

THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF OTHERNESS

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Abstract: *When dealing with Beautiful Losers by Leonard Cohen and Tay John by Howard O'Hagan, issues related to cultural identity represent the focal point from which a relevant discussion of the two novels might start. It is from this point that this paper starts its analysis and tries to establish the meaning that the two novels give to ethnic, national and religious identity. The perspective from which this paper will look at these aspects would be that of discursive sanctification and legitimization. The latter term can be defined as the discursive construction of a Grand Recit, of a powerful religious figure which would legitimize the ethnic environment of origin. This religious figure would represent the margin, the Other, but, at the same time, could become an universal authority figure for both centre and margin. This analysis would not only concentrate on the religious dimension but would also aim at discovering very important and intricate connections between the above mentioned dimension and issues of national identity and of 'name-giving' as a discursive practice which accurately reflects possible power relations existing between the centre and the margin.*

Key words: *legitimation, Otherness, discourse, identity, naming*