysis of journalists' choices in writing the past leading to Brexit thus shows the constructed public by the media outlet and the fractures that Brexit reveals in the unity imaginaries conveyed by European institutions. The analysis is based on a thesis work and draws on a corpus of nine press titles in three countries: Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Quantitative and qualitative analyses highlight the circulation of different historical motives: the 1930s, the Suez Canal crisis and the immemorial times of Athenian democracy, Christianity and the Enlightenment. The circulatory approach consists of not comparing differences on a national basis, but rather identifying variations in historical motives according to their polarising power. The historical motives analysis shows the formation of a European semiosphere (Bal, 2023) around Brexit, but also the limits of a European public sphere constitution in Habermas' sense.

Keywords: Brexit, representation, press, history, France, Germany, United Kingdom

Boris Johnson's Narrative of the 2016 Brexit Referendum: A Counter-discourse on the European Union

Fathi Bourmèche

This paper seeks to argue that Boris Johnson, one of the most prominent leaders in the Leave campaign during the 2016 Brexit referendum succeeded in persuading British voters to be on his side and choose to leave the European Union (EU). One of the arguments advanced by Johnson during the referendum campaign was that leaving the EU would allow Britain to regain its sovereignty as well as its role in the world. This study is focused on Johnson's two speeches, one on the Brexit referendum and one on the Brexit result, given their significance in manipulating British public opinion in relation to their stance on the EU. The analysis is based on Obeng's (1997) indirectness strategies and Fairclough's and Fairclough's (2012) practical reasoning framework. The central argument is that Johnson's verbal strategies have been influential in the results of the referendum, putting an end to a long partnership between the EU and the UK. Such a split ushered in a new era for both partners in the aftermath of Brexit, putting EU's integrity at stake, raising concern about more frictions within such an institution.

Keywords: Brexit, Britain, Discourse, EU, Johnson

War commemoration as an (Anti-)European radical past

Hedwig Wagner

The article *War commemoration as an (Anti-)European radical past* explores how digital media and political narratives have transformed war commemoration, focusing on the interplay of memory, power, and media in shaping public perceptions of history. Hedwig Wagner applies Michel Foucault's concept of the *dispositif* to war commemoration, emphasizing how digital platforms, like social media, act as tools for shaping collective memory and public discourse. The article critically addresses how modern political figures, particularly Vladimir Putin, misuse historical memory, like that of World War II, to justify the current war. This article tackles with German quality journalism, particularly in outlets like *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*, *Die Zeit*, and *Der Spiegel*, offering a counter-discourse, opposing revisionist history and emphasizing a European memory culture aimed at combating such manipulations. The section "Radical Past," examines how the digital age has fundamentally altered our relationship with historical memory, particularly through the concept of the "radical past" proposed by Ford and Hoskins (2022). The immediacy and participatory nature of digital platforms create a constant recontextualization of the past, where historical events like World War II are invoked in contemporary conflicts, such as Russia's war against Ukraine. In the conclusion, it is emphasized that war commemoration in the digital era operates as a Foucauldian *dispositif*, a complex system where power, memory, and media intersect, shaping both public discourse and individual perceptions of history.

Keywords: Russo-Ukrainian war, historical narratives, radical past (Ford and Hoskins, 2022), European memory culture, Foucauldian *dispositif*, German online journalism

Les médias socio-numériques en tant que dispositifs : analyse des tweets-médias de l'anniversaire du 24 février 2023

Alida Maria Silletti

This paper is part of COMETE Europe research project and is based on the LEMEL-DIREPA media corpus as far as the period 21st-27th February, 2023, is concerned. It deals with the media and semio-discursive analysis of the first anniversary from the beginning of the Russian aggression to Ukraine on 24th February, 2022, looked through the tweets coming from *Le Monde (LM)* and *Le Figaro's* Twitter accounts. Socio-digital media will be related to the notions of "socio-digital *dispositif*" and of "*dispositif*". Methodology used in order to study Twitter cards also containing illustrations, whose total number is 33, is based, on the one hand, on French Discourse Analysis; on the other hand, on a Peircean approach of illustrations. The aim of this research is to verify if, on the basis of the analysis of the tweets and of their illustrations, it is possible to consider these tools as European *dispositifs*. The analysis shows that a European dimension is only dealt with the Russo-Ukrainian war by itself rather than with its media characterization, which is more interested in the consequences of the war for civilians (LM) and in the breaking off the international stability (LF).

Keywords: 24th February anniversary, *dispositif*, media discourse, media tweets, Peircean illustrations

Cette contribution tire son origine du projet de recherche COMETE Europe et s'appuie sur le corpus médiatique LEMEL-DIREPA par rapport à la période 21-27 février 2023. Elle aborde le traitement médiatico- et sémio-discursif du premier anniversaire du début de l'agression russe en Ukraine du 24 février 2022 à partir des tweets du Monde (LM) et du Figaro (LF). Les médias socio-numériques étudiés seront encadrés dans la notion de "dispositif socio-numérique" et, en amont, de "*dispositif*". La méthodologie utilisée pour examiner le corpus des cartes Twitter assorties d'une illustration, dont le nombre total s'élève à 33, repose, d'un côté, sur l'analyse du discours « de l'école française » ; de l'autre côté, sur une approche peircienne des illustrations. Le but de cette recherche est de vérifier si, à l'appui de l'étude menée sur les tweets des deux médias et sur leurs illustrations, il est possible de considérer ces outils comme des *dispositifs* d'Europe ou européens. Notre analyse montre qu'une dimension européenne relève du conflit russo-ukrainien en soi plutôt que de son traitement médiatique, qui privilégie des aspects qui portent en revanche sur les conséquences de la guerre pour la population civile (LM) et sur la déstabilisation des équilibres internationaux (LF).

Mots clefs : anniversaire du 24 février, discours médiatique, *dispositif*, illustrations peirciennes, tweets-médias

Représenter l'Europe dans un divertissement télévisuel. Entre marque et programme : la mise en scène des frontières au Concours eurovision de la chanson 2023

Johan Boittiaux

Various ethnic and linguistic minority groups live within the borders of Ukraine. The management of these minorities has led to tensions, which seemed to be resolved partly due to Ukraine's adherence to international treaties ensuring their protection. Among these diverse minority groups, the Russian-speaking population needs special attention. By Russian-speaking, we mean anyone who uses Russian as their preferred language, regardless of their ethnic background and political preferences. The presence of such a high number of Russian speakers became problematic from 2014 onward, when the use of the Ukrainian language took on a more pronounced political significance, and the divide with the rest of the Russian-speaking world became more apparent. This divide was evident through Ukraine's political choice to align with the Euro-Atlantic world and Russia's annexation of Crimea. The situation became even more complex following the Russian attack on February 24, 2022, which exacerbated tensions and moved away from the prospect of a peaceful resolution. In the first part of the article, a definition of Russian-speaking minorities is provided, with data justifying the choice to focus on the linguistic factor instead of relying solely on ethnicity. The second part historically explains the presence of minorities in Ukraine. The third part analyzes the situation of Russian speakers from the time of Ukraine's independence to the present by examining the Ukrainian constitution and regulations related to minority management. It also considers the reports, comments, and opinions of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the Committee of Experts on the Application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The goal was to trace how the situation of Russian speakers in Ukraine changed over time, with a particular emphasis on issues arising from the escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

Keywords: minority, language, Russian-speaking, Ukraine, protection

Le concours Eurovision de la chanson est organisé annuellement par l'Union européenne de radiodiffusion (UER). L'article vise à analyser les variations apportées au dispositif scénique dans le contexte particulier de l'édition 2023, organisée par la BBC au nom du média ukrainien Suspilne, en raison de la guerre d'Ukraine. Cette configuration particulière met en effet en avant la porosité entre le discours institutionnel de l'UER sur l'union et le programme de divertissement qui met symboliquement en concurrence des nations. L'approche conjugue stratégies médiatiques et discours des programmes télévisés à partir des travaux en sciences de l'information et de la communication de François Jost et Jean-Claude Soulages. Le transfert de la décision institutionnelle de l'UER dans le format du divertissement est analysé à travers les relations entre genres, énonciation, tons et usages stratégiques de huit passages tirés des trois émissions qui composent l'édition 2023 du concours. Le fil rouge exploratoire identifié est celui de la métaphore de la frontière. Ses différentes manifestations visuelles et discursives approfondissent le sens de l'union dans une stratégie de renforcement du message de l'UER en contexte sensible. L'article apporte ainsi des éléments de réflexion sur la saturation du message de l'union décliné dans une variété de contenus et porté par une énonciation polyphonique. L'article interroge donc comment le divertissement négocie les événements extérieurs pour consolider son fonctionnement, son langage propre et la valorisation de l'UER comme acteur médiatique.

Mots-clés: Divertissement, Dispositif, Europe, Eurovision, Frontière, discours institutionnel

**The Joint Research Centre of the EU Commission: An Ideological Dispositif for Whom?
A Critical and Positive Discourse Analysis**

Michelangelo Conoscenti

This paper comprehensively examines the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) public communication and its practices when interacting with recruited external contributors, shedding light on its role as a Foucauldian dispositif in shaping political narratives and policy decisions. Drawing inspiration from the works of Gilbert and Wodak (2000), Rossetti di Valdalbero (2021), and building upon the insights of Hughes (2018), this study employs a blend of Critical and Positive Discourse Analysis, quantitative and qualitative multimodal corpus linguistics, and autoethnography (Chang 2008; Adams *et al.* 2015) to dissect the JRC's activities and their implications for decision-making processes within the EU. The paper particularly focuses on the political struggles among actors involved in decision-making processes and the impact on report authors.

Keywords: strategic autonomy, European Union, European defence, Russia-Ukraine war

**Pulling democracy up by its national bootstraps?
Contemporary societal order in Italy, Europe and the West**

Alon Helled

Tackling the structures of contemporary political life, constituted by nation, state and political regime, is no easy task. Many scholars have dedicated research to decipher the interlinks, even interdependencies, between state-building, nation-building and the formation of political regimes. By crossing centuries and deconstructing the sedimentation of political phenomena that have characterised domestic political life as well as international relations, the essay reviews some of the major features of what it suggests to be a triadic nation-state-regime edifice. With a specific attention paid to Italian and European societies, issues concerning democratic rule, sovereignism, nationalism, populism and so forth are scrutinised, whilst using processual analysis that indicates lacks and excesses in the Western model of a nation-state-based collectivity. The essay briefly introduces the interdependent threefold infrastructure of modern national statehood and juxtaposes some of the main theses which shaped contemporary political thought. It thus draws from recent scientific literature from which it takes inspiration in bridging different scholarly sensibilities. While placing the Italian case, the European context and the vaster Western morphology of nation-state-democracy combination, the essay adds two other variables that have shaped European and Western citizenry: ideology and nostalgia. The latter are then discussed through both theoretical and empirical exemplification of the dynamic dialectics between individuals, collectivity and societal order. The state of contemporary Western democracy is thus put in relation to its long-term institutional and mental stratification, as forged by national statehood and its seemingly ever-lasting hold.

Keywords: democracy, national statehood, Italy, European society, ideology, nostalgia

**Civic and Citizenship Education under scrutiny:
a comparative analysis of case studies across EU and non-EU countries**

Federico Castiglioni and Alessia Chiriatti

Citizenship Education has become a cornerstone of contemporary debates on democracy and education, particularly in light of the challenges posed by post-truth politics and the proliferation of mis- and disinformation. While Civic Education traditionally emphasizes knowledge of institutions, legal frameworks, and citizens' rights and duties, Citizenship Education extends beyond this scope by cultivating values, dispositions, and competences such as empathy, critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and digital literacy. These elements are essential for equipping young generations with the epistemic vigilance and moral responsibility required to sustain democratic life. The integration of institutional knowledge with participatory competences reflects a growing consensus among scholars and international organizations – including the European Union, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe - that effective education must move from the mere transmission of knowledge to the active formation of democratic practices. Against the backdrop of polarization, manipulation of information, and declining trust in democratic institutions, this paper argues that the alignment of Civic and Citizenship Education offers a robust educational response to contemporary threats, fostering both resilience and active participation. The research underlying this article has been conducted with the framework of the Horizon Europe project RECLAIM, which investigates how European education systems can strengthen democratic resilience against mis- and disinformation in the so-called post-truth era.

Keywords: Citizenship Education, Civic Education, Post-truth politics, Digital and media literacy, Democratic resilience, Soft skills