

## **HIERARCHIES OF EASTERN EUROPE: EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE VERSUS THE BALKANS**

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Beyond and below what was once Czechoslovakia lie the deep Balkans. They are, it has been said, a sort of hell paved with the bad intentions of the powers. John Gunther<sup>1</sup>

The right question is not "Is it true?" but "What is it intended to do?"  
S. H. Hooke<sup>2</sup>

In the geographical and political classification after World War II, a portion of the Balkans secured an unobtrusive place as part of a common Eastern Europe perceived by the West as a homogeneous appendix of the Soviet Union; another portion was willingly included in Western Europe, something that would have been inconceivable under any circumstance other than the prevailing anti-Communist paranoia. In the Balkans themselves, the feeling of a certain Balkan commonality was pushed aside but never entirely submerged, and the priority of the self-designation and orientation followed an East-West axis.

The disappearance of the bipolar world and the bipolar mentality after 1989 introduced a nervous search for new and more appropriate categories for the organization of academic and journalistic knowledge, particularly in the United States. The study of Russia and the Soviet world was euphemistically renamed "Eurasian studies." The study of the former Eastern Europe also received due attention, emancipated, it was believed, not

only from the tutelage of the former superpower but also from the tutelage of Russian studies. In a timely reassessment of East European studies in the United States, it was argued that "the trajectory of Russian history is substantially different, particularly from that of East-Central Europe [which] retained more religious, cultural, and economic linkages with the West than did the Russians." Yet this analysis also posited a contrast between the Balkans and "the Orthodox lands that eventually fell under the sway of Moscow." Accepting the three-region division of Europe of the Hungarian historian Jenő Szűcs as "fundamentally correct," the study argued for a further elaboration, namely that "Eastern Europe should be divided into two sections, East-Central and Southeast Europe."<sup>3</sup>

Thus the Balkans began to reemerge as a separate entity, albeit under what was apparently considered a more neutral title--Southeast Europe. While this particular study was undoubtedly motivated by the loftiest goal of stressing the diversity and variety of Eastern Europe through reclassification, it should be clear by now that the treatment of classification as "an ordering process as if the organisation of thoughts comes first, and a more or less fixed classification follows as the outcome" is highly problematic. Rather, "the ordering process is itself embedded in prior and subsequent social action."<sup>4</sup> In this respect, two comments need to be made. One is that the academic study in question implicitly accepts the notion of a homogeneous Western Europe to which a series of different and differing East European entities are juxtaposed. It was only a version on a more modest geographical scale of what has been described as a symptom of West European ethnocentrism--that is, "to conceive of the entire Euro-Asian land mass as four Easts (Near, Middle, Far, and Eastern Europe) and only one West, itself."<sup>5</sup> The second is that it is explicitly grounded in the conception of Szűcs, one of the major exponents of the Central European ideology, thereby making the whole Central European discourse an important heuristic device.

This kind of restructuring has not been confined to academe. On 20 September 1994, the Reuters News Service transmitted a statement entitled "The State Department has made it official--no longer is there an East Europe." The text informed that Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs and a former ambassador to Germany, in a testimony to members of Congress said that "the people of the region themselves do not consider themselves Eastern Europeans . . . Prague lies west of Vienna. Budapest has a long cultural tradition as rich as that of Paris, or Vienna, or Berlin." Therefore, Holbrooke said, "Eastern Europe would now revert to what it was before the start of World War II in 1939--Central Europe." He added that instructions would be issued to all embassies in the region, and indeed in the world, that the words 'Eastern Europe' would be banished from the lexicon of the department's Europe bureau. While it was unclear how an entity, Europe, was to have a center flanked only by a West, this episode is evidence that the claims of the Central European champions were taken seriously, at least in the case of diplomatic nomenclature. Later, by speaking about the "two large nations on the flanks of central Europe," Holbrooke intimated that Russia was assuming the role of Eastern Europe, but never spelled this out explicitly.<sup>6</sup> As William Safire rightly stated, "at the State Department, nomenclature is an expression of foreign policy." Since foreign policy

was shifting, so was nomenclature, and there were hot disputes about where exactly the line with Eastern Europe would fall.<sup>7</sup>

Even the news media tried to reform. Until the end of 1994, the Munich-based Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute distributed a daily report. It published news in three categories: "Russia," "Transcaucasia and Central Asia," and "Central and Eastern Europe" (without specifically differentiating between the last two). Beginning 1 January 1995, the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) daily report has been continued by the daily digest of the Prague-stationed Open Media Research Institute (OMRI), a public-private venture between the Open Society Institute and the U.S. Board for International Broadcasting.<sup>8</sup> Although the first two RFE/RL categories, "Russia," and "Transcaucasia and Central Asia," have been retained, the former "Central and Eastern Europe" has been split into two--"East-Central Europe" (covering the Višegrad four, the three Baltic republics, and Ukraine and Belarus) and "Southeastern Europe" (comprising all the republics of the former Yugoslavia, as well as Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, and Moldova). In this classification, the unarticulated "Eastern Europe" seems to be reserved for Russia. In the case of OMRI, one need not envisage a conspiracy with consciously thought out macabre consequences, but I believe that, in general, structures can become self-generating and that the apportioning of knowledge is geared to a subsequent validation of the structure. I readily attribute OMRI's classification to a genuine effort to overcome the legacy of Cold War divisions, yet the newly shaped "Southeastern Europe" is drawn precisely along the former Cold War line. No news is broadcast about Greece or Turkey, which are still subsumed under "Western Europe" and the "Middle East," respectively.

These are but a few examples which clearly demonstrate the present influence of the Central European idea. Since it is an important element in shaping the current attitude toward the Balkans, it merits detailed attention. The Central European idea came into vogue again in the early 1980s with the almost simultaneous publication of three works by well-known authors representing the voices of the three countries claiming partnership in the idea--Poland, Hungary, and the former Czechoslovakia. The first, Jenő Szűcs's essay "The Three Historic Regions of Europe. An Outline," appeared in English in 1983.<sup>9</sup> It was followed, in the same year, by Czesław Miłosz's *The Witness of Poetry*.<sup>10</sup> Milan Kundera's essay, first published in France in 1983, appeared in the United States as "The Tragedy of Central Europe" in 1984.<sup>11</sup> Since these works exerted immense influence, have been described as pioneering, and have even served as master narratives, I will deal with them in some detail, paying specific attention to whether and on what terms they discussed the Balkans.

The most erudite of the three pieces, and also the longest, was that of Jenő Szűcs. It had tremendous resonance and enormous influence in Hungary but remained virtually unknown in the West and in Eastern Europe outside the narrow circle of professional historians. This was due not only to the length of the study and its dense prose interspersed with professional jargon but also to the fact that it did not present a clear-cut and simple argument.

In a truly kaleidoscopic summary of several centuries of European development from the fall of the Western Roman Empire until the end of the eighteenth century, Szűcs attempted to outline the internal borders of the continent based on a series of economic, social, political, and cultural characteristics. He argued that by the beginning of the ninth century the notion of the West had been born, and that by expanding to the north and to the east in the first centuries of our millennium *Europa Occidens* enlarged its bounds to include East-Central Europe (Szűcs's preferred term). In the meantime, "a 'truncated' Eastern Europe and South-Eastern Europe . . . took shape under the sphere of influence of Byzantium." The modern period, after the fifteenth century, witnessed the second expansion of the West over the Atlantic and an almost simultaneous expansion of 'truncated' Eastern Europe, which assumed its 'complete' character by annexing Siberia, thereby stretching to the Pacific. "East-Central Europe became squeezed between those two regions, and at the dawn of the Modern Times . . . it no longer knew whether it still belonged within the framework of *Europa Occidens* or whether it remained outside it."<sup>12</sup>

Szűcs's piece is not unique; on the contrary, it is one of a genre of works delving into what has been described in tragic terms as the dilemma of Hungarian identity, crucified between "East" and "West." It also lies within a tradition of looking for the roots of backwardness in Eastern Europe. In Szűcs's reading, the case for Hungary's status as a border region was based on the conviction that Europe was developing around two opposing centers. He delineated a number of fundamental structural characteristics in which the two poles, according to him, developed divergent and opposing trends. Principal among these different characteristics are the following: urban cultures (in the West, urban sovereignty and an intensive commodity exchange grew up in the interstices between the sovereignties of rival powers while a centralized bureaucratic state structure gripped the traditional urban civilization of the East); Western corporate freedoms and the system of estates against "the ruling power with an enormous preponderance over the fairly amorphous society" in the East<sup>13</sup>; differing roles for the state (in the West, "the internal principles of organizing society were dominant over those of the state;" in the East, the state prevailed over society); the development of serfdom in both regions and the "second serfdom" of the East; the idiosyncratic development of the absolutist state which compensated for the disappearance of serfdom in the West, but consolidated it in the East (here Szűcs was following Perry Anderson); Western mercantilism with the capitalist company at its center versus state dominance in industry in the East; Western evolution toward national absolutism against Eastern development toward imperial autocracy; and Latin Christianity versus caesaropapist Orthodoxy.

His doubtless erudition notwithstanding, Szűcs's case can be criticized on its own merits and within the terms he set. He sometimes used disingenuous arguments, for example comparing the evolution of Western absolutism (from ideas intrinsic in the Middle Ages through Grotius, Bodin and Hobbes to Montesquieu) to Russian absolutism, which he neatly reduced to the Byzantine autocratic mysticism of the state omitting the legal and political discussions of absolutism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that led to a short-lived but nonetheless constitutional change in the nature of the Russian polity.

Despite his considerable knowledge of historical culture, particularly that of the medieval and early modern periods, he conveniently preferred to ignore the literature exposing the simplified treatment of the Byzantine tradition as caesaropapism.<sup>14</sup> More seriously and surprisingly for a historian, he assumed a textbook homogeneity on the part of the West.

Most importantly, however, Szűcs built his case for intrinsic opposition by uncritically accepting the view that Europe developed around two poles which seemed to have evolved independently of one another. He even went so far as to describe "the *organic* [italics, M. T.] Western process of changes in forms," implicitly suggesting an "inorganic" process for the East.<sup>15</sup> Within this framework, he constructed ideal types; indeed, he spoke of two models of development. It is obvious that with a different methodological point of departure, for example, center-periphery relations, world economies, or simply the chronologically uneven structural development, this polarized view would become much more shaded. In the last case, moreover, the sharp though moving spacial borders delineated by Szűcs, in which he conveniently established his East-Central Europe, would be transformed into much more transparent and gradual temporal transitions. But, in the end, this is a matter of methodological choice and it was, I think, in his particular choice that Szűcs wrapped his indirect political message.

One could argue that Szűcs wrote in what has been aptly called the East European periphrastic, where the real political case was not clearly expressed but followed from the overall argument. Although he did not draw explicit political conclusions from his sketch, Szűcs worded it in terms of the current political science debate and used all the proper conceptual apparatus of the new canon. He employed the notion of civil society which has become "the new *cause célèbre*, the new analytic key that will unlock the mysteries of the social order."<sup>16</sup> The idea of civil society was rooted in Christian natural law, but it was developed theoretically only during the Scottish Enlightenment. It was this modern articulation of the idea which, as Adam Seligman has shown, inspired its resurrection in the 1970s, at the height of the Solidarity movement in Poland.<sup>17</sup> Although it is a term over whose nature and applicability political scientists are still arguing,<sup>18</sup> Szűcs utilized it to show that a *societas civilis* had already appeared in the West in the mid-thirteenth century "as a synonym for the autonomous society."<sup>19</sup> There were the "organizing principles of law and freedom" which had managed to carve out a "plurality of small spheres of freedom" seen as the foundation of Western development.<sup>20</sup> Even the feudal categories of medieval *honor* and *fidelitas* were reinterpreted in terms of "human dignity" as a constitutive element of the West, not to speak of a the fortuitous combination of *virtus* and *temperantia* in European behavior.<sup>21</sup>

In fact there was also a direct message, although Szűcs chose to present it from the viewpoint of István Bibó, adding that this viewpoint was "one of several possible," namely, "the search for the deepest roots of a 'democratic way of organizing society'."<sup>22</sup> Szűcs outlined Bibó's view of the combination of revolutions from above stemming from the East European background of the region with democracy from below presented by Western-type elements:

The model had at least three important premises in the co-ordinates of necessity, non-necessity, and possibility. One of them was the necessity that the socialist revolution was, as Bibó put it, "a great historic endeavor to escape from the impasse of Eastern social development," and a "further correction and completion" of the process of mankind's full liberation. The other was that it was unnecessary to place this Eastern demand under the hereditary Eastern European techniques of power and bureaucracy or to "set aside" the Western techniques of freedom, particularly if there existed certain internal historical and structural preconditions for democracy's objective techniques of a character that was not superstructural. The third was that the "revolution in human dignity" was an absolute precondition for democracy.<sup>23</sup>

Within this somewhat convoluted structure, always faithfully clad in sophisticated Marxist dialectics and interspersed with liberal vocabulary, Szücs presented his case for Hungary's fitting the objective preconditions. His grand finale was an undisguised appeal for action, although again legitimized with Bibó: "His [Bibó's] basic concept, which he put down several times and meant to serve as a long trend, is also valid and opportune: chances inherent in reality are not necessarily realized--their realization depends on effort and goodwill."<sup>24</sup> This vision and the entire Central European debate are informed by a thoroughly modern framework of reference. As Iver Neumann has aptly put it: "The grand history that resounds in the debate is one of human progress towards freedom."<sup>25</sup> It remains to be added that within this majestic framework the Balkans were not even deemed worthy of analysis. At the very beginning of his argument, Szücs not very convincingly but certainly conveniently disposed of what he called South-Eastern Europe: "Since this last area was to secede from the European structure along with the gradual decline of Byzantium by the end of the Middle Ages, I shall disregard it."<sup>26</sup>

The second of the supposed founding fathers of the Central European idea, Czesław Miłosz, wrote in *The Witness of Poetry* a "much more culturally argued definition, in which he makes the point of Central Europe's liminality to Europe as a whole."<sup>27</sup> In this first work, Miłosz did not specifically use the term Central Europe, let alone define it.<sup>28</sup> Miłosz's case is, in fact, the one which illustrates aptly the idea that "we have to realise the limits of control we can maintain over our work. We cannot dictate how it will be understood or used and by whom."<sup>29</sup> In my reading, the six 1983 essays that Miłosz wrote are a rich contemplation on the world of poetics by a refined and nuanced intellectual who was well aware that "the twentieth century, perhaps more protean and multifaceted than any other, changes according to the point from which we view it."<sup>30</sup> Miłosz obviously spoke from what he defined as "my corner of Europe" and the peculiar perspective it offered. Yet "my corner of Europe" is not the Central Europe which has been ascribed to him. It is both broader and more confined than Central Europe.

His "corner of Europe"--Poland, specifically the Lithuanian periphery--instilled in him a complex identity revolving around three axes. Not surprisingly, these axes revolved around language--the language of poetics in general and the concrete language of the poet. The

first was the North-South axis, the opposition but also the synthesis between Latin and Polish, between the classicism of Rome and its ancient poets and the line of poetry produced by his Polish predecessors both in Polish and in Latin. The second was the East-West axis, the axis between home and the new capital of the world, Paris, which "exported in succession its philosophers, its revolution, war under Napoleon, then its novel, and finally a revolution in poetry and painting. . . . The modern poetry of many European countries can be understood only if we keep in mind a fusion of two metals—one of native origin, the other imported from Paris."<sup>31</sup> The third was the Past-Future axis, the quality of poetry as "a palimpsest that, when properly decoded, provides testimony to its epoch."<sup>32</sup>

I specifically outlined these three axes because they, particularly the East-West axis, should not be associated with another opposition of which Milosz spoke and which, decontextualized, has been taken to represent his definition of Central Europe. "I was born and grew up on the very borderline between Rome and Byzantium," was his introduction to the geography of his birthplace. This was taken by George Schöpfung to mean that "thus only from the outer edge of Europe, which is Central Europe or, in this case, Wilno, can one properly understand the true qualities of Europeanness." Although Schöpfung was aware that such an interpretation raises "the more or less geographical and semantic question that if Central Europe constitutes the outer edge of Europe, where is Eastern Europe to be found?", he persisted in it.<sup>33</sup>

There is also an apparent ambiguity in Milosz, stemming from his ambivalent attitude toward Russia expressed in the feelings of "menace" and "danger" which he repeated several times. On one hand, he spoke of the centuries-long division of Europe between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Christianity; on the other, he hastened to specify that the sense of menace he felt came "not from Eastern Christianity, of course, but from what has arisen as a result of its defeat."<sup>34</sup> In fact, it could be argued (although he did not specifically do so) that his views of Rome and Byzantium reflect the opposition between these two worlds of antiquity and between the two great linguistic traditions--Greek and Latin. In order to illustrate Russian isolation, he even went so far as to quote an absurd statement by the Russian historian Georgii Fedotov, who claimed that all of Russia's misfortunes stemmed from having substituted the universality of Greek for the Slavic idiom. Yet he never entirely purged Russia from Europe; what he did was to oppose Russian messianism to the body of Western ideas.

In fact, however, Milosz is much more political than Schöpfung's reading allows him to be. In a powerful paragraph in "Starting From My Europe," the first essay in *The Witness of Poetry*, he not only raised his voice for the emancipation of the whole of Eastern Europe (indirectly defined by the enumeration of its cities--Prague, Warsaw, Budapest, but also Belgrade--and by its number--a hundred million Europeans) but was doubly political--directly, by documenting the cynicism of the Cold War division of Europe, and more subtly by recognizing the political significance of cultural images and the responsibility of intellectuals:

The literary map of Europe, as it presented itself to the West, contained until recently numerous blank spots. England, France, Germany, and Italy had a definite place, but the Iberian peninsula was no more than a vague outline; Holland, Belgium, and Scandinavia were blurred; while to the east of Germany the white space could have easily borne the inscription *Ubi leones*. (Where the lions are), and that domain of wild beasts included such cities as Prague (mentioned sometimes because of Kafka), Warsaw, Budapest, and Belgrade. Only farther to the east does Moscow appear on the map. The images preserved by a cultural elite undoubtedly also have political significance as they influence the decisions of the groups that govern, and it is no wonder that the statesmen who signed the Yalta agreement so easily wrote off a hundred million Europeans from these blank areas in the loss column.<sup>35</sup>

Once the discussion of the essence and the fate of Central Europe was in the air, Milosz found it necessary to rejoin it three years later with an essay which at first glance left the impression that he was becoming much more explicit about his Central Europeanness. The opening line of "Central European Attitudes" reads: "I assume there is such a thing as Central Europe, even though many people deny its existence."<sup>36</sup> In fact, although Milosz set himself the task of defining specific Central European attitudes, it is a tribute to his intellectual integrity that whenever he ventured into broader generalizations, he was careful to do so within the confines of the world he knew best--the domain of literature.

Milosz pointed out two characteristics that he considered specifically Central European. First, he believed that, "the most striking feature in Central European literature is its awareness of history."<sup>37</sup> He also maintained that "a Central European writer receives training in irony." It is in the context of his exploration of irony that Milosz made a rare lapse into reductionism when he stated that, in contrast to the Central European realm of irony, "Russian contemporary art and literature, obstinately clinging to clichés, frozen by censorship, seems sterile and unattractive."<sup>38</sup> To make this statement in the face of such a splendid line of authors as Il'f and Petrov, Isaac Babel, Mikhail Bulgakov, Andrei Platonov, Ven'yamin Erofeev, and Vladimir Orlov, to mention but a few, was obviously preposterous but, as already said, it was the only such breach of *bon ton*. It might seem that in this essay Milosz had begun to accept the short formula of Central Europeanness as "being a Pole or a Czech or a Hungarian." Yet, when he elaborated on the different literatures participating in the Central European literary experiment, he enumerated "Czech or Polish, Hungarian or Estonian, Lithuanian or Serbo-Croatian," and also referred to Ukraine, Slovakia, and Romania. Clearly, without mentioning the Balkans separately, Milosz embraced them, together with the rest of non-Russian Eastern Europe, in his Central Europe which for him was "an act of faith, a project, let us say, even a utopia."<sup>39</sup> It was the ambiguity toward Russia that came to the fore.

This ambiguity was transformed into prohibitive certainty in the best known and most widely read of the three pieces. The essay on Central Europe by "the man who more than

anyone else has given it currency in the West . . . a Czech, Milan Kundera,<sup>40</sup> was also the one which took the argument to its extreme. Rereading Kundera after more than ten years is extremely disappointing in terms of logical consistency and moral integrity. The essay sounds melodramatic and at times outright racist but, given the historical context, its emancipatory pathos was entirely genuine. The sincere emotional appeal and the excessive reductionism explain the attention that it received. Kundera's essay became the focus of a certain intellectual turnover. It has become impossible to approach the original text without taking into account the ensuing powerful but less numerous critiques and the more numerous but less powerful endorsements. It is as if the text has lost its autonomy; one cannot revisit it with innocence.

This forces me to resort to a different strategy--namely, briefly introducing Kundera's main points through the presentation of his views by people who share his belief in the distinctiveness of Central Europe and were in the best position to know the debates surrounding his piece intimately--George Schöpflin and Nancy Wood, editors of *In Search of Central Europe*. This "post-modernist" technique is further justified by the fact that Kundera himself did not allow the publication of his essay in the 1989 volume "for reasons of his own," so the editors provided a summary of his argument.<sup>41</sup> Iver Neumann sheds some light on the reasons for Kundera's refusal to give permission to reprint his essay by evoking Kundera's postscript to the Czech version of *A Joke*<sup>42</sup> in which he insisted that "the essay falls into that part of his production which he disowns because it was tailor-made for Western consumption."<sup>43</sup> I will then add some observations that have not been the object of separate analysis.

According to Schöpflin and Wood, Kundera recast the upheavals in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Poland (1956, 1968, 1970, and 1981) not as East European dramas but as quintessential dramas of the West. "In Kundera's schema, it is not politics, but *culture* that must be seen as the decisive force by which nations constitute their identity, express that identity, and give it its own distinctive mould."<sup>44</sup> Within this self-proclaimed cultural approach, Kundera argued that the Central European identity as a family of small nations was an inextricable part of the larger European experience, having, at the same time, its own distinctive profile and developing in productive tension with the West European model. In the case of Russia, on the other hand:

Kundera asserts . . . both the continuity of Russian traditions and their profound *difference* from the European ones. This explains why in his view Central Europe's adherence to the West is a natural disposition, arising as it does from a constant and intimate intermingling of cultural traditions, whereas Russia represents an 'other' civilization, a fundamentally different culture, despite its periods of cultural rapprochement with Europe.<sup>45</sup>

Kundera's essay produced a torrent of reactions, the most notable of which were those revolving around the complete banishment of Russia from Europe as an essentialized alien, an *other* civilization.<sup>46</sup> The most outspoken critic of assigning "a demonic power to

the Russians" was Milan Šimečka. Responding particularly to Kundera's allegation that "when the Russians occupied Czechoslovakia, they did everything possible to destroy Czech culture,"<sup>47</sup> Šimečka pointed out that "we are not too distant from the events, however, to forget that it was not the Russians who put paid to Czech culture which seemed to be evolving so promisingly to us in the 1960s. It was our lot, Central Europeans born and bred . . . Our spiritual Biafra bore an indelible local trademark."<sup>48</sup>

Kundera attributed the fate of Central Europe to its acceptance of the pan-Slavic idea, "I feel that the error made by Central Europe was owing to what I call the 'ideology of the Slavic world'."<sup>49</sup> Of course, Kundera did not go so far as to assert that the Czechs were not Slavs (as Joseph Conrad had done back in 1916 for the Poles),<sup>50</sup> but he still affirmed that "in spite of their linguistic kinship, the Czechs and the Russians have never shared a common *world*, neither a common history nor a common culture. The relationship between the Poles and the Russians, though, has never been anything less than a struggle of life and death."<sup>51</sup>

There is a detail in Kundera's argument that would have been only an illustrative aside had it not been replicated later in an almost symmetrical way by his compatriot Václav Havel and which, therefore, merits some attention. Kundera evoked the meeting of Kazimierz Brandys and Anna Akhmatova, who showed no understanding of his complaint that his works were being banned because he had not encountered real horror such as being imprisoned or expelled. Brandys concluded that these were typically Russian consolations, that the fate of Russia was foreign to him, and that Russian literature scared, indeed horrified him. He would have preferred "not to have known their world, not to have known it even existed." Commenting on the otherness of Russia's world, Kundera added: "I don't know if it is worse than ours, but I do know it is different: Russia knows another (greater) dimension of disaster, another image of space (a space so immense entire nations are swallowed up in it), another sense of time (slow and patient), another way of laughing, living, and dying."<sup>52</sup>

At the beginning of 1994, Joseph Brodsky wrote an open letter in response to Havel's speech on the nightmare of post-Communism.<sup>53</sup> This was a philosophical manifesto of a kind and, without necessarily agreeing with it, one has to respect it, if for nothing else, for its profound intellectual effort and honesty. It addressed extremely serious problems concerning the basis of our understanding of human nature and society and the role and responsibility of intellectuals, particularly of philosopher-kings. Havel's civilized and polite response was essentially a rebuttal. He refused to discuss the crucial problems Brodsky raised--problems such as the legacy of the Enlightenment and of Jean Jacques Rousseau and Edmund Burke; the issues of compromise and saintliness, and survival and conformity; questions about society and the individual, and about bureaucracy and culture--on the grounds that these matters were too complex and would require "an essay at least as long." Instead, Havel wrote an essay about one-third the length of Brodsky's whose only idea was that there is an *essential* difference between Brodsky's experience and his own:

For ordinary people in your country of birth, any change aiming at a freer system, at freedom of thought and action, was a step into the unknown. . . . By contrast, Czechs and Slovaks enjoyed a considerable degree of freedom and democracy in the late nineteenth century under the Austro-Hungarian constitutional monarchy. . . . The traditions of those times live on in family life and books. Thus, although the renewal of freedom is difficult and inconvenient in our country too, freedom was never a completely unknown aspect of time, space, and thought.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, while the Russian was raising existential problems of universal significance, the civilized Central European was responding in a polite but patronizing manner evoking, in a typically provincial way, a relatively less significant issue about differences of degree in the historical experiences of two countries. But maybe the issue does not deserve more than the verdict of Zdeněk David about the Czechs who, "like other nations at the fringes of the West, were particularly susceptible to the siren song of this elitist snobbery," the convenient presumption of an unbridgeable cultural gap between the West and the East.<sup>55</sup> One need not go into further detail about the role Kundera assigned to Russia. It has been well recognized that Russia was becoming "Central Europe's constituting other."<sup>56</sup> For our purposes, what is remarkable in Kundera is that there is no mention of the Balkans whatsoever. The only opposition is Russia.

At this point, a common conclusion can be reached. When the articulation of the Central European idea began, there was an attempt to define the region in both cultural (Kundera and Milosz) and more broadly historical terms (Szűcs), while always describing it in opposition to Russia. At this stage, the Balkans did not exist as a separate entity. They were either ignored or subsumed in a general Eastern Europe or sometimes, although more rarely, in Central Europe itself.

In fact, the Central European idea of the 1980s was an emancipatory idea, "a metaphor of protest" in the words of Claudio Magris,<sup>57</sup> which in itself was a subspecies of a genre dealing with "Europeanness" in general that has been represented in different periods and with different intensities in virtually all European countries. The main issues addressed were the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of Europe as a phenomenon and as a concept, and since much more than intellectual prowess was at stake in this discussion, it was conducted passionately.

In the second round of the development of the Central European idea, prior to 1989-the East European *annus mirabilis*, its followers elaborated on different aspects of it. As has been aptly observed, "the proponents of the idea of Central Europe were not realists, and they initially refrained from defining Central Europe in real terms."<sup>58</sup> A number of articles were published in academic, literary, and popular journals, in the West and in East

European intellectual émigré publications and *samizdat*.\* A substantial and representative part of this literature was assembled by Schöpflin and Wood in their 1989 volume *In Search of Central Europe*.

Schöpflin's introductory essay on the definitions of Central Europe recognized that the discussion of Central European identity "takes a putative Central Europeanness as its launching pad, seeks to define it in terms most favourable to its unstated though evident goals, and insists that the whole concept is apodictic, that it is up to its opponents to prove it false."<sup>59</sup> The "evident goals" were very broadly described in negative terms, the construction or reconstruction of a consciousness emphasizing values "other than those propagated by the existing system" and the forging of the Central European debate into an identity "authentic enough to act as an organizing principle for those seeking something other than Soviet-type reality."<sup>60</sup>

Schöpflin replicated and enriched the conclusions of the previous authors. Well shaped, his argument sounded convincing to all but a minority of historians weary of teleological constructs and sweeping generalizations. The central idea was quite simple. Beginning with the work of Szűcs, it was to establish the essential contrast between Russia and Western Europe and then place Central Europe nominally between them but actually as an organic part of the latter because the incompatibility of the two ideal types effectively precluded transitional models. "The real differences," according to Schöpflin, "arise in culture and history, thereby making a discussion of European values essential."<sup>61</sup> The "short list of these shared experiences," which constituted the *longue durée* of Europe's cultural mainstream, were crammed into half a page and were a sweeping account of European history from its Judeo-Christian and Hellenic beginnings through medieval universalism, the Renaissance, the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the Enlightenment, Romanticism, Nationalism, Socialism, the Great European Civil War of 1914-1945, and two opposing currents in postwar European history--the a-nationalist, which culminated in the European community, and the revival of the nationalist.<sup>62</sup> This list was animated by the conclusion that the principal political methods and techniques generated by this cultural tradition were not only opposed but irreconcilable to the Russian tradition. Europe had "developed values specific to itself and these appear to be immanent, as well as ineradicable."<sup>63</sup> The way in which such statements combine with the belief in the spirit of experimentation and innovation in the European cultural tradition "in which no solution is permanent"<sup>64</sup> is difficult to envision logically, but logic is not the most important prerequisite for a convincing political manifesto. And this is how Schöpflin himself obviously conceived of it: "In the late 1980s, all the evidence suggests that the identity of Central Europeanness is attractive enough to a sufficiently wide range of people to give it a good head of steam."<sup>65</sup>

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\* These publications include *Cross Currents*. *A Yearbook of Central European Culture*, *East European Reporter*, *East European Politics and Societies*, *Daedalus*, *Cadmos*, *New York Review of Books*, *Svedectví*, *La Nouvelle Alternative*, and *Nowa Koalicja*.

Despite its clear distinction from Russia, Schöpflin's treatment of Central Europe was not explicitly defined in opposition to the rest of Eastern Europe, particularly the Balkans. Moreover, his rare and indirect references to the Balkans reflected uncertainty, if not outright ambiguity, toward this region. On the one hand, in some statements the Balkans were subsumed in a broader Eastern Europe that was not clearly distinguishable from Central Europe. Thus, when speaking of the liminality of Central Europe, he remarked: "The Polish eastern marches--the Kresy, the Pannonian plain--not to mention the Balkans, were the untamed Wild East of Europe."<sup>66</sup> Also, in giving examples of European cultures that had been Russophile, he mentioned Bulgaria, thus separating it from Russian culture and ranging it alongside the Czechs before 1968.<sup>67</sup> At the same time, he followed the religious fault-line argument of a chasm between the Latin and Orthodox lands that would figure so prominently in the 1990s. In an entirely apodictic statement from the introduction concerning the then still-existing Yugoslavia, he maintained that "Croatia and Slovenia *see* themselves rightly as Central European, whilst the remainder of the country *is not*"<sup>68</sup> [italics, M. T.]. The wording, not to speak of the logic, was amazing. The perceptions (or pretensions) of the former were justified, while in the case of the latter perceptions were not even considered, let alone justified, because they simply were not part of Central Europe and obviously had no right to apply.

With one exception, the authors included in *In Search of Central Europe* as well as the other contributors to the Central European idea during the 1980s did not move out of the purported cultural parameters of the idea.<sup>69</sup> The progression of the master narratives could also be traced, not necessarily in terms of ethnic continuity but in methodology, style, and overall concerns. The solitary exception was the Hungarian scholar Péter Hának who followed in the steps of his predecessor Jenő Szűcs and attempted to update his argument with material from the nineteenth century.<sup>70</sup> Hának's piece, even more than Szűcs's, displayed his dominant concern with the question of backwardness and modernization. Hának had his own idiosyncratic definition of Central Europe that coincided with the Habsburg realm: "The Monarchy (including Hungary) as a system of state powers and of politics stood in the middle between the fully fledged parliamentary democracy in the West and autocracy in the East. This is precisely the meaning of Central Europe."<sup>71</sup> Although he also postulated that the system and structure of feudalism in Central and Eastern Europe were radically different, his underlying argument was not so categorical (as befits a good historian who knows his material) and revealed only differences of degree: "In the Eastern part of Central Europe--in Hungary and Poland--the nobility was *more* numerous, *better* organized, and *more* independent than in Russia," and "there were *quite considerable* differences in the development, legal position, and economy of towns" [italics, M. T.].<sup>72</sup> Comparative judgments on differences as well as on similarities are relative and, as Nelson Goodman has shown, "variation in both relevance and importance can be enormous." The crucial variable is "who makes the comparison, and when."<sup>73</sup> It comes as no surprise, then, that while Hungarians, Poles, and Czechs focus on the differences between a Central European entity and Eastern Europe (exemplified by Russia), their few German counterparts who believe in the notion of Central Europe tend to stress the differences between *Westmitteleuropa* and *Ostmitteleuropa*, between "West Central Europe" and "East

Central Europe."<sup>74</sup>

Czaba Kiss, who clearly drew upon the work of Milosz in his attempt to outline a Central European identity through literary works, was remarkably and honestly nonexclusive in terms of geography. His literary map of Central Europe was marked by three aspects: "the intermediate and frontier character of the region and interpretations of being between West and East," "the literary formulation of the fate of small nations," and "the linguistic and cultural variety of the region, as well as their coexistence."<sup>75</sup> For him, literary Central Europe was represented by two halves, one German and the other consisting of a series of small peoples--Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Romanians, and Bulgarians--to which he added the Finns and the Baltic peoples, the Belorussians, the Ukrainians, and the Greeks. He formulated their differences from the Russian literary scene not in terms of incompatible values but in the fact that Central European writers were obsessed with national ideology, and their literature was subordinated to the realization of national goals. The cultural variety of Central Europe was illustrated through Ivo Andrić, a quintessentially Yugoslav writer who was born in Bosnia of Croatian parents and chose to define himself as a writer of the Serbian literary tradition.

Kundera's argument was followed by that of Mihály Vajda, although Vajda has claimed that he wrote independently of Kundera.<sup>76</sup> His essay was informed by the same intensity of passion and the same exclusiveness, but went much further in logical inconsistency and, more importantly, in heaping open slurs on "the beast on our borders with . . . its feelings of inferiority."<sup>77</sup> Vajda was, thankfully, an exception to the otherwise well-mannered *Középeuropa*.

The only essay in the collection which did not come from or on behalf of the trio--Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia--was that of Predrag Matvejević entitled "Central Europe Seen From the East of Europe."<sup>78</sup> It is particularly interesting not only in regard to the question of the place of the Balkans in the Central European rhetoric but also in view of the subsequent developments of Yugoslavia. Matvejević apparently did not feel threatened by exclusion from the vision of Central Europe, although he offered a correction to Kundera's claim that "today, all of Central Europe has been subjugated by Russia with the exception of little Austria." Instead, he drew attention to other little countries that were likewise not under Russian domination such as "Slovenia, Croatia, and other regions of Yugoslavia where Kundera is one of the most frequently translated authors."<sup>79</sup> His essay was one of the least restrictive and dogmatic from the point of view of geography. As far as the internal divisions of Eastern Europe were concerned, Russia still loomed as the defining other. Accordingly, his Central Europe was one of the fuzziest: "Central Europe might even be said to extend as far as its styles--the Baroque, Biedermeier, and Secession--or a certain distinctive music, painting, and sensibility."<sup>80</sup> At the same time, he never spoke of the Balkans per se, but Belgrade and Bucharest were in, while Bulgaria was not even mentioned, an omission most likely born of ignorance rather than conscious neglect. What is really interesting in his piece, which first appeared in 1987 and then in an extended version in 1989, was how much it was informed by an organic view of Yugoslavness despite

his realization of divisive identities: "Are we just Slovenes, or Yugoslavian Slovenes; are we just Croats or Yugoslavian Croats? By the same token, is a Serb exclusively a Serb or is he also a Yugoslavian Serb and a European?"<sup>81</sup> This is worlds apart from the soon-to-follow process of "nesting orientalisms" in the former Yugoslavia, when part of the region was forced to rediscover a Balkan identity, more often than not ascriptively imposed on it.

Another voice, this time originating from and speaking on behalf of Romania, was that of Eugène Ionesco, who advocated a Central European confederation, an "empire in the good sense of the word." It was supposed to encompass "not only Austria, Hungary, and Romania, but also Croatia and Czechoslovakia" and would represent "the only European and human defense against the pseudo-ideological barbarity of Russia and its spirit of conquest."<sup>82</sup> As Radu Stern and Vladimir Tismaneanu appropriately comment, the choice of Vienna as center revealed not merely nostalgia for the Habsburg past, but more importantly the appeal of the envious niche that contemporary Austria had managed to carve for itself in the bipolar world. They point to the irony that even regions that belong to the Balkans have, in the new circumstances, overcome the historical legacy of confrontation with Vienna and wish to join this "imaginary political construct" in order to get rid of Soviet tutelage.<sup>83</sup>

In a telling aside on the frontiers of Central Europe, Jacques Rupnik wisely stated that "the answer changes from country to country, affording interesting insights into the motives involved and the perception of one's neighbours." Rupnik himself, however, invites a psychoanalytic approach with his concluding comment on Ionesco's vision of a vast confederation consisting of Austria, Hungary, Romania, Croatia, and Czechoslovakia. "Poland is conspicuously absent," wrote Rupnik, "but then Ionesco is the undisputed master of the absurd."<sup>84</sup> The 'absurdity' to Rupnik consisted apparently in Ionesco's crossing civilizational fault lines and including Orthodox Romania while not mentioning Catholic Poland. Although Rupnik was careful not to condone Arnold Toynbee's civilizational approach wholeheartedly, he was the only writer who articulated, before 1989, the problem of a "divide between Catholic Central Europe and the Orthodox Balkans" though he did not elaborate on it.<sup>85</sup>

One could cautiously conclude that with regard to the Balkans the second round of the Central European idea replicated the perspectives of its founding fathers. It has been suggested that Central Europe should be interpreted as a case of region building, "which is itself a subgroup of what may be called identity politics, that is, the struggle to form the social field in the image of one particular political project."<sup>86</sup> Being a search for identity "*Traum oder Trauma*,"<sup>87</sup> the debate over Central Europe was not a region-building attempt precisely because it never came up with a particular concrete political project for the region qua region, outside of the general urge for liberation from the Soviets.

The only piece within the Central European debate that actually considered possible political scenarios for Central Europe was written by Ferenc Fehér, and its validity was circumscribed by the pre-1989 political reality. It also skeptically warned against the

possibility that "it [the debate] could degenerate into a triumph of collective self-gratification for the intellectuals of *Café Zentraleuropa*, a group always delighted to escape from history and always willing to be stoical in the face of other people's misery."<sup>88</sup> Despite their skepticism, both Fehér and Agnes Heller espoused the categorical view of an intrinsic difference between Central and Eastern Europe. According to them, a civil society was emerging in Central Europe, but this could never happen in Eastern Europe.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, during this period of its development, emancipatory pathos was the focus of the Central European idea.

Although not a new term, the Central Europe of the 1980s was a new concept. It was not a resurrection of *Mitteleuropa*, which had been a German idea; Central Europe was an East European idea.<sup>90</sup> *Mitteleuropa* always had Germany at its core; Central Europe excluded Germany. The most famous proponent of the *Mitteleuropa* idea, Friedrich Naumann, who foresaw an enormous political body from the North Sea to the Alps, and then down to the Adriatic and the Danube valley, excluded in the first version of his plan not only Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece, but also Switzerland and the Netherlands. Only one year later, Bulgaria was deemed ripe to be included in *Mitteleuropa*.<sup>91</sup> About a decade before Naumann, Joseph Partsch had conceived of a *Mitteleuropa* with Germany and Austria-Hungary as the nucleus around which would revolve Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Montenegro, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria. Greece and Turkey were excluded from his vision.<sup>92</sup>

It would also be farfetched to look back to the interwar period for antecedents to the Central European idea of the 1980s. The Central Europe of this era existed in different varieties and competing visions. *Střední Evropa* was essentially an expression of Czech political thought. For Tomáš Masaryk it was a "peculiar zone of small nations extending from the North Cape to Cape Matapan" and including Laplanders, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Finns, Estonians, Letts, Lithuanians, Poles, Lusatians, Czechs, Slovaks, Magyars, Serbo-Croats and Slovenes, Romanians, Bulgarians, Albanians, Turks, and Greeks, but no Germans or Austrians.<sup>93</sup> As has been convincingly shown, in this period Poland was more concerned with Polish matters than with Central European political geography, and the Hungarians clung to their "fanatic revisionism; at best they envisioned a Danubian Europe revolving around their own nation."<sup>94</sup> On the other hand, the Hungarian politician Elemér von Hantos was trying to promote closer ties between Hungary, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, although he also considered Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia part of Central Europe.<sup>95</sup>

The passionate writings of the 1980s were not, of course, the first attempt at the intellectual emancipation of the region. In 1950 an American of Polish descent, Oscar Halecki, published a small volume, *The Limits and Divisions of European History*, which was followed thirteen years later by a much extended study called *The Millennium of Europe*.<sup>96</sup> The latter was an undisguised Christian polemic against the Marxist view of history and offered a vision of a united Christian Europe:

A positive approach, replacing the Marxist, is badly needed, and the

experience of the discussions about the Polish millennium can be helpful in this respect. . . . The alternative is indeed of general significance because independently of the individual case under discussion it raises the question whether the Christian interpretation of history and the emphasis of the religious, purely spiritual element in the evolution of mankind is not the best answer to the claims of historical materialism.<sup>97</sup>

Halecki's definition of Europe, like that of the exponents of the Central European idea, was a strictly cultural one; for him "the European community, especially in the period of its greatness, was always primarily a cultural community."<sup>98</sup> He was careful from the outset not to identify Christianity with Western culture, which he considered a synthesis of Graeco-Roman civilization with Christianity. Nevertheless, he did acknowledge that Christianity was the most important part of the European heritage.<sup>99</sup> His verdict on the Europeanness of ancient Greece was unequivocal; it not only gave Europe its name but it was also "the nucleus of the Europe of the future, a kind of proto-Europe or a European microcosm."<sup>100</sup> "This part of Europe, which was already 'historic' two thousand years ago, included the Balkan peninsula--that is, a large part of Eastern Europe--and did not include, for instance, the Scandinavian countries, which from the very beginning of their history, several centuries later, were considered 'Western'. "<sup>101</sup>

This attitude toward Greece extended also to the Byzantine empire, whose treatment was very balanced. Halecki specifically cautioned that the so-called caesaropapism of Byzantium had been overrated.<sup>102</sup> His Eastern Europe is not only "no less European than Western Europe" but "it participates in both the Greek and the Roman form of Europe's Ancient and Christian heritage."<sup>103</sup> Moreover, although acknowledging Asiatic influences on the Byzantines, his final verdict of the role of the empire as the defender of Europe was unquestionably laudatory: "It must never be forgotten that the same Byzantine Empire was from its origin a continuous, frequently heroic, and sometimes successful defender of Europe against Asiatic aggression, exactly as ancient Greece had been."<sup>104</sup>

Before going into a more detailed treatment of Halecki's concept of "the Asiatic," it must be added that he specifically included the Slavs as a whole in European history. Russia also was an essential component of his vision of Eastern Europe. "The Christianization of Kievan Rus had made the eastern Slavs an integral part of Europe" and:

What is called the entrance of Slavs into European history was an almost unlimited extension of that history, including the major part of the European Continent and possibilities of further colonial expansion, not in distant regions beyond the seas but in contiguous territories where even the geographical frontiers of Europe were difficult to determine.<sup>105</sup>

There was, of course, an ambiguity in his treatment of Russia which, on the one hand, was Christian and thus a partner in the European community but, on the other, had been influenced by Asia. For Halecki, the source of this influence was more the Asiatic

form of government of the Mongols than the impact of Byzantine autocracy.<sup>106</sup> In fact, following in the tradition of Toynbee, he stressed that the Russian Orthodox offshoot was a society distinct from its original Orthodox heartland.<sup>107</sup> Speaking in terms of the now revived and fashionable Eurasian character of Russia, Halecki nonetheless accepted the more or less European character of Russia between Peter I and Nicholas II. Predictably, it was with the ascent of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin and the Bolsheviks that Russia became "non-European if not anti-European."<sup>108</sup>

While strongly arguing the unity and undermining the opposition between Western and Eastern Europe, Halecki posited his great and essential other as "the Asiatic," a notion he used throughout his text but never defined explicitly. He first mentioned it in connection with the period of antiquity where he recognized a political dualism of the European tradition that derived from its Graeco-Roman origins but:

does not coincide with the opposition between Western and Eastern Europe, which has a similar background. . . . It can be correctly understood only against an oriental background which is not Greek, indeed, nor East European, but Asiatic, and this is connected with an entirely different problem which explains another profound difference between Greek and Roman culture.<sup>109</sup>

This undefined Asiatic was "alien to the tradition of both the Roman Republic and free Greece" although "it is equally obvious that the Greeks, much more than the Romans, were exposed to the influence of Asiatic powers and cultures, at least these in the Near East."<sup>110</sup> What is remarkable in Halecki's view of Hellenic antiquity is the de-orientalization of Greece, his attempt to divorce the ancient Greeks from some of their fundamental formative influences and from their solid roots in Asia Minor. It is a perfect illustration of what Martin Bernal in his *Black Athena* has described as the cleansing of ancient Greece of its African and Asian influences. He voices the same concern for Byzantium: "There was a danger that Byzantine culture, which was no longer under a simultaneous Latin influence, would be Hellenistic rather than truly Hellenic, as happened in the successor states of the empire of Alexander the Great."<sup>111</sup>

But this amorphous Asiatic becomes much more specific when at one point of the chronological narrative it is identified with Islam. The presentation then follows the master story of Christian attitudes toward Islam that have been so deeply internalized in European cultures. This story tells of the rivalry between "two entirely different civilizations: the Christian and the Islamic. Compared with the basic difference between these two, the internal differences between Latins and Greeks were really insignificant."<sup>112</sup> Given this axiomatic premise, it is not surprising that Halecki went on to write that "even in these parts of Europe which were for centuries under Muslim rule, the indisputably high but basically alien culture of the conquerors left significant traces only in the mathematical and natural sciences and, to a certain extent, in architecture."<sup>113</sup>

Against such a background, the assessment of the Ottoman conquest and centuries-long presence is logically portrayed as an intrusion "completely alien to its European subjects in origin, tradition, and religion" which effectively interrupted "for approximately four hundred years their participation in European history."<sup>114</sup> Despite their geographical continuity, the Byzantine and Ottoman empires had nothing more in common:

The Eastern Roman Empire, in spite of four centuries of ecclesiastical schism, had always been an integral part of Christian Europe, and never, in spite of all political rivalries with Latin powers, a real threat to the West. The Ottoman Empire, though it moved its capital to Constantinople, remained a non-Christian and non-European conqueror and a growing danger to what remained of Christian Europe.<sup>115</sup>

In *The Limits and Divisions of European History*, Halecki had already specifically repudiated the notion of "*Byzance après Byzance*" as advanced by Nicolae Iorga and had criticized the praise heaped on the Ottoman empire by scholars like A. H. Lybyer and Toynbee. His counter-argument is endearingly naïve for a historian: "Modern Turkish historiography rightly stresses the basic differences between the Byzantine and the Ottoman empire."<sup>116</sup> That was indeed so, particularly in the heyday of modern Turkish historiography which wanted to stress the uniqueness and, above all, the Turkishness of the state against accusations that it was essentially imitative and unoriginal. Present-day initiatives for integration into European organizations also emphasize the synthesizing character of the empire in an attempt to make Turkey the legitimate heir of all of the civilizations that have developed on its historic turf.

To Halecki, however, "the Ottoman conquest of the Balkan peninsula is the obvious reason why that very region where Europe originated seemed so different from the happier parts of the continent when, at last, it was liberated." It was this liberation and "the division of the Balkans among the Christian successor states of the Ottoman Empire [which] reunited that region of Europe during the last period of its history."<sup>117</sup> Halecki has no doubt that the rebirth of Greece and subsequently of the other Balkan states was an inspiration and encouragement for the nationalities "in the center of Europe." In a remarkable passage, Halecki came to the defense of Balkanization in its more neutral meaning of simply subdividing larger units:

The national states of the Balkan area, in which the long submerged nations of southeastern Europe regained their freedom and independence, represented an apparent triumph of self-determination--apparent only because the great powers, after contributing to the liberation of the Christian peoples of the peninsula, continued to interfere with their difficult problems. The troubles which resulted from such a situation were soon used as an argument against national self-determination. The loose talk about a threatening "Balkanization" of Europe by the creation of "new" small states was and is not only unfair to the Balkan nations--some of the oldest in Europe--but an

obstacle to any unprejudiced approach to the claims for self-determination in the region north of the Balkans.<sup>118</sup>

It has to be understood that besides his big goal—offering a Christian interpretation of history—Halecki was also appealing for a more substantial place for this part of Eastern Europe, which he thought was unduly neglected in academic curricula and historiography. He repeatedly stressed that East European history was neither the history of Russia and a score of other small countries nor the history of the "Byzantine Empire, together with the states created by the Slavs in the Balkan peninsula." His Eastern Europe consisted of what today is defined as East-Central Europe and the Balkans. According to him, only the Byzantine part was duly considered in general historiography, while the other countries were represented marginally in surveys of West European or Russian history.<sup>119</sup> Three decades after the appearance of his book, the story is all but reversed. Byzantium has disappeared from American university curricula, and the Balkans are covered as a footnote in the history of Eastern Europe. East European history courses are primarily devoted to the history of Poland, with a lesser emphasis on that of Hungary and the Czech lands.

The really interesting question, however, is the nature of the difference between Halecki and the exponents of the Central European idea of the 1980s. Was there a crucial difference between the 1950s and 1960s, when Halecki wrote, and the 1980s, when the Central European idea was produced? In a certain sense not really because Halecki had witnessed the revolt of the East Germans in 1953, the efforts of the Poles and, most importantly, the tragic end of the Hungarian revolution of 1956. The suppression of the Prague Spring of 1968 was within the tradition of complete control from Moscow. There was, however, a subtle change from the beginning of the 1980s on, and it may well have been reflected in the timing of the Central European idea. The events in Poland in the late 1970s and early 1980s—the rise of Solidarity and the subsequent introduction of martial law without a Soviet invasion—signaled that Moscow was at least considering alternatives to direct interference in the satellite countries. By that time, it was also clear that there were specific differences in the Soviet Union's treatment of different satellite countries, a phenomenon that prompted piecemeal emancipation attempts. Indeed, when Halecki wrote his second book in 1963, he could only exclaim bitterly that "the liberation of the nations of East-Central Europe is simply impossible in the present conditions without a war which most certainly would be a nuclear war involving all Europe and probably the world."<sup>120</sup> What a difference from the feelings of East European intellectuals in the 1980s which, although they lacked hope that things would be resolved in the near future, were nonetheless very far removed from this apocalyptic vision.

Yet I do not think that it was merely the political background that ultimately set Halecki's vision apart from that of the intellectuals of the 1980s. The crucial difference is that Halecki was essentially an ecumenical Christian thinker and openly professed his Christian interpretation of history on behalf of a united Christianity. He also had a subtle understanding of the character of Orthodoxy and was unquestionably opposed to polemic reductionism and to the exclusion of the Orthodox nations from Europe. With him, one can

still understand and appreciate one of the famous aphorisms of Anatole France: "Catholicism is still the most acceptable form of religious indifference."<sup>121</sup>

In the latter decades of the century, there was also a different attitude toward Islam, or at least a different attitude toward what it was permissible to say about Islam. This helps shed some light on the difference between the exponents of the Central European idea in the 1980s and 1990s and Halecki. The irony is that the secular proponents of the Central European idea, who lack grand visions, stressing instead the national or, at the very most, regional interests of their respective states, are waving the banner of religious intolerance *within* Christianity and are essentializing religious differences of which they are largely ignorant.<sup>122</sup> At the same time, they have excellently internalized the cultural code of politically correct liberalism. The radical change since Halecki's day is that it is now impossible to profess the complete otherness of Islam with impunity. Gone are the days when even Russian liberals convincingly "bolstered Russia's claim to 'Europeanness' by contrasting it to the barbarous Turk."<sup>123</sup> Halecki portrayed Islam as the "culprit" that explained why the Balkans "seemed so different." This is unacceptable to the new generation which must show that it has overcome its Christian prejudice and which, in a move to overcome the legacy of anti-Semitism, has recognized the Judeo-Christian roots of Western culture. One wonders how long it will be before we begin speaking about the Judeo-Christian-Muslim tradition and roots of European culture.

Therefore, I disagree with the notion that the 1980s debate over the identity of Central Europe was a continuation of that of the 1950s.<sup>124</sup> On the contrary, the debate of the 1980s was a new phenomenon with different motivations and goals. This also explains why Soviet writers were taken by surprise in May 1988 when, at a meeting of Central European and Soviet writers at the Wheatland Foundation conference in Lisbon, György Konrád startled his Soviet colleagues by stating: "You have to confront yourself with the role of your country in a part of the world that doesn't want your presence in tanks but as tourists." This triggered a heated debate. Tatyana Tolstaya responded with an amazed, "When am I going to take *my* tanks out of Eastern Europe?" and added that "this was the first she had ever heard of Central Europeans speaking of their culture as something separate from that of the Soviet Union."<sup>125</sup> Since there can be no doubt about the sophistication and critical credentials of someone such as Tolstaya, this episode proves the novelty of the idea. At the same time, it demonstrates the Central European tactfulness and good manners of Konrád, as well as his readiness to identify Soviet intellectuals with the Soviet state.

In *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Larry Wolff remarked that the Enlightenment idea of Eastern Europe, which was perpetuated in the West in the next two centuries, presupposed neither its definitive exclusion nor its unqualified inclusion.<sup>126</sup> The Balkans were an integral part of this Enlightenment perception of Eastern Europe, and it is only in the last decades that a real attempt has been made to exclude them. By the end of the 1980s, the argument for an intrinsic difference between Eastern and Central Europe had already taken shape and was

internalized by many intellectuals. It surfaced in 1989 in a volume of conference papers on social theory edited by Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman in the form of an almost undetectable aside in a chapter on post-Communist societies authored by György Konrád and Ivan Szelenyi. Whether or not one accepts the substantive argument of the chapter on the role of intellectuals, it reads like an argument that purports to be systemic rather than region-specific. The authors expressed the belief that it was unnecessary to stress the uniqueness of Central Europe. As a result, the statement about the fundamental role of intellectuals in the transformation of state socialist societies was considered to be "particularly true for Hungary in 1989-1990, but it is also true for the USSR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia." The three central European countries were also mentioned as a group in passing several times in the text. In a footnote, however, the authors explained their use of "central European" in terms of the "descriptive, non-normative way" of Jenő Szűcs. They emphasized the intermediate place of Central Europe between the West, in regard to which it was more backward, and an "eastern Europe (meaning Russia in a narrow sense or Eastern Christianity more broadly)" in regard to which it was more advanced. Note that in the Szűcs argument, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania were not even mentioned; but they could be quietly subsumed under the broader heading of Eastern Christianity.<sup>127</sup>

The last article in the Schöpflin and Wood collection squarely deals with the question "Does Central Europe Exist?" Writing in 1986, Timothy Garton Ash chose to analyze three authors as representative of their countries—Havel, Michnik, and Konrád.<sup>128</sup> With his usual brilliance as an essayist, Ash explored the meaning of the concept as it emerged, according to him, from voices from Prague and Budapest, rather than from Warsaw.<sup>129</sup> He pointed to an important semantic division between the use of "Eastern Europe" and "Central Europe" (or "East-Central Europe") in Havel and Konrád. The first was used invariably in a negative or neutral context; the second was always "positive, affirmative, or downright sentimental." Despite sympathy with the Central European *Zivilisationsliteraten*, Ash's acute analytical pen could not but comment on the mythopoetic tendency of the idea:

[T]he inclination to attribute to the Central European past what you hope will characterize the Central European 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 Henker.'<sup>130</sup>

Unperturbed by the fact that the central organ of the Polish United Workers' Party, *Trybuna Ludu*, had published "a splenetic attack on what it called 'The Myth of Central Europe,'" Ash actually referred to it as a myth but in a benign way: "The myth of the pure Central European past is perhaps a good myth."<sup>131</sup> His most interesting observation was the apartness of Poland. Michnik himself had never talked of Central Europe and Miłosz's Central Europeanness is more attributed than professed. For Ash, "emotionally, culturally,

and even geopolitically the view eastward is still at least equally important to most Poles." In a characteristically illuminating metaphor, he even cautiously ventured that "Poland is to Central Europe as Russia is to Europe."<sup>132</sup>

Ash explored some of the similarities between the 'national' contributions to Central Europeanness, particularly the region's shared belief in anti-politics, the importance of consciousness and moral changes, the power of civil society, and non-violence. He found many differences and inconsistencies, which led him to believe that perhaps Central Europeanness was "no more than a side product of shared powerlessness." His final verdict on the Central European idea was that "it is just that: an idea. It does not yet exist," and that the Central European program was "a programme for intellectuals."<sup>133</sup>

In his beautiful and somewhat melodramatic ending, Ash refers to the Russian poet Natalya Gorbanevskaya who had told him that George Orwell was an East European. Having accepted the idea of Eastern Europe *in acta* and Central Europe *in potentia*, Ash added: "Perhaps we would now say that Orwell was a Central European. If this is what we mean by 'Central Europe,' I would apply for citizenship."<sup>134</sup>

Eastern Europe *in acta* ceased to exist after 1990, but its demise inaugurated a third round in the development of the Central European idea—one in which the idea became a political reality. It was also the first time that the Balkans were considered an integral part of that reality. This period spelled the end of anti-politics; politics were squarely on the agenda. Earlier György Konrád had precipitously declared, "No thinking person should want to drive others from positions of power in order to occupy them for himself. I would not want to be a minister in any government whatever," and Václav Havel had spoken of "anti-political politics" and against the overestimation of the importance of direct political work in the traditional sense, such as seeking power in the state.<sup>135</sup> This chapter was over. Now, the Central European idea could be explored not only in thought but also in action.

One of the first to make the pragmatic jump was Timothy Garton Ash himself. In his 1986 piece, he never explored the potential exclusiveness of the Central European idea because he believed it to be an intellectual utopia, the realm of "intellectual responsibility, integrity, and courage."<sup>136</sup> Early in the East European transformation, however, he lobbied for the acceptance of *part* of Eastern Europe in the institutional framework of Western Europe. At the same time, it must be admitted that Ash was sensitive and intellectually honest enough to promote his plea for what it was—a pragmatic answer to a political challenge.

Yet where would this leave the rest of post-Communist Europe? Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, and Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, to name but a few, also want to "return to Europe." And by "Europe" they, too, mean first and foremost the EC. The first, pragmatic answer must be that the EC simply cannot do everything at once. It makes plain, practical sense to start with those that are nearest, and work out to those that are farthest. Poland,

Hungary, and Czechoslovakia are nearest not only geographically, historically, and culturally, but also in the progress they have already made on the road to democracy, the rule of law, and a market economy.<sup>137</sup>

The post-1989 world gave the Central European idea the chance to actualize itself as a region-building opportunity for the first time; but, despite the Višegrad fanfare and the series of summit meetings, concrete cooperation failed to materialize.<sup>138</sup> As Kristian Gerner observed, "the liberation from Pax Sovietica 1989-1990 revealed that there did not exist any 'Central Europe'."<sup>139</sup> Dušan Třestík expressed it thus: "We rather feel like poor but still respectable AlmostEuropeans and only some, for whom begging is unbefitting, are poor but proud Centraleuropeans."<sup>140</sup> Adam Krzemiński added that "every underdog wants to be at the center,"<sup>141</sup> and Péter Hának, a long-time champion of the idea who was particularly disappointed with Eric Hobsbawm's attack on it, published a bitter essay about the danger of burying Central Europe prematurely.<sup>142</sup>

In 1993 György Konrád wrote an ardent supplication, "Central Europe Redivivus," which he included in a volume of essays from post-Communist Central Europe.<sup>143</sup> The essay, a genre that East Europeans have mastered, offers ample opportunity for a happy combination of analytical vigor and emotive power. Konrád exhibited only the latter. To him there is no question about the existence of Central Europe--it "was, is, and probably will continue to be." It exists, Konrád maintained, just like the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The fact that these categories are incomparable (some designate geographic, historical, or political areas, others state formations; and at least one of them--the Middle East--has been shown to be a meaningless notion)<sup>144</sup> does not seem to bother him.

"The existence of Central Europe is thus a given." It is defined by Konrád as the small nations between two large ones--Germany and Russia--thus depriving of its Central European nature the country that used to be its embodiment--Germany. But a Central Europe without Germans and Jews was the dream and has become the achievement of many different groups of Central Europeans. Besides, some of the "small nations between two large ones" are more so than others. In a following essay, Konrád praised Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Slovenia for going in the right direction, toward the "organic coupling of its social consciousness with Western values." Croatia was not even mentioned. Romania, although no less in-between, was listed alongside the former Soviet republics and the Balkans as part of "Eastern Europe proper."<sup>145</sup>

In the same essay, Konrád emerged as a major theoretician of ethnic civil wars and provided their most concise definition, rivalling Stalin's definition of the nation: "An ethnic civil war requires a checkered array of ethnic groups, a mountainous terrain, a long tradition of guerilla warfare, and a cult of the armed hero. Such a combination exists only in the Balkans." It is nice to hear such a reassurance for the rest of the world from someone described by his translator as an "exemplary Central European writer" next to Havel and implicitly as the greatest Hungarian writer. By contrast, he unassumingly described himself

in a self-introduction written in the third person singular as: "K. is a fifty-year-old novelist and essayist [...] His wardrobe is modest, though he has several typewriters."<sup>146</sup>

Immediately after 1989, the ideal of intellectual solidarity in the region all but disappeared. Intellectuals from the former Soviet bloc countries decided to publish a journal called *Iztok-Iztok* (East-East) dealing with problems of post-Communist East-Central European societies and printed in all the languages of the region. The editorial board includes among others Adam Michnik, Marcin Krul, Milan Šimečka, Ferenc Fehér, Richard Wagner, Dobrosław Matejka, Andrej Cornea, Anca Oroveanu, Eva Karadi, Evgeniya Ivanova, and Ivan Kristev, but the journal is published only in Bulgarian.<sup>147</sup> The rest do not want to participate in a dialogue with the East; in fact, they do not want to have anything to do with the East. The reason for this goes beyond the usual statements about emancipated Central Europeans who wish to shed the last chains binding them to the East and conforming Bulgarians who cannot overcome the inertia of the collective socialist *Raum*. Although the denial of over four decades of common existence is understandable and may be even justified, it nonetheless breeds the particularism and parochialism of much of today's Central European discourse. Thus it is no wonder that one of the most exciting postmodernist accounts of the political aesthetic of Communism, written in the spirit of Walter Benjamin, was the work of a Bulgarian--Vladislav Todorov. Todorov was concerned with the ontology of the modernist impulse that produced the greatest social experiment of the twentieth century rather than with the Manichaen implications of the East-West dichotomy. Therefore, he did not separate the political aesthetic of Communism from its Russian origin, but placed it at the center of a rigorous appraisal.<sup>148</sup>

Yet Iver Neumann has argued that despite the failure of an institutionalized Central European framework, the Central European project "could still be used politically vis-à-vis Western Europe and Russia" as a moral appeal and reproach addressed to Western Europe.<sup>149</sup> Indeed, at this point it ceased to be an accessory of the Central European intellectual discourse and is increasingly found in unimaginative and embarrassing political supplications.

This is most evident in the drive to enter the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the institutional framework of the EU. The argument is usually based on two pillars--the affinity of Central Europe with the European system of values and the exploitation of the threat of a possible triumph of imperialist, chauvinist, anti-democratic, and anti-market forces in Russia. In this context, Central Europeanness became a device entitling its participants to a share of privileges. President Václav Havel, for example, argued:

If . . . NATO is to remain functional, it cannot suddenly open its doors to anyone at all. . . . The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia--and Austria and Slovenia as well--clearly belong to the Western sphere of European civilization. They espouse its values and draw on the same traditions. . . . Moreover, the contiguous and stable Central European belt

borders both on the traditionally agitated Balkans and the great Eurasian area, where democracy and market economies are only slowly and painfully breaking away toward their fulfillment. In short, it is a key area for European security.<sup>150</sup>

Again the Balkans were evoked to serve as the constituting other to Central Europe alongside Russia. The reason for this was, of course, the annoying proclivity of the EU to treat the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe as a package deal. On 1 February 1995, EU association agreements with the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria went into effect. (These countries joined the earlier admitted Poland and Hungary.) This *en groupe* treatment apparently annoyed the Czechs who lately want to go it alone. In an interview published in *Der Spiegel* on 13 February 1995, Havel said that admission to NATO was more urgent for the Czech Republic than EU membership. If the West accepts that certain, particularly Central European, countries belong to the Russian sphere of influence and thus should not be allowed to join NATO, Europe is heading to a "new Yalta," Havel warned. One would suppose that the logical alternative to this is that if these "particular Central European countries" were admitted to NATO but the rest were relegated to the Russian sphere of influence, a "new Yalta" would be avoided. If the notion of a *limes* between the civilized West and "*les nouveau barbares*" is accepted as unavoidable, the question is where exactly should the *limes* run.<sup>151</sup> For someone like Ryszard Kapuściński, there is no moment of hesitation: "the *limes* normally drawn in Eastern Europe is the frontier between the Latin and Cyrillic alphabet."<sup>152</sup> It is a rule that any social perception of an out-group by an in-group tends to construct differences along dichotomous lines. But it is only the degree of institutionalization of these perceptions or of their relative importance and strength for the collective whole which perpetuates them and makes them potentially explosive.

On the one hand, therefore, Havel's pronouncement could be approached calmly as simply a rhetorical device in a lobbying effort. After all, Havel himself had forsaken his purist stance toward practical politics and was arguing that intellectuals had a responsibility to engage in politics. The irony, of course, is that his argument echoed much of the argument of the former Communist regimes in their not at all unsuccessful attempts to coopt intellectuals:

I asked once a friend of mine, a wonderful man and a wonderful writer, to fill a certain political post. He refused, arguing that someone had to remain independent. I replied that if you all said that, it could happen that in the end, no one will be independent, because there won't be anyone around to make that independence possible and stand behind it.<sup>153</sup>

On the other hand, however, Havel's advocacy for Central Europe contains an element of lost innocence. One aspect of this is revealed in his motivation and his former stature. Havel is a believer in the power of words, and as he put it in "A Word about Words," his acceptance speech for the International Peace Prize of the German Booksellers

Association, "events in the real world, whether admirable or monstrous, always have their prologue in the realm of words." Much as one could debate the weight Havel assigns to words, there is no doubt about the sincerity of his conviction. He himself traced the mystery and perfidy of words as they have been used in Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Jesus Christ. One is tempted to apply to his own position his warning about "the consequences that transcend the nonmaterial world and penetrate deeply a world that is all too material," especially as his words nowadays are consecrated by his new prominence. Despite his stature as a dissident writer, Havel's words before 1989 were living and revered almost exclusively among fellow intellectuals in Eastern Europe. Only now, anointed by his political rank, has he become a favorite subject for name droppers in political circles in the West. Yet he, together with other former East European dissidents, has lost his exalted stature among disillusioned or simply weary Western intellectuals.<sup>154</sup>

Indeed, one can already trace how these words are readily taken up by shapers of public opinion. The *Chicago Tribune*, emulating Winston Churchill's Fulton speech, made the following solemn statement: "A new curtain is falling across Eastern Europe, dividing north from south, west from east, rich from poor, and the future from the past. As Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic sprint into the future of democracy and market economics, Romania and Bulgaria slide into Balkan backwardness and second-class citizenship in the new Europe."<sup>155</sup> Ernest Gellner could not resist a wisecrack when speaking of the Balkans as the third time zone of Europe, clearly but safely intimating or prophesying their third world status in Europe.<sup>156</sup> By contrast, the Central European countries are called Central European only when something positive is meant by it. Whenever the implications are negative, the notion of Eastern Europe is invoked. Thus, when the journalist Paul Hockenos covered the rise of the right and of anti-semitism in Germany, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Romania--ostensibly the countries of Central Europe--he preferred to subsume them in a larger Eastern Europe even though the rest of this Eastern Europe was not necessarily experiencing these problems.<sup>157</sup> Besides, to this day the Czech republic, as befits a litigious Western democracy, is the only Central European and indeed the only East European country that has introduced discriminatory legislation against its Gypsy population.<sup>158</sup>

William Safire, in a fresh Cold War piece, decided magnanimously to extend NATO's umbrella to the courageous Baltics and to Ukraine "which cannot be consistently excluded." The Balkans, by contrast, appear only as the epitome of Western failure. It was "after much thumb-sucking, cognitive dissonance, and cussing out of the Europeans for their Balkan shame" that Safire came down hard on the side of distrust.<sup>159</sup> In "On Language," his ironic and, as usual, entertaining column exposing the disarray surrounding the shifting nomenclature of Eastern and Central Europe, an exasperated Safire innocently suggested that the adjective should merely not be capitalized. Nevertheless, he asserted that it was common sense that "if Poland is part of Central Europe, shouldn't it be allowed in NATO sooner than if in Eastern Europe?"<sup>160</sup>

After having demonized the Balkans, Robert Kaplan sought to resew them, together

with the Near East, into a post-Ottoman world and to urge the appropriate construction of American foreign policy. According to him, "Turkey, the Balkans, and the Middle East (and to lesser degrees the Caucasian nations and Central Asia) are reemerging as one region--what historically minded Europeans have always referred to as the greater "Near East." The former Ottoman Empire and even the former Byzantine world are fusing back together following the aberration of the Cold War."<sup>161</sup> Kaplan is, of course, no European. Only a historically minded European would be wary of such a categorically non-historical word as "always." And, while his vision is a tribute to his own (and to some Turkish and American politicians') wishful thinking, it is hardly realistic.

Religion as culture is increasingly entering the vocabulary of political journalism. As late as March 1995, the *New York Times* had the nerve to run an editorial claiming that "Washington's best hope is to appeal to predominantly Roman Catholic Croatia's longstanding desire to extricate itself from Balkan conflicts and associate itself more closely to the West"<sup>162</sup> as if it was not precisely in the name of this Roman Catholic Croatia that some of the most gruesome crimes in the Balkans were committed during World War II and whose present leadership, along with that of Slobodan Milošević and other internal and external politicians besotted with nationalism and the new orthodoxy of self-determination, has singularly contributed to the present Yugoslav, not Balkan, quagmire. One may have legitimate doubts about the influence of journalistic writing on policy making, but when journalists themselves concede that "lacking any clear strategic vision of their own, governments appear to be at the mercy of the latest press reports"<sup>163</sup> and that "the president of the United States backed away from military action after reading a book called *Balkan Ghosts*,"<sup>164</sup> then there is ample reason for concern.

The rhetorical device became politically operational when former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger made the same political point without the guise of a seemingly sophisticated discussion of Western values. Addressing the issue of the responsibilities and credibility of NATO in connection with the Bosnian crisis, he stated that the organization should be very much alive, and should include Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic [Slovakia not mentioned. M. T.] "so that there is a clear message who should be in and who out."<sup>165</sup> The discourse on the Balkans at this time, when the future of Europe is being discussed in terms of the overexpansion of European institutions endangering the exclusiveness of a privileged club, becomes intelligible only in the light of the agency of this "clear message." Eagleburger was joined by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger who pleaded for an immediate expansion of NATO to extend membership to the Višegrad countries.<sup>166</sup> Kissinger seems to have decided that Slovakia was dispensable and later appealed to the administration to support the National Revitalization Act put forward by Congress which, among other things, proposed NATO expansion to include three Central European countries--Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.<sup>167</sup> Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke, on the other hand, was extremely cautious not to overcommit his administration. In February 1995, a few months after his "renaming reform" in which the east of Europe disappeared, he openly reveled in the gratitude of the former East European countries who were saved from a label that reminded them of the Soviet umbrella.

According to Holbrooke, there were three wings of the security architecture in Europe--the West (which more or less coincided with NATO), Central Europe, and Russia. In this architectural vision, Russia was becoming Eastern Europe, and the Balkans, although not explicitly mentioned, were subsumed into Central Europe. His classification scheme mentioned "the fifteen countries of Central Europe," which very clearly included the Balkan countries with the exception of Serbia and Macedonia. When it came to the expansion of NATO into Central Europe, however, the only countries mentioned were the Višegrad four, and the formula used for the "Partnership for Peace" arrangement clearly indicated the lines of differentiation. The "Partnership for Peace" was defined as comprising twenty-five countries with individual programs, of which some were to enter NATO, while for others the partnership was to be an end in itself.<sup>168</sup>

The geopolitical vision of Europe presented by Ilya Prizel, an associate professor at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University, seems completely consistent with this line of reasoning. In October 1994, he presented a sophisticated survey of Poland's position between Russia and Germany, contesting alarmist views and arguing that Poland should not be turned once again into frontier territory by being the *cordon sanitaire* and the spearhead of an anti-Russian bloc. He described his vision and hope for an encompassing northern hemisphere security policy consisting of NATO (to which the Višegrad group would belong), the CIS, and Japan. When asked where the Balkans enter into this, he replied that Turkey and Greece were already in NATO, and Greece was part of the EU. As for the others, in the long run something would have to be done, but it was necessary to concede that there were real cultural divisions and different values between Europe and Byzantium!<sup>169</sup>

For all the logical and intellectual absurdity implicit in this statement (Byzantine Greece and Muslim Turkey can be in, but Byzantine Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Macedonia, and Muslim-Christian Albania, all of them predominantly secular nowadays, must be out), there still is something truly revolutionary, and in the long-run positive, about it. Following the postwar inclusion of Turkey into NATO and despite often vociferous right-wing objections, a significant number of intellectual and political elites, slowly followed by the public, internalized the idea that Islam should not be singled out as alien. This is a step in the direction of opening Europe up and recognizing the rich variety of historical and cultural roots of the European experience. This, of course, is not a predetermined and irreversible outcome. It also may be prematurely optimistic. After all, the British journalist Charles Moore recently stated in *The Spectator* that "Britain is basically English-speaking, Christian, and white. . . . Just as we want to bring Poles, and Hungarians, and Russians slowly into the EEC, and open markets for their goods, so we should try to open our doors to their people . . . Muslims and blacks, on the other hand, should be kept out strictly as at present."<sup>170</sup> In his comment in what was probably his best chapter on Istanbul, Scott Malcomson wrote: "Since most Poles don't speak English, and many black people do, the key characteristic of Europeans . . . must be that they are Christian and white. Turks, in general are neither."<sup>171</sup> In the prophetic vision of Sami Nair:

There are two ways, only two ways: either confessionalism will win and everywhere in Europe community ghettos will be erected (as would follow from Pope John Paul II's sermon on the conquest of Christian Europe), and in this sense democracy will be the inevitable casualty; or Europe will modernize its democratic alliance, it will enforce its republican model, based this time not on the unconscious emulation of the papist-caesarean model, but guaranteed by a concrete humanistic universalism.<sup>172</sup>

It has already been mentioned that linking the Judeo-Christian-Muslim tradition with the roots of European culture is not a paradoxical notion. This expectation can be elaborated and can develop in two directions. On the one hand, it could mean the opening up of Europe and the recognition of its rich and various roots; on the other, it could mean the selective appropriation of traits which are then determined to be part of the European, Western tradition. The first option has had some modest success; the second has had a rich tradition. The "very beginnings of Western thought" usually lead "to Egypt and Mesopotamia and Vedic India, to Zoroaster and the Hebrew Bible,"<sup>173</sup> but the social and political bodies in which these traditions have been or continue to be developed have been neatly relegated to a different, third world. The part of Europe that first bore this name--the ancient Greeks called "Europe" the Balkan mainland beyond the islands which included the Peloponessus--has been stripped of it and bequeathed, at best, the purely geographic modifier southeastern. At worst it has been called the *Schimpfwort* Balkan without the modifier European. In almost any other discourse, this would be branded a truly grandiose "renaming process." It is not difficult to anticipate how Islamic traditions could become cleansed of their historical reality and elevated to adorn the tiara of West European tolerance in an act of self-crowning.

Arthur Schnitzler once remarked that, "the things which are most often mentioned do not actually exist."<sup>174</sup> He was speaking of love. But there is no love lost in Central Europe and the competition to be the first to enter Europe dealt a blow to the Central European project itself. As Neumann aptly put it, "the program of Havel the participant in the debate about 'Central Europe' was thwarted by, among others, Havel the president."<sup>175</sup> Václav Havel's less poetic, more realistic, and more successful political counterpart, Prime Minister Václav Klaus, angrily rejected the institutionalization of cooperation among the Višegrad group as an alternative to Czech membership in the EU and said that "any concept of the group as a poor man's club and buffer zone to keep the Balkans and the former Soviet Union at a safe distance from Western Europe" was unacceptable.<sup>176</sup> It is remarkable how the transformation of the Central European concept from an emancipatory idea to a politically expedient tool was accompanied by a parallel transformation of the concept of Europe from a cultural definition identified with liberalism and democracy into "the international solidarity of capital against poverty."<sup>177</sup>

To summarize, after 1990, in the third round of its development, the Central European idea passed from the politics of culture into political praxis. To paraphrase Rupnik, who considered the sublimation of politics within the realm of culture the major

distinguishing feature of Central Europe,<sup>178</sup> now there was a complete reversal; culture was sublimated in the realm of politics. Far from becoming a region-building notion, it was harnessed as an expedient argument in the drive for entry into the European institutional framework. It is during this stage that the Balkans were first cast as diametrically opposed to Europe, sometimes alongside, sometimes indistinguishable from Russia. This internal hierarchy of Eastern Europe was born of political expediency, but its rhetoric feeds on a discourse which has had an independent evolution and which I have called *balkanism*.<sup>179</sup> In 1960 Roderic Davison commented on the use of the term "Middle East":

In the last analysis, then, a term of convenience like Middle East may on occasion become a term of great inconvenience. Not only is the term amorphous, but it seems to imply gratuitously that the Mediterranean lands have no close relationships with the United States and the West generally, but are Asian in outlook. The only solution, then, to the dilemma of how to use the term officially would be a pledge of total abstinence. . . . Can the State Department, the White House, and Washington generally be induced to take the pledge?"<sup>180</sup>

There was no pledge. At present, the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) issues a daily report which is defined as a United States Government publication whose "contents in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the U.S. Government." The contents naturally do not, but the sections in which the contents are classified do. Thus, a Near East does exist linked to South Asia. This Near East spreads from Morocco, which happens to be more to the west than the *patrie* of the Greenwich meridian, to Afghanistan, India, and Bangladesh. Turkey, on the other hand, is covered by the daily report on "West Europe," although West Europe is not confined to the NATO countries. After all, it is not symbolic geography that creates politics, but rather the reverse.

There are two strategies that can be pursued at this point. One is an analytical critique of the line of division as conceived by the Central European and, indeed, by the European idea, taking up the challenge of the Central European identity as an apodictic concept which it is up to its opponents to prove false.<sup>181</sup> For all its attractions as polemic, this is essentially an exercise in disproving and repudiating, not a useful objective. It has, after all, been suggested that "myth is beyond truth and falsity." Therefore it is the pragmatic function of myth that should be the focus of attention. This requires a closer examination of both the motives of its creators and the quality of its recipients because "the effectiveness of myth depends in large measure upon ignorance or unconsciousness of its actual motivation."<sup>182</sup> As George Baranyi cautioned over a decade ago, "given the millions of 'functional illiterates' at every level of the American educational system and society at large, the impact of functional myths, and society's vulnerability to them, is bound to grow."<sup>183</sup>

But it is not enough to expose the Central European myth as insidious or its attempt to contrast itself to the Balkans as invidious. The other strategy would consider the problem

of the nature of the Balkans, its ontology and perception, and juxtapose that to the Central European idea. This entails assessing the nature and imprint of the different legacies that historically have shaped the Balkans, something attempted elsewhere.<sup>184</sup> Juxtaposing the notion of Central Europe as an idea having short-term cultural and political potential with the concept of the Balkans, which has a powerful historical and geographic basis but an equally limited though much longer historical span, one can argue that the two concepts are methodologically incomparable and therefore incompatible constructs.

## NOTES

1. John Gunther, *Inside Europe* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940), 437.
2. Cited in George Baranyi, "On Truths in Myths," *East European Quarterly* 15, no. 3, (September 1981): 354.
3. Gale Stokes, "East European History after 1989," in *East European Studies in the United States: Making Its Own Transition after 1989*, ed. John R. Lampe and Paula Bailey Smith (Washington, D.C.: East European Studies, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1993), 35.
4. Mary Douglas and David Hull, "Introduction," in *How Classification Works. Nelson Goodman among the Social Sciences*, ed. Mary Douglas and David Hull (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 2.
5. Tomislav Z. Longinović, *Borderline Culture: The Politics of Identity in Four Twentieth-Century Slavic Novels* (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1993), 26.
6. Richard Holbrooke, "America, A European Power," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 2 (March/April 1995): 41.
7. William Safire, "Hello, Central," *New York Times Magazine*, 12 March 1995, 24-26. William Pfaff, on the other hand, insisted on distinguishing between Eastern Central, Eastern, and Balkan Europe, "Absence of Empire," *The New Yorker* 68, no. 25 (10 August 1992): 63.
8. The newscast, on the other hand, was resumed by RFE/RL from its new operations center in Prague, Czech Republic, on 10 March 1995. On 1 October 1995, RFE/RL was consolidated with the Voice of America and other components of the U.S. Information Agency's (USIA) Bureau of Broadcasting and will be part of the newly established International Broadcasting Bureau of USIA, responsible for all nonmilitary international broadcasting for the U.S. government.
9. Jenő Szűcs's essay "The Three Historic Regions of Europe. An Outline" appeared in English in 1983 in the *Acta Historica Scientiarum Hungaricae* 29 (2-4): 131-84. This is the version quoted in the text. It was reprinted in John Keane, ed., *Civil Society and the State. New European Perspectives* (London, New York: Verso, 1988). George Schöpflin informs us that the original Hungarian essay first appeared in *samizdat* as part of the *festchrift* dedicated to István Bibó in 1980, George Schöpflin and Nancy Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 2. In fact, it appeared officially in Hungarian in *Történelmi Szemle* 24 (1981): 313-69 and was also published as a separate treatise *Vázlat Európa három régiójáról* (Budapest: Magvető, 1983).
10. Czesław Miłosz, *The Witness of Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).
11. Milan Kundera, "The Tragedy of Central Europe," *New York Review of Books* 31, no. 7 (26 April 1984): 33-38. The British journal *Granta*, no. 11 (1984): 95-118, published it under its original title, "A Kidnapped West or a Culture Bows Out."
12. Szűcs, "The Three Historic Regions," 134-35.
13. *Ibid.*, 151.
14. A few titles by some of the greatest names in the Byzantine field who have taken issue with this simplification include: Georgije Ostrogorski, *History of the Byzantine State*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968); and *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire* (New York: Macmillan, 1956); Hélène Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1975); Alexander Kazhdan and Giles Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies,

- 1982); Hubert Hunger, ed., *Das byzantinische Herrschenbild* (Darmstadt, Germany: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1975); Ronald D. Ware, "Caesaropapism," in *Handbook of World History* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1967). For a later survey, published after Szűcs, see Aristeides Papadakis, "The Historical Tradition of Church-State Relations under Orthodoxy," in *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Pedro Ramet (Raleigh-Durham, N.C. and London: Duke University Press, 1988), 37-58.
15. Szűcs, "The Three Historic Regions," 142.
  16. Adam B. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 200.
  17. *Ibid.*, IX.
  18. For an affirmative account of the notion of civil society in general and with special reference to Eastern Europe, see John Keane, ed., *Civil Society and the State*. On the multifarious uses of the idea of civil society, its ambiguities and outright contradictions, see Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society*. See also the articles in Michael Walzer, ed., *Toward a Global Civil Society* (Providence R.I. and Oxford: Berghahn Books) 1995.
  19. Szűcs, "The Three Historic Regions," 147.
  20. *Ibid.*, 145, 177.
  21. *Ibid.*, 140-42.
  22. *Ibid.*, 135.
  23. *Ibid.*, 180.
  24. *Ibid.*, 181.
  25. Iver B. Neumann, "Russia as Central Europe's Constituting Other," *East European Politics and Societies* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 356.
  26. Szűcs, "The Three Historic Regions," 134.
  27. George Schöpflin, "Introduction," in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 19.
  28. Milosz, *The Witness of Poetry*, 10. The only mention of Central Europe in this work is a casual sentence: "Besides, literary New York was composed mostly of immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe."
  29. Rosemary McKechnie, "Becoming Celtic in Corsica," in *Inside European Identities. Ethnography in Western Europe*, ed., Sharon Macdonald (Providence, R.I. and Oxford: Berg, 1994), 143.
  30. Milosz, *The Witness of Poetry*, 3.
  31. *Ibid.*, 6-7.
  32. *Ibid.*, 10-11.
  33. Schöpflin, "Introduction," in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 19.
  34. Milosz, *The Witness of Poetry*, 5.

35. Ibid., 7.
36. Czesław Miłosz, "Central European Attitudes," *Cross Currents. A Yearbook of Central European Culture* 5, no. 2 (1986): 101-108. Further quotations follow this publication. The essay was subsequently reprinted in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 116-24.
37. Miłosz, "Central European Attitudes," 101.
38. Ibid., 103.
39. Ibid., 106.
40. Timothy Garton Ash, "Does Central Europe Exist?" *New York Review of Books* 35, no. 15 (9 October 1986): 45.
41. "Milan Kundera's Lament," in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 140.
42. Milan Kundera, *Žert* (Prague, Československý Spisovatel, 1967).
43. Neumann, "Russia as Central Europe's Constituting Other," 357-58.
44. "Milan Kundera's Lament," in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 140.
45. Ibid., 141.
46. The most heated exchange was published in *East European Reporter* between 1985 and 1987 and was reproduced in its entirety in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*: Milan Šimečka, "Another Civilization? An Other Civilization?" 157-62; Jane Mellor, "Is the Russian Intelligentsia European? (A Reply to Šimečka)," 163-67; Mihály Vajda "Who Excluded Russia from Europe? (A Reply to Šimečka)," 168-75; and Milan Šimečka, "Which Way Back to Europe? (A Reply to Mihály Vajda)," 176-82.
47. Kundera, "The Tragedy of Central Europe," 37.
48. Šimečka, "Another Civilization? An Other Civilization?" in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 159.
49. Kundera, "The Tragedy of Central Europe," 34. For another view, see the critique of Ivo Banac, "Milan Kundera i povratak Srednje Evrope," *Gordogan* 9, no. 1 (1987): 39-46.
50. Joseph Conrad, "A Note on the Polish Problem (1916)," in *Notes on Life and Letters* (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), 135. This is a reprint of a work published in 1921 by Doubleday. "The Poles, whom superficial or ill-informed theorists are trying to force into the social and psychological formula of Slavonism, are in truth not Slavonic at all. In temperament, in feeling, in mind, and even in unreason, they are Western, with an absolute comprehension of all Western modes of thought, even of those which are remote from their historical experience."
51. Kundera, "The Tragedy of Central Europe," 34.
52. Ibid., 34.

53. Brodsky's essay and Havel's response entitled "'The Post-Communist Nightmare': An Exchange" were published in *New York Review of Books* 41, no. 4 (17 February 1994): 28-30. Havel's speech, "The Post-Communist Nightmare," was published in *New York Review of Books* 40, no. 10 (27 May 1993): 8-10.
54. Havel, "The Post-Communist Nightmare': An Exchange," 30.
55. Zdeněk David, "Bohemian Utraquism in the Sixteenth Century: The Distinction and Tribulation of a Religious 'Via Media'," *Communio Viatorum* 35, no. 3 (1993): 229.
56. This is the title of the excellent article by Neumann, "Russia as Central Europe's Constituting Other."
57. The quote is borrowed from Neumann, "Russia as Central Europe's Constituting Other," 357.
58. Lonnie R. Johnson, "Central Europe. Enemies & Neighbors & Friends," unpublished manuscript, 4. Quoted with the permission of the author.
59. Schöpflin, "Central Europe: Definitions Old and New," in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 18.
60. Ibid., 19, 27.
61. Ibid., 9.
62. Ibid., 10.
63. Ibid., 12.
64. Ibid., 14-15.
65. Ibid., 27.
66. Ibid., 20.
67. Ibid., 16.
68. Ibid., 2.
69. The only exception to this is Péter Hának who followed in Szűcs's attempt to define the region in ontological terms. On his contribution, see further in the text.
70. Péter Hának, "Central Europe: A Historical Region in Modern Times. A Contribution to the Debate about the Regions of Europe," in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 57-69. Another Hungarian also continued to popularize the three regions theory but diluted in a different context. See Mihály Vajda, "East-Central European Perspectives," in John Keane, ed., *Civil Society and the State*, 333-60.
71. Hának, "Central Europe: A Historical Region in Modern Times," 68.
72. Ibid., 63.
73. Nelson Goodman, "Seven Structures on Similarity," in Douglas and Hull, eds., *How Classification Works*, 21.

74. Winfried Eberhard et al., eds., *Westmitteleuropa. Ostmitteleuropa. Vergleiche und Beziehungen: Festschrift für Ferdinand Seibt zum 65. Geburtstag* (Munich: R. Oldenburg, 1992).
75. Czaba G. Kiss, "Central European Writers about Central Europe: Introduction to a Non-Existent Book of Readings," in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 128.
76. Vajda, "Who Excluded Russia from Europe?" in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 168-75. On the claim for independence, see Neumann, "Russia as Central Europe's Constituting Other," 361-62. Neumann also contributed the best critique of Vajda's views of Šimečka.
77. Vajda, "Who Excluded Russia from Europe?" in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 175.
78. Predrag Matvejević, "Central Europe Seen from the East of Europe," in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 183-90.
79. *Ibid.*, 183.
80. *Ibid.*, 189.
81. *Ibid.*, 188.
82. Quoted in Radu Stern and Vladimir Tismaneanu, "L'Europe centrale. Nostalgies culturelles et réalités politiques," *Cadmos. Cahiers trimestriel du Centre Européen de la Culture*, no. 39 (1987): 42.
83. *Ibid.*, 44. It is indicative of this desire to be classified as Central European that the Romanian Jewish writer Sebastian was defined as "an East-Central European Jew living in the mid-1930s." Matei Calinescu, "Romania's 1930's Revisited," *Dalmagundi* 97 (Winter 1993): 137.
84. Jacques Rupnik, *The Other Europe* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), 5.
85. *Ibid.*, 21-22.
86. This view has been defended by Neumann in his otherwise excellent article "Russia as Central Europe's Constituting Other," 350.
87. H.-P. Burmeister, F. Boldt, Gy. Mészáros, eds., *Mitteleuropa - Traum oder Trauma? Überlegungen zum Selbstbild einer Region* (Bremen, Germany: Temmen, 1988).
88. Ferenc Fehér, "On Making Central Europe," *East European Politics and Societies* 3, no. 3 (Fall 1989): 443.
89. Ferenc Fehér and Agnes Heller, *Eastern Left, Western Left: Totalitarianism, Freedom and Democracy* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press International, 1987), 17-18.
90. On *Mitteleuropa* the most solid study is still that of Henry Cord Meyer, *Mitteleuropa in German Thought and Action, 1815-1945* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955).
91. Friedrich Naumann, *Mitteleuropa* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1915); *idem*, *Bulgarien und Mitteleuropa* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1916).
92. Joseph Partsch, *Mitteleuropa* (Gotha, Germany: J. Perthes, 1904).

93. Quoted after Timothy Garton Ash, "Does Central Europe Exist?" in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 196. On Masaryk's relentless critique of Austro-Hungarian policy in the Balkans and on his views on the South-Slav question in particular, see H. Gordon Skilling, "T. G. Masaryk, Arch-Critic of Austro-Hungarian Foreign Policy," *Cross Currents. A Yearbook of Central European Culture* 11 (1992): 213-33.
94. Henry Cord Meyer, "Mitteleuropa in German Political Geography," *Collected Works* (Irvine, Calif.: Charles Schlacks, Jr., 1986), 1:123-24.
95. Karl Kaser, *Südosteuropäische Geschichte und Geschichtswissenschaft* (Vienna, Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1990), 99.
96. Oscar Halecki, *The Limits and Divisions of European History* (London and New York: Sheed & Ward, 1950); *idem*, *The Millennium of Europe* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963).
97. Halecki, *The Millennium*, XV-XVI; see also 333, 389; *The Limits*, 202.
98. Halecki, *The Millennium*, 372.
99. *Ibid.*, 3, 377.
100. Halecki, *The Millennium*, 5; *The Limits*, 13.
101. Halecki, *The Limits*, 35.
102. Halecki, *The Millennium*, 39. See also his perceptive treatment of the crusades, 181-91.
103. Halecki, *The Limits*, 121.
104. Halecki, *The Millennium*, 43-44.
105. *Ibid.*, 307 and 73.
106. Halecki, *The Millennium*, 233; *The Limits*, 93.
107. Halecki, *The Limits*, 11, 117.
108. *Ibid.*, 99.
109. Halecki, *The Millennium*, 7-8.
110. *Ibid.*, 8, 43.
111. *Ibid.*, 43.
112. *Ibid.*, 44.
113. *Ibid.*, 138.
114. Halecki, *The Millennium*, 231; *The Limits*, 78.
115. Halecki, *The Millennium*, 231.

116. Halecki, *The Limits*, 77.
117. Ibid., 78, 120.
118. Halecki, *The Millennium*, 335.
119. Halecki, *The Limits*, 109, 118-19.
120. Halecki, *The Millennium*, 376.
121. Anatole France, *Les pensées*, ed. Eric Eugène (Paris: Cherche-Midi, 1994).
122. Indeed, it has been argued that the attention to detail and authenticity so typical of Dutch and Flemish painting of the seventeenth century, especially that of Rembrandt, has to do with religion, with the belief that since everything is the creation of God and thus bears his imprint, the least one can do is to recreate it in all its richness. One does not need to be religious in this sense to believe in the basic unity of humanity. But I guess this is also based on belief and therefore it is a matter of choice.
123. Neumann, "Russia as Central Europe's Constituting Other," 368.
124. Ibid., 349.
125. Rupnik, *The Other Europe*, 3.
126. Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), 364.
127. George Konrád and Ivan Szelenyi, "Intellectuals and Domination in Post-Communist Societies," in *Social Theory for a Changing Society*, ed., Pierre Bourdieu and James S. Coleman (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1991) 338, 356-58.
128. Before appearing in *In Search for Central Europe*, Ash's essay was published as a review article entitled "Does Central Europe Exist?" in the *New York Review of Books* 33, no. 15 (9 October 1986): 45-52.
129. Rupnik also points out the ambiguous attitude of the Poles for whom the term *Mitteleuropa* always smacked of German hegemony and who would prefer to identify with Europe as a whole in *The Other Europe*, 7.
130. Ash, "Does Central Europe Exist?" in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 194-95.
131. Ibid., 195.
132. Ibid., 197.
133. Ibid., 210, 212.
134. Ibid., 214.
135. György Konrád, *Antipolitics: An Essay* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984) quoted after Ash, "Does Central Europe Exist?" in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 198; Václav Havel, "Anti-Political Politics," in John Keane, ed., *Civil Society and the State*, 381-98; Václav Havel, *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens against the State in Central-Eastern Europe* (London: Hutchinson, 1985).

136. Ash, "Does Central Europe Exist?" in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 214.
137. Timothy Garton Ash, Michael Mertes, and Dominique Moisi, "Let the East Europeans In!" *New York Review of Books* 38, no. 17 (24 October 1991): 19. Ash made exactly the same point ("My answer is a purely pragmatic one . . . You cannot do everything at once.") in an earlier piece entitled "Eastern Europe: Après Le Déluge, Nous," *New York Review of Books* 37, no. 13 (16 August 1990): 51-57.
138. On the attempts at cooperation, see Neumann, "Russia as Central Europe's Constituting Other" and the literature cited there.
139. Kristian Gerner, *Centraleuropas återkomst*, quoted in Neumann, "Russia as Central Europe's Constituting Other," 364.
140. Dušan Třestík, "We Are in Europe." First published in *Přítomnost*, the essay is quoted from its Bulgarian translation in *Iztok-Iztok* (East-East), no. 9-10 (1993): 106.
141. Hans Agnus Enzensberger, Ryszard Kapuściński, and Adam Krzemiński, "Back to the Future: A Conversation," *New York Review of Books* 41, no. 19 (17 November 1994): 43.
142. Péter Hának, "The Danger of Burying Central Europe" and Eric Hobsbawm's essay first appeared in *Magyar Lettre Internationale* in 1991. Both pieces are quoted from *Iztok-Iztok* (East-East), no. 9-10 (1993): 111-18..
143. György Konrád, "Central Europe Redivivus," *The Melancholy of Rebirth. Essays from Post-Communist Central Europe, 1989-1994* (San Diego, Calif: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1995), 158-66.
144. Roderic H. Davison, "Where is the Middle East?" *Foreign Affairs* 38, no. 4 (July 1960): 665-75.
145. Konrád, "Eternally Waiting," *The Melancholy of Rebirth*, 177.
146. Konrád, *The Melancholy of Rebirth*, vii, 195.
147. See articles from *Iztok-Iztok* (East-East) in previous notes.
148. Vladislav Todorov, *Red Square, Black Square. Organon for Revolutionary Imagination* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1995).
149. Neumann, "Russia as Central Europe's Constituting Other," 364-65.
150. Václav Havel, "New Democracies for Old Europe," *New York Times*, 17 October 1993.
151. The notion has been reintroduced by Jean-Christophe Rufin, *L'Empire et les nouveaux barbares* (Paris: Hachettes-Pluriel, 1992). The author, however, argues about the character of the *lines* not only as fortress but as a place of exchange and genuine osmosis.
152. Enzensberger, Kapuściński, and Krzemiński, "Back to the Future: A Conversation," 44.
153. Cited in Timothy Garton Ash, "Prague: Intellectuals and Politicians," *New York Review of Books* 42, no. 1 (12 January 1995): 34.

154. Vladimir Tismaneanu, "NYR, TLS and the Velvet Counterrevolution," *Common Knowledge* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 130-42.
155. R. C. Longworth, "Bulgaria, Romania Resist Pull of the West," *Chicago Tribune*, 10 October 1994. I would like to thank Dr. Bonka Boneva for alerting me to this publication.
156. Cited in Michael Ignatieff, "On Civil Society," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 2 (March/April 1995): 134.
157. Paul Hockenros, *Free to Hate. The Rise of the Right in Post-Communist Eastern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
158. The law was introduced at the beginning of 1993 and was upheld on 13 September 1994, *RFE/RL Daily Report* 183, 26 September 1994.
159. William Safire, "Baltics Belong in a Big NATO," *New York Times*, 16 January 1995. See a thoughtful riposte in the letter section of the *New York Times* on 20 January 1995.
160. Safire, "Hello, Central," 24.
161. Robert D. Kaplan, "The Middle East is a Myth," *New York Times Magazine*, 20 February 1994, 42-43.
162. "Balkan Brinkmanship," *New York Times*, 10 March 1995, A28.
163. The quote is from the "Editor's Note," *Foreign Policy* 97 (Winter 1994-95): 183. It refers in particular to the present Yugoslav crisis which "has been unusual in the degree to which governments appear to base daily pronouncements and decisions on media reports and TV images."
164. Fouad Ajami, "In Europe's Shadows," *The New Republic*, 21 November 1994, 37.
165. *The MacNeill-Lehrer Newshour*, 7 February 1994.
166. Henry Kissinger, "Expand NATO Now," *Washington Post*, 19 December 1994.
167. Henry Kissinger, "Ready for Revitalizing," *New York Times*, 9 March 1995, A21.
168. Richard Holbrooke, "America's Stake in Europe's Future," Noon Discussion at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 10 February 1995. This talk summarized a subsequently published article, "America, A European Power," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 2 (March/April 1995): 38-51.
169. Ilya Prizel, "Poland between East and West: A False Dichotomy?" Noon Discussion at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 19 October 1994.
170. Scott L. Malcomson, *Borderlands: Nations and Empire* (Boston and London: Faber and Faber, 1994), 120.
171. *Ibid.*, 121.
172. Sami Nair, "Le differend mediterraneen," reprinted in *Iztok-Iztok* (East-East), no. 9-10 (1993): 63.
173. This particular quote is from Jasper Griffin, "New Heaven, New Earth," *New York Review of Books* 41, no. 21 (22 December 1994): 23, but the pattern is present in most Western civilization texts.

174. Quoted from Egon Schwarz, "Central Europe--What It Is and What It Is Not," in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 143.
175. Neumann, "Russia as Central Europe's Constituting Other," 364.
176. Václav Klaus, press conference on 23 March 1993, *RFE/RL Daily Report* 57, 24 March 1993.
177. Interview with Heiner Müller, "Stirb schneller, Europa," broadcast on Deutsche Welle in 1990 and published in *Iztok-Iztok* (East-East), no. 9-10 (1993): 47.
178. Rupnik, *The Other Europe*, 7.
179. Maria Todorova, "The Balkans: From Discovery To Invention," *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (Summer 1994).
180. Davison, "Where is the Middle East?" 675.
181. George Schöpflin, "Central Europe: Definitions Old and New," in Schöpflin and Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe*, 18.
182. David Bidney, "Myth, Symbolism, and Truth," in *Myth: Symposium*, ed., Thomas A. Sebeok (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1955), 12.
183. Baranyi, "On Truths in Myths," 353.
184. The argument is developed at length in a chapter of my forthcoming book *Imagining the Balkans*. Its essence is presented in my "The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans," in *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint in the Balkans and the Middle East*, ed. L. Carl Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 45-77.

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