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Author(s)	Edin, Hajdarpasic
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Piro Rexhepi, *White Enclosures: Racial Capitalism and Coloniality along the Balkan Route* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2023), 200 pp.

In the spring of 2024, a wave of rumors and demonstrations swept Bulgaria as the country was poised to join Europe's Schengen travel area. Several Bulgarian groups violently attacked Pakistani, Arab, and Afghan passersby on the streets of Sofia while chanting anti-Muslim and anti-migrant slogans. Meanwhile, Bulgarian right-wing politicians portrayed themselves as the true defenders of Europe against the perceived flood of non-Europeans on the country's border with Turkey.

A century earlier, a popular Bulgarian postcard from 1913 depicted a soldier "with a fiery sword treading on the crescent moon while chasing a Muslim couple" out of a gated garden marked "Europe." This illustration, which features prominently in the introduction of Piro Rexhepi's book (p. 15), confronts us with unsettling similarities between Balkan discourses of 1913 and 2024. In both instances, Christian Balkan nationalists try to align themselves with "Europe" and against the presence of other populations perceived as non-European and therefore undesirable. Faced with these parallels, many scholars find it more comfortable to emphasize the differences between these phenomena, treating each as a product of its own unique time and lacking any meaningful linkages. In this rendering, Islamophobic politics in the Balkans appear as fleeting moments of excess that can be disaggregated from each other and then folded into the larger story of progress toward European integration.

Rexhepi's book offers a profoundly different and insightful reframing of these issues. "The frequently promised but continuously deferred state of Euro-Atlantic integration" of the Balkans, argues Rexhepi, has played out in structures where the "mandate of policing the borders of the [European] enclosure at its [Balkan] edges is thus presented as an auspicious opportunity to be saved once and for all through integration into white supremacy." Moreover, Rexhepi outlines a different periodization of these processes. Instead of taking for granted 1989 as the "Year Zero" that kick-starts Eastern European integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, Rexhepi pushes back the historical frame to the late nineteenth century, revealing recurring attempts of successive post-Ottoman regimes and intellectuals to fashion themselves as "European" in contrast to other Balkan populations that they perceived as "non-European."

White Enclosures explores the inner workings of these dynamics through a series of chapters, each tackling a different theme. The book opens with a chapter on the political predicament of Muslim intellectuals in non-aligned Yugoslavia, proceeds to consider the Habsburg cultural legacy in post-Dayton Bosnia, explores problems of Albanian sovereignty as well as the sexual politics of European integration, and closes with an analysis of anti-Romani racism in Bulgaria, which also opens the introduction to the book.

Several of these chapters develop the overarching argument of White Enclosures in compelling and innovative ways. Chapter 3 stands out for its analysis of how "post-Ottoman mapping of racial and religious borders of Europe is reactivated in the post-Cold War moment to reinvigorate Euro–Atlantic collaborations toward enclosure." Departing from largely hagiographic accounts of the Albanian writer Ismail Kadare, Rexhepi not only situates him in a longer line of Balkan intellectuals obsessed with proving their "European identity" to the West, but also shows how such efforts entailed articulating new cultural and sexual sensibilities that would align with perceived Euro–

American norms. In another inventive turn, Chapter 4 uses the photographic archive of the Marubi studio (itself a rare and valuable source) to discuss "how anxieties over the hetero-European orientations of Albanians are at times constructed against the queer Muslim as a renegade of the Ottoman past that continues to haunt the Albanian orientation toward Europe." Chapter 5 returns to the reproductive racism outlined in the introduction, deepening the discussion of anti-Romani politics while also highlighting how the work of Azis, a Bulgarian Romani musician, can offer counter-narratives against the pressures to Europeanize and sanitize Balkan past and present.

In other chapters, more contextualization is needed to fully realize the potential of the stories that *White Enclosures* brings forth. In Chapter 1, for example, the discussion of Melika Salihbegović and Alija Izetbegović assumes considerable knowledge of the Yugoslav and global context in which both thinkers articulated their ideas amid turbulent changes at the end of the twentieth century. Similarly, Chapter 2 would benefit from a more substantial discussion of the geopolitical position of the Habsburg colonial project in Bosnia as well as the subsequent engagements (or lack thereof) with Habsburg legacies in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Generally, more historicization of both Balkan socialist states and post-socialist "transitions," particularly regarding relations between successive political regimes and various Romani and Muslim populations, would bring out the overarching arguments more clearly.

This does not substantively detract from the overall impact of this book, which issues an energetic and creative call for greater critical attention to the history of racial politics at Europe's edges. In important ways, Rexhepi challenges the established notions of scholars like Maria Todorova, whose *Imagining the Balkans* assumed that "self-understanding as colonial subjects was absent in the Balkans" and had little to say about the politics of race and colonialism within the region. Rexhepi not only shows the historical self-understanding and concern of Balkan Muslim, Romani, and other activists regarding European colonialism since the late nineteenth century, but also suggests a different theoretical approach, even if it does not develop it in entirety. Throughout his book, Rexhepi engages with a great range of thinkers working on the Middle East, North Africa, and Latin America, thus integrating the Balkans into a larger and ongoing conversation about the global histories of colonialism and racial capitalism. The latter category, however, remains only partly sketched and needs further elaboration that would unite the case studies into such an analytical framework.

One of the main accomplishments of *White Enclosures* has been to identify and map out, so to speak, several competing and intertwined claims to Europeanness and whiteness that continue to shape political, economic, and cultural projects across the Balkans. Similar anxieties about the ambiguities of whiteness extend well beyond the geographic edges of Europe. Recent scholarship on the histories of whiteness in the late Ottoman Empire and republican Turkey (Murat Engin), in Iran and its diaspora (Reza Zia Ebrahimi and Neda Maghbouleh), across North Africa (Leila Tayeb), among Jewish communities (Eric Goldstein and Ilan Pappe)—just to name a handful of cases—continues to raise questions about how we can understand and relate regimes of racialization across very different contexts without flattening them into a single story or reducing them to a set of simple binaries. With this brave book, Piro Rexhepi has made a major contribution to these ongoing conversations.

Edin Hajdarpasic