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Géographie Moraliste versus Cosmopolitan Europe
Reflection on Imperial Thinking in the Heart of Europe

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MA Programme Euroculture Declaration

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1. Introduction

It is just few years ago that the final chord of global history has been announced¹. The era of political tensions was proclaimed to be over. We were told that we apparently had found the universal formula for the future world order and that any further development was expected to exclusively follow this formula. The political system of liberal capitalism, the economic system of trade market and the social system of the welfare state have seemed to have spread worldwide, suppressed all competing alternatives, and finally tamed most of the intrinsic revolutionary potentials of modernity. However, if the interpretation of some distinguished scholars is precise, the very recent situation of the post-political world², where “capitalism is moralized and legalized”³, is far from being statically entropic. Indeed, we are occupying a conflicting universe. In this moment, the form of clashes which has persisted in the global arena is a cultural conflict. Accordingly, a particular factor connected with the cultural conflicts is the conflict over the right to represent and interpret, the right, up to the recent post-colonial movement, executed only by the few hegemonic cultures of the West.

The European continent is cross-cut by a significant number of symbolic delineation lines. Besides the very obvious level of legalized nation-state frameworks, there are also regional as well as transnational reservoirs of socio-cultural and political content of belonging. Concentrating only on the level of transnational geopolitical entities, one can speak about the pluralities of Europe: Old Europe, New Europe, Eastern Europe, Central Europe, East Central Europe, Nordic Europe, Iberian Europe, Trans-Alpine Europe, Scandinavian Europe, Baltic Europe, Mediterranean Europe, Southern Europe, Balkan (South-Eastern Europe), etc. Until today, most of these particular European socio-political entities have been uncontested up to today.

In this thesis, I am concentrating on the specific – for a long time perhaps the most

¹ Francise Fukuyama, *The End of History and Last Man*, 1993. First published as the article: ‘*The End of History?*’, 1989.

² e.g. Jacques Rancière, Slavoj Žižek, Václav Bělohradský, Samuel Huntington, etc. In terms of ‘post-political world’, the opposition between Huntington and Fukuyama seems to be the false one. They both concurrently claimed the death of politics.

³ Slavoj Žižek, *The Future of Europe*, http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=031DE139C14CEE38&search_query=slavoj+zizek+The+Future+of+Europe.

resonating - internal European delineation between ‘Eastern and Western Europe’⁴. This topic illustrates the allegedly unavoidable and tempting tendency to exclude (‘to Other’, ‘Veränderung’,⁵) during any identity-building processes (including recent European integration). To put it initially briefly and schematically, a mechanism of constructing the cultural, social and political identity seems to function in binary oppositions.

There has been a long period of tangible socio-cultural, political and economical exclusion⁶ and separation of ‘Eastern Europe’. On May 1, 2004 this officially ended when this very European delineation disappeared by the decisive political act of European Union enlargement. Europe finally expanded to the east. Seemingly, ‘Eastern Europe’ as a geopolitical concept collapsed and the continent’s geo-cultural division slowly began to evaporate⁷. However, in 2009 we can witness again the sudden return of a firm category of ‘Eastern Europe’ in parallel with the eruption of the recent financial crisis. Eastern Europe is once again considered as one block and the particular state are treated equally regardless their economic, social or political situation⁸.

The elimination of this European cleavage between ‘Western and Eastern Europe’ (since eighteenth century) is of considerable importance in relation to the successful project of European integration. My hypothesis is that the downgrading discourse on ‘Eastern Europe’ could be overcome by a regulative idea of European cosmopolitanism (internal and external). To my mind, the European cosmopolitanism is an endeavour which has a potential to denature and decentre previous European delineation lines. There is a heuristic capacity to ReOrient the relationship between ‘Eastern and Western Europe’ inherent to the discourse on European cosmopolitanism.

The liberal multicultural model of society is unable to provide worthwhile inspiration to this recent stage of Europe. In one of the following chapters, I assume that the general idea of multiculturalism is incapable of being a pattern for a transnational cultural integration. If

⁴ In order to avoid the impression of reifying the regions of Europe as essential facts, I refer to them in inverted commas.

⁵ See: Heidrun Friese, *Europe’s Otherness: cosmopolitanism and the construction of cultural unities*, in: Delanty (ed.), 243-256.

⁶ My understanding of mechanism of exclusion refers to the joint work of Martin Kohli and Alison Woodward. They conceptualize the exclusion as “cumulative process of deprivation, up to the point where society is polarized into a majority of insiders and an increasingly walled-off minority of outsiders – les exclus or the underclass. See: Alison Woodward, Martin Kohli, *Inclusion and Exclusion in European Societies*, 1-17.

⁷ The European Union enlargement in 2004, however, did not include all countries of the ‘former Eastern European region’, but it was interpreted as the symbolic act of acceptance the united Europe frame, which was going to be followed by further enlargement of the rest Eastern European countries. Thus enlargement was no longer a question of “if” but “when”. Even the Eastern Europeans countries out of the accession debates received the assurance of the future membership.

⁸ See chapter: Eastern, Central, Obsolete.

the European integration is seen to be just another continuation or even reinforcement of the multicultural strategies, united Europe would be nothing more than a transition of the nation-state rationality of identity-building to the higher level of socio-political organization and as such only a reinforcement of the tension between the ‘West vs. the Rest’. The European integration would thus lack its legitimacy due to the multiplying of inefficient policies.

Reversely, unlike multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism is not a matter of coexistence, but a project of universal and reflexive inclusion. What is in the centre of cosmopolitan discourse is its ambition to provide a new form of sensitivity towards otherness. This inclusive sensitivity challenges previous conceptions dominated by dichotomous ideological notions. In order to affirmatively establish European identity as well as to irrevocably repudiate the hierarchical delineation, “the very meaning of Europe must be re-imagined in a more cosmopolitan direction”⁹. Internal European development has to be based on a moment of universality that exceeds the pragmatic demands of the specific context.

Consequently, dissertation focuses on this particular normative potential of European cosmopolitanism to overcome European internal division between East and West. I want to question whether the implementation of the idea of European cosmopolitanism to the EU’s cultural and social policy is in principle able to eliminate the legacy of the excluding mechanisms constructed in the age of Enlightenment. In an overly schematic way: one of the objectives - the ‘pressing urgencies’ - of the European Union is to initiate and encourage processes of identity-building and solidarity across borders, the form of solidarity which is yet to be invented. “This invention is our task; theoretical or critical reflection it involves is indissociable from the practical initiatives we have already, out of sense of urgency, initiated and implemented.”¹⁰

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, we now try to change the world, but maybe it is rather time to interpret it better. In this moment, we still experience a lack of the global cognitive mapping – a proper diagnosis of the present. We still miss some ethical, socio-cultural and political orientation in the cognitive co-ordinations of the world. Therefore, the normative project of cosmopolitan imagination is a legitimate attempt to bring this interpretation to the scene. In order to overcome the previous hegemonic divisions of Europe, the normative interpretation of European cosmopolitanism is needed. Decolonization involves epistemic decolonization – to emancipate yourself from mental slavery - and the decolonization of imagination.

⁹ Gerard Delanty, *The Idea of Post-West Europe*, 3.

¹⁰ Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, 4.

It is not accidentally that I have chosen the tension between Western and Eastern European identity as an example. Currently, in the social sciences, many authors have expressed a need to approach the various social phenomena from a post-national or trans-national perspective¹¹ due to a distortion of ‘methodological nationalism’. ‘Methodological nationalism’ is an approach that naturalises or rationalises the existence of the nation-state as the primary concern of social sciences. According to Robert Fine, “seeing the concept of ‘society’ marked at birth by the coincidence between the rise of sociology as a discipline and the formation of nation state as the primary form of modern political organization, the new cosmopolitanism emphasizes the historicity of this analytic framework and its inappropriateness for comprehending social life in an age of globalization.”¹² Ulrich Beck writes about the “obsolescence” of traditional social theories, their “zombie categories” and he postulates a liberation from the old “container theory of society”¹³. I am convinced that an analysis of these rather transnational (some scholars would say even civilizational¹⁴) concepts could avoid a misconception stemming from ‘methodological nationalism’ which “imposes the concept of the nation-state upon all political formations which have emerged or survived in the modern period, including multinational empires, totalitarian regimes, *east and west power blocks*, city states and transnational bodies such as the European Union.”¹⁵

The final accord of this paper tries to point out that a cosmopolitan Europe also inaugurates the discourse on post-Western Europe. I will argue that the projects of European integration and European enlargement have brought about the emergence of a new political and socio-cultural entity – a post-Western Europe. The term of post-Western Europe has an ambition not to refer only to the actual territorial enlargement of the European Union but to the changed internal as well as external perspective. “The question, in a nutshell, is whether a Europe which is becoming post-Western in the trivial sense that it is no longer composed of Western and Central Europe (plus Greece) will also become post-Western in a more interesting sense of multicultural cosmopolitanism.”¹⁶

The steps I am going to address in this paper are organized as followed: firstly, I am going

¹¹ e.g. Ulrich Beck, Robert Fine, Daniel Chernilo, etc.

¹² Robert Fine, *Taking the ‘Ism’ Out of Cosmopolitanism: An Essay in Reconstruction*, 454.

¹³ Ulrich Beck quoted in: Fine, R. *Cosmopolitanism*, 6-7.

¹⁴ See: Samuel Huntington or Gerard Delanty for example.

¹⁵ Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism*, 10.

¹⁶ William Outhwaite, *Europe after the EU enlargement*, in: Delanty (ed.), 199. The listing of countries is actually inaccurate since EU has included Malta, Cyprus, Romania and Bulgaria. None of them could possibly be subsumed to the categories of Western or Central Europe.

to elaborate on the general mechanism of identity building by creation of a binary opposition of processes of inclusion and exclusion. The particular case of such a mechanism is a situation when a dominant strong society significantly contributes to the identity building of its external figure. This argument is analyzed in the chapter on residual indigenous identity. The mechanism of identity-building in binary oppositions is unrolled in the example of the internal European case of orientalising discourse. The discourse on ‘Eastern Europe’ embraces a variety of the orientalising symptoms. The following chapters discuss its emergence, character, proximity and differences to the traditional orientalism; its tensions and incoherencies, elaborations and appropriations. The particular appropriation of the orientalising discourse within the Eastern European context is the theme of ‘Central Europe’. The discourse on ‘Central Europe’ is an effective continuation of excluding strategies and representations applied against the further eastern European neighbours. Subsequently, I argue that a very similar orientalising and excluding logic lies behind the concept of liberal multiculturalism. Multiculturalism does not offer anything else than an international federation of tolerating cultural communities. It fundamentally misses to address the phenomenon of cross-cultural interpretation. The multicultural model does not succeed providing the solution for abandoning the European cultural delineations. The chapters providing with positive arguments start with the elaboration on the intrinsic fluidity of every cultural category. It is followed by introducing the cosmopolitan discourse, its rational-liberal basis, its reference to European integration, its methodological distinction to the concept of transnationalism and problematization of imperial connotations linked with any project of universal ambitions. The final chord will be the argument that the discourse on cosmopolitan Europe is a very promising alternative capable of overcoming the long-lasting internal European division between west and east.

2. I as not You: Enlightened Consciousness

“Those who live in a cold climate and in Europe are full of spirit, but wanting in intelligence and skill; and therefore they keep their freedom, but have no political organization, and are incapable of ruling over others. Whereas the natives of Asia are intelligent and inventive, but they are wanting in spirit; and therefore they are always in a state of subjection and slavery. But the Hellenic race,

which is situated between them, is likewise intermediate in character, being high-spirited and also intelligent.”
Aristotle, Politics, 1327b

Let me first focus on the general logic of identity-building and treatment of the ‘Other’- i.e. alien, stranger or foreigner. It is almost a matter of course to state that global order contains various forms of political, social, economic and symbolic exclusions and inequalities¹⁷. Every identity-building process, regardless whether it takes on a particular form of political recognition, resources allocation, social solidarity or cultural autonomy¹⁸, requires the construction of an ‘Other’. “Cultures are formed through binaries because human beings live in an evaluative universe.”¹⁹ It is due to this human axiological environment and unstoppable penetration of moral codes into all human activities that we cannot construct, realize or reflect upon ourselves without confronting alternatives. “[T]he development and maintenance of every culture require the existence of another different and competing alter ego [...] ‘others’ whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from ‘us’.”²⁰ Thus, different social units such as national states, ethnic groups, economic classes, transnational political federations²¹ or whole civilizations²² identify themselves with narratives which comprise economical, political, linguistic, ethnic, religious, as well as territorial and regional accounts. These accounts serve as the significant source for an identity positioning. As Seyla Benhabib convincingly expressed: ”We become aware of who we are by learning to become conversation partners in these narratives.”²³ To become a conversation partner does not include mere internal reflection of a group an individual is integrated in by birth, decision of family, or by deliberate integration, but it also introduces a notion of adverse element of the ‘Other’²⁴. Within the corpus of classical social theory, it is

¹⁷ See Ratna Kapur (2009), Costas Douzingas (2009), Amartya Sen (2002), Robert Fine (2007), Seyla Benhabib (2006), Ralf Dahrendorf (2008).

¹⁸ I derived my understanding of ‘culture’ from Rémi Brague. According him, culture is a definite practice commonly received for a long time in a social group large in number and powerful in influence. See: Rémi Brague, *Is there such a thing as Eurocentrism?* in: Delanty (ed.), 257-268.

¹⁹ Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*, 7.

²⁰ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 332.

²¹ See Hegel’s argument criticizing the Kant’s cosmopolitan project of perpetual peace, in: Robert Fine, *Taking the ‘Ism’ out of Cosmopolitanism*.

²² My understanding of the concept of civilization is derived from the work of Gerard Delanty. He broadly considers civilization not just as cultures or systems of ideas but as the complex “families of societies”. See: Gerard Delanty, *Civilizational constellations and European modernity reconsidered*, in: Delanty (ed.), 45-60.

²³ Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*, 15.

²⁴ There could be a situation when more than one nation, population or ethnic group possesses the same cultural traits – the European Union or India but also when referred to Pakistan and Bangladesh. For example, India and Bangladesh share the author of text of their anthems – Rabindranath Tagore.

Emile Durkheim's analysis of societal integration which stressed that every process of exclusion also serves to reinforce inclusion. According to him, by excluding deviant groups, a society is stabilizing itself²⁵. Thus, external figures are inherent in identity politics within which programs for recognition (individual as well as communal) draw socio-political units into the cultural tensions. "No one seemed to be free from the opposition between 'us' and 'them,' resulting in a sense of reinforced, deepened, hardened identity that has not been particularly edifying."²⁶

There has been an immense number of cultural tensions (interrogations between included members and foreigners caused by clashes of different symbolic systems) occurring in history. The particularization of the symbolic order and inequalities and tensions stemming from this particularization inspired Immanuel Kant to propose the argument for universal cosmopolitan point of view. With the concept of cosmopolitanism, Kant tried to address the problems connected with striking evidence that the rights of human beings were institutionalized only through the prism of nation-states and restricted to their preferences. According to Kant, an image of human beings as being shaped and filtered through particular institutions of the nation-state, implies a variety of problems as "the lawlessness of international relations, the perpetual wars that govern relation between European states, the exclusion and stigmatization of foreigners within state, and the subjection of colonized people in the non-European world."²⁷ The last two problem areas could be summed up into a general rubric of the treatment of the 'Other'. The French Revolution was the first proclaimed attempt to address the idea of universal inclusion. However, this attempt failed. The implicit deficiency of the enlightenment project in terms of a universal validity and reach, as Kant saw it, could be aptly illustrated by the *Code Noir*. In general, slavery was considered a common metaphor for illegitimate human deprivation, however, the slaves of French colonies were not automatically granted the right of man during the French revolution. "The rights of man were also invoked by slaves themselves – notably, the revolutionaries of Saint Domingue (Haiti) who under the name of the Black Jacobins declared freedom from slavery in 1793, sent a delegation to Paris to secure the abolition of slavery in the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1794, declared a black republic when the French state re-instated slavery on 1803."²⁸

²⁵ See: Alison Woodward, Martin Kohli, *Inclusion and Exclusion in European Societies*, 1-17.

²⁶ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 335.

²⁷ Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights: Radicalism in a Global Age*, 11.

²⁸ Gurminder Bhambra quoted in: Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights: Radicalism in a Global Age*, 12. It is said that when French army reached Haiti in order to suppress the black rebels, they heard some noise which they considered to be expression of barbarians, monkey-like indigenous people. However, it turned to be Haitians singing 'La Marseillaise'. They tried to universalize the very same principle which mobilized

Although the theoretical program had universal ambitions, the actualization of these ideas followed the pattern of predominantly national and civilizational scope. Article three of the declaration notes that the right of sovereignty belongs to the nation. Every human being is acquired with rights but it is only a citizen of any given nation who can effectively execute this particular rights. Thus, the French revolutionaries controversially postulated universality of human rights however only for French and Western European citizens. The Enlightenment's declaration of the 'Rights of Man' as well as the hence current international system of human rights have gone along the superiority of 'civilized' - the superiority of Western civilization.²⁹ "Human rights do not belong to humans but construct what humans are."³⁰ Human rights were given to people on the basis of their citizenship and nationality. This particular case suggests that the theme of exclusion is not absent from liberal philosophy. As Ratna Kapur claimed, no liberal subject is able to survive without the existence of the 'Other' or without essentializing differences³¹. Thus, the mechanism of exclusion seems to be an integral part of liberal identity-building.

Within this general rubric of the 'Other', I would like to analyze on the particular discourse on 'Eastern Europe' which has been present since the age of Enlightenment. The Enlightenment "cultivated and appropriated to itself the notion of civilization, an eighteenth-century neologism"³² By affirming itself as the only civilized world, Western European proponents of Enlightenment from the beginning postulated another Europe against which to define its own sense of 'superior civilization'. Some scholars introduced the concept of 'civilizational mastery' in order to analyze these binary mechanisms of civilizational establishment. The concept of 'civilizational mastery' refers to the idea that "the very notion of civilization required a binary relation of self and other whereby it was the self, the West, that created the terms of the relation and thus established its mastery over the other, the Orient."³³

It is no coincidence that in terms of the Western civilization's interactions with alternative cultural blocks, the general opposition can be seen between strategies of inclusion of the

France and caused them to be excluded.

²⁹ See: Ratna Kapur (2009), Costas Douzinas (2009), Robert Fine (2007), etc.

³⁰ Costas Douzinas, *The Paradoxes of Human Rights*, speech given in Summer school on Theory for a Global Age.

³¹ Ratna Kapur, *The Dark Side of Human Rights: A Postcolonial Reflection*, speech given in Summer school on Theory for a Global Age.

³² Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 4. The appeal on the distinctiveness of the Enlightenment in terms of the distancing from the previous tradition makes the Enlightenment the first 'modern' civilization.

³³ Gerard Delanty, *Civilizational constellations and European modernity reconsidered*, in: Delanty (ed.), 45.

elements of rationality and exclusion of those of irrationality, emotionality, spirituality, etc³⁴. As Heidrun Friese pointed out “in this negative definition and via including differences in an - alleged - homogenous identity, otherness cannot but show itself as non intelligible.”³⁵ The self-appropriation of exactness and rational reasoning is a problem which deserves further exemplification. In his book on Egypt, Lord Cromer – the British colonial administrator initially in India and later on in Egypt – elaborated the ‘natural’ anthropological difference between Europeans and ‘Orientals’ in terms their faculties of comprehension:

“The European is a close reasoner; his statements of fact are devoid of any ambiguity; he is a *natural logician* [my italics], albeit he may not have studied logic; he is by nature *skeptical* and requires proof before he can accept the truth of any proposition, his trained intelligence works like a piece of mechanism. The mind of the Oriental, on the other hand, like his picturesque streets, is eminently *wanting in symmetry* [my italics]. His reasoning is of the most slipshod description. [...] They are often incapable of drawing the most obvious conclusions from any simple premises of which they may admit the truth. Endeavor to elicit a plain statement of facts from any ordinary Egyptian. His explanation will generally be lengthy, and wanting in lucidity. He will probably contradict himself half-a-dozen times before he has finished his story.”³⁶

The European logician ‘by birth gifted by reflexive reasoning and unambiguous argument ability’ is opposed to the figure of the inaccurate ‘Oriental man’. The ridiculous analogy between profiles of street and ordering of the mind is employed in the pedantic delineation machinery. The binary opposition between these two types is surprisingly cohesive and combined into a fixed puzzle. On the one hand, we can witness European exactness, explicitness, rational reasoning, syllogistic, automat-like outcomes, and on the other hand, Oriental absurdity, contradictions, asymmetry, inability to deduction as well as induction, etc. In general, ‘Orientals’ are lost in the darkness of their apparent ignorance.

Thus, in the background of self-promoting and sometimes overtly self-congratulatory

³⁴ See: Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian*.

³⁵ Heidrun Friese, *Europe’s Otherness: cosmopolitanism and the construction of cultural unities*, in: Delanty (ed.), 245.

³⁶ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 38, my italics.

events, the anthropological and psychological figures of orientals, barbarians, inhumans or subhumans were created as a negative image, always in contrast to the civilized man. These figures embodied descriptions of primitiveness and simplicity hence exceeded the category of being human reserved only to the people of Enlightenment.

Employing the reverse perspective, the hypothetical oriental rationality then could have consisted only of western patterns imported to and appropriated by colonized cultures. At the same time, the other side of this process, when not described in a language of deprivation but the one of positive traits, followed the direction of considering only irrationality elements (the items of uncultivated sensuality) as the essentials of these cultures. This one dimensional civilization and universalistic notion of understanding civilization left no space for alternative notions of cultural cultivation, and tolerated the substantial existence of only two opposing poles – civilization and barbarity. As Gurminder Bhambra stated “the general conceptual understanding of the modern world was thus premised on the idea of modernization as a process of the global diffusion of the Western civilization and its key institutions [...] that is, other societies were to be studied in terms of the extent to which they approximated the characteristics of Western Industrial societies”³⁷. In such a conceptual framework, there is hardly space for other cosmologies and epistemologies coming from different environments. As will be argued later, even the self-emancipation of ‘Eastern Europe’ currently represented rather paradoxical and absurd consequences in the minds of ‘westerners’. According to Attila Melegh, Hungary and ‘Eastern Europe’ always had to struggle with labels such as “pretended capitalism”, “non-real bourgeoisie” or “distorted, uneven development”³⁸. Indeed, the concept of Western civilization required only one universal scenario of the geopolitical and symbolic extension of ‘Western Europe’ over the vast eastern territories. It became the only way in which the ‘Rest’ (Asia or ‘Eastern Europe’) could avail a positive quality. In this particular constellation no civilization encounters, learnings or borrowings between these civilizations were possible. Any Eastern European attempt of becoming a ‘genuine civilization’ was superseded. Thus, Hungarian constitution was deemed as “the dangerous toys (*joujoux*) of angry children.”³⁹ In a similar way, the Encyclopedist Jacourt, (who in the century of the universal political emancipation) wondered, what would destroy Poland first “the height of slavery or the excess of liberty”⁴⁰. To Jacourt,

³⁷ Gurminder K. Bhambra, *Multiple Modernities or Global Interconnections: understanding the global post the colonial*, 61. Bhambra analyses the discourse of social scientists of the nineteenth-century.

³⁸ Attila Melegh, *On the East -West Slope*, 30.

³⁹ Charles Marie, marquis de Salaberry quoted in: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 44.

⁴⁰ Louis, chevalier de Jaucourt, in: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 285.

Poland was itself substantially incapable of handling the legacy of French Revolution. Once again, as in the case of Black Jacobins, a narrative of universal emancipation could only be embedded by particular nations.

Thus, the installation an apparent superiority of Western civilization has been always accompanied by a collateral process of *creating* an ‘Other’. This process has followed the patterns of homogenization, uniformity and consistency. Similarly, such tendencies served as the rational elements of mastering the complexity of unfamiliar lands into a more coherent whole. The ‘Alter Ego’ of ‘civilized man’ did not derive from empirical experiences and personal encounters, rather it was a project of consistent philosophical and geo-historical synthesis which invented the homogenous figure of the ‘Other’ across the ‘oriental territories’,⁴¹. Thus, fundamental for Orientalism (the Western conceptions of the Orient) is its internal consistency, rather than its correspondence with real territories and populations of the Orient. “All spatial configurations are expressions of mental maps, a form of symbolic geography.”⁴² This epistemic violence of unilinear axis of development distributes silence and darkness as a general condition that dominated other societies and cultures. Simultaneously to a process of ‘grand liberalization’ of the Western world, was the process of “sending the anonymous others back into the darkness from which they find it hard to escape.”⁴³

Previous paragraphs suggested that although the conceptual framework of Orientalism is an adequate instrument for addressing the mechanisms of creating and justifying various forms of exclusions, the discourse however lacks a clearly circumscribed referential reality. Even Said denied the existence of a real Orient: “I say that words such as ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’ correspond to no stable reality that exists as a natural fact. Moreover, all such geographical designations are an odd combination of the empirical and imaginative.”⁴⁴ There are hardly neutral geographical or cartographical positions which could be analyzed. Instead, we have to accept that all spatial metaphors open up to a broader semantic field. Thus, the concept ‘Orient’ demarcates no specific objective reality, or rather, due to its imaginative component it could possibly appear wherever a notion of developed culture includes particular forms of protectionism and exclusive homogenization.

⁴¹ I mean ‘Oriental’ in the terms of the non-West, the non-Occidental. From this point of view Eastern Europe, for example, could be considered as oriental, too. In Said’s work, the concept of Orient denotes Biblical lands – Levant and India.

⁴² Thomas W. Gallant, *Europe and the Mediteraen: A Reassessment*, in: Delanty (ed.), 121.

⁴³ Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, 6.

⁴⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 331.

2.1. *Residually Indigenous*

[They] cannot represent themselves; they must be represented. Their representative must appear simultaneously as their master, as an authority over them, as unrestricted governmental power that protects them from the other classes and send them the rain and sunshine from above.⁴⁵

Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

Surely, it is an extreme and partly paradoxical case of an intercultural encounter, when an external image - which follows the logic of establishing a distinctive ‘Other’ – is then also accepted as a central part of the others’ internal identity. This particular moment could be considered the ultimate case which closes all possibilities of a dialogue with the ‘Other’ in its irreducible difference. Moreover, it is an intensified example of a rhetoric that only speaks totalities. Johann P. Arnasson pointed out that “the ultimate triumph of the Western power was the general de-stabilization of non-Western cultural worlds.”⁴⁶ In Baudrillard’s illustration of his theory on simulacrum, he often referred to the Tasaday, the Philippino tribe first extracted from the jungle and then returned back to it as ‘museumized’ examples of indigenous autochthonous people⁴⁷. Besides Baudrillard’s reference to re-installed and re-invented indigenous people, there is also another reference. The essentials of the ‘Other’ have been adopted and intensively articulated in the politics of indigenous cultures of a postcolonial part of the world. “The special characteristics of Western approaches to India have encouraged a disposition to focus particularly on the religious and spiritual elements in Indian culture.”⁴⁸ The reason why these elements have been chosen to function as a crucial aspect of current political recognition is that they resisted these external Western influences. This is an appalling moment when the consequences of Orientalism were picked to function in a completely different framework of political fundamentalism. Thus, in the case of

⁴⁵ Karl Marx quoted in: Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* 30. Spivak refers to this passage of Marx description of peasant’s situation as highly ironic, written in the context of the fraudulent representation by Napoleon.

⁴⁶ Johann P. Arnasson, *Contested divergence: rethinking the “rise of the West”*, in: Delanty (ed.), 85.

⁴⁷ For the references to the Baudrillard’s examples, see Andrew Gibson, *Postmodernity, Ethnics and the Novel*

⁴⁸ Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian*, 140.

contemporary India, the Hindutva movement⁴⁹ seems to work according to an Indian particularism that stressed its spiritual distinctiveness. The unique distinctiveness of India lies, then in its Hindu heritage⁵⁰. Consequently, the Hindu nationalists' picture of India is reductive not just in terms of a plurality of religious faiths - which includes Hindus, Muslims⁵¹, Christians, Parsees, Jains and Jews - but also in terms of India's tradition of science and argumentative reasoning. "Seeing Indian traditions as overwhelmingly religious, or deeply anti-scientific, or exclusively hierarchical, or fundamentally non-skeptical [...] involves significant oversimplification of India's past and present."⁵² Thus, the imperialistic, exclusive, homogenized and reductive mechanism of the intellectual mastering of colonized territories and populations has been consequently deployed by local fundamentalists (in these former colonies) in order to distance their national identity from the Western values. However, they distanced themselves partly from Western representation, actually, the very part which the West appropriated for itself during the period of Enlightenment. The Hindutva movement does not differentiate between a notion of religion as faith and religion as identity⁵³. The latter is neglecting the various social and cultural statuses which every complexity of identity includes. As Amartya Sen argues, in India "our religion is not our only identity, nor necessarily the identity to which we attach the greatest importance"⁵⁴. It is a matter of ironic controversy that the idea of religious identity continues to execute imperial representation over one's own people.

3. L'Europe Orientale

After the excursus to the extreme consequences of orientalising discourse developed by 'Enlightened Europe' in its constituting moment, let me continue with an application of this oriental mechanism within the European continent.

According to Said, "the Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies [...] its cultural contestant, and one of its

⁴⁹ Hindutva which literally means 'the quality of Hinduism' see Rama in the light of divinity. Political representation of Hindutva in Indian parliament is Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

⁵⁰ Equally, Samuel Huntington, in his '*Clash of Civilization*', placed India firmly in the category of 'the Hindu civilization'. Huntington's civilization delineation is considered to be roughly reductive, too.

⁵¹ There are more than 140 million Muslims in India. This population is larger than in any other country in the world with exceptions of Indonesia and Pakistan.

⁵² Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian*, 31.

⁵³ As well as Huntington does not.

⁵⁴ Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian*, 56.

deepest and most recurring images of the Other". The narratives on these adjacent lands were consolidated into the concept of Orientalism. Orientalism served as "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient". Orient was constructed by the Occident "as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience".⁵⁵ In fact another 'Western' invention - the concept of 'Eastern Europe' - was established in the similar manner as the Orient. The French term for 'Eastern Europe' – *L'Europe Orientale* – keeps the common ground and combines Orient with 'Eastern Europe' in the non-transparent mélange.

"For the Europeans, the Other has not been created exclusively in the colonial context. Representations of the Other have taken as their subject [...] also the populations of different parts of Europe, as well as the Middle East."⁵⁶

For an example of proximity between discourses on Orient and 'Eastern Europe', we can keep referring to the work of Edward Said. One of the sources he quotes – the *Bibliothèque orientale* by Barthélemy d'Herbelot, "the standard reference work in Europe until the early nineteenth century" – discusses the histories of the Mogul, the Tartar, the Turkish together with the history of the Slavs resided in eastern part of European continent⁵⁷.

In the following chapters, I analyze the discourse on Oriental symptoms of 'Eastern Europe' in several steps. Initially, I concentrate on the emergence of this discourse. Further, I use an example of Hungarian ethnic. Consequently, to illustrate this discursive problematic the chapter discussing the structural differences between oriental discourses on Asia and 'Eastern Europe' follows. Finally, I end up this section with the chapter on the anthropological aspects of Oriental Europe.

3.1. '*Eastern Europe*' as an Invention

Europe has always raised numerous boundaries, both internal and external. The most

⁵⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 1-3.

⁵⁶ Robert Miles quoted in: József Böröcz, *Goodness is Elsewhere: The Rule of European Difference*, 127.

⁵⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 63-64.

conventional internal division into East and West is a comparatively late invention by the philosophers of the Enlightenment. These intellectuals were responsible for the conceptual reorientation of Europe along an East-West axis from the heretofore dominant division between North and South.⁵⁸ In the Renaissance, the crucial European geopolitical demarcation line was still drawn between northern barbarian lands of Germanic tribes⁵⁹ and the cultivated Italian south. This polarization of Europe persisted into the eighteenth-century in a rhetoric form, since it enabled one to view the North-South axis as an anachronism. At the height of the Enlightenment, different geopolitical and geo-cultural perceptions of Europe were determined. In search for an alternative, the “proper Europeans” began to gaze from west to east, instead of south to north. Enlighteners initially set out to see the lands of the North and ended up discovering ‘Eastern Europe’.

“Ségur⁶⁰, would have to recognize the new formulation when he stood on the battlefield of *Poltava* in 1787 and contemplated ‘the destiny of north and the east of Europe’. The Ukraine, after all, was in the same latitudinal range as France, and the path from Paris to Poltava was due to east.”⁶¹ [158]

The figure predominantly responsible for the conceptual reorientation of Europe was *Voltaire*. The reason why he turned his interests to ‘Eastern Europe’ was due to the expansion politics of the Swedish king, Charles XII. Voltaire was impressed by it and wrote a book on Charles’s military campaigns⁶². In this book, regardless of the fact that the most eastern place he had visited was Berlin⁶³, Voltaire surveyed the lands and people of ‘Eastern Europe’, and articulated their relative backwardness in comparison to Western Europe, their relative resemblance to each other, and their relation of their identity to their own ancient barbarian ancestors. These relations constituted the philosophical foundation for the eighteenth-century construction of ‘Eastern Europe’. Thus, when Charles marched his army to the „eastern

⁵⁸ See: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*.

⁵⁹ The sack of Rome in 1527 by German soldiers of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. Italian Renaissance saw itself battered by the blows of northern barbarians. Due to the previous sack of Rome by Goths in 476, it was seen as continuation and reinforcement of the northern barbarian perspective.

⁶⁰ Count Louis-Philippe de Ségur, minister plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinaire of Louis XVI in Russia.

⁶¹ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 158.

⁶² Voltaire, *The History of Charles XII*, 1731.

⁶³ Precisely the same case is mentioned by Said when referring to the German Orientalism.”There is some significance in the fact that two most renowned German works on the Orient, Goethe’s *Westöstlicher Diwan* and Friedrich Schlegel’s *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*, were based respectively on a Rhine journey and on hours spent in Paris libraries.” Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 19.

extremity of the Ukraine“, to the eastern extremity of the Europe itself, Voltaire discovered the Zaporozhian Cossacks, “the strangest people who are on the earth”, people which according to Voltaire did not even sexually reproduce⁶⁴. This invention of ‘Eastern Europe’ played a crucial part in the general Enlightenment’s broad discourse of linear evolutionary thinking in terms dichotomies, such as “progressive-reactionary”, “advanced backward”, “industrialized-agricultural”, “urban-rural”, “rational-irrational”, “historic and non-historic” and the like. The Enlightenment thus initiated the disparagement of Eastern Europe for the sake of a purely geographical denotation.

The lands of ‘Eastern Europe’ were generally unfamiliar to the people of Western Europe in the eighteenth-century. It is precisely then, that western travelers and scholars turned their distinguished and learned attention to the eastern half of the continent. Voltaire, for example, wrote about the territories of Eastern Europe as ‘*pays perdus*’, the lost lands awaiting discovery⁶⁵.

“The work of invention lay in the synthetic association of lands, which drew upon both fact and fiction, to produce the general rubric of Eastern Europe.”⁶⁶

From its emergence, the concept of Eastern Europe carries the symbolic meaning of a cultural region, rather than being primarily a geographic designation. It was a project of consistent philosophical and geographical synthesis, by associating and intellectually combining the lands of ‘Eastern Europe’ into a coherent whole, that western scholars and travelers attempted to cope with the complexity of these unfamiliar lands. They did not avoid comparative trivialization, and by posing the puzzlement of resemblances and ignoring the differences, the Enlightenment thinkers executed intellectual mastery over the entire Eastern European territory. Thus, the label of ‘Eastern Europe’ was consolidated to be used as a signifier for all included parts, and different individual parts were transformed into a blank spot on the mental map⁶⁷.

It was the Enlightenment which “invented Eastern Europe as its complementary other half”, even as “it cultivated and appropriated to itself the notion of civilization, an eighteenth-

⁶⁴ Voltaire quoted in: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 92.

⁶⁵ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 195-235.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 356.

⁶⁷ József Böröcz, the prominent Hungarian sociologist, has labeled this tendency „a reverse synecdoche exclusion“. Instead of a synecdoche situation when part of something is used to refer to the whole thing, the general term of ‘Eastern Europe’ was appointed to refer to all its elements. József Böröcz, *Goodness is Elsewhere: The Rule of European Difference*, 124.

century neologism”⁶⁸ The Enlightenment from the beginning, needed another Europe against which to define its own sense of superior civilization. Thus, the concept of Eastern Europe has indeed much more in common with Western Europe than with Russia.

The invention of Eastern Europe was subtly self-promoting and sometimes overtly self-congratulatory event in intellectual history, whereby Western Europe also identified itself and affirmed its own precedence.”⁶⁹

It was precisely in the second half of eighteen century and beginning of nineteenth century, when the new figure appeared under the gaze of Western Europeans. From the horizon of the vast, still almost unknown, eastern lands, the semi-barbarian human being, not totally oriental and exotic, moreover geographically still European, approached the horizon of civilized world. This image of internal stranger was going to become the ‘Other’ of (not for) Europe, a mythological inhabitant who does not conform to the standard categories of behavior devised as normative by and for the civilized world.

“At least since the Enlightenment, there has been a Western European discourse on lesser-developed, lesser-civilized Eastern Europe that conjured up overlapping images of the exotic: the Balkans, the East, the Orient.”⁷⁰

Quite significantly, even during the First World War, the invasion of German troops to ‘Eastern Europe’ was followed by the orientalizing discourse. German military campaign was described in the term of s fight between Teutonic and Slavonic civilization. Furthermore, the interference was drawn that Great Britain and France, in cooperating with Russia – “Muscovite Barbarism” were betraying the cause of Enlightenment and progress for which Germany was contending⁷¹. It was against the civilizational affinity of Western nation-state that Great Britain and France help barbarians to deny the extension of Enlightenment project. They were considered to betray and oppose the heritage of developed civilization.

The relation between ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western Europe’ was characterized as an antagonistic opposition and has created sufficient ground to treat ‘Eastern Europe’ as a structural variant of Orientalism. Generally, one can speak of a united scale of

⁶⁸ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 4.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 360.

⁷⁰ Nancy, M., Wingfield, *Creating the Other: Ethnic Conflicts and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, 1.

⁷¹ See: John B. Bury, *Says Germany’s Fight is Selfish*.

Eastern/Oriental deviations (or backwardness) from the Western standard model. ‘Eastern Europe’ was acquired oriental character but being geographically much closer to emanating centre, it qualitatively differs from real Orient.

“Europeans as they traveled beyond Germany into Catholic Poland, Orthodox Russia, and the still Ottoman Balkan peninsula, felt themselves to have suddenly entered an alien and archaic world of vast distances, enserfed peasantries, and brutal petty officials – a world that corresponded all too easily to their received notions of oriental despotism”⁷²

During the Enlightenment period, ‘Eastern Europe’ was not seen as the entering zone to exotic lands, eastern territories of Europe did not possess the transferring character for traveling to the Orient. Indeed, was it already traveling *through* the Orient. There was a crucial fluidity of borders between ‘Eastern Europe’ and Oriental Asia, and crossing the borders of Prussia or the western part of the Habsburg Empire meant entering the Asian world⁷³.

In order to support the argument of binary opposition instead of transitive character between ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western Europe’, one could mention the dominance of the eighteenth-century ‘épistémè’ based on a classification scheme.⁷⁴ Every item occupies specific place at the table of related species. This taxonomy logic still did not contain an evolutionary tendency, thus, the different species were separated without any possibility of continual transition. ‘Eastern Europe’ occupied a rather confused place between the light of civilization and the darkness of barbarism, but it still could not be comprehended as an element on the development scale. The opposition between civilization and barbarity epitomized the substantial character. Eastern Europe was acquired confused place because it included the traits of both poles: European location and Asiatic manners, not because its strategic position on the descendant scale. Eastern Europe was “residual area for Europe without any obvious geographical boundary from Asia”⁷⁵.

Hungary is perhaps the most eligible example supporting the thesis on the Oriental

⁷² J. G. A Pocock, in: Piotr Sztompka, *From East Europeans to Europeans: Shifting Identities and Boundaries in the New Europe*, 11.

⁷³ Recently, the same applies to the unresolved tension about Euro-Asian character of Russia, Turkey and Israel.

⁷⁴ See: Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences*.

⁷⁵ Piotr Sztompka, *From East Europeans to Europeans: Shifting Identities and Boundaries in the New Europe*, 2004, 11.

symptoms of ‘Eastern Europe’. ‘Oriental Magyarism’⁷⁶ stemmed from the isolation of the Magyars in mostly Slavic Eastern Europe. Even the Eastern European nationalist of the nineteenth and twentieth-century, following the excluding western intellectual machinery, stressed the incompatibility of the so-called Magyar national character with the idea of Europeanness.⁷⁷ In the next chapter, I am going to elaborate on the orientalizing discourse towards Hungarians.

3.2. Idea of Isolation of Hungarians in Europe Oriental Magyarism

Nowadays in Europe, we can continually experience a variety of stereotypes created even before the age of modern nation-states. However, these pre-national themes, although they often address the divergent claims, were consequently deployed in a struggle for political sovereignty and cultural superiority of major ethnic group. Tendency to a cultural homogeneity, clearly delineated segregation of the ‘Other’ and its degradation or total exclusion out of the humanity, even when permanently shifting, were a significant instruments in the processes of cultural, ethnical or political recognition of newly emerged nation-states.

Currently, it is a generally accepted thesis that most of the recent European population’s ancestors at some point came to Europe from Asia. It is partly due to a relatively later arrival of Hungarian tribes (the ninth-century) that the particular discourse on Oriental Hungarian origin initiated. At the time of their arrival, the ethnic groups occupying the European territory did not recognize or articulate their Asiatic origin, anymore. Thus, since these early times Hungary was considered an epicenter of the European-Asiatic encounters. In the age of Enlightenment, the eastern boundary of Hungary⁷⁸, the borderline with the Ottoman Empire, was generally accepted as the delineation line between Europe and Asia. The

⁷⁶In the European context, a term ‘Magyar’ has been used very frequently when describing Hungarian nationality. Moreover, this is the way Hungarians called themselves, too. The ‘Hungarian’ is synonymous term used in English as well as in several other languages.

⁷⁷ Peter Haslinger, *Hungarians Motifs in the Emergence and the Decline of a Czechoslovak National Narrative*, 169-182, in: Wingfield (ed.). For example, according to the Czechoslovak president Eduard Beneš, Magyar national character was incompatible with European norms as well as with the needs of Slovak population.

⁷⁸ The historical Kingdom of Hungary comprised much wider territory compare to the recent Hungary.

Hungarian territory was called ‘*Turquie d’Europe*’,⁷⁹ Due to the bridge status, Hungary occupied an uncertain transitional location. Larry Wolff argues that when describing Hungary, the European maps “transposed the ancient lands of Asia onto modern maps of Europe”.⁸⁰ Besides the transposing the geography of the Asiatic lands onto Hungarian territory, there was another tendency to impose the Asiatic manners to the Hungarians character. This anthropological perspective was perhaps even more significant aspect.

There was an idea of incompatibility of the so-called Magyar cultural tradition and patterns of behavior with Europeanness presented in the scientific, the political and the popular accounts⁸¹. Hungary was confused place because it combined European location with Asiatic manners. In general, the same personality traits as in the case of Oriental people’s description - irrationality, primitiveness, sensuality, emotionality, simplicity, unskilfulness and laziness - were applied to Hungarians. An ordinary Hungarian possessed “vain, hot-tempered, irascible nature, rush and capricious temperament”⁸². Such an image included a variety of aspects of Enlightenment’s intellectual mastery over unfamiliar territory. The intellectual synthesis and the homogenous picture of an alternative population were produced in order to oppose it to the self-promoted identity. In this particular case of the oriental character of Hungarians⁸³, it is predominantly the German identity⁸⁴ which was self-celebrated. The quasi-reflexive hegemonic image of the German included politically constructive traits and symbols of cultural achievement, diligence, industrial undertaking, orderliness, etc.

Thus, the slope from civilized man to undeveloped and primitive barbarian was, in this particular context, arbitrarily drawn between German and Hungarian ethnic groups. According to this moral geography, at least since early nineteenth-century Germans were considered to be ‘*Musterknaben*’ of progress and civilization, the role patterns for primitive

⁷⁹ See: Larry Wolf, *Inventing Eastern Europe*.

⁸⁰ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 185.

⁸¹ Peter Haslinger. *Hungarians Motifs in the Emergence and the Decline of a Czechoslovak National Narrative*, in: Wingfield, *Creating the Other*, 169-182. For example, according to the former Czechoslovak president Eduard Beneš, the Magyar national character was incompatible both with European norms on the one hand and the needs of the Slovak population on the other.

⁸² Nancy Wingfield, *Creating the Other: Ethnic conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, 144.

⁸³ The striking moment in the discourse on the Oriental Hungarianism or Asianess of Magyars is its acceptation and positive evaluation in the internal identity-building process of Hungarians during their national uprising.

“Hungarian geography textbooks and linguistic studies attributed a positive meaning to the Asianess of Magyars. The best of Hungarian national character: freedom, pride, faithfulness, and courage, derived from the Asiatic period in their history.” See: Irina Popova: *Representing National Territory, Cartography and Nationalism in Hungary, 1700 – 1848*, in Wingfield, 19-38.

⁸⁴ Primarily Austro-Germans of Habsburg monarchy.

Hungarian tradition, which, although in Europe, still followed the Asiatic manners⁸⁵. It was in the name of the same discipline of moral geography as well as in the curse of a general conceptual framework of exclusion, when *Tacitus*'s account of the German people was not so much in their favor. According to him, the Germans occupied another pole of civilization axis than they would have done several centuries later. Tacitus described that they performed human sacrifices, wore wild animal skins, and *generally lack the refinement of culture*: “when not engaged in warfare, they spent a certain amount of time by hunting, but much more in *idleness, thinking of nothing else but sleeping and eating.*”⁸⁶ More striking than an astonishing controversy of one nation occupying both extreme poles inside the discourse on civilizational development is an obvious systematic and conceptual proximity of accounts in different times⁸⁷. Regardless the origin of a hegemonic identity (or the ethnicity of the narrators), it includes almost the same characteristic traits of refined culture. On the contrary, the excluded figure is systematically embedded as stagnant primitive society embracing the same residual characteristics. Thus, the Germans were described as primitive, bellicose, idle, lazy, irrational, etc, in the records of prominent Imperial historian. The same cultural traits would have been prescribed to the Hungarians centuries later, when the Germans or the Western Enlightenment writers in general, were self-appropriating the imperial concept of civilization, once again.

3.2.1. Preference of Political Dominion over Civilization Affinity

As was demonstrated above, when compared to the Germans (the Westerners in general), the characteristic traits of Hungarian people were described by the lack of the diligence, warmheartedness, laziness and simplicity, etc⁸⁸. Later on, when the Hungarians would have

⁸⁵ András Vári, *The Functions of Ethnic Stereotypes in Austria and Hungary in the Early Nineteenth Century*. In: Wingfield (ed.), 46.

⁸⁶ Tacitus, *Germania*. in: Larry Wolff. *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 142.

⁸⁷ The reference to Tacitus might demonstrate that this pattern or mechanism of ‘othering’ in fact does not depend on the Enlightenment. However, I do not claim that the mechanism of ‘othering’ was developed by the Enlightenment. What I intend to demonstrate is that: a) every account of identity-building tends to include the mechanism of binary opposition between I and the ‘Other’. Exclusion seems to be integral part of every identity account, b) The discourse on ‘Eastern Europe’ emerged in the period of the Enlightenment as a consequence of the Enlightenment’s appropriation of the notion of civilization. From the general point of view, the Enlightenment act conservatively while employing the traditional mechanism of ‘othering’ into its own identity construction.

⁸⁸ See, András Vári, *The Functions of Ethnic Stereotypes in Austria and Hungary in the Early Nineteenth Century*. In: Wingfield, *Creating the Other*, 39 – 55.

succeeded in the struggle for a political recognition in the Habsburg monarchy (1867) and the plurality of the ethnic groups in this multicultural empire was more adequately reflected, a need for more positive representation of Hungarians appeared. Due to their gained legal position equal to the ‘civilized’ Austro-Germans as well as their hegemonic position towards the ethnic minorities in Transleithania (the region in the Austro-Hungarian Empire directly governed by the Hungarians), the overall image of Hungarian was continually supposed to change. Thus, as soon as in the last decades of the nineteenth-century, when compared to the minorities occupying the same territory, the representation of Hungarians already included more positive elements as high spirits, pride, bravery, straightforwardness, and military virtues⁸⁹. “Hungarians are lively, even fiery, bellicose, honor and luxury were dear to them. They were sincere, trusting, courteous, sharp-witted, hospitable, but not overly keen on handicrafts.”⁹⁰

Although these representations met the requirements for more positive image, they still continued the discourse on the oriental origin of Hungarians inside the civilized Europe. The stress was still hold on the irrational and emotional aspects of personality and conduct, however romantically⁹¹ depicted they were. A rational cultivation, a putative core of the Western civilization, continued to be absent among the Hungarians. Furthermore, the luxury and the gentlemanhood were the aspects of the Oriental Ottoman image which impressed the Western travelers to that extent, that they deliberately abandoned their cultural, political and religious affinities with Greeks⁹². Thus, even more positive representation of Hungarians tended to be closer rather to the Orientalism then to the quasi-reflexive narrative of the Occident itself. A melioration of the Hungarian’s representation could be understood rather as an appreciation of the manners and morals of a dominating group then as an act of inclusion to the world of Western civilization. There could a parallel made to the Western appreciation of the Oriental Ottoman, which obviously contradicted the solidarity with the Occidental world. Thus, the amelioration of the Hungarian representation could be understood as a thought-provoking circumstance when the preference was given to the dominion over the

⁸⁹ See András Vári, *The Functions of Ethnic Stereotypes in Austria and Hungary in the Early Nineteenth Century*. In: Wingfield (ed.), 39 – 55.

⁹⁰ Lucas Joseph Marienburg, in: András Vári, *The Functions of Ethnic Stereotypes in Austria and Hungary in the Early Nineteenth Century*, 44.

⁹¹ The role of European Romanticism in the positive evaluation of the Hungarian’s representation seems to be very significant.

⁹² See: Maria Todorova, *Imagining Balkans*, chapter 4.

“Encounter between Britons and Greeks on the Ionian Islands, [...] the British did not construct an oriental identity for the Greek subjects but instead saw them as the Irish of the Mediterranean, they constructed them as Europe’s less fortunate and only marginally civilized distant relatives.” Thomas W. Gallant, *Europe and the Mediteraen: A Reassessment*, in: Delanty (ed.), 128.

civilization affinity.

This argument can be even more compelling if we employ a more profound investigation in the minority problematic of the Transleithania, a territory ruled by Hungarians. Particularly convincing evidence of the preference of ruling ethnic group instead of the solidarity to the civilization can be found in a case of the minority of the *Romanians* (The Vlachs, the Szatmár county). This ethnic group, which in the twentieth-century, after the decline of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, gained independence and created the state of Romania, has been deriving its alleged origin from the ancient Romans. However untenable argument it might be from contemporary point of view, the fact is that in the eighteenth-century, the Enlightenment writers were familiar with Romanian's alleged link of origin⁹³. However, when the Romanians ('the residual Romans') were compared with the hegemonic Hungarian, the Westerner's accounts comprised the characterizations such as: "unstoppable drive to steal, vengefulness, cruelty, even to close relatives; and pretense are his peculiar vices [...]; Naturmenschen, hardened, lazy, wild, sensual, poor, extravagant, and drunken [...]; laziness, endurance, vengefulness, superstition without healthy morals [...]; but their women are plump and especially beautiful"⁹⁴. Due to the lack of any cultural development and the servant-like social condition of their lives, the Romanians, however significant historical connection with the Western civilization they were able to propose, were excluded from the idea of Western civilization and depicted as much backward, primitive and inferior as far as the distant (geographically and culturally) populations of the Orient.

3.3. *Imputed Ambiguity of Eastern Europe*

However, Orientalism is a discourse about imputed opposition, the invention of 'Eastern Europe' represents a discourse about an imputed ambiguity⁹⁵.

"Eastern Europe was located not at the antipode of civilization, not down in the depths of barbarism, but rather on the developmental scale that measured the

⁹³ See: Maria Todorova, *Imagining Balkans*.

⁹⁴ See, András Vári, *The Functions of Ethnic Stereotypes in Austria and Hungary in the Early Nineteenth Century*. In: Wingfield, (ed.), 39 – 55.

⁹⁵ One of the distinctive traits between discourses on Orient and Eastern Europe could be that Orient, on contrary to Eastern Europe, used to be location of a great civilization. From this perspective, there would be possible to draw a line between Orientals and Eastern European '*naturmenschen*'.

distance between civilization and barbarism”⁹⁶

The idea of Eastern Europe never attained the definitive “otherness” of the Asiatic Orient, rather it has fitted to the discourse on continual development scale. ‘Eastern Europe’ has functioned as the figure of internal other situated on the edge of civilization, occupying the symbolic marginal places of Europe. ‘Eastern Europe’ was located in the sideline of cultivated Europe and signified place of transition and transaction between civilization and barbarity. The bridge is perhaps the apt metaphor of this region. Not only the bridge between Occident and Orient, Christianity and Islam⁹⁷, but also the bridge between stages of growth: semi-developed, semi-colonial, semi-civilized, semi-oriental were the attributes of ‘Eastern Europe’. Symptomatically, Balzac in his ‘*Comédie humaine*’ then could describe the dominant ethnic of ‘Eastern Europe’ as follows: “the Slav people are a link between Europe and Asia, between civilization and barbarism”. Similar account could be found in Rousseau’s description when Eastern Europeans are “polarized between French tastes and manners on the one hand and Tartar inundations and devastations on the other”⁹⁸. Moreover, the European and Austrian maps of Hungary in late eighteenth-century could identify Hungary as a *semi-European* Catholic state situated in the transitional zone from backwardness to civilization or vice versa⁹⁹. The Enlightenment scholars identified ‘Western Europe’ as the most cultivated and developed region, this region emanated the rays of civilization to the other territories. The development categories on the line from civilization to barbarity were not just set up, but also put in the hierarchical order. ‘Eastern Europe’ was invented and then located on the very lower part of this slope of civilization light.

From the afore mentioned could be understood, that the image of ‘Eastern Europe’ was not stable at all, its representation shifted on the scale between the inclusive image of the undeveloped, uncultivated, and infantile neighbor to the exclusive image of the juxtaposed, irreconcilable ultimate ‘Other’. The underlying reasoning suggests that since the eighteenth-

⁹⁶ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 13.

⁹⁷ The demarcation line between Eastern and Western Europe is by some author, especially the proponents of Central Europe, traced on the ground of Christian division between Catholic and Protestant Western Europe versus Orthodox Eastern Europe, see Jacques Rupnik, in: Maria Todorova, *Imagining Balkans*.

Todorova commented that “Orthodoxy, for all the enmity that is evoked among Catholics, was not seen as a transitory faith to Islam, what was usually emphasized was the unbridgeable boundary between Christianity and the Muslim religion.” Maria Todorova, *Imaging Balkans*, 23. From this point of view, Islam and Orthodoxy could not interfere, because they both are in the invented framework as the poles of binary relation to Western Europe, both are the Western Europe’s complementary other halves.

⁹⁸ J.J. Rousseau quoted in: Larry Wolf, *Imagining Eastern Europe*, 199.

⁹⁹ See: Irena Popova, *Representing the National Territory, Cartography and Nationalism in Hungary*, 19-38, in: Wingfield, 2004.

century on, ‘Eastern Europe’ evaded the competing representations of ‘Western Europe’ and the Orient, lands that the thinkers of Enlightenment could not locate with the fixed certainty. According to Wolf, this region functioned as a “nonsensical disordering and inversion of eighteenth-century ideas about society, politics, demography, even chivalry and gender”¹⁰⁰. If we concentrate on the later radicalized representation, the eighteenth-century travelogues provide us with descriptions of voyages to Eastern Europe (mostly to Poland and Hungary) hyperbolically acclaimed as an *interplanetary displacement*, descending as if from the planet¹⁰¹. Similarly, when entering Hungary “a man seems to take leave of our world.”¹⁰² This solipsistic perspective, where only I and my constitutive ideas of the world exist, was just an ultimate expression of European self-consciousness as the unrivalled source of civilization.

Understanding the West-East relation the progressive continual way, the enlightened travelers experienced moving to ‘Eastern Europe’ as *traveling in time*. The most common practice among the scholars, politicians and travelers was to compare medieval France with then contemporary Poland. Thus, between Prussia and Poland was established the place where the travelers “left the Europe entirely” and “moved back ten centuries”¹⁰³. Considering the concept of progress, which means the time with developmental aspect, the movement from past to future is not merely motion but rather evolution from simple to complex, backward to developed, primitive to cultivated. This notion of time permits to count centuries to determine development.

3.4. *Eastern Europeans as Ancient Barbarians*

Discovering ‘Eastern Europe’, Western Europeans did not perform just intellectual mastery over these lands, but also an anthropological mastery over its inhabitants.

While medieval Europe perceptions of the ‘Eastern peoples’ were often characterised by bizarre images - the Sciopods, Blemmyae and Anthropophagi¹⁰⁴ – the reference of

¹⁰⁰ Larry Wolf, *Imagining Eastern Europe*, 18.

¹⁰¹ See the account of Madame Geoffrin analyzed in: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 242-260.

¹⁰² Edward Brown quoted in: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 41.

¹⁰³ Count de Ségur quoted in: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 19.

¹⁰⁴ See: John. M. Hobson, *Revealing the cosmopolitan side of Oriental Europe: the eastern origin of European civilization*, in: Delanty (ed.), 107-119. *Monopods* are mythological dwarf-like creatures with a single, large foot extending from one thick leg centred in the middle of their body. *Blemmyae* are headless creatures who have eyes and mouths in their bellies. *Anthropophagi* are the man-eaters, cannibals.

Enlightenment to the populations of ‘Eastern Europe’ crystallized in the less fabulous but no less imaginative context. The intellectual enchantment with eastern territories faced the challenge of taming the savage. When the Western European political elites, travelers or scholars turned their sophisticated interest to ‘Eastern Europe’, they primarily encountered *mingled or scrambled people*. Perhaps, the most illustrative example in this regard is the description of Wallachians¹⁰⁵:

One must in effect regard these peoples as a mélange of Romans and Greeks, with Dacians, the Getae, the Gepids, the Jazyges, the Sarmatians, the Saxon, the Goths, the Huns, the Avars, the Slavs, the Pechenegs, the Turks, and all the Oriental and Septentrional¹⁰⁶ barbarians who have successively occupied the land that the Moldavians and Wallachians inhabit today.¹⁰⁷

The ethnologists and linguists made a great and important effort to unscramble all this chaos of languages and ethnics of fluid and hybrid people of Eastern Europeans¹⁰⁸. Even in this particular field of knowledge, they could not avoid the general prejudice about ambiguity and semi-character of the Eastern Europeans situated somewhere between coarse barbarians and polished Europeans. Todorova pointed out *the mongrel theme* represented in the travelogues of authors concentrated on the inhabitants of Eastern Europe¹⁰⁹.

Besides the scrambled character attributed to the identity of Eastern Europeans, there was another factor indispensable for identifying ‘Eastern Europe’, ethnographically. This factor consisted of identifying the entire ‘Eastern European’ population with ancient nations of Scythians and Sarmatians. In the eighteenth-century, these ancient barbarians - the embodiment of cultural otherness for ancient Greeks - were rediscovered by the Enlightenment writers in the region of ‘Eastern Europe’. Thus, for example “Poland for Voltaire was not located on the contemporary maps but instead was identified as a part of ancient Sarmathia”¹¹⁰ and for Casanova “the Poles, though generally polite enough

¹⁰⁵ Wallachians or Vlachs have been people occupying the area of contemporary Romania, but their diasporic communities can be found in all Eastern and Central Europe.

¹⁰⁶ The term ‘Septentrional’ means ‘of the north’, it is rarely used in English but commonly used in French.

¹⁰⁷ Charles de Peyssonnel, *Historical and Geographical Observations on the Barbarian People* quoted in: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 287.

¹⁰⁸ The twentieth-century identity constructions of Czechoslovaks or Serbian-Croats just support this Enlightenment attitude.

¹⁰⁹ See: Maria Todorova, *Imagining Balkans*.

¹¹⁰ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 91.

nowadays, still keep a good deal of their old nature; they are still Sarmatians or Dacians”¹¹¹. Similarly *Montesquieu* when contemplating about the trip to ‘Eastern Europe’ stated that “I wanted to see Hungary because all the states of Europe were once as Hungary is now, and I wanted to see the manners of our fathers”¹¹² or *Atlas Historique* informs that “Hungarians were Scythians, cruel peoples, it is said, who lived only by blood.”¹¹³ As we can see, ancient Scythians and Sarmatians were the crucial anthropological component of the Enlightenment’s Eastern European. The projection of ‘Eastern Europeans’ into an ancient history served as a literary device for relegating ‘Eastern Europe’ anthropologically to a lower level of civilization.

None of this, which was analyzed in previous chapters, is to say that ‘Eastern Europe’ lacks any geographical and political reality or cultural and moral self-reflection. Rather, I tried to point to the fact that as other reservoirs of belonging, ‘Eastern Europe’ is also man-made enterprise where dominating interpretation comes from external perspective. Drawing on the argument of united Eastern/Oriental scale of otherness, we can employ Edward Said’s argument for describing the situation of ‘Eastern Europe’. Latest the eighteenth-century, there emerged a complex subject field on eastern part of European continent “suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the (colonial) office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national or religious character”¹¹⁴. Since the eighteenth-century, ‘Eastern Europe’ has been caught in the dreams, however not of its own but in the dreams of the Western civilization. This dreams which combined the realistic and the imagined components, which functioned to exclude unwanted, which substantially differentiated and distributed in time and space were much later on engaged by another European arbitrary delineated actor – ‘Central Europe’. The proponents of the socio-cultural and political concept of ‘Central Europe’ used the orientalizing discourse on ‘Eastern Europe’ to delineate themselves from their more eastern neighbors – namely Russia and the Balkans. In the next chapters, I analyze this appropriation of these particular exclusionary strategies.

¹¹¹ Casanova, quoted in: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 61.

¹¹² Montesquieu quoted in: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 205.

¹¹³ *Atlas Historique* by M. Gueudeville quoted in: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 162.

¹¹⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 7-8.

4. Orientalising Central Europe

During the Enlightenment, the countries of ‘Central Eastern Europe’ used to be considered as the setting for the beginning of exotic adventures. Entering these lands symbolized the crossing of “the great barrier of European and Asiatic manners”¹¹⁵. Thus quite significantly, Hungary was in Encyclopedia described as “vast land in Asia and in Europe.”¹¹⁶ Western borders of Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary represented the fault line between civilization and barbarity, and the lands of these countries were already considered as the vast territories inhabited by eastern savages¹¹⁷. It is only in the twentieth-century, when countries of this region realized its commonalities and took effort to establish particular discourse on Central European distinctiveness¹¹⁸.

In order to precisely address the issue of the validity of certain logic of Enlightenment’s ‘othering’ employed by the proponents of Central European distinctiveness, it is worthwhile to point to a preceding attempt to establish the Central European solidarity. Let me elaborate on this particular attempt in the next chapter.

¹¹⁵ John Ledyard meanwhile crossing the borders between Prussia and Poland in 1772, in: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 344.

¹¹⁶ Encyclopedia (1765) quoted in: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 184.

¹¹⁷ See: Larry Wolf, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, or Maria Todorova, *Imagining Balkans*.

¹¹⁸ Actually, there were two different historical representations of that region as a Central Europe: *The Habsburg Empire and German Mitteleuropa*.

Czech historian, František Palacký proclaimed the idea of the ‘Central Europe’ as the geopolitical entity consisting of the small nations under the protection of **Habsburg constitutional monarchy**. According to his belief, the nations under the Habsburg Monarchy should be conceived analogically as citizens in a civil society and thus, just as citizens should be secured individual civil rights in a civil society, so should nations and nationalities under the monarchy. The Habsburg Monarchy should protect the Central European small nations against the juggernauts – Germany and Russia. See: Hughe L. Agnew, Czechs, German, Bohemians: Images of the self and other in Bohemia to 1848; or Shinohara, Central European Discourses from Historical Perspective.

Mitteleuropa was a German liberal-imperialistic concept developed by Friedrich Naumann. The Central European *Menschentyp* supposed to be sensitive to multiculturalism of that region. Naumann proposed the cultural autonomy for all Central European nations under the patronage of the Germany.

These two geopolitical constructions, however, did not represent the inclusive reflection of the position of the people inhabiting that particular region in European continent. Both these construction were imposed to them.

4.1. Parody of Mid-European Union: Lecture in the Cohesion of Central Europe

There is no doubt that among the most decisive consequences of World War I was an extensive sociopolitical reorganization of European continent. The decline of two grand multiethnic empires - Ottoman Empire and Habsburg Monarchy – resulted in the emergence of number of small nation-states. Likewise other successors of Habsburg monarchy, Czechoslovakia was founded in October, 1918 by legitimating approval of the Allies. However, during the same time of foundational act, the future Czechoslovak president Tomáš Garigue Masaryk still dwelled in his US exile. Moreover, he was signing the official documents by ‘President of the Democratic Mid-European Union’ title¹¹⁹. Conventionally it is thought that the decline of Austro-Hungarian Empire was directly followed by an emergence of fragmented national units. Indeed, there was an exile project of Mid-European Union which attempted to unify twelve ethnic groups¹²⁰ among the potential plans for post-war geopolitical organization of Europe¹²¹. The ‘Union’ was established in October 3, 1918¹²² and definitely collapsed less than one month later. Although Masaryk was elected the president, the original author of this Union was the American sociologist Herbert A. Miller who became its executive director. From the first moment, there were conflicting interpretations concerning the character of Union, whether it should act as a federation or as a mere cooperation of autonomous agents. This Union aimed to adequately represent interests of its members during the post-war peace conference. One of the most progressive moments of this federation-like pact between different ethnic groups, which mostly occupied the territory of ‘Central Europe’ was a possibility to adequately and constructively address an ethnic mélange issue, since there was practically no territory that did not contain a mix of different people. Thus, the establishment of Mid-European Union was a pragmatic multicultural step toward a self-determining political sovereignty in the territories of extreme ethnic mixture, since one of

¹¹⁹ See attached official invitation for the dinner signed by Masaryk.

¹²⁰Czechoslovaks, Polish, South Slavs, Ukrainians, Ruthenians, Romanians, Lithuanians, Austrian, Italians, Turkish, Greeks, Albanians, Armenians, and Sionists of Palestine. The argument so far outlined shows how utopian endeavor the Union was. There is no doubt that such integration could not be based on other than pragmatic orientations.

¹²¹ This paragraph is based on the article of Václav Drchal, *Masaryk – the Head of Mid-European Union*, Lidové noviny, Prague, 26.10.2008.

¹²² The declaration was signed by the pen soaked in the ink bottle used to sign the American Declaration of Independence. This is a decisive symbolic legacy.

the objectives of post-war political organization was an ethnic majority principle for the newly emerging states. From this perspective, the Mid-European Union seemed to continue the empire logic of political arrangement.

"If in a mixed area one group makes good a territorial claim and establishes a nation state, other groups will feel threatened and resentful. For them to be ruled by one group claiming to rule in its own national territory is worse than to be governed by an empire which does not base its title to rule on national ground."¹²³

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After these quotations from Masaryk's report to President Wilson, we may once more return to the important document from the archives of Columbia University:

THE DEMOCRATIC MID-EUROPEAN UNION
McLachlen Building, 10th and G Streets
Washington
THE PLAZA
5th Avenue and 59th street
New York

Miss Lillian D. Wald
New York

October 31, 1918

Dear Madam:
The Democratic Mid-European Union composed of representatives of twelve oppressed nationalities of Central Europe and Asia Minor, as enumerated above, with certain additions, requests the honor of our presence at a dinner at the Hotel Plaza on Wednesday, November 6, at 7:30 P.M.
We feel that the American public is interested and vitally concerned in the question of assuring self-determination to the nationalities represented in this Union. For the consideration of this problem a series of meetings was held last week at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, by delegates officially representing these nationalities in America. The measures agreed upon at this conference will be presented for discussion on this occasion.
The purpose of the dinner is to make possible a larger knowledge of our cause by means of the mid-European nationalities. No financial assistance will be directly or indirectly solicited. The dinner is prefatory to a meeting to be held at Carnegie Hall Friday, November 8, at 8:00 P.M. To present publicly the aims of our Union to this meeting also you are cordially invited.

Very truly yours
President
DEMOCRATIC MID-EUROPEAN UNION
Thomas Garrigue Masaryk

Although, this union lasted just several days (from the documents is clear that even president Masaryk was skeptical towards the integrative ambitions of such an union), due to the unresolved national tensions between members¹²⁴, we can consider it as an inherent successor of the idea of Habsburg monarchy. Drawing on such an understanding, we cannot be surprised of the rapid decline. The unification of Central Europe was based on the loyalty of dominated nations. By the way of conclusion we can point that the 'Democratic Mid-European Union' did not stand for any serious project of overlapping the cultural values of particular populations living in the territory of 'Central Europe'. The proper integrating element was the political pragmatism.

¹²³ Elie Kedourie quoted in: Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism*, xv.

¹²⁴ The crucial collapsing moment was the conflict between the Polish and Ukrainian members over the territory of Lvov.

4.2. *Pissing against the Eastern Wind*

Debates over ‘Central Europe’ were not hushed by the decline of rather symbolic Mid-European Union and consequent establishment of national states. Indeed, there has been at least one significant Slovak politician who took the idea of Central European federation seriously. *Milan Hodža*, the prominent politician who was Czechoslovak Prime Minister (1935 – 1938) was also an adherent of the Central European federation¹²⁵. With this specific conviction he had to face the proponents of the clearly delineated nation-state like *Edvard Beneš*, the later president of Czechoslovakia.

The concept of ‘Central Europe’ was reinvented and developed during the 1980s by dissidents and intellectuals from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. “The Central European identity was reinvigorated even more in the 1980s and became a kind of popular fashion as a definite resistance against Sovietization.”¹²⁶ Since then, ‘Central Europe’ as a space of a common historical memory has been no longer merely an issue of nostalgic admirers of the Habsburg Monarchy or German imperialists.

“In the middle of Europe is a space that, because of its transitional and *exposed geographic location and distinct history*, is different from the European East and West.”¹²⁷

Czeslaw Milosz’s ‘Central Europe’, “his corner”, is revolving around three axes: The North-South axis, which represents the opposition but also synthesis between Latin world and Poland; between ancient poets and poetry produced by his polish predecessors. The West-East axis expresses the difference between home and the new capital of the world – Paris, and the third was the Past-Future axis¹²⁸.

¹²⁵ His arguments are elaborated in his book (originally published in English): *The Federation in Central Europe* (1942) recently edited by historian and political scientist Pavol Fugál. For more about Milan Hodža’s arguments see an interview with Pavol Fugál, <http://knihy.sme.sk/clanok.asp?cl=577827>, last visited on April 21, 2009.

¹²⁶ Attila Ágh, *The Politics of Central Europe*, 5.

¹²⁷ Otto Lothar /Breda Lothar, *Making the difference or Looping the Common Ground*, in: Wingfield (ed.), 232.

¹²⁸ See: Maria Todorova, *Imagining Balkans*, 101 -106.

„Standing one one's own feet, liberating oneself from the vestiges of *unhappy love for the West* is a good thing, provided it doesn't lead to entrenching oneself in a morbid nationalism. An East-Central Europe composed of closed national compartments hostile or indifferent to each other would be against the vital interests of its nations.”¹²⁹

From Milosz poetical contemplation is coming up the ambivalent perception of Russia, he opposes the Russian messianism to the corpus of western ideas, and ‘Central Europe’ joins the ranks of the participants of these western ideas.

The Hungarian historian Jenö Szűcs developed the three-regional division of Europe. According to him, “Eastern Europe should be divided into two sections: East-Central and South-East Europe.”¹³⁰ Besides the apparent fragmentation and decomposition of ‘Eastern Europe’, ‘Western Europe’ was still taken as one homogenous essential block. „East-Central Europe became squeezed between those two regions, and at the dawn of the Modern Times [...] it no longer knew whether it is still belonged within the framework of *Europa Occidens* or whether it remained outside it”¹³¹ Szűcs ascribed to ‘Central Europe’ the transitory status, which since the beginning of the modernity has been confusing element in the identity-building of the countries belonging to this region. ‘Central Europe’ has been stuck between the two European opposing centers, confused about the appropriate belonging.

Milosz’s ambivalent perception of Russia was transformed to the prohibitive certainty in the work of *Milan Kundera*¹³². “Kundera’s essay produced a torrent of reactions revolving around the complete banishment of Russia from Europe as an essentialized other.”¹³³ He has believed in the *distinctiveness of ‘Central Europe’*. Apart from the linguistic kinship among Slavic languages, neither Czechs nor Poles had anything in common with the Russians. Kundera wished to totally exclude Russia from the map of Europe.

Generally, all these authors have tended to represent ‘Central Europe’ as *cultural identity*. They stress that, it is not the politics, but rather *culture* which must be seen as the decisive force by which nations constitute their affinities. For *Milan Kundera*, ‘Central

¹²⁹ Czeslaw Milosz, *Looking for a center: on the poetry of Central Europe*, originally in ‘Crosscurrents’, 1982, quoted in: Jessie Labov, *Balkan Revisions to the Myth of Central Europe*, 11.

¹³⁰ Jenö Szűcs, *The Three Historic Regions of Europe*, Acta Historica Scientiarum Hungaricae, vol. 29 (2-4), 1983. For the reference see: Maria Todorova, *Imagining Balkans*.

¹³¹ Jenö Szűcs in: Maria Todorova, *Imagining Balkans*, 142.

¹³² Milan Kundera, *The Tragedy of Central Europe*, New York, 1984.

¹³³ Maria Todorova, *Imagining Balkans*, 145.

Europe' is a "culture or fate"¹³⁴, for *Czeslaw Milosz* "an act of faith, a project, let us say, even an utopia"¹³⁵, and for *György Konrád*, "to be a Central European, it is an attitude, a Weltanschauung, an aesthetic sensibility for the complicated, multi-linguistic view"¹³⁶. The cultural and ethnic diversity has often been treated as a common, unifying feature of 'Central Europe, as its unique value. "It is a melting pot of cultures, peoples and cuisines, uniting these small countries into a bigger unit."¹³⁷

4.3. *Central Europe Asymmetrically Central*

Before examining the inherent tensions hidden inside the idea of 'Central Europe', let me illustrate this problem by recent example. In February 2009, the then Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs - *Karel Schwarzenberg* - visited Moscow in order to communicate with his Russian colleague - *Sergei Lavrov* - the agenda of an installation of the US radar basement in the Czech Republic (and Poland)¹³⁸. Although the Czech Republic is universally recognized as an autonomous state which can legally govern within its territory, the installation of radar has brought the broader interests into a play. The Russian government considers the US military basement situated in the strategic proximity to its border as a significant threat. Despite the official argument that radar is suppose to protect the countries of NATO against the danger coming from the Near East, Russian representatives interprets it as the military expansion of USA towards its own borders. Moreover, it is considered that the foreign (still antagonistic) power entered their sphere of influence. Thus, besides the debates on the importance of military defensive shelter and the possibilities of more peaceful interrogations, the topic on the geopolitical organization of continent leaked out.

Sergei Lavrov argued that 'Easter Europe' is the territory of Russian "privileged interests" and any foreign military maneuvers will be considered to be a provocation. Swarzenberg replied to this appeal by surprising readiness that the Czech Republic is not

¹³⁴ Milan Kundera, *The Tragedy of Central Europe*, 35.

¹³⁵ Czeslaw Milosz, *The Witness of Poetry*, 46.

¹³⁶ György Konrád, *Der Traum von Mitteleuropa*, quoted in: Taku Shinohara, *Central European Discourses from Historical Perspective*, 12.

¹³⁷ Attila Ágh, *The Politics of Central Europe*, 4.

¹³⁸ My references to this event comes from its coverage by the Czech and Slovak online media portals: <http://www.idnes.cz/>, <http://www.novinky.cz/>, <http://aktualne.centrum.cz/>, <http://www.sme.sk/>.

located in Eastern but in Central Europe. The implicit context of this debate is transparent. ‘Eastern Europe’¹³⁹ is a geopolitical concept where Russian still, however subliminal, executes its dominion. On contrary, ‘Central Europe’ is, by self-definition, area beyond the sphere of their influence. It is a shared land of the countries which, after the half century-long episode of Russian despotic hegemony, returned to the course of democratic, autonomous and self-constitutive processes.

Thus, this implicit geopolitical project of self-positioning, called ‘Central Europe’, seemed to consolidate as an intellectual and cultural alternative to the bipolar constellation later represented by the post-Yalta division of Europe between Soviet dominion of ‘Eastern Europe’ and the capitalistic ‘Western Europe’. According to Attila Ágh, ‘Central Europe’ was continually in turns exposed to these two discursive invasions. “Historically, these waves of Europeanization-Westernization have been interrupted by the periods of ‘Easternization’, the last case of which was the period of Sovietization.”¹⁴⁰ Put it more precisely, the concept of ‘Central Europe’ was both a penetrative refusal of this reductive division as well as a symbolic resistance against Communist takeover. Thus, the idea of ‘Central Europe’ represents not just the mobilizing appeal for independence of nation-states but also the struggle for civilization affinity¹⁴¹.

This cultural and discourse rebellion postulated the fundamental difference between multiculturalism of ‘Central Europe’¹⁴² and the totalitarian universalism of the Soviet Union¹⁴³, which belittled the cultural plentitude and maturity of that particular region.

"Central Europe longed to be a condensed version of Europe itself in all its cultural

¹³⁹ However, Lavrov defended his statement by pointing to the UN structures where the Czech Republic as well as Poland are considered to be Eastern Europe.

¹⁴⁰ Attila Ágh, *The Politics of Central Europe*, 4.

¹⁴¹ Perhaps, this is a moment where the experience of Central European countries could be fruitful for the recent EU candidate countries as Turkey or Israel, which are struggling for a recognition of their European belonging.

¹⁴² The multicultural essence of ‘Central Europe’ is rather paradoxical. Even Milan Kundera, the obstinate adherent of the multicultural character of ‘Central Europe’, acknowledged that core of multiculturalism lied in the presence of Jews: "the Jews in the twentieth century were the principal cosmopolitan, integrating element in Central Europe: they were its intellectual cement, a condensed version of its spirit, creators of its spiritual unity [...] in their destiny the fate of Central Europe seems to be concentrated, reflected, and to have found its symbolic image." Milan Kundera, *The Tragedy of Central Europe*, 35. With the loss of Jewish people and culture, Kundera believed that the “intellectual cement” and unity had been missing from the concept of Central Europe. Considering the history of Jews in ‘Central Europe’, Taku’s comment on Kundera statement is rather cynical: “If it is true that this region had been full of colorful cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, it destroyed itself and became monotonous and the goal of pluralism has never been realised.” Taku Shinohara, *Central European Discourses from Historical Perspective*, 39.

¹⁴³ The representation of Russian (Muscovite) political culture as essentially totalitarian, authoritative and paternalistic can be connected to the Weber’s characteristic description of oriental politics as “Oriental Patrimonialism”. Here again, the discourses on Orient and ‘Eastern Europe’ shows apparent proximity.

variety, a small arch-European Europe, a reduced model of Europe made up of nations conceived according to one rule: the greatest variety within the smallest space."¹⁴⁴

Indeed, it was a general project of recomposing of European geopolitical framework and rearranging its mental mapping. This explicit attempt of detachment and self-positioning of ‘Central Europe’ did not primarily react against the Cold War arrangement, but, more profoundly, it dealt with the Enlightenment’s invention of Eastern Europe as a consequence of civilization-barbarism division. The arguments of the proponents of the concept of ‘Central Europe’ belonged to this general discourse of Western civilization.

All proponents have been internally convinced that countries of the ‘Central Europe’ fundamentally participated on the Western civilization and the post-war geopolitical arrangement imprisoned them in the framework of totalitarian cultural bastardization. Central European countries shared a common Western cultural background of democratic civilization, in contrast to Russian totalitarian and authoritative despotism. For Kundera, ‘Central Europe’ is essentially the “kidnapped, displaced West”¹⁴⁵. ‘Central Europe was forced into the alien category of East. Strong orientation towards the West has been one of the most remarkable characteristics of Central European discourse of 1980s¹⁴⁶. Still nowadays, in this particular geographical part of European continent, the ‘East’ signifies an offensive term. There has been an inclination towards imitating the Western attitude which allegedly integrated ‘Central Europe’.

“The West” as a positive moral entity so deeply penetrates Hungarian intellectual history that even the title of the most important literary journal of the twentieth century—published from 1908 to 1941—was called Nyugat (West)."¹⁴⁷

According to the adherents of the idea of ‘Central Europe’, the demarcation line between east and west was also the line between true and untrue. True and false discourses symbolically divided Europe into opposing blocks. The discourse of Eastern Europe has been seen as the

¹⁴⁴ Milan Kundera, *The Tragedy of Central Europe*, 33.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 34. One of the significant traits of the hijackers of ‘Central Europe’ was that they were not just Russians, but also Communist. Interesting investigation then could be, to analyze the way how could be orientalized the figure of Communists, especially the Central European communist.

¹⁴⁶ The orientation to the West was neither a part of the idea of Habsburg Central Europe nor Naumann’s Mitteleurope.

¹⁴⁷ József Böröcz, *Goodness is Elsewhere: The Rule of European Difference*, 118.

web of small, subtle lies which deterred ordinary people from “living in truth”,¹⁴⁸. One could not be surprised that the Enlightenment’s categories of true and untrue penetrated the geopolitical settings of 1980s exactly at the same fault line designed in eighteenth-century. Following the table of binary opposition in the Enlightenment, there were different crucial categories, simultaneously combining the moral and geopolitical discourse, employed in the symbolic parcelization of twentieth-century Europe¹⁴⁹.

Central Europe’ was asymmetrically central, it has desperately longed for the West. Its cultural location has been situated in „the west-centric core-periphery structure”,¹⁵⁰. The geographic center of the European continent represents rather a radiated peripheral territory, enlightened by the western manners and values. The ambiguity, mélange, and indeterminateness penetrated the central European region from both, internal and external side of the ideological elaboration.

“The inclination to attribute to the Central Europe past what you hope will characterize the Central Europe future, the confusion of what should be with what was – is rather typical of the new Central Europeanism. We are to understand that what was truly ‘Central European’ was always Western, rational, humanistic, democratic, skeptical, and tolerant. The rest was ‘East European’, Russian, or possibly German. Central Europe takes all the ‘Dichter und Denker’, Eastern Europe is left with the ‘Richter und Henken’.”¹⁵¹

Thus, the heritage of ‘Central Europe’ is to certain extent arbitrary and one could simply declare that ‘Central Europe’ is another imaginary construction of symbolic exclusion, lacking the cultural and historical unity as well as geopolitical reality. György Konrád, one of the prominent adherents of the central European idea, later soberly observed that:

“Compared to the geopolitical reality of Eastern Europe and Western Europe, Central Europe exists today only as a cultural-political anti-hypothesis (eine kulturpolitische Antihypothese).”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ See: Václav Havel, *The Power of the Powerless: citizen against the state in Central Eastern Europe*.

¹⁴⁹ See: József Böröcz, *Goodness is Elsewhere: The Rule of European Difference*.

¹⁵⁰ József Böröcz, *Goodness is Elsewhere: The Rule of European Difference*, 129.

¹⁵¹ Timothy Garton Ash, *Does Central Europe Exist?* 194-195.

¹⁵² György Konrád quoted in: Attila Melegh, *From Reality to Twilight Zones: Transition of Discourses and the Collapse of State Socialism*, 175.

Without fixed borders, with just hypothetic cultural, historic and ideological commonalities, the narrative of ‘Central Europe’ has represented the continuation of the hegemonic west-east relation and followed the self-evident western instruction on the descending slope of the economical, political, moral, and cultural worthlessness of ‘Eastern Europe’. Due to this perspective, Timothy Garton Ash argued, that “Central European ideas of the 1980's contained an almost mystical historicism”¹⁵³. Once again, the intellectual construction mastering this region has been encountered with the insoluble ambiguities. There have been substantial difficulties of describing ‘Central Europe’ positively. In 1984, Kundera proclaimed: Central Europe was „situated geographically in the center, culturally in the West and politically in the East”¹⁵⁴. Instead, Central Europe has been mostly defined passively as something that has been always moving between East and West, cut by and stuck in the political and symbolic juxtaposition.

Following the Enlightenment’s categorical table of binary attributes, the Central European ‘unhistoricalness’ has been found between the Western historical dynamic of cultural progress and the Eastern non-historical static. Thus, Central Europeans imprisoned in the eastern block faced two choices: either mobilize themselves towards the West and prove the civilization affinity (that would mean exile) or wait silently in a totalitarian depreciation for the western emancipating mission. The mobilization or emancipation in terms of postulating the inherent manners and values of the Central European region has been scarcely proclaimed. When the crucial enemy of Communism was eliminated, the narration on Central Europe vanished, too.

The thesis on the negative definition of ‘Central Europe’ can be also illustrated by the events which took place in the first years of the second millennia when the USA government launched the war against the global terrorism. Surprisingly, it mobilizes the awareness of Central European identity, too. There has been Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary among the European states who on January 30, 2003 signed the ‘letter of the eight’, that is who supported the US invasion to Iraq¹⁵⁵. Despite the serious criticism, mostly from France and Germany, the threats and accusations of disloyalty to the idea of Europe from the side of the Western European countries, Central European countries considered themselves and act as the most privileged partners of the USA. Once again, the awareness of belonging was raised

¹⁵³ Timothy Garton Ash, *Does Central Europe Exist?* 195.

¹⁵⁴ Milan Kundera, *The Tragedy of Central Europe*, 36.

¹⁵⁵ See: Chris Rumford, *Introduction*, in: Rumford, (ed.), 10 – 12.

in the time of danger - not just the one of international terrorism but also the danger of paternal approach from the side of the ‘Old Europe’.¹⁵⁶ By the way of conclusion we can point that this partnership between unilateralist USA and chimerical ‘Central Europe’ lasted just a short time.

A paradoxic consequence of the world of free-floating and shifting identities is that this part of Europe, which the rich heritage of communist experiments, now considers itself to be more liberal than the welfare regimes of ‘Western Europe’¹⁵⁷. What could this strategy of preferring the extreme poles say about the cultural identity?

4.4. Chain Reaction of Eastern Inferiority

Considering these crucial difficulties, one can claim that the ‘Central Europe’ is controversial idea or a mythical “program for intellectuals”¹⁵⁸, captured in the centre of the discourse of west-east civilization slope and continuing the narrative of superiority of ‘Western Europe’.

“Central Europe is not solely a geographic notion but rather an idea linked with the myths of western civilization and shaped by the encounters with the Balkans as its Oriental Others.”¹⁵⁹

In the context of ‘Eastern Europe’, the peculiar twofold pattern is applied¹⁶⁰. Besides the participation in the western storytelling, it also appropriates the excluding rhetoric towards Russia and Balkans¹⁶¹, or more generally towards the all eastern neighbors¹⁶². The more

¹⁵⁶ If this suggestion is correct, we should expect that the Central European identity will continually lacks its justification due to the change of US foreign policy represented by President Obama. From this particular position, Obama might not be apprehended by ‘Eastern Europeans’ due to the fact that his presidency is challenging the very notion of its privileged partnership (Obama = Obava – fear, worry, trouble).

¹⁵⁷ However, from a short-term perspective the substantial liberalism is not a controversy. It is a consequence of the radical (laboratory) transition models (‘Washington Consensus’) applied in the Post-Communist countries. The experiments of laissez-faire not only decimated the population of Eastern European states economically, but it also provided them with the imported arguments for particular reflection on their identities. “To pursuit and overtake”, a slogan of Vaclav Klaus seems to count on this particular model of internal European development, too.

¹⁵⁸ Maria Todorova, *Imagining Balkans*, 156.

¹⁵⁹ Otto Lothar, Breda Lothar, *Making the difference or Looping the Common Ground*, in: Wingfield (ed.), 232.

¹⁶⁰This pattern of ongoing eastern inferiority was already articulated by Jenö Szücs in his division of Eastern Europe.

¹⁶¹The excluding mechanism towards Balkans could be also interpreted and justified on the basis of the historical

country is geographically western country, the earlier, faster and better development, cultivation and recovery from the Sovietization possesses. The religious denomination has sometimes served as the basis for these inferiority claims¹⁶³ because the first acknowledged wave of Westernization was through the religion. So, the more eastern and more southern country the more being placed at the bottom of the intra-European hierarchy. This ideological escape from the East leads to the deliberate ignorance of other Eastern European countries. Each country, geopolitically belonging to the former eastern political bloc, has considered its own eastern or southeaster borders as the fault line of economical development and cultural and political cultivation.

“From the Austrian perspective this [cultural] border lies in the Karavanke Mountains, on the top of the southernmost Alpine peak on the border with Slovenia, separating the Oriental Slavic world from the civilized European Germanic world. In the Slovene imagination, the border separating civilization from barbarians lies south of Slovenia on the Kolpa, the river separating Slovenia (Central Europe) from Croatia (the Balkans). Croats place the edge of civilization on the border between Croatia (Central Europe) and Serbia (the Balkans). And the Serbs understand themselves as the last defense of European civilization against underdeveloped Islam personified most recently by either the Bosnian Muslims or the Kosovar Albanians.”¹⁶⁴

This continual process of attributing the inferiority in the framework of ‘Eastern Europe’, and especially in the region of ‘South-Eastern Europe’, has been academically conceptualized as the “*Nesting Orientalisms*”, which is the process of gradual “easternization” and that was one of the most important factors of the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia.

“As a political entity, the former Yugoslavia encompassed traditional dichotomies such as east/west and their nesting variants (Europe/Asia, Europe/Balkans, Christian/Muslim) largely neutralizing their usual valorization. With the destruction of this neutralizing framework, the revalorization of these categories,

reference. Some could argue that although Central European countries were the part of Habsburg Monarchy, the Balkan countries belonged to the Ottoman Empire.

¹⁶² See: Maria Todorova, *Imagining Balkans*, chapter ‘Balkans and the Myth of Central Europe’.

¹⁶³ Attila Ágh, *The Politics of Central Europe* or Jacques Rupnik, in: Todorova, *Imagining Balkans*.

¹⁶⁴ Otto Lothar, Breda Lothar, *Making the difference or Looping the Common Ground*, in: Wingfield (ed.), 235-36.

now oppositions rather than simply differences has resulted in the destruction of the living communities that had transcended them.”¹⁶⁵

Although inherently polemical, the consequences of South-East European wars in 1990s could be connected to the occidental gaze. As the matter of fact, the particular mechanism of creating European internal ‘Other’ was developed and employed by the Enlightenment, the period of European history that has been considered by many recent Europeans as the crucial part of currently emerging European identity. It was exactly the creation of internal other and the recomposing the mental mapping of the region, that the inhabitants of declining Yugoslavia eagerly appropriated.

4.5. East, Central, Obsolete

Nowadays, within a framework of the European Union, there are voices for complete abandonment of geopolitical terms of ‘Eastern and Central Europe’. According to *Mojmír Hampl* - the vice-governor of Czech State Bank (ČNB) a denotation of the countries as ‘Central and Eastern Europe’ is continually losing its ground. “Nowadays, it is a proper time for media to realize that the designations Central and Eastern Europe perhaps could mean an apt geographical term, but in economic terms - a power of the monetary sector and the macroeconomic stability - it lost its meaning long time ago.”¹⁶⁶

Similarly, *Jacques Rupnik* – the outstanding French political scientist and the Czech emigree in France – proclaimed that the Czech Republic is neither eastern nor central but simply Europe.¹⁶⁷ The new EU members from the post-communist countries became part of Europe without any adjective. Although these two proclamations might seem to be almost identical, indeed, they follow a different logic of argumentation. By the previous statement (originally published in the Financial Times) *Hampl* attempted to react against the very contemporary inclination of ‘Old Europe’ to re-evoke the distinctive features and substantial

¹⁶⁵ Bakić-Hayden, M. *Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia*.

¹⁶⁶ SME (the Slovak online newspaper) 26/2/2009, www.sme.sk. From a completely different perspective, the World Bank –in the report ‘From Dissintegration to Reintegration (Harry Broadman) – warn that Eastern Europe could bifurcate into two groups of countries, the new members of EU orientating to the West and the ones left behind in the integration processes, which have tried to cooperate with Russia. The very existence of Eastern Europe would thus be seriously challenged. See: SME 2/2/2009. Last visited on July 13, 2009.

¹⁶⁷ IDNES (the Czech online newspaper), www.idnes.cz, 24/09/2008. Last visited on July 13, 2009.

difference of ‘Eastern Europe’. With a burst of the recent financial crisis, the abysses re-emerged along the former ‘Iron Curtain’ line. Neither ‘New Europe’ nor ‘Central Europe’ are the terms used in a situation of the contemporary global crisis. It is evoked as if a phenomenon of solid entity of ‘Eastern Europe’ re-appeared within the European Union once again.

Moreover, being hysterically separated from the Western part, ‘Eastern Europe’ is repeatedly considered as homogenized and uniform block. Unsurprisingly then, it is this tendency to see all the post-communist countries in one group which provoked the Czech vice-president to react. There are two particular countries – Hungary and Latvia – especially damaged by an explosion of mortgages which scared the Western investors and brokers and subsequently revoked the generalization of ‘Eastern Europe’ to appear. Hampl did not hesitate to make sure that Western countries will not look at the Czech Republic in the same perspective: “the householders in the Czech Republic do not have the debts in foreign currencies”¹⁶⁸. This is apparently understood as the deeper meaning behind his claim of the corrosion of the Eastern and Central Europe concepts.

Another example supporting the outlined argument is the circumstance of the pre-EU summit of the Central European countries – the Visegrad group organized on March 20, 2009. This preliminary ‘mini-summit’ was formally called by the Czech Republic, the recent EU presidency country, in order to formulate a coordinated strategy of ‘Central Europe’ for receiving the EU subsidies. Due to dramatic impact of the financial crisis on Hungary (and ‘Baltic states’) it is at hand to interpret this meeting as the volition to form the Central European solidarity block within the EU structures¹⁶⁹. However, the outcomes of this meeting turned to be of surprisingly reverse character. Almost no agreement was reached. It was exactly the Czech Republic representatives who proclaimed no need of special support for their economy. Similarly, the two countries of Eurozone – Slovenia and Slovakia – also showed little concerns about the Central European solidarity. Apparently, in order to benefit from the various economic and political interactions with the states of ‘Old Europe’, the nation-states which allegedly form the Central European region explicitly showed no specific proximity and solidarity beyond the loyalty to the integrated Europe. Drawing on such an understanding we can conclude that the EU enlargement in 2004 brought to the light an elusive and instable character of the enthusiasm for Central European identity.

¹⁶⁸ SME 26/2/2009. Last visited on July 13, 2009.

¹⁶⁹ Although it could as well be seen as a tricky agency of Hungary to propose a general need of new members for financial subsidies, instead of acting as a particular member state in need.

5. Cosmopolitan Europe

It might be worthwhile to dwell a little longer on arguments revolving around the debates on ‘Central Europe’. Analytically, there is a two-sided general outcome of these observations. First, let me start with a positive definition. It is apparent that an inclination to ‘Western Europe’ is not sufficient source for the socio-cultural and political cooperation of Central European countries. There is always a disruptive moment at stage when a particular Central European state tends to dislocate from its neighbors in order to proclaim being more western. On the other hand, a negative definition embraces the idea that the Central European solidarity seems to be adequately established only when used in order to separate ‘Central Europe’ from more eastern states. Thus, the solidarity bound among Central European states exist only when engaged in an excluding discourse. In the further chapter, I invite you to follow this theme in the theoretical elaboration on excluding mechanisms inherent to the idea of multiculturalism.

5.1. Multiculturalism – An Apartheid Arcadia

“Perhaps, people tend to prefer the societies of equals without any foreigners, perhaps they just like entropy.”

Ralf Dahrendorf, *The New Beginning of History, From Fall of the Wall to the War in Iraq*, 46.

By deconstructing the connection between the concept of the binary oppositions of cultures and its referential reality, we can criticize the tendency to substantiate the unambiguously delineated alternatives.

Such a sedimentary tendency expresses rather attachment to some form of fundamentalism than to an academic integrity. However, my argument here is not to advocate a populist postmodern mélange, where “the freedom continually degenerates to the

existentialists' nightmare, where everything is possible but nothing can be done anymore”¹⁷⁰, either. Let me initially state that I am completely aware of the fact that even when we keep a position of the substantial fluidity and interactivity of cultures (which can stem from the genealogy of nation-state or Western civilization heritage in general¹⁷¹), the issue of constant negotiations of delineation between ‘we’ and the ‘Other’ persists.

A conservative fear that blending cultures would destroy their particular authenticities and bring a social disorder, presupposes a notion of cultures as homogenized and clearly delineated wholes, which basically copies the borderlines of nation-states. The conservatives proposing a political status quo in this global era have realized that in modernity a cultural homogeneity¹⁷² represents a core of any autonomy claims. However, there is indeed a paradoxical consequence of such an argument. We can claim that if we anticipate any cultural homogeneity for the autonomy of political body, at the same time we restrict an individual autonomy of free choice. “The homogenous nations, the societies lacking any ethnic, religious or cultural differences, are not homes of autonomous individuals but houses of souls.”¹⁷³ These souls of pre-arranged identities might work well for nations but lack capacities for an individual and cultural cultivation. Accordingly, a tempting question rises then, how can liberal state emerge from an aggregation of culturally homogenous groups? To my mind, the multicultural entropy cannot guarantee morally justified recipe for treating the ‘Other’ – i.e. foreigner, alien, migrant, ‘the mad and the bad’, etc. Furthermore, the presupposition of segmented cultures constitutes not only the conservative argument, which aims to support and protect various ways of territorial and language-based notions of nationalism, it could also be found behind the contemporary idea of multiculturalism. The idea of multiculturalism was originally initiated as a “policy for management of the ethnic diversity within a nation state.”¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the multicultural policy towards diversity embodied within a nation-state very soon turned to the shared conviction of a failed political initiative.

Multiculturalism based on a strategy of preserving the ultimate multiplicity of cultures not just integrates a tendency to substantiate the differences but it also justifies the

¹⁷⁰ Ralf Dahrendorf, *The New Beginning of History/ From the Fall of the Wall to the War in Iraq*, 60, (my translation from Czech) The phenomenon of ‘choice inhibition’ when the individual is principally free to choose, but cannot in practice exercise the choice, is particular issue of globalization.

¹⁷¹ See: Gerard Delanty (ed.), *Europe and Asia Beyond East and West*, 2006 or Gurminder K. Bhambra, *Multiple Modernities or Global Interconnections: understanding the global post the colonial*, 2007.

¹⁷² For example: the promotion of a single national language, the codification of national history, the corpus of classical literature, etc.

¹⁷³ Ralf Dahrendorf, *New Beginning of History/From the Fall of the Wall to the War in Iraq*, 39, (my translation from Czech).

¹⁷⁴ CH. Husband, T. Moring, *Public Spheres and Multiculturalism in Contemporary Europe*, in: Saalovara, 2009, 136.

impenetrable cleavages between cultures. According to *Slavoj Žižek*, what we nowadays call liberal multiculturalism is de facto a conceptual contradiction. His critique of multiculturalism is based on a recognition that the majority of ‘liberal world’ considers tolerance to stand for an absence of harassment. This understanding of tolerance among different cultures literary means to maintain a distinguishable distance. The representatives of various cultural heritages are asked to keep the proper distance and not to interfere and harass each other. Thus, liberal multicultural society restricts people of different identities and backgrounds not to come too close to each other¹⁷⁵. We are encouraged to live in clearly delineated groups or cultural communities of codified tradition and be aware of some negative side of every social and cultural exchange. By this negative side is meant a possibility of disintegration of one’s own local or national cultural framework as well as the instability of transnational systems (e.g. the EU).

This social system of fragmented cultural elements has provoked many critical remarks not just within Europe (e.g. criticism from the side of Critical Theory/ Frankfurt School or Phenomenology) but also from the non-western parts of the world. One of the most prominent figures who constantly criticized the ‘apartheid’ cultural tendency of Western societies, although he firmly supported the reflexive westernization of India - was *Rabindranath Tagore*. As Alaistair Bonnet emphasizes, “[f]or Tagore, the development of alienated, instrumental relations between people encourages a hollow cosmopolitanism, in which people are able to travel extensively; encountering many different cultures, yet never experience any vulnerability or desire for genuine exchange. ‘Our Knowledge of foreign people grows insensitive’ [Tagore]”.¹⁷⁶

Similarly, for *Žižek*, the multicultural agenda perfectly refers to the contemporary appeal for ‘safe products’. He argues that there is a growing demand for the products which can actually offer you a product without its substance. This means that you can get the product without what makes it dangerous - decaffeinated coffee, beer without alcohol, chocolate without sugar, etc. Following this argument, *Žižek* considers the notion of multiculturalism being one of these products. The appeal for tolerance of the ‘Other’ is ‘commodified’ the same way as a coffee for example. Likewise, what the Europeans in particular and the Westerners in general recognize as a cultural alterity is de facto the

¹⁷⁵ Slavoj Žižek, *The Future of Europe*, http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=031DE139C14CEE38&search_query=slavoj+zizek+The+Future+of+Europe.

¹⁷⁶ Alaistair Bonnet, *Rethinking Asia/ Multiplying modernity*, in: Delanty (ed.) 280.

‘decaffeinated Other’¹⁷⁷. This is the ‘Other’ deprived of any dangerous component which might interfere and penetrate one’s own identity. Drawing on such an understanding, we can conclude that liberal multicultural model of society is apparently unable to provide an inspiration in the recent stage of Europe. If the European integration is seen to be just another continuation or even a reinforcement of the multicultural strategies, the united Europe would be nothing more than a transition of the nation-state rationality of identity-building to the higher level of socio-political organization and as such only the reinforcement of the tension between the ‘West versus the Rest’. The European integration would thus lack its legitimacy due to the multiplying of inefficient policies. Multiculturalism does not offer anything else than an international federation of tolerating cultural communities. Moreover, it is the concept of legalized indifference towards otherness (because of its institutional guarantee). Neighboring cultural identity is not treated as a reflexive challenge but as (if ever overlaps such a horizon) potential threat. The multicultural model misses the analysis of phenomenon of cross-cultural interpretation and the impact of globalization.

Accordingly, the multiculturalists’ argument supports the state of fragmented entropy, which corresponds to the utopia of mythical country of Arcadia - an imaginary idyllic paradise inhabited by unspoiled shepherds and described by Virgil as a land lacking all conflicts and changes¹⁷⁸. This pastoral idea of an eternal harmony with nature has been postulated in many elaborations stretching from the poetry to the affluent literature of political utopias. Aside from a number of different romantic elaborations, demand for Arcadia was profoundly scrutinized by *Immanuel Kant* in his book ‘Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose’¹⁷⁹. Kant criticizes this Arcadic concept of static political order, resolutely. According to him “in an Arcadic bucolic life, all talents - if stayed in an entire congruence, restrained and in reciprocal love - would be hidden once for all in their rudiments. Then good-natured as their sheep when feeding, people would hardly give more sense to their existence than could do their animals.”¹⁸⁰ Noble savages inhabiting the pastoral idyllic world, according to Kant, would be deprived of any meaning of their life courses, their lives would be experienced the similar unreflective way as in the case of their animals.

¹⁷⁷ Slavoj Žižek, *The Future of Europe*, http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=031DE139C14CEE38&search_query=slavoj+zizek+The+Future+of+Europe, last visited on April 5, 2009.

¹⁷⁸ Virgil, *Eclogues*, <http://classics.mit.edu/Virgil/eclogue.html>.

¹⁷⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*, 1784 in: *Kant: Political Writings* edited by Hans Reiss.

¹⁸⁰ Immanuel Kant quoted in: Ralf Dahrendorf, *New Beginning of History/From the Fall of the Wall to the War in Iraq*, 73 (my translation).

Following further his argument, any development emerges only by facing the obstacles and challenges. It is only through the dialectic of antagonisms, the reciprocal interactions and the mutual exchanges that cultures develop and not perish. Kant's conclusion is that human kind should preferably avoid any form of Arcadic ideals. In fact, the course of history has showed that the idea of Arcadia often leads to authoritarian systems of tyranny and terror.

Instead of the multicultural strategy of dealing with the 'Other' based on the mutual pact of non-interference, there is a need for more holistic approach in which the self-referentiality will not be the fundamental presupposition. In the discourse on European cosmopolitanism "there are no authoritative definitions of what constitute the 'we' of the political community and also there is no clear definition of who the 'Other' is"¹⁸¹. European cosmopolitanism has an ambition to step beyond the circular self-referential structure of symbolic order.

In order to adequately introduce a cosmopolitan discourse, it is worthwhile to demonstrate a counter-account to multicultural cosmology. In the following chapter, I argue that any cultural claim is derived from an overlapping discursive violence of initially authentic situation of heterodoxy, plurality of stories, interpretations and problematizations.

5.2. Fluidity of Tensions

An anti-entropy argument

"European societies are becoming more and more mixed as a result of a common currency, migration, tourism, transversal web of cheap airlines, and the common feeling of inhabiting the world risk society."

Beck and Delanty, Europe from a cosmopolitan perspective, 12

Nowadays, taking the general crisis of representation seriously - which is taking into account the presence of power in any established narrative, regardless its objective claims and emancipating motives – it is unavoidable to use a *genealogical approach*. According to

¹⁸¹ Ulrich Beck and Gerard Delanty, *Europe from a cosmopolitan perspective*, 15.

Michel Foucault, genealogy destabilizes “a tyranny of ubiquitous discourses and its hierarchies”. Genealogy is a will to point out historical struggles when one dominating paradigm (*'épistémès'*) subjugates and thus disqualifies other types of knowledge. It is a rehabilitation, “digging a knowledge out of the sand”, the particular knowledge silenced by an unitary discourse. Genealogy is a “stage design of the battle of individual knowledges against the consequences of science discourse’s dominion.”¹⁸² Foucault in a sublime line of thoughts demonstrates that an heterodoxy of narratives pulses under every essentialized and firmly established notion of social community and cultural identity: the Orient, the Occident, the East, the West, Europe, the developed and developing civilizations, societies and cultures as well as any ‘authentic and cultivated’ personal identity.

However, a genealogical disorganization of given does not aim to end up in any postmodern melangé. The tradition of relativism embodied in Foucaultian genealogy denies all eulogies of indifference, vacuum and ‘anything goes’ rhetoric. It rather expresses the acknowledgment of the political, economic, social and cultural essential interconnectivity and interdependency. As Richard Rorty pointed out:

„Relativism is the view that every belief on a certain topic, or perhaps about any topic, is as good as every other. No one holds this view [...]. The philosophers who get called ‘relativist’ are those who say that the grounds for choosing between such opinions are less algorithmic than they had been thought [...]. Our culture, or purpose, or institutions cannot be supported except *conversationally*.“¹⁸³

Thus, collective cultural identities and social groups seem not to be clearly delineable wholes, separate entities which are bounded, distinct and internally homogenous. “Cultural forms and social practices are both interconnected and constituted in those interconnections. There are no entities that are not hybrid, that are not always and already hybrid.”¹⁸⁴ An origin of cultural patterns is not the kind of thing to which purity happens easily, reversely, there can be found a substantial heterodoxy, cross-cultural contamination, borrowings and learnings, “hybridity, creolization, cross-fertilization, globalization and entangled modernities, cultural trade, diasporas, translations, cultural diffusions, syntheses, adaptations”¹⁸⁵ behind assertive claims

¹⁸² Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 25-28, (my translation from Czech).

¹⁸³ Richard Rorty quoted in: Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, *Post-Marxism without apologies*, 14. My italics.

¹⁸⁴ Gurminder K. Bhambra, *Multiple Modernities or Global Interconnections: understanding the global post the colonial*, 59.

¹⁸⁵ Gerard Delanty, *Civilizational constellations and European modernity reconsidered*, in: Delanty (ed.), 45.

of every culture. The proliferation of cultural interconnectedness stands firm against the modern claims for self-assertion. Very often, it is almost impossible to delineate ethnic, cultural and linguistic cleavages among different communities because of the fact that societies and cultures have been exchanging their products since ancient times¹⁸⁶. „We should view human cultures as constant creations, recreations, and negotiations of imaginary boundaries between „we“ and the „other(s).“¹⁸⁷ Europe has been considered a melting pot of cultures and societies at least since the eighteenth-century. Thus, Herder praised European spirit for being extremely developed due to its appropriation of many various impulses. He wrote that “[i]n no part of the world the peoples have mixed in such a large proportion [...], a melting without which the Europe’s general spirit (*Allgemeingeist*) would not have been aroused.”¹⁸⁸ In this line of thoughts, it is an inaugural heterogeneity which is the substantial European trait. Concurrently with Herder, Nietzsche characterized the European distinctiveness in terms of a fruitful mixture. “Neither God nor nation but modern homelessness and permanent exile shape the ‘good European’, who, because he has grown within Christendom has grown out of it. “We, the homeless [...] are by race and descent all too mixed and therefore not inclined to participate in [...] self-adoration of race and its prostitution (*‘Unzucht’*).”¹⁸⁹

The opponents of the cultural fluidity argument would claim that blending the cultures only brings the confusions and consequently a stage of anomie. According to this conservative point of view, any trans-cultural hybridity necessarily causes a social and political instability. They rather see the idea of multiculturalism as a mosaic origin, where particular cultures are isolated by clear boundaries and located in the protective frameworks. Besides the fact that such a notion lacks any academic integrity, it also contrasts with another conceptual framework when elaborating on cultures and identities. A distinction of internal and external reflection of culture and identity is mostly psychological, however, it has the significant consequences in the other fields, too. There are situations where there is principally more stimulating to elaborate instead of I/’Other’ distinction rather on a difference between identity self-perceived and identity reflected by others. Apart from the notion of multicultural mosaic, there is an attempt to overcome this later difference. A cleavage between essentialized

¹⁸⁶ Indian culture in particular represents these difficulties when standing for the indistinguishable combination of different religious, linguistic, ethnic and political narratives.

¹⁸⁷ Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*, 8.

¹⁸⁸ Johann Gottfried Herder quoted in: Heidrun Friese, *Europe’s Otherness: cosmopolitanism and the construction of cultural unities*, in: Delanty (ed.), 246.

¹⁸⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche quoted in: Heidrun Friese, *Europe’s Otherness: cosmopolitanism and the construction of cultural unities*, in: Delanty (ed.), 247.

internal identity and its external recognition, their transparent difference, is considered to be a part of psychological pathology.

As far as extremities are not concerned, a common strategy is to keep the most possible balance between internal and external identity. This means on the one hand, to realize a fundamental openness and fluidity of oneself, on the other hand to reflect various distortions of external (often entirely imaginary) views. Besides the discourse on personal integration, the externally created¹⁹⁰ (by combining of the imagination and observations) identities and sometimes even identities unavoidably prescribed by dominating powers (colonial empire, state majority, prevailing religion, mainstream lifestyle, dominating tradition, etc.) can significantly contribute to the self-reflection of subalterns¹⁹¹. As Amartya Sen pointed out “the self-image (or ‘internal identities’) of Indians have been much affected by colonialism over the past centuries and are influenced – both collaterally and dialectically – by the impact of outside imagery (what we may call ‘external identity’).”¹⁹² There is a principal distortion of identity view implied by the external position. Due to such a perspective, we tend to emphasize the differences (imagined or invented). Thus, this argument suggests that the external perspective has in fact more in common with the production of contrasting figure inside the representing culture (the West) than with the actual culture of intended description (India, Orient, Eastern Europe, Balkans, Russia, etc).

Apparently, dialectic of internal and external identity is misguided when complementary parts (patterns) become substantial oppositions. As history shows, this was not just the case of considering the ‘Other’ by hegemonic civilization but also a moment in the post-colonial and post-oriental emancipation. Thus, essentializing the ‘Other’ persists even in the age of the ‘the general crisis of representation’. Nowadays, this stereotypical essentialization is often acquired when describing ‘Western civilization’, too. Although Said warned that an answer to Orientalism can not be any form of Occidentalism, neither he nor his followers¹⁹³ paid enough attention to the reductive essentialization of ‘Western civilization’.

However, there have been several authors who addressed this problematic¹⁹⁴. An

¹⁹⁰ See chapter Residually Indigenous.

¹⁹¹ Subversive and alternative populations. This term was first used by Antonio Gramsci. “Subaltern – a person without lines of social mobility.” Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, 28. In this particular context, I use the term for referring to the members of ‘weak cultures’ which identity was invented, imposed and reflected predominantly by the agency of dominant hegemonic cultures.

¹⁹² Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian*, 139.

¹⁹³ e.g. Martin Bernal, Samir Amin, Paul Bairoch, Stavrianos, Erich Wolf, James Blaut, Jack Goody, etc.

¹⁹⁴ Amartya Sen, Maria Todorova, Jacques Derrida, Slavoj Žižek, etc.

allegedly sharp and sedimentary contrast between the binary opposition of Occident and Orient has been recently challenged by many distinguished scholars of post-colonial and oriental studies. For example, the historian Maria Todorova in her book on Western representation of South-East Europe wrote: „By reacting against a stereotype produced in the West, I do not wish to create a counter-stereotype of the West, to commit the fallacy of ‘Occidentalism’”¹⁹⁵. Todorova is fully aware of a danger of intellectual enterprise scrutinizing the hegemonic role of the Western world. This enterprise almost irresistibly tempts to some moralization. The risk of such a moral judgment is aptly articulated by German skeptical philosopher, Odo Marquard. He claims that by becoming the consciousness of the others, the need to have own consciousness usually vanishes, too¹⁹⁶. It is a rather asymmetrical but still reciprocal interaction between a dominating and submissive or suppressed cultural sphere which is in the centre of Todorova’s research. The following quotation aptly expresses her position: “There was no common Western stereotype of the Balkans [South-East Europe, m.s.]. To declare this is not to say that there were no common stereotypes but that there was no common West.”¹⁹⁷

Interestingly enough, there has been broad a criticism of post-colonial and Oriental studies presented among politicians, religious representatives and scholars. They have argued that a deconstructive reflection of the West is made by means of western knowledge itself and as such it cannot be considered valid and relevant. Amartya Sen recognizes this argument as a “dual role of the West”, when “the colonial metropolis are supplying ideas and ammunition to post-colonial intellectuals to attack the influence of the colonial metropolis”¹⁹⁸. Mostly, such a critique comes from a milieu of anti-West fundamentalism where “it has become quite common to cite the foreign origin of an idea or a tradition as an argument against its use”¹⁹⁹.

Thus, we can witness that in the conceptual framework of substantial cultural and societal fluidity, we encounter controversies and tensions. There are those who have acknowledged that the particular opposition of Individual/ an ‘Other’ is instable, fluid and elusive-like just in order to challenge the universal dominion and the applicability of hegemonic strong cultures/societies. According to them, any cultural representations of dominated oriental identities of historically excluded others need to be deconstructed. However, their deconstruction is focused only on one complementary side of this binary

¹⁹⁵ Maria Todorova, *Imagining Balkans*, IX.

¹⁹⁶ See: Odo Marquard, *Farewell to Matters of Principle*.

¹⁹⁷ Maria Todorova, *Imagining Balkans*, 115.

¹⁹⁸ Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian*, 133.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 130.

opposition. Surprisingly enough, their analysis has not address a firm category of the West. Moreover, they even seem to enforce the reifications and essentializations of Western civilization.

On the other hand, the argument on substantial cultural fluidity is interpreted in emancipative terms of subversion and elusive tendencies. “Culture is never just a matter of ownership, of borrowing and lending with absolute debtors and creditors, but rather of appropriations, common experiences, and interdependencies of all kinds among different cultures.”²⁰⁰ The substantial element of incertitude and indeterminacy of cultural content as well as constant cycles of exclusions, distances, repatriations and naturalizations provides any subaltern with an emancipation potential to destabilize hegemonic constructions. As Lyotard pointed out “[e]mancipation depends on the perpetuation of dissensus, that is, on a permanent crisis in representation, on ‘even greater awareness of the contingent and localized – the unstable – nature of all norms for representing the world.’”²⁰¹ In the similar line of problematization, when still in the multicultural framework, Spivak expressed very pessimistic account. She concluded that it is almost impossible for the ‘Other’ to speak, to be heard and listened.²⁰² However, despite Spivak’s reluctance, a recent postmodern era of cross-cultural and transnational hybridization has encouraged a more enthusiastic account on the capability of the ‘Other’ to speak. Thus Robin Cohen, while speaking about an emancipative potential of creolization of the societies, inauguates the realm of elusive power which provides subalterns with an instrument of political and socio-cultural recognition.

“I argue that elusive power and creolization have become implicitly seditious concepts and modes of social conduct – challenging primordial versions of race and ethnicity, territorial and language-based notions of nationalism and fundamentalist versions of religion. More ambitiously, I argue that much traditional social and political theory needs to be recast for we can no longer assume the stability and continuing force of the ethnic segments that supposedly make up nation-states.”²⁰³

It is exactly this elusive world diagnosed by Cohen, where European integration is recently

²⁰⁰ Edward Said, *Resistance, Opposition and Representation*, 98.

²⁰¹ Jean-François Lyotard quoted in: Gibson, A, *Postmodernity, Ethnics and the Novel*, 68.

²⁰² Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*

²⁰³ Robin Cohen, paper given at the conference: *Shifting Politics: Transnationalism, Power and Politics*, Groningen, March, 2008. <http://www.rug.nl/filosofie/faculteit/vakgroepen/pf/ShiftingPolitics.pdf>.

taking place. Although announced and slowly becoming recognized, this world of cross-cultural experiences and practices lacks a substantial institutional framework. It is here where a cosmopolitan perspective has potential to provide with inventive suggestions. In the further chapter, what I call liberal cosmopolitanism will be analyzed as an attempt to address the problems linked with the cross-cultural and hybrid circumstances of contemporary societies in the era of global interconnectivity.

5.3. *Liberal Cosmopolitan*

Rahi agl (the path of reason)

“Where the mind is without fear and head is held high;
Where the knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into
fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
into that heaven of freedom, my father, let my country
awake.”

Rabindranath Tagore, The Religion of the Man.

In fact, an isolation and protective framework are the most elaborated topics in the contemporary version of multiculturalism which Seyla Benhabib aptly and critically called a *mosaic multiculturalism*. “The mosaic multiculturalism is wrong, empirically as well as normatively, [...] the intercultural justice between human groups should be defended in the name of *justice and freedom* and not of an elusive preservation of cultures.”²⁰⁴ It is already in *fin de siecle*, when a demand for liberal cosmopolitanism appeared in social theory. Emile Durkheim’s concept of “world patriotism” includes social order in which “societies can have their pride, not in being the greatest or the wealthiest, but in being the most just, the best organized and in possessing the best moral constitution.”²⁰⁵ Following this line of thoughts, we can suggest that every transnational political order based on the concept of mosaic

²⁰⁴ Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*, 7-8.

²⁰⁵ Emile Durkheim quoted in: Fine, R. *Cosmopolitanism*, IX.

multiculturalism is necessarily fragmented and instable and as such lacks legitimacy in the recent global era. Instead of forming the mosaic museum out of different cultures, the transnational cultural politics should concentrate on the regulative ideas of justice, freedom and dialogical reasoning. Multiculturalism should stand for a stubborn humanism and promote a cosmopolitan understanding of inclusion: universal equality of opportunities, democracy²⁰⁶, rule of law, justification of heterodoxy, tolerance, respectful dissent and open and unrestrained mobility drives for all.

In this regard, Seyla Benhabib articulates “the need for the *impartial* institutions”²⁰⁷. The impartial institutions in a transnational environment are supposed to be *equidistant* from all specific national interests as well as from the others transnational political and economic lobbies. The only political rationality they suppose to be guided by is a creation of the legal framework of cosmopolitan liberal order.

It is likely that somebody can find an internal conflict in such a request. How could any liberal project have confidence in a strategy of an institution building? Conversely, liberalism has seemed to find its political interest in the reverse project of the disintegration of state bureaucratic institutions. However, social solidarity which has established and kept together most of the social orders has always required some institutions in order to avoid a risk of anomie. Thus, “under specific circumstances, when a risk of anomie is growing, the most important task of liberals is to build some institutions.”²⁰⁸

Nevertheless, the question then is how to deal with the particular universalistic claims in a pluralistic environment? Recently, when democracy and rule of law are denounced rather as the neo-imperialistic values of European and American origin, it is difficult to think about any universal regulative idea that all nations and ethnics would accept. In some parts of the world, mere identification of Western connections of an idea could be enough to damn it (still or even more than ever). Among others, this is the case of Human Rights Charter which since September 2001 has been associated exclusively with Western civilization interests. Its defense embedded in the moral mission of *George W. Bush* to combat evil caused definite lost of its global credit and legitimacy. Every defense of Human rights was since then equated to ‘war on terror’. Some authors have focused on this shift while elaborating on the “ideology of

²⁰⁶ As Gorand Therborn stated, the European Union is a political entity which has established democracy as its crucial integrative principle. „This was the first time ever that democracy was made a sine qua non qualification for membership of an inter-state organization.“ *Gorand Theborn, Post-Western Europe and the plural Asias*, in: Delanty (ed.), 25.

²⁰⁷ Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of culture:Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*, 8.

²⁰⁸ Ralf Dahrendorf, *New Beginning of History/From the Fall of the Wall to the War in Iraq*, 61.

human rights”²⁰⁹.

Accordingly, it is one version of Kant’s moral imperative which could provide some guidance here: “Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law”²¹⁰. Act according to the rules of your action could be simultaneously recognized as an universal law. Without any hesitation, we need to admit that there are significant objections made against Kant’s ethical formalism, criticizing the imperative for its incompetence to engage with the practical matters of ordinary life. Thus, *Slavoj Žižek* speaks about ‘the pseudohegelian critique’:

“The moral law does not say to me, what is my duty, only thing it says to me is that I should execute my duty. It is impossible to derive the particular norms, which I should follow in actual situation, from moral law itself. That means, the subject himself has to take responsibility for “translation” of abstract order of the moral law to the series of particular demands.”²¹¹

However, to my mind, we could still address a though-provoking fruitful connection between Kant’s moral imperative and the recent European cosmopolitan imagination. This rather formal and constitutional-like postulate bounds actions and behaviors with far reaching consequences. “This is a cosmopolitan meaning to act according to the way that our conduct could be considered as the principle of cosmopolitan society promoting a common law.”²¹² The humanistic prescriptive point, despite the contemporary multiculturalism, is to scrutiny the ideas and cultural patterns regardless their origin. Consequently, the ultimate purpose of the promotion of multiculturalism is cosmopolitan society in which all people are citizens of one common world. The spacious and absorptive idea of cosmopolitan order is a profound foundation of any other version of multiculturalism.

²⁰⁹ Costas Douzinas quoted in Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights: Radicalism in Global Age*, 9.

²¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, 30.

²¹¹ Slavoj Žižek, *Kant and Sade: The Ideal Couple*,

<http://www.egs.edu/faculty/zizek/zizek□kant□and□sade□the□ideal□couple.html>, downloaded on March 4, 2007.

²¹² Ralf Dahrendorf, *New Beginning of History/From the Fall of the Wall to the War in Iraq*, 297.

5.4. Otherness at Work: Multilateral Europe

"Anti-Semitism, imperialism and totalitarianism have demonstrated that human dignity needs a new guarantee which can be found only in a new political principle, a new law on earth, whose validity this time must comprehend the whole of humanity."

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, ix

On the one hand, there are arguments of those who claim that a justification of European unity should not lean just on an economic cooperation, market trade and a financial agenda. On the other hand, even the same proponents of broader-than-economic integration are hesitant about a particular form of a common European heritage and identity. One of their most frequent questions concentrated on the problem to which extent does Europe need some social and cultural integration, and to which extent we could benefit from such integration?

If the topic of socio-cultural integration is generally justified then subsequent questions arise immediately. Which form of the postulated integration should be chosen; which regulative pattern should be followed? It is more than clear that if the European integration is seen to be just another continuation or even a reinforcement of the tension of 'the West versus the rest', and the united Europe would be nothing more than the transition of the nation-state rationality of an identity-building to the higher level of socio-political organization, the European integration would encounter a crisis of legitimacy due to the redundant multiplying of inefficient policies²¹³.

To my mind, a common European culture does not necessarily need to represent a specific reference to common European identity. The theme of European culture and identity could be plausibly linked only with some reference to common concerns, common problematics and common modes of communication. It does not require a ready-to-install program of cultural strategy composing and differing Europe from its alternatives. Reversely,

²¹³ The parallel to the Occam's razor principle is apparent.

the European Union project could be understood in matter of an open and inclusive endeavor. Beck and Delanty noticed that up to current period “the European polity has often been described as a reflexive form of integration.”²¹⁴, a reflexive form in terms of having a potential for rethinking the inherited prejudices and systems of exclusion. Nevertheless, the fact is that the European integration has given Europe a clearer cultural and political identity. It was the first attempt (however not the only one) to give expressions to an hermeneutical culture of critique and reflection. Europeanization has led to a generous Europe or to a common political project (and not homogenous Europe). The resulting uncertainty of what Europe might stand for, may be seen less as a sign of crisis than as an expression of a questioning attitude and a more critical kind of self-understanding.

Subsequently, the project of the European Union has an ambition to open up a new chapter of political architecture. In this postulated architecture, there would be no longer meaningful to rely on the heritage of internal European delineations created by hegemonic power relations. The contemporary negation of lines of European ontology has also brought about a problematization of external European borders. In order to address these questions of external and internal European delineations in a consistent way, the discourse on cosmopolitan Europe emerged. This particular discourse represents a new approach not mere by considering Europe as the whole, but also by an appropriation of continual and augmentative inclusive strategy. “Cosmopolitans put the human kind to the fore, instead of categories of people/groups and declare solidarity with other people despite differences in nationality, cultures, or lifestyles.”²¹⁵ Thus, the cosmopolitan discourse does not install limits of humanity between bounded community and external figures.

A cosmopolitan Europe is not just descriptive but also normative and transformative concept. It is a complex set of debates and problematizations which try to address the issue of universal inclusion from various - political, cultural, social, legal, economic, etc - angles. According to Vertovec and Cohen “cosmopolitanism can be viewed or invoked as: (a) a socio-cultural condition; (b) a kind of philosophy of world-view; (c) a political project towards building transnational institutions; (d) a political project for recognizing multiple identities; (e) an attitudinal or dispositional orientation; and/or (f) a mode of practice or competence.”²¹⁶ It builds upon a sober and disenchanted recognition of unconscious dispositions of modernity, when the outcomes of European Enlightenment turned into a path

²¹⁴ Ulrich Beck and Gerard Delanty, *Europe from a cosmopolitan perspective*, in: Delanty (ed), 12.

²¹⁵ Florian Pichler, *Cosmopolitan Europe: views and identities*, 4.

²¹⁶ Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice*, 1-22.

of the shocking historical events. The consequences of such a recognition include the constant discovering of foreign elements inside one's own individuality as well as the different within the identical. In general, this tradition invites to discover a subversive element inside one's own identity. Cosmopolitanism entails a constant capacity to (re-)view oneself from the eyes of the other. Thus, any inclusion of the 'Other' as a Leitmotiv for the socio-cultural integration of Europe answers not just very sensitive issue of the treatment of the 'Other' both within and among the nation-states, moreover, it critically questions the heritage of the European delineations (internal and external) on the transnational level.

Consequently, cosmopolitan imagination is understood as an impetus for societal transformation which refers to the absence of socio-cultural closure: "The European project lacks closure"²¹⁷. Cosmopolitan outlook comprises "a global sense, a sense of boundarylessness, an everyday, historically alert and reflexive awareness of ambivalences in a milieu of blurring differentiations and cultural contradictions. It reveals [...] the possibility of shaping one's life under conditions of cultural mixture."²¹⁸ This kind of subjectivity emerging today in integrating Europe can be termed cosmopolitan due to its open ended nature and the fact that it is not underpinned by a substantive identity such as 'people' but multiplicity of identities and projects. "Cosmopolitan Europe is in Europe the last really effective utopia. It is about something completely new in the history of humanity, namely the projected image of a state structure which makes its foundation the recognition of cultural otherness."²¹⁹ Looking back into European history, cosmopolitan imagination suggests that the common European cultural policy could only be founded on a multilateral recognition of otherness. Precisely what is meant is a cosmopolitan inclusion in the name of the respect to social, political and cultural otherness. Cosmopolitan multi-centered society could then be a proper normative principle of social and cultural integration.

In parallel with the emergence of the discourse on 'Eastern Europe', the universal declaration of rights of Man could be also dated back to eighteenth century²²⁰. As in the former case, "the rights of man presupposed all manner of exclusions and silences"²²¹, bounded community and external figures. On the one hand, we could picture the discourse on human right as the failure that did not successfully resist to become another side of power. However, the rights of man "also provided the universalistic framework within which

²¹⁷ Gerard Delanty, *The Idea of Post-West Europe*, 1.

²¹⁸ Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, 3.

²¹⁹ Ulrich Beck, Edgar Grande, *Cosmopolitan Europe*, 376.

²²⁰ See Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism*.

²²¹ Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights: Radicalism in a Global Age*, 10.

struggles for inclusion could take place”²²². The demand of Enlightenment for universality of rights was thus a twofold process, exclusive²²³ and inclusive at the same time, due to a limited political imagination of national self-determination frameworks. Nevertheless, seen from a normative perspective, the right of every individual to belong to humanity should not be guaranteed or mediated by particular political, cultural or religious communities but by a common cosmopolitan project. According to Hegel “a human being counts as such because he is a human being, not because he is a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, etc.”²²⁴ What is proposed here is a universalistic extension of the rights of man beyond the particularities of the nation-state, the federal and the transnational reservoir of belonging (of Western and Eastern Europe, for example).

“The credo of the new cosmopolitanism is that the universalistic character of the idea of right, once swamped by the self-assertion of one nation against another, is best suited to the identity of world citizens and not to that of citizens of one state against another.”²²⁵

The juridical concept of the rights of man incorporates a demand for a multilateral cultural representation and a tolerant ethical treatment. “The cosmopolitan imagination constructs a world order in which the idea of human rights is an operative principle of justice.”²²⁶ The juridical embedment of this cosmopolitan demand guarantees its binding and enforceable character. However, the daunting problem lies in its cultural and ethical dimensions. It is not evident that the mere proliferation of law would bring more emancipation and freedom²²⁷. Accordingly, Robert Fine speaks of “the culture of Human Rights”²²⁸.

In Kant’s formulation: “The law of cosmopolitanism must be restricted to the conditions of universal hospitality.”²²⁹ The consequences of the duty (devoir) of hospitality and the right (droit) to hospitality include the recognition and the respect of the ‘Other’ within

²²² Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights: Radicalism in a Global Age*, 10.

²²³ See chapter: I as not You: Enlightened Consciousce.

²²⁴ Hegel quoted in: Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights: Radicalism in a Global Age*, 10.

²²⁵ Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism*, 4.

²²⁶ Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights: Radicalism in a Global Age*, 8.

²²⁷ See: Ratna Kapur, *The Dark Side of Human Rights: A Postcolonial Reflection*. Kapur discuss the human rights as product of the business transaction. Moreover, she argues that the human rights were also often used justification of atrocities.

²²⁸ Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism*. Drawing on the understanding that the tensions and clashes in the recent world embrace a substantially cultural character, the human rights could be a new agenda in the world after the end of ideology and history, only when incorporated in the cultural discourse.

²²⁹ Immanuel Kant quoted in Derrida, J. *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, 19.

one's sphere of reference. Thus, in regards to Europe, the former delineations initiated by the Enlightenment should be reconsidered in terms of the internal multilateral plurality. In the core of the cosmopolitan project we can locate a demand for a cultivation of ethics of hospitality. Maurice Blanchot constantly insisted that "I will not speak of the other or about the other but I will speak [...] to the other."²³⁰ Identically, in his lecture on cosmopolitanism, Jacques Derrida stated:

„Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic among others. Insofar as it has to do with the *ethos*, that is, the residence, one's home, the familiar place of dwelling, inasmuch as it is a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners, *ethics is hospitality.*“²³¹

Ethics is hospitality and hospitality is culture. According to the cosmopolitan imagination, the treating of the 'Other' at home, in the (political) territory of any individual and in its specific cultural tradition, requires the unconditional opening towards otherness, "an opening and non-exclusion for which Europe would in someway be responsible"²³². According to Derrida, such openness includes the tendency to unconditional hospitality, to accommodate and accept the 'Other' at home (*chez moi, chez nous*), to give him or her a place. Cosmopolitanism is an initiative, with political and socio-cultural essentials, which attempts to dismantle the human self-identity in favour of a resolute openness towards the 'Other'. This would mean that the self-referentiality, a circular close structure of symbolic order, would not stay the organizing principle neither of personal identity nor the socio-cultural community. With the occurrence of the constitutive 'Other' as the impetus for a re-construction of identity, the hegemonic culture and its hierarchical divisions might be deprived of its world-constructing power. "Europe again is asked for to allow for an open space, a space of an active otherness which is not only marked by the presence of an Other within but points towards an otherness already at work that halts any notion of cultural identity."²³³

²³⁰ Maurice Blanchot quoted in: Andrew Gibson, *Postmodernity, Ethics and the Novel*, 64.

²³¹ Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, 16-17.

²³² Ibid, 36.

²³³ Heidrun Friese, *Europe's Otherness: cosmopolitanism and the construction of cultural unities*, in: Delanty (ed.), 251.

5.5. From Transnationalism to Cosmopolitanism

"Europe would have to make up its mind [...] so that the long spun-out comedy of its petty-statism, and its dynastic as well as its democratic many-willed-ness, might finally be brought to a close. The time for petty politics is past: the very next century will bring the struggle for dominion over the world – the *compulsion* to great scale politics."

Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, § 208

It is obvious that a relation between cosmopolitanism and transnationalism is not the symmetric one. Although both are the holistic concepts - the political entities they refer to are wholes qualitatively different from mere sum of its parts; they are not just generalizations and expositions of the nation-state perspectives - they do not represent the same approach. Transnationalism is usually recognized as a perspective restricted to bounded community of the European Union, lacking the signs of the European transgression. One of the key objectives transnationalism addresses is a problem of national tensions. On the other hand, looking outside Europe, its objective is to provide the European Union with the power of global governance. To my mind, the internal and external strategies of transnationalism thus represent different approach of dealing with a situation of plurality of actors. While in the internal case, the idea is to include all involved parts and provide them with a voice, in the global politics transnational Europe is expected to juxtapose the other global actors. In general, the intrinsic attempt of transnational Europe for equality and inclusion is accompanied with the exclusion of non-Europeans. From this point of view, mere transnational unification of Europe in order to re-acquire and then systematically retain the position of the global actors reminds a move from critical idealism to uncritical positivism. Conversely, cosmopolitanism represents discourse on potentially universal inclusion of whole humanity. The cosmopolitan imagination moves from a national, through the transnational to the human frame of reference. On contrary to the transnational perspective, European cosmopolitan is an open project, which encompasses the potential of transgressing the European context in time. Thus in the direction of cosmopolitan imagination, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, former French finance minister, who was a head of the European

Commission's round table on 'European model of development' emphasized that the European social model should defend "the dignity of all human beings, not just of Europeans"²³⁴. By identifying the concept of cosmopolitanism with the concept of transnationalism, a danger that the concept of European cosmopolitanism will not be enough cosmopolitan in its core and it turns to the adoration of the particular conventional European notion of belonging emerges. Facing the discursive challenge of cosmopolitan imagination, it is more apparent that the European transnational movement keeps intimate connection with the exclusive nation-states rationality. However, if the European identity would be an application of the strategies and tendencies which were developed in the framework of nation-state, the question of meaningfulness of such a project would deserve a serious consideration. On contrary, Beck and Delanty demand that "the modernist drive to create homogeneous structures such as territorial states with a unitary structure is not being replicated on the European level."²³⁵

Therefore, there are good reasons to analyse European cosmopolitanism as different to the transnationalisation of Europe. As some sociological researches conducted in Europe suggested²³⁶, there are significant differences between people, who subjectively ascribe themselves to the European or cosmopolitan 'Weltanschauung'. European cosmopolitans²³⁷ is an established category for people who primarily consider themselves to be a part of wider than local, national or European community, but who do not necessarily deny significance of these other levels of belonging. Quite aside from this denial of more local forms of belonging, Florian Pichler's research demonstrated that "with the respect to the meaning of 'being European' it is striking that cosmopolitans have not only developed a stronger but also a more open European identity (compared to non-cosmopolitan)"²³⁸. There has been recorded meaningful and argumentative tendency towards the European identity among people who positively referred to the world openness, self-problematization and loyalty to human kind. This outcome supports the argument that the European cosmopolitanism is continually becoming a part of described European reality than staying a mere normative concept. Reversely, the hypothesis that the transnational integration causes collapse of social solidarity seems to be in need of corrective study.

²³⁴ Dominique Strauss-Kahn quoted in: Chris Rumford (ed.), *Cosmopolitanism and Europe*, 5.

²³⁵ Ulrich Beck and Gerard Delanty, *Europe from a cosmopolitan perspective*, in: Delanty (ed.), 2006, 12.

²³⁶ The researches of Florian Pichler, *Cosmopolitan Europe: views and identities* based on the data from Euro barometer 57.2, or Per Gustafson, *More Cosmopolitan, no less local*, based on the data from Statistic Sweden for example.

²³⁷ Pichler operationalized the cosmopolitan attitude as feeling of closeness to various groups of people.

²³⁸ Florian Pichler, *Cosmopolitan Europe: views and identities*, 3.

Among the people who acknowledged the affinity to cosmopolitanism, a culture is forged in which the local engages with the global. It is obvious that some individuals successfully combine local (in terms of bounded communities) and cosmopolitan (in terms of embracing whole humanity) forms of belonging. Consequently, the affinity to Europe engaged with the affinity to human kind. Thus, these researches provide with a contra-argument opposing those who believe that a transfer of political decision making from the local and nation-state to the European and cosmopolitan level generally signifies a sacrifice of a lower level of deciding political entity. Following this understanding, one would expect that bringing a cosmopolitan proposal into play, which goes even beyond the level of transnational organization, will bring further distance from and dismantling of the local, national and European identities. However, sociological researches show that this argument cannot be supported by empirical data and that actually the opposite is more likely to be the proved. Pet Gustafson conducted research on the value orientations of the highly mobile Swedish people²³⁹. He discovered that:

“the frequent international travellers generally have more cosmopolitan orientation than others, but the local ties are not significantly weaker among frequent travellers than among occasional travellers and non-travellers. [...] In some respect, notably *social networks and associational activities*, international travellers tend in fact to be more involved than non-travellers in all four examined spheres – locally, regionally, nationally, internationally.”²⁴⁰

Firstly, it is worthwhile to note that the cosmopolitan attitude seems to a great extent be a consequence of intensified international mobility drives. “Strong relationship between international travel and cosmopolitan orientations cannot be explained by underlying socio-demographic factors. [...] Frequent international travel is strongly associated with cosmopolitan orientations, even when controlling for sex, age, birthplace, place of residence, education, and socio-economic classification.”²⁴¹ There seems to be no other determinant variable influencing the relation between international travels and cosmopolitan attitude. However, the causal direction is not transparently clear, the intensive international travels

²³⁹ Per Gustafson, *More Cosmopolitan, No Less Local/The Orientation of International Travelers*.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 25. International long distance work-related travels were operationalized as 100 km or more during a normal working month. Non-traveller means person who never travelled abroad at work.

²⁴¹ Ibid, 42.

might be explained by the reference to the cosmopolitan cosmologies but the inverse tendency could be possible as well. Cosmopolitan imagination might be a reason for tendency to intensive travelling. Secondly, although obviously having less time for more stable interactions and involvements, cosmopolitan people showed to build their social networks and associational activities more intensively and more frequently (more personal friends, socializing with the neighbours, etc.) than people who prefer other forms of belongings. In general, the alleged decline of solidarity bound due to the transnational uprooting showed to be contradicted with the empirically grounded observations of cosmopolitan preferences. “Cosmopolitans have more spatially dispersed social networks than locals.”²⁴²

However, the most crucial outcome of this second research is, almost identical with the outcomes of previous research, in the reference to the European form of belonging. The most apparent difference between the international travellers with cosmopolitan imagination and the non-travellers with reduced sense for other than local forms of belonging was identified at “the European level, with frequent international travellers being considerably more likely than others to express strong sense of belonging to Europe.”²⁴³ Thus, the fear perceived within the EU structures that the cosmopolitanism or the promotion of the European cosmopolitan identity will lessen already weak attachment to European project is proved by empirical data not to be legitimate²⁴⁴.

Drawing on the outcomes of previous sociological researches, we can state the actual problem of European polis is not a lack of interests in the regional and national identities among the highly mobile and cosmopolitan-attitude people. The serious observation is required rather among the Europeans with less or none mobility drives. Thus quite significantly, the underlying reasoning is apparent. Cosmopolitan compared to transnational identity is not emerging to replace other kinds of identity but exists along sides a wide range of other kinds of identity. It is an attempt to inaugurate the notion of parallel, transversal and multiplical identity.

²⁴² Per Gustafson, *More Cosmopolitan, No Less Local/The Orientation of International Travelers.*, 39.

²⁴³ Ibid, 46.

²⁴⁴ See: Chris Rumford, *Introduction*, in: Rumford (ed.), 1-15.

5.6. *Farewell to Translatio Imperii*

“Europe will become a colloquium where people would learn to think beyond the framework of empire.”

Peter Sloterdijk, If Europe Awakes, 56.

In his book on the re-establishment of European role in the global politics, Peter Sloterdijk demonstrates that a quintessence of European heritage, the European constitutive element, lies in the mechanism of transmission the idea of Empire²⁴⁵.

“Europe is a theatre of imperial metamorphosis. The guiding principle of its political imagination is *sui generis* a wandering of the soul of Roman Empire upon the authoritative and historically powerful European nations. Not a few of these nations confessed in their most successful eras that they are chosen to become a new incarnation of Roman ideas of a world dominion.”²⁴⁶

The actual and innermost connection between the European nation-states is explained as a mimesis and practical engagement in imperial politics. In a sublime line of thought, Sloterdijk demonstrates that “European is a person engaged in the transmission of Empire.”²⁴⁷ The motive of Empire transmission stroke through the various important European historical events. According to him, in modernity a perverted side of this historical process emerged when several translating actors occurred at the same time. A competition between various territorial or national self-appointed heirs was the reason for impossibility to unify Europe under the share motive of an imperial legacy. We then encounter with a theme of Europe in a situation of a constant bifurcation between an idealistic picture of inner imperialistic coherence and an practical fragmentation of the multi-imperial programs. Consequently, Sloterdijk blames the pluralization of the European imperial programs for causing the political disasters of the twentieth-century. He terms nation-states as “monster novo-European empires

²⁴⁵ Peter Sloterdijk, *Falls Europa erwacht: Gedanken zum Programm einer Weltmacht am Ende des Zeitalters ihrer politischen Absence*.

²⁴⁶ Peter Sloterdijk, *If Europe Awakes: Thoughts for the Programme of the World Power at the End of the Era of its Political Absence*, 39 (my translation from Czech).

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 40.

which competition implied the catastrophe of Europe in the twentieth-century”²⁴⁸. There is a twofold political catastrophe of Europe in the twentieth-century. On the one hand, an internal collapse and degeneration of European regulative ideas which drifted towards the mass destruction of World Wars as well as to the totalitarian political experiments. On the other hand, the essential socio-cultural and political principle of Europe was passed along to the other side of Atlantic Ocean. A constitutive European ‘mythos’ was transferred to and seized by another political body - the USA. According to Sloterdijk, since the year 1945 Europe has been dominated by “ideologies of vacuum which advise to escape to the stage of non-assertivity”²⁴⁹ and at the same time it has been condemned to play “a role of the colony of its own utopia”²⁵⁰.

In parallel to Sloterdijk’s analysis, I find an internal danger in the tendency to re-establish a European unity (and its position of an influential global actor) on the basis of rethinking its imperial metamorphosis. I agree by and large with his premise that a fragmentation of European continent into the battlefield of conflicting nation-states brought a wave of hatred, hostility and all kinds of exclusions and that this situation cumulated in personal tragedies and political frustrations of the twentieth-century. However, what strikes me in his account is his silence about the consequences of European imperialism on the ‘Others’ of non-western territories, his confidence in Europe being chosen for an avant-garde role to provide the others with a notion of development and freedom. Although potentially with the best intensions of universal enlightenment, Eurocentrism - that is the political and social imperialism and the cultural orientalism - attempted to impose its particular perspective as some universal norm. What I called Eurocentrism here is an unilateral contract which does not give almost any voice to the ‘Other’; it considers ‘Western Europe’ and its particular history, politics, social stratification and cultural development as the measure of civilization. At the same time, adherents of this discourse have been more than willing to apply this measure to the global scale. It is also a discourse on an exploitation of the world for the (Western) European benefit. Eurocentrism is a reduced form of universalism based on the strategy of overlapping the particularities. A clear-cut critique of European universal imperialism is based on the recognition that any other cosmopolitan imagination needs to reconcile the universal and particular in more multilateral terms. A European imagination can no longer afford to distribute its own point of view to whole human kind. There is more likely

²⁴⁸ Peter Sloterdijk, *If Europe Awakes: Thoughts for the Programme of the World Power at the End of the Era of its Political Absence*, 43.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, 47. Ideology of vacuum is a consequence of Europe being clenched in between the powers of Cold War.

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 48.

an opaque strategy of looking at a European place and a European context from the global perspective, which can legitimate any universal applicability. As Pascal Lamy, the former European Commissioner for trade emphasized: “Cosmopolitics may simply be about thinking globally and acting locally.”²⁵¹ This particular tendency corresponds to challenges of both the “methodological approach to understanding the world and its normative approach to changing the world.”²⁵² In this moment, we encounter a world where such a form of universalism is loosing its legitimacy and this particular form of universalism is more and more inadmissible for any further legitimize political imagination. Nevertheless, Eurocentrism can no longer either simply be willed into being or willed away. On the one hand, a point that European imperialism needs to be deconstructed and delegitimized is not hard to grasp. One the other hand, we should be aware of the danger of its replacement by some vacuum ideology in which the highest political virtues would be the lack of attitudes towards global processes.

An integrated Europe could not anymore turn to a new Empire, the Empire in the period of globalization. It is partly due to its postcolonial heritage of shame and failure linked with European enterprises outside the Continent, but also due to its internal reasons why the European Union deliberately expanded to the eastern territories. The very same territories, which were orientalized by the project of Enlightenment, were currently incorporated into the extended European identity. Europe is re-emerging from the shadow of the West. “Cosmopolitanism is emerging on the global stage as a new stage of post-Western development.”²⁵³ Even if the proponents of ‘stronger Europe’, Europe as a newly awakened superpower, would like to continue exclusive game on ‘the West and the Rest’, or additionally to exclude other inhabitants of Western world from their discourse, an intrinsic composition of the political and socio-cultural body of Europe brings them to the controversial situation of fundamental inconsistency.

One may wonder whether “the rise of the West [Europe, m.s.] would thus culminate in a self-abolishing leap to higher levels of social organization.”²⁵⁴ On contrary to the old European imperial tendencies, the discourse on European cosmopolitanism highlights the presupposition that human being can be accurately understood only if treated as a holistic

²⁵¹ Pascal Lamy, quoted in: Chris Rumford (ed.), *Cosmopolitanism and Europe*, 4. Slavoj Žižek, when referring to the US foreign policy during Bush presidency, ironically claimed an opaque strategy – ‘Think locally, act globally.’ See: Slavoj Žižek, *The Future of Europe*, http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=031DE139C14CEE38&search_query=slavoj+zizek+The+Future+of+Europe.

²⁵² Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism*, X.

²⁵³ Richard Sakwa, *Russia as Eurasia: An Innate Cosmopolitanism*, in: Delanty (ed.), 226.

²⁵⁴ J.P. Arnason, *Contested Divergence*, in: Delanty (ed.), 86.

subject of universal unity of humankind. This is a point which deserves a serious consideration. The recent European integration in the form of the European Union project might bring the Western (European) identity to a deliberate decision of the self-abolishment. From the cosmopolitan perspective of the universal inclusion “the West appears less as a dominant part of the world than as a vehicle of forces or principles that follow a global logic and find their most adequate expression on a global scale.”²⁵⁵ This is quite paradoxical reconciliation between European ideas of imperial translation and cosmopolitanism. Europe once again turns its attention to the global scope but this time its perspective introduces a very controversial figure. It seems to have initiated the age of Western civilization epilogue, the project of the displacement of Western civilization from the centre of the globe. This particular translation-interpretation of European heritage has given rise to “the formless and decentred Empire”²⁵⁶. It is exactly this Empire of cultural polycentrism which occupies the postmodern self-reflection of Europe. “If Europe wakens up, a pluralism will no more signify a fancy and modish word by which one can grasp everything up to ‘unity in diversity’, but on contrary, an obligatory and active principle of organization which will guaranty a post-imperial European form.”²⁵⁷ This would be a cosmopolitan agency of Post-Western Europe.

In a final chord of this process, a Post-Western Europe provides a conceptual framework for a post-universalistic societies²⁵⁸, this means for an embodiment of a dialogical and decentralized version of universalism. The ambitions of European world-supremacy thinking, which can be heard from the side of some proponents of transnational European integration²⁵⁹, might be replaced by a discourse on cosmopolitan Europe which ambition is to exclude virtually no one.

²⁵⁵ J.P. Arnason, *Contested Divergence*, in: Delanty (ed.), 85.

²⁵⁶ Gerard Delanty, *The Idea of Post-West Europe*, in: Delanty (ed.), 2006, 1.

²⁵⁷ Břetislav Horyna, *Epilogue*, in: Peter Sloterdijk, *Falls Europa erwacht: Gedanken zum Programm einer Weltmacht am Ende des Zeitalters ihrer politischen Absence*, 89.

²⁵⁸ See: Gerard Delanty and Vivienne Boon, *Cosmopolitanism and Europe: Historical Considerations and Contemporary Applications*, in: Rumford (ed.), 19-38.

²⁵⁹ For example precisely expressed by Jurgen Habermas.

6. Conclusion

This exclusive binary mechanism stands beyond the constitution of social solidarity and cultural identity and seems to have passed the tests of logical consistency and potential universal applicability. As I have elaborated in this dissertation, the constitution of Western civilizational hegemony was accompanied by a constant process of ‘orientalising othering’. This process did not only influence the territories and populations beyond the European continent. As I have argued of this orientalising discourse can also be found within the internal European division of ‘Western and Eastern Europe’. The image of ‘Eastern Europe’ was developed in order to and make visible and enforce this unrivalled source of Western civilization. This discourse, at least some of its fragments, still seems to be preserved in contemporary Europe. Larry Wolf’s prediction that: ”in Europe of 1990s Eastern Europe will continue to occupy an ambiguous space between inclusion and exclusion, both in economic affairs and in cultural recognition”,²⁶⁰ remains valid even after the last two waves of European Union’s enlargement.

Thus, meanwhile the processes of enlarging and deepening this idea of a ‘shared Europe’ – which were processes originally initiated by the Enlightenment - there is still an exclusive hostility towards ‘Eastern Europe’ from the side of ‘Old Europe’. In a turn of the second millennium, there was the Eurobarometer surveys conducted in which EU citizens warmly welcomed the idea of a Swiss or Norwegian accession, but were constantly hesitant or even negative about the Eastern and Central European countries.²⁶¹ The majority of Western European society was not in favour to accept an extension of political, economic but more significantly socio-cultural institutions and European identity to eastern countries. From this particular perspective, united Europe remains to be an inherently polemical enterprise which cannot just be overcome by enlargement and the deepening of the EU structures.

Moreover, regardless the analysis of oriental symptoms of ‘Eastern Europe’, it was argued that the theme of ‘Central Europe’ embraces similar tendencies towards this othering. The proponents of ‘Central Europe’ took over these very orientalising tools created by the Enlightenment in order to substantiate and differentiate its population and territories from the

²⁶⁰ Larry Wolf, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 9.

²⁶¹ Eurobarometer, 53:54. For reference, see: William Outhwaite, *Europe after the EU enlargement*, in: Delanty (ed.).

more eastern countries. In line with this mechanism, Western European countries functioned as a role patterns and those countries to the east of ‘Eastern Europe’ as the excluded ‘Other’.

Nevertheless, I am to conclude with a suggestion. Perhaps the cosmopolitan discourse could help to overcome the inherent European delineation between west and east. I very much agree with Isin and Turner in the sense that “unless we have a clear view of how other cultures have experienced globalization prior to modernity we will fall deeply into the trap of previous forms of orientalism. Any discussion of cosmopolitan citizenship must overcome orientalism.”²⁶² Cosmopolitan discourse is fundamentally activated by the potential for an universal inclusivity and embracement of the ‘Other’. It concentrates on practice of the constitutive ‘being-othered’ (‘Veranderung’)²⁶³. Consequently, to my mind, *the transgressive reOrientation of internal European divisions could be effectively addressed within the discourse on a cosmopolitan Europe (internal/external)*.

Recently there is a characteristic plurality of social theories of the present: late capitalism, reflexive modernity, second modernity, world risk society, network society, post-industrial society, post-modernity, globalization, transnationalism, multiculturalism, multiple modernities, creolization, hybrid society, new empire theory, etc. Taking the inspiration from this plurality, I claim that a new socio-cultural policy of Europeanization would fail if constructed in accordance with the theories on multiculturalism, transnationalism or European universalism. Cosmopolitanism is not just a diagnosis of the present, diagnosis of what is happening to us in this specific moment but also transformative and prescriptive concept. Thus, cosmopolitanism is not a matter of coexistence, as in multiculturalism, but a project of universal and reflexive inclusion. Reversely to transnationalism, cosmopolitan discourse is not predominantly concentrated neither on the reinforcement of the European global agency nor on a distribution of the (European) belonging to any given bounded community. Cosmopolitanism is an open and inclusive project within which local affinities engage with global ones. It is an attempt to inaugurate a notion of parallel, transversal and multiplical identity. Last but not least, the idea of post-Western cosmopolitan Europe suggests that it is no longer appropriate to uncritically rely on the heritage of Western civilization. An Inherently polemical understanding of internal European symbolic delineations stands firmly against the tendency to globally distribute any European particularism. *The socio-cultural dynamics of contemporary Europe could be effectively governed only when incorporated to*

²⁶² Engin F. Isin/ Bryan S. Turner, *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, 9.

²⁶³ See: Heidrun Friese, *Europe’s Otherness: cosmopolitanism and the construction of cultural unities*, in: Delanty (ed.), 245.

the cosmopolitan perspective.

There are some unambiguous cosmopolitan credentials within the structures of the European Union. However, as Chris Rumford stated “the EU policy-makers almost never refer to cosmopolitanism.”²⁶⁴ Paradoxically enough, current EU representatives are unwilling to recognize a cosmopolitan potential of the European Union. Nevertheless, the conceptual framework for a decline of the long-lasting division of Europe would require a more concise and more elaborated practice of an implementation to the European Union policies. *In order to overcome the internal European orientalism, the structures of the European Union would need to recognize the regulative idea of cosmopolitan Europe.*

²⁶⁴ Chris Rumford, Introduction, in: Rumford (ed.), 3-6.

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