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The Symbolic Balkan *Modus Operandi* and  
*Modus Vivendi*:  
Different Politics of the Balkan Discursive/Narrative  
“Approximations”

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Abstract

The centrality of the Balkan issue has, during the last thirty years and even before, often been equated with extreme political contexts- armed conflicts. The most common explication of this state of affairs, aside from global international political trends/intereventions is, one-sidedly and shallowly, seen in the alleged inherent aggressive nationalism, historically rooted and/or transferred by the radicalization of the distinction of tribal/national pasts and in the liminal position of the marginalized and minorized Balkans in between the West and the East. It seems as if the Balkans is in some state of “frozen”, never ended or perpetuated identity-profiled disintegration, violence and antagonisms. However, the liminality in understanding the Balkans need not point to marginality and irrelevance of the “Balkan political gloss/scholia”, which indeed, best and most poignantly articulate the overlapping discourses that create and reflect it. In order for the detected status of discursive “liminal centrality” to be extensively explored, this paper will be divided into three parts. In the first part will present and examine the concepts of narrative, constellation and codification, as essential methodological-instrumental prerequisites for the comprehension and research of Balkan imaginaries. The

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second part will offer a detailed explication of the concept of post-colonialism as the paradigmatic lens for its comprehension/perception, but also for its pro-active “surpassing”/resistance. In the third part, understanding of the Balkans as an “objectivized” entity of Balkanism will be deconstructively juxtaposed to the Balkans as a “textualized” representation of Orientalism and Post-colonialism.

Key words: Balkans, Balkanization, Balkanism, Orientalism, orientalization, Post-colonialism, post-coloniality.

## Introduction

Notwithstanding the intensity in reformulating/reconfiguring the courses of European Union’s (EU) enlargement politics after the United Kingdom’s opt-out (“Brexit”), or the insistence on rapid systemic transformations, consistent and strict adherence to a set of EU accession criteria concerning the marketization, democratization and stabilization mechanisms/instruments, the integration and/or assimilation of the part of Balkans not already inside the EU is a political act/move/gesture that springs to mind and seems politically “natural”, especially given that the respective segment of the Balkans is an “archipelago” in the EU’s political “sea” and that all countries have a more or less clearly articulated political will for unification. However, what may seem politically “natural”, “objective” or “rational” at first glance is often much more complicated, uncertain and subject to broad and diverse debates. In this context, there is a whole arsenal of Balkanizing and/or Balkan topics, strategies, platforms or perspectives, or prejudices, clichés and stereotypes, again in the stage of “galloping”, at some points sensationalist, political actualization/re-actualization with regard to the enlightening-progressivist dictates of octroyed Europeanization matrices/processes, epitomized/manifested not only as sum of systemic, but also civilizational demands.

Thus, in terms of borders, Croatia- an EU member-state, rejects the ruling of the Arbitration tribunal and enters into an open diplomatic war with the neighboring Slovenia, another EU member-state, due to an apparently routine border demarcation in Piran Bay/Savudria Bay, an issue escalated to the level of “to be or not to be” in terms of national identity and sovereignty, while the

Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Karl Erjavec, acknowledging the findings of the same court, states that in dealing with Croatia, it is necessary to apply a “firm grip” politics as the only “language” it understands. At the same time, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Montenegro, are still to demarcate their borders with Croatia, while the catholic Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina request amendments to the Dayton Peace Agreements, the potential option being to add another, Croatian federal unit, modeled on the orthodox Serbs’ Republika Srpska. Bakir Izetbegović, member of the collective presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bosniak Muslim leader, claims that this is impossible without another civil war. Serbia does not recognize Kosovo independence and also has a fair number of unresolved border issues with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia; Greece, besides border disputes with Albania, objects to Macedonia’s membership in NATO and the EU under that name, while Greater Albania is a leitmotif of Albanian, visible or invisible, pro-nationalist politics.

These are just some, perhaps not even major, problems characterizing the current political situation in the Balkans, but they are more than illustrative of the condition/context/situation that earned the term “Balkanization”, or “Balkanizing” a place in some relevant world dictionaries. Indeed, is it a “transcendental”, universal and ahistorical, permanent semantic formula or contrived, manipulative and temporal; is the destabilizing Balkans an invariable politico-historical constellation/“diagnosis” of extremely violent antagonistic confrontations and fragmentations; a specific kind/class of spatially determined politics, like the one termed “Finlandization”; perhaps, the result/outcome of latent internal logic of late capitalism/liberal democracies; a consequence of immobile mentality structure; strategic implosion of the “heterotopian/atopian stigmatization mantra”, or of the minstrelization/self-exoticization and auto-chauvinism/auto-racism; or is it a primarily colonial-oriental construct, script, performative linguistic code or representation *par excellence*?

Genealogically, the liminal/kaleidoscopic Balkans, as a coherent/precise geo-political/geo-geometrical entity is very hard to determine, it manifests a space loaded with a spectrum of opposite identity binomials/codes: West/East, Muslims/Christians, Catholic/Orthodox, Habsburg (Austro-Hungarian Monarchy)/Ottoman

Empire or capitalism/socialism. It is a liminal space of intersection between worlds, continents and highly complex and tragic historical legacies, traditions and policies, where one geographic area/space has several different symbols and names, and is hence “a signifier/name, rather than a precisely fixed signified/territory”, where everything is apparently similar and intertwined, but actually different and divided by paradoxically unsurmountable “symbolically hypertrophic” nuance and small cultural fissures. In that sense, the question is: is the Balkans an ambiguous politico-cultural, orientalized reality/entity or the opposite trope/representation, a hyper-real, linguistic-figurative, simulacral and subordinated colonial repository/imaginary of all that the enlightened/modern Europe is and would like to forget, all that the enlightened/modern Europe is and would like to confirm? Is there an “ideotypical” Balkan “barbarogenius”, a *homo balkanicus*, who will politically-culturally revive/regenerate Europe or accelerate its politico-cultural decadence/degeneration? In a nutshell: is there a politically-culturally non-Balkanized Balkans and is politico-cultural de-Balkanization or re-Balkanization of the Balkans possible?

## 1. Some methodological issues: narratives, constellations and codes/codification

In order to elaborate the topic of the Balkans/Southeast Europe as thoroughly as possible, it is first necessary to say more about the narrative. Abstracting the fact that the narrative and narrativity<sup>2)</sup> are international, trans-historical and trans-cultural (Barthes 1977: 79), “story-telling” has for quite a long time been a methodologically stigmatized and proscribed research technique/engagement in social sciences, limited to humanities, especially to the traditionalist historical approach and theory of literature. By deconstructing the meta-theoretical attempt to create a holistic science on society that would explicitly as well as implicitly be anti-historical and anti-descriptive, the representative quality/mode of narrative

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2) The term narrative (White 1987: 215, fn. 2) etymologically derives from the ancient Sanskrit word “*gnā*”, meaning “to know”, its present form originates from the Latin words “knowing” (“*gnarus*”) and “telling” (“*narro*”).

and narrativity, as the most distinct obstructing factor in their program introduction to social sciences, has evolved into the component/concept of social epistemology and ontology. Namely, through “story/telling” to us or others, we not only passively interpret our lived experience, but also proactively construct/deconstruct/reconstruct what we interpret. The narrative is no longer an isolated/peripheral form of reality representation, but the quintessential point/instrument in its construction, as everything we know is somehow associated with the intertwined narrative trajectories/storylines in which we can identify/install ourselves, throughout our lives we are *homo narrans* or, more suggestively, “story-telling animal” (Macintyre 2007 [1981]: 216; Fisher 1999 [1984]: 266, 1987: 62; Bruner 1991: 5; Somers 1994: 607; Somers and Gibson 1994a: 41). Generally speaking, narratives can be (Ewick and Silbey 1995: 201-204): (1) an object of research- when the emphasis is on the production of narratives through social action/engagement and their influence on the (re)formulation of identity; (2) a research method- narratives are the instruments/means in the study of some social phenomenon; and (3) a research result- where scientists themselves function as narrators of their own concepts of society and social life. For a narrative, or a series of separate and ephemeral events, to make sense, it needs a finale/closure: it has to have have a moral meaning (White 1980: 24, 25; 1987: 21, 22).

From the structuralist perspective, drawing on the ancient distinction between mimesis as a perfect imitation of dramatic frame, and diegesis as pure verbalization (Genette 1980: 30), narrative is comprised of (Bal 1997 [1985]: 5): (1) the storyline - chain of logically and chronologically related events, transitions from one state into another, initiated or experienced by actors, agents of derived events who are not necessarily people (but can instead be, for example, states or ideologies or monuments); (2) story- plot presented in a particular way; and (3) text- the story-telling medium (e.g. language, images, sound or structures), so a single story may have different textual versions. In this paper we will accept the broadest definition of the plot-driven narrative, according to which the representation of meaning-related events is created by using any sign system (Herman and Vervaeck 2005: 11-14). In part, this leaves the possibility for sequences or episodes of an event, or the relational dimension of the narrative, to

be part of some greater configuration of happenings that are an ambivalent transgression of the context, meaning that the narrative self-prescribes/ascribes its own context, is self-contextualized and re-contextualized. The causality of the narrative (storyline) is not only defined through the perspectives of the narrator and the narrative but also through the perspective of the listener who may be the protagonist of both these roles simultaneously, which further leads to the alignment of the disjunction between the synopsis and the plot, to achieving their synchronicity.

Such non-systemic, post-modern reading of the narrative is therefore more focused on the language/sign system as an instrument in the construction of reality, than on how reality is reflected in it. It also dismisses linear time, where the cause precedes the consequence (the present is both the past and the future) and fixed space, since it is in continuous “fluctuation”, fusion from one form into another (Punday 2003: 76-77; cf. Czarniawska 2004: 12-14). This also implies the rejection of the bifurcation to the privileged and secondary events. To a greater or lesser degree, every post-modernism, as well as post-structuralism, supports socio-narratorlogy, that everything is treated as narrative or text, or that every narrative is a reflexion of some narrative/story politics (Currie 1998). In that sense, behind any border/space there is an underlying (mythological) construct or text about it, every border is a temporal and spatial social transfiguration of their parallel and plural narrations. We can thus refer to the pluriverse of borders, to several distinct “border-spatial realities”, or several ways of “reading/projecting” of the Balkans concretenesses and to the multiverse of “borders, or Balkans, universes” comprising a single spatial reality of the Balkans.

At any rate, we can distinguish four narrative “formats” (Somers 1994: 617-620): (1) ontological narratives; (2) public narratives; (3) conceptual narratives; and (4) meta-narrative. Ontological narratives denote personal stories about the status we have in the world, about our personal history that generates and is generated by them, they shape our conscience, beliefs and attitudes, what we are and what we will become or are becoming. They express the underlying agendas of our activities, our narrative identity is derived from them: a fluctuating, never monomorphous and immobile, and, though intimate and oriented at our actual,

direct or immediate- our world, ontological narratives are interpersonal and socio-structurally profiled. Public narratives are characteristic for group/collective social, cultural and political entities and various institutions, such as religious groups, political associations, educational, professional and administrative institutions, civil associations or family or friends' and other networks. Like all other narratives, they also have a scenario, peripety, argumentation and subjective criteria for evaluation of events. Likewise, their stories will often be selected to fit their (publicly proclaimed) identities or bricolage/mould reality to fit their stories. Conceptual (disciplinary) narratives denote ideas, exegeses and explanatory matrices characteristic for both social research and other scientific fields (*ibidem*: 620; Lyon 1998: 145). When the focus is on social sciences, conceptual narratives provide terminologico-analytical idioticons, texts confirming the narrative substance of social life, social action, social organising and social identities and are employed in the relational (re)articulation of ontological and public narratives in time and space, also serving to (re)configure the relations/communication among historical actors. By and large, disciplinary narratives operate as forms of judgement that enable/cause the reformation or consolidation of worldviews stemming from respective disciplinary arrangements/regimes of beliefs and convictions.

Meta-narratives (grand or master-narratives) denote competitive narratives in which we are all "installed" as historical actors, these are narratives explaining all other narratives and crucially bear upon the (re)construction of social, public, scientific and personal/private Truths (God/Religion, Freedom, Progress, Modernization, Equality, etc.) Jean-François Lyotard (1984 [1979]: xiii) objects to the totalizing perspective that views history and society through meta-narratives and pleads for authentic, *sui generis* "little stories" arising from heterogeneous subjective positions of individuals and the plurality of diverse social groups. Although it has all the elements of a narrative (series of events characterised by the causal nexus, plot, actors and transformational action) in meta-narrative we also register a tendency for the "quasi-denarrativization": the employment of an assortment of explanatory clichés that appear to be indisputable abstractions (cf. Somers 1994: 619). In the shadow of every master-narrative, there is a master-plot

(Abbott 2002: 42-43), or, the recursive/fractal proto-plot, connected with the deepest wishes, fears and values, present in different intercultural and intracultural valences. Finally, for the post-modern theorising, there is no a priori, naturalized hierarchy/scale/criterion pre-qualifying some narratives for meta modulation (that also refers to post-modernism itself): every narrative can end in a meta status and *vice versa*, can lose that status.

It would also be useful to mention, as relevant for this paper, the concept of constellations, or constellational relations, as they are viewed by Walter Benjamin (1999 [1927-1940]; 462, 463, 844). Namely, the relevance of constellational formations is due to the fact that, by exceeding the one-way/linear/sequential/consecutive reading of time and history, they enable the inter-relational joining of the present with the past or with different historical occurrences/sediments. The issue is not if the elucidates the present or *vice versa*: if the relationship of the present to the past is continuous and temporal, what happened, in relation to now, is in a dialectical position, it is not a progression/temporality but a linguistically coded notion/figurality. Every constellation manifests one of the indefinite, ephemeral and unforeseeable variations/permutations/frequencies of different configurations, conjunctions, resonances and aggregations of places, networks, events, practices and relations that may simultaneously apply in the identical space/spatial stratum (cf. Gilloch 2002: 25). Every constellation is thus a cluster/set of interpretatively filtered qualities and relations so that each individual element/component may be what it is only in relation to other elements/components of the constellation as such. That approach will enable to identify and decode extremely complex relational processes and several different, simultaneous constellations that together profile the fundamental characteristics of the context of Southeast Europe/Balkans, while avoiding linearity, monolaterality and monosemy.

Assuming their semantic equality with programs and algorithms, at the end of this part we should also touch upon codification/coding, or codes. First, codification can be understood as ways in which the singular positivist universe of high modernity, as well as countless post-modern multiverses and pluriverses, objects, relations, phenomena or occurrences are substituted and represented, as

well as constructed, designed, fabricated or simulated by communicable symbols. According to Bradley Bryan (2010), the focus on codes represents a shift from ontology toward epistemology, issues concerning existence are replaced by those oriented at knowledge, “what we know” is replaced by “how we know”. Codification rests on the idea that the trueness of a statement, which in itself is neither true nor false, depends on the mutual agreement between the participants in an act of communication, and ensuing from this, that every statement of some particular codification constitutes its affirmation, that up to a point, it is meta-communicative (Ruesch and Bateson 1951: 212, 214). It is fair to say that the major problems of any kind of world paradigm are translational in nature and manifested in issues concerning their codification, or search for a common language free from instrumental control and arranged in a way that all heterogeneities are open to composing, decomposing, recomposing, investing or exchange (cf. Haraway 1991: 164). More or less, that implies a complex polyphonic situation with the possibility for the monist symbolic universes themselves to be particular symbols and consequently, we can refer to the external and internal codification politics meaning that codes are associated not only to intermediary features in the relation cultures-worlds, but that they can also be the way of universe creation/generation/production.

This entails the parallelism of autonomous worlds, a radical post-modern irreducibility to the common politico-cultural denominator or to alternative options to the real world. It is an aberration from the perception of a single world as a multitude of worlds or of the multitude of worlds as a single one, or the replaceability of one real world with some other: they are coded worlds, simulacrum copies without originals, featuring the fuzzy border between real and simulated (cf. Goodman 1988 [1978]: 1-2). The primary task of modernity is no longer the (scientific) demystification of illusions and self-delusions, but the preservation and regeneration of the reality principle that lost its object, because the issue is no longer the deficient, ideological representation of reality, but the fact that reality is no longer real, having metamorphosed into an order of coded simulation and the hyper-real while the reality code has become more real than the reality it codifies (Baudrillard 1983: 25; Derian 1990: 299-300). In case that the

Truth conceals its non-existence, it automatically conceals not only its own non-existence but also that of its duplicate/copy (Ward and Fernando 2011). The duality of the Truth and its linguistic-symbolic transposition is manifested in the paradoxical unity of the real and the imaginary. Only a copy which is also the Truth can permit itself the loss of its illusoriness and *vice versa*: only the Truth which is also its copy can permit itself the distancing from its own Truthfulness. This view is by no means some vulgar/naïve reasoning centered around the contention for the ahistorical supremacy of mutually confronted and invalidating “solipsistically” coded realities of the Balkan nationalist “archipelago”, but the quest for a political formula of cultural stereotyping/dogmatization/clichéization of the Euro-centric meta-narrative which makes the Balkans colonially definable and dependent in its post-interpreted indefinability and randomness. The Balkans thus becomes not only a particularly decoded, coded and recoded reality/history/space/periphery/practice of subordination, but is transferred/translated as a timeless imperial-enlightenment global submissive code (e.g. in formulations like: Balkanization of Southeast Asia or the West).

## 2. Some paradigmatic issues: colonial/post(-)colonial world imaginary

Colonialism, with its pre-capitalist and capitalist phase, can be defined as spatially and substantively differentiated, socially traumatizing, submissive practices of brutal force and/or hegemony of the exogenous establishment/creation of colonies in imperial territories for the purpose of trade, production or control of natural resources; as practices implying an expropriatory political system and administrative apparatus/mechanism, related to exploitation, annexation or conquest and racial discrimination of the indigenous majority resulting from hegemonizing binary antipodes like: self/otherness, center/periphery, superior/inferior, metropolis/colony, white/black, developed/backward, primitive/civilized, etc. (cf. Walia 2001: 77). It would be wrong to think that modern (neo-) colonialism boils down to the physical control of other countries and their resources, as it actually involves a radical restructuring of subordinated economies

in terms of their indirect dependency on the economic composition/priorities of the “master” conquering state and the constitution of complicated bilateral relations, flows of people and profit, between the colonial powers and colonized lands (Loomba 2005: 9). With all its different texts, tactics, codes, strategies and matrices, or metamorphosing, unfixed or mutable connotations covered up by specific historical situations and processes, colonial expansion manifests the *condicio sine qua non* of mercantile capitalism and is a reflexion of an extraordinary rational format- scientific knowledge, as a postamental principle in the rise of European Enlightenment. The most intriguing part is that, in the majority of cases, the oppressive intellectual-economic optics of European colonizers became the self-replicated identity optics of the colonized states and nations. We should add that by “colonization”, we understand the process of territorial incrementation/acquisition, that a “colony” is a kind of spatio-political organization and that “colonialism” embodies a system of domination (Osterhammel 1997: 4).

It would be totally wrong to equalize the modern, capitalist (neo-)colonialism with imperialism, or to treat capitalism as a genuine, evolutionally profiled, specificum of imperialism with regard to colonialism, because it also has its pre-capitalist phase, for example in Roman, Russian, Spanish, Portugese or Ottoman empires, so their equivalence would better fit the term “neo-imperialism” (Loomba 2005: 10). Given the fact that dependency can be achieved through various intermediary economic-market techniques/technologies, colonialism requires a direct, formal occupational rule, while for imperialism, this is not necessary. Colonialism refers solely to colonial politics, while imperialism also includes international politics, where colonies are not targets *per se*, but rather constituting elements within the broader distribution of power. Just as it is possible to talk about colonial imperialism without colonial empires, case of USA, it is also possible to talk about colonial empires without imperialism, for example France, Germany or Russia (Osterhammel 1997: 21).

*Ergo*, the discrepancy between the codification of (neo-)imperialism and (neo-)colonialism cannot be successfully rendered based on chronological parameters, but it is also necessary to employ their spatial equivalents. The repercussions/

effects of the centrifugal (neo-)imperial vector of domination/superiority, the metropolitan emanation of repression, are epitomized or become visible in some geographic zones of penetration: (neo-)colonies. In so doing, although the era of colonization is over, the “official” decolonialization is a process that, despite unfolding in several “waves” for three hundred years (from the eighteenth century until the second half of the twentieth century) and encompassing a range of rather culturally divergent countries (from the US, Australia or Canada to India, Algeria or Mozambique), is not yet concluded. In addition, independence gained in politics and partially also in economy is not necessarily followed by cultural decolonization, or the decontamination/detoxication of reasoning: western domination through axiological-scientific strands of meanings woven/embedded into governance, educational and media institutions also becomes the intellectual lens of the “self-conscious” colonized individuals, a latent mechanism of subjection.

If we now consider the distinction in the readings of colonialism and imperialism, it becomes clear why the connotation of the term “post-colonial” should be freed from rigidity, simplification and one-dimensionality. Equivocal understanding of post-colonialism can thus have several modes. The term can be employed for the temporal separation of the colonial period before the gain of independence by a state or nation, compared to the cultural production “affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day”, for processual post-colonization or the persistence of colonial power through different mutations during and immediately after the colonial deployment/rule (Ashcroft *et al.* 2002 [1989]: 2, 195). There is room for interpreting post-colonialism on the one hand through conventional reference to the chronological consecutiveness, to temporally induced repercussions, a period subsequent to colonialism and on the other, to the critically induced repercussions, cultures, discourses or meta-narratives positioned beyond/out of colonialism and the consequent experience, but which are not directly related to it, albeit under their indisputable and intensive influence (Blunt and McEwan 2002: 3). These two approaches, therefore, need not necessarily coincide, as the insistence on the temporally disparate stages of the colonial past and post-colonial present can mask the relations of both colonial and

neocolonial inequality and the constituting power relations between the colonizer and the colonized.

The conceptual focus on the historically located western expansionism and the convergent strict/isolated orientation at the colonial “scenography and choreography”, or the favoring of the time axis of differentiation makes the understanding of the World, planetary constellation, laden with the relapse of colonialism at the moment of its disappearance (McClintock 1996: 10-11, 12). Namely, the idea of post-colonialism is negatively defined as something that is not equivalent to colonialism. Forced into the frame of the European temporal one-dimensionality or vacuum, it has become the notional apology/affirmation/appendix for what it most opposed: the European linear progress script. Mindful of this kind of issues, Derek Gregory (2004: xiv-xv) uses a syntagm “the colonial present”, not to suggest some “frozen/petrified” foundationalist colonial continuum/reality, spanning from the nineteenth century to the present one, but to challenge the singular, coherent or univocal sense of Time and the corresponding teleological narration of History as an unstoppable, undisputed and ubiquitous progress of the omnipotent Reason, at the expense of its plurality, competitiveness and incoherence, “dappled” with a host of various temporalities, spatialities and tangent, transversal or parallel chronologies.

By “apocatastasis”, colonialism “recurrently” invokes or reviews the colonial past, as much as it represents its critical confrontation/opposition, thus being inextricably linked to the amnesic or nostalgic form/variety of memories. (*ibidem*: 9-11). On the one hand, techniques and technologies used by, as a rule, extremely physically violent metropolitan cultures to fabricate/falsify/code/represent colonial “terato-cultures” and label them as bizarre, extreme, “Grand-Guignol” different and absolutely alien “Other” are often forgotten. Although, it is worth noting that, historically speaking, there is a tendency to transform the absolute Other into domesticated Other for the sake of consolidating the imperial I (Spivak 1985: 253). On the other hand, the romanticized reminiscence is evident, as an exoticizing post-colonial nostalgia for modernity-devastated colonial cultures that involves a tendency to petrification/fetishization intended for metropolitan cultural consumption, as well as to the far more dangerous revival of the colonial spirit, a

demand for the restoration of colonial prerogatives and powers. If colonial amnesia and nostalgia are crossed with culture and power, as Gregory suggests (2004: 9), it is possible to find a pattern for the detection of modalities of memories as a relevant/unavoidable factor in the generation of colonial present (see Table 1).

Table 1. The relationship between memory and the colonial present  
(Source: Gregory 2004)

	Colonial amnesia	Colonial nostalgia
Culture	Degradation of other cultures as “other”	Idealization of other cultures as “other”
Power	Violence and subjugation	Domination and deference

If it is presumed that the prefix “post-” does not necessarily denote sequentiality, or a linearly/teleologically determined process with essentialized identities, then it is possible to talk about parallel narratives where post-colonial is not so much the signifier of subsequent subjectivity, that which follows the colonial experience, as much as an authentic/particular subjectivity of resistance or contrast to the imperializing/colonizing discourses and practices (Alva 1995: 245-246). The concept of postcoloniality is perceived as a mode of contestational/counterpoint awareness implying both pre-existing and current elements of subaltern/subordinating situation or context and insists on the re-articulation/revision of both antecedent/hereditary and operative/vital standards, practices and cultures of domination, containing the variable colonial legacy of dependence, but also questioning of the very logic underpinning the colonial constellation. The post-structuralist approach to post-coloniality thus favors genuine characteristics, identity positions/statuses, specific groups of people, but also individuals within them, in relation to the location or social system, any attempt at uninstalling/uprooting the authenticity of the location itself entails the risk to make the relations of domination abstruse and “esoteric”. The fact that both metropolises and colonies have been transformed/restructured under the influence of the process of colonisation/decolonisation does not indicate that they are post-colonially congruent. The formulation of a post-colonial “status” unfolds under the

simultaneous action in a specific economic, social, cultural and historical context, and as such, it is a geographic/spatial unicum (Loomba 2005: 22).

In so doing, it is worth noting that some authors, like Joanne Sharp (2009: 4-5), make a distinction between the concept of post-colonialism with and without a hyphen. When the hyphenated orthographic version is used, it is an exaggerated, ostentatious historical-spatial “fissure” between colonialism and post-colonialism, the colloquial understanding of the notion which, besides its emphasis on the period after the liberation from colonial rule, also geographically positions/locates/identifies particular post-colonial states. When the unhyphenated orthographic version is used, it is a perception including a critical-analytical approach in the decoding/deconstruction of the colonial matrix and alternative understanding or recoding/reconstruction of the world grammar. By basing its insights not only on economic and political parameters of colonialism, but also insisting on its cultural generation of a paradigmatic grasp of reality which does not end in the proclamation of independence, or physical decolonialisation, the concept ambivalently amalgamates the continuum of colonialism and the discontinuity with it.

### 3. Subaltern studies and the relationship between post-coloniality/post-colonialism and post-modernity/post-modernism

At any rate, unlike Homi Bhabha (1994), who bases his critique of imperial legacy on the inherent hybrid ambivalence of the concept of post-colonial “third-space”, Edward Said (2003 [1978]), who is critically focused on the discursive premises of articulation, disarticulation and rearticulation of the relation Occident-Orient, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1999), who basis his critical optics on combining Jacques Derrida’s deconstructive analytics/methodology with the textualized/strategized one of Karl Marx, showed some reserve to the term post-colonial. Said because of the overall systemic/teleological/eschatological attributes of the term and Spivak because of the greater degree of inclusiveness of the term “subaltern” (Ashcroft *et al.* 2002 [1989]: 198). The term “subaltern”, like

“hegemony”- from ideology different cultural transposition of bourgeois values into the default structural/genetic values of society, was first used by the Italian marxist Antonio Gramsci, interchangeably with the terms “subordinated” and “instrumental”, to indicate disunified and fragmented non-hegemonic groups or classes, marked by the fragmented and episodic history, which function only as allies of groups tending towards domination/hegemony, with the official or only valid history (Hoare and Smith 1991 [1971]: xiv/Gramsci 1991 [1971]: 52-55).

Within Subaltern studies, the concept extends to the general quality of subordination/obedience in the societies of South Asia, and we would also add, the Third World, South/Central America, Africa or Orient, but also Balkans,<sup>3)</sup> regardless of whether it is manifested through class, gender, age, religion or some other quality (Guha 1988: 35). Subaltern/submissive can therefore be defined as a heterogeneous concep covering all those overlooked, neglected, inferior, minor or marginalized, all those unrepresented and unrepresentable, a broadly diversified group exposed to the oppression of disinterested, apathetic, “cavalier” and indifferent dominators, their discourses/narratives and conceptual categories. Subalterns are not a sovereign/autonomous political subject capable of controlling its own fate, their heteronomous political will is falsified by the superior elite discourse of nationalism or meta-narrative of the bourgeois national liberation/independence, it actually represents its effect. The primary focus is on ignoring the socio-symbolic practice of subalterns in the domineering colonial discourse in a way that the detection/decoding of the algorithm of instrumentalized subaltern subject entails the detection/decoding of particular forms of resistance. It is a fluid and polyvalent “orthodoxy” of the subaltern identity whose resistance is still in self-constitution outside the bounds of prescribed organized resistance and notion of organizability. In additon, the theory of change as a point of functional inversion of sign systems is the most sharpened of all theoretical modalities of

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3) Of course, the post-colonial denotes a permanent, endogenous and exogenous imperial process of direct repression or indirect supression, frequently both, covering a wide spectrum of different societies, their institutions and discursive practices which, acting on groups and societies, cannot be correctly expressed either through the classification into the “First”, “Second” or “Third” or even “Fourth” (Manuel 1974) world, nor through an equally inadequate/wrong/manipulative qualifier of economic “underdevelopment”.

reading understood as an active transaction between the past and the future, opening the possibility for engagement/action. Hence, transactional reading is not a reduction/degrading of real life, perceived as a web of concepts/tropes of social texts, to mere pages in books (Spivak 1987: 198).

*Ergo*, the question of all questions is “can subalterns speak”, or “can subalterns put up resistance”, and the theoretical answer proffered by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is that in a colonial situation/context, where their political/discursive/narrative identities are determined by the system of political and economic representation, they have no history and this is simply impossible, so the full responsibility is shifted to the engagement of post-colonial intellectuals (Spivak 1988: 283, 287, 308; Morton 2003: 67; Loomba 2005: 192-204; Ashcroft, B. *et al.* 2013: 246). However, this is a specific kind of strategic, non-theoretical or non-universalist pro-marxist essentialism blended with the deconstructivist reading of the issue (Spivak 1990: 1-17; 2009 [1993]: 1-27). Although generic/essentialist/substantialist designation of the subaltern position is flawed, due to its reductionism and rigidity (even in the case of Marxist paradigm, which criticizes colonial exploitation from the position of universalising European experience), its strategic use makes it a convenient instrument/mechanism for assuming progressive and empowering positions in the political-intellectual field of collisions and arguments with the oppressive imperial power and homogenizing globalist forces. The insistence on the script of authenticity may be a crucial appeal for a number of inferiorized and subordinated societies/cultures in the sense of more valiant existence and self-recognition, but essentializing race/ethnicity/group in turn leads to social conservation/taxidermy, to a restrictive-reactionary obstruction of attempts to change the socio-politically hybridized *status quo*.

We should keep in mind that the pre-colonial history did not achieve its idealized/idyllic “authenticity” since, as a rule, it’s a fabricated mentality-cognitive installation of the disciplining colonial panopticon. The mapping of authenticity by return to the pseudo-intact primordial/archetypal, nativistically romanticized original state is inevitably passed through an array of colonial cultural filters, softwares and requirements. This by no means implies that post-coloniality

abstracts/invalidates colonial history, but that it has a specific tangent relation to it, which makes historically valid contentions regarding the political, ideological, military or economic emancipation or oppression impossible to realize in any space. Namely, it is not the discovery of historical foundations, but the liminal zone of “catachrestic reinscription”, zone of inversion, dislocation and acquisition/“reoccupying” of the colonial value coding apparatus (Prakash 1992: 8; Spivak 1996: 206).

Colonial hybridity/hybridization, unlike the post-enlightenment social situation of the colonial center, which is equal to the prevalence of European centripetality in the construction of meta-narratives of History, where power must be automatically visible and ascertainable and thus, a “part” representing the “whole” is the “whole”, resting on the premise of discriminatory practice of colonial rule, rejection of compactness of collectivity, where the colonizing part paradoxically represents the colonized whole through a vertical/diametrical difference (Bhabha 1985: 154-155). Colonial power is not generated by multiplying/cloning but by muting/variation, the revaluation of colonial identity is realized through the iteration of its differentiating effects and potentials, it is not only a mimetic/repetitive but also a discriminatory process. Contrary to attempts at artificial, falsified or simulated equilibrium of colonial hybridity/syncretism initiated by the dominator, since the repertoire of the colonizer’s essentialism is never thoroughly “essentialized”, the ambivalence of hybridity/syncretism can serve not only to intellectually “provoke” the stability of the Western/allochthone ideas, concepts and views through decoding/reinterpreting, with the decoding key in indigenous/allochthone/vernacular ideas, concepts and views, but also for the promotion of differences or for a complete negation/discarding of the possibilities of their resolution. In colonizing discourse, hybridization perpetuates difference for the purpose of the unattainable ideal of “representational identity”, it is not only the impracticable/traumatic/“schizophrenic” position of a disadvantaged colonial subject with the “black skin” and “white mask” (Fanon 2008 [1952]), but also a mode of functioning/manifestation of the disavowed perfection of colonial power and, as such, a “narative fracture/inconsistency” profiling the type, form and rhythm of resistance.

For some authors (Ahmad 1987: 5, 1995: 1; Dirlik 1994: 341, 342, 348, 1998: viii, 64), post-colonialism is a product/“meander”/offshoot of post-modernism in the context of the Third World since, like post-modernism, it is subsumed by the “cultural logic” of late capitalism (Jameson 1991). *Ergo*, post-colonialism is integrated with the post-structuralist/post-modernist rhetoric of the (quasi-) decentered subject of the First World and, declaratively, with the fragmented vernacular/local, but in the final outcome, similar universalist aspirations and epistemological sumptions. For Kwame Anthony Appiah (1991: 348-352), the prefix “post” in the term “post-colonialism” does not correspond to that in the term “post-modernism”, as it indicates some sort of cleaning action, detoxication of space contaminated by colonialism, an activity that can be characterized rather as post-realistic, post/anti-nativist and/or transnational/post-nationalist than a strategy of national post-modernization or a politics of post-modernization of the post-colonial language/script. According to Appiah (*ibidem*: 348), post-colonialism is a script of westernized, comprador intelligence (writers and thinkers) who, like a mechanism for the perpetuation of otherness, mediate in the trade in cultural goods between the western capitalist center and the periphery, or, as corrected by Arif Dirlik (1994: 356) due to the disappearance of the context in which the comprador qualifier has significance, post-colonialism is a script of the intelligence of global capitalism. It is no longer about the nostalgic reclamation of the national unicum, return to national loyalty, but class self-consciousness through the formulation of resistance and the critique of ideology and the system that generated/produced it.

In general, one should be skeptical/reserved to the inevitable, pre-given or rigid paradigmatic separation to the marxist perception of the Third World and the post-modernist perception of the First World, as well as to the idea that post-modernism always implies the complete historiographic discrepancy/break-up with the modernist era. Unless it is an exclusive philosophical matrix/code, post-modernism suggests mutual repositioning, reformulation, reorganization and reconfiguration of the local and global scale, the need for a new intellectual lens and/or instrument for understanding of the world (Loomba 2005: 209). Premature/authoritarian, apriori attribution of anti-marxism to post-colonialism, only because

of its association to post-modernism, means losing sight of the fact that marxism itself is not some solid conceptual cast, totalizing knowledge for the formatting and formulation of social realities, but that issues related to ideology, structure, conflicts and historical changes are (re)discussed, (re)configured and (re)defined as contingent/accidental, or that, at the level of fundamental political orientation, there is, if not direct, then certainly indirect continuity between the marxist and post-modernist position (Seshadori-Crooks 1995: 65). For all its negative focus on the modernism of enlightenment, for Spivak (1987: 169, 1999: 320), post-modernism still reproduces modernity in another context, it is neo-colonial *per se*, or a kind of balancing of neo-colonial interpretations through the inverse reiteration of modernity.

Given the fact that the wide acceptance of the “post-colonial” concept coincides with the obliteration of the “Third World” paradigm, we cannot consider that its primary function was to cover the terminological vacuum, the *tabula rasa* in the relevant sphere of social studies/analyses. By selectively absorbing impulses of post-modernism/post-modernity, post-colonialism/post-coloniality merges two mutually competitive genres of “post” thinking, considerably contributing to internal tensions, ambiguities, evasiveness and abstruseness of the concept itself. On the one hand, post-colonialism is an intellectual substitution of obsolete philosophical, social political or cultural discourses, the transgression of anti-colonial nationalist narratives, reverse Orientalism, which, as a rule, end absurdly in invoking Reason and Progress institutionalized by colonialism, while, on the other hand, the “post-colonial” has a simplified chronological dimension of the periods after colonialism, or anti-colonial awakening, de-colonizing national struggle of the Third World (Shohat 1992: 101-102). According to Graham Huggan (2001: 6), post-colonialism represents the value politics/regime based on the cluster of incoherent, loose opposite practices grounded in the extremely eclectic methodology of cultural “revolt” and the aesthetics of mostly textual, partially localized resistance, antithetical to the global processes of commodification, while post-coloniality refers to a market-oriented system of symbolic and material exchange, where even the language of resistance may be manipulated, used and re-consumed, it is a mechanism of regulating values within

the commodity exchange system of high capitalism. Partial similarity to some meanings of the notions of post-modernism and post-modernity is evident.

To insist that “post” is unsuspectedly “after”, the sequential succession from the past, but also precedence from the future, would mean to take away from all “posts” their liminal contestational and metamorphosing “in-between” space on the borders of something that is only apparently amputated as singular, monolithic and homogenized, since our present manifests itself as discontinuity rather than the rupture with the past and the future. It is a negation/repulsion of the idea of temporal linearity, or the foundationalism and essentialism of teleologically positioned historical narratives, in favor of their multifarious and conflicting, as well as parallel narrative equivalents. In that sense, post-coloniality denotes less the subjectivity as a time successor of the colonial experience that follows the colonial era, than the revolted/bipolar subjectivity that is diametrically opposed to the oppressive/drastring, or imperializing/colonizing discourses and practices (Alva 1995: 245).

According to Gyan Prakash (1992: 15-16), the insistence on the heterogeneity of colonial histories is erroneously confused with the postmodern pastiche. Namely, the postcolonial criticism of heterogeneity does not reside in the glorification of plurivocality/polyphony and multiplicity of the decentered subject, but at the level of heterogeneity of colonial power compared to its own foundational oppositions. He argues that Subaltern studies/postcolonial criticism draws its strength from the catachrestic discursive mixture “of Marxism, post-structuralism, Gramsci and Foucault, the modern West and India, archival research and textual criticism”, where, in the process of combining, each listed narrative angle/component undergoes some change and where the constituting act of translation, as the most important point in defining Subaltern studies, is unfolding along the line/relation outside-inside and inside-outside, but also inward between the lines (Prakash 1994: 1490; cf. Slemon 1994: 16-17; cf. Venn 2000: 45-47; cf.). Therefore, it would be utterly wrong to single out any particular perspective/approach/paradigm as exclusive and omnipotent analytical, epistemological, ethical or political bearing point in the representation of post-coloniality, just as it would be wrong to think that any particular perspective automatically conflicts

with all others. Such non-compactness or non-homogeneity can be understood as a tendentious expression of the need for the prophylaxis of the post-colonial conceptual space from colonialism as the discursive apparatus/protocol in engineering the status of the subject as “doomed” to some fixed types of submissive presentation. However, no matter how successful complexity, multidimensionality/multidisciplinarity and nuance may be as post-colonial discursive strategies, they certainly entail problems/confusions related to the definition of content, scope and degree of importance of post-colonial studies.

*Summa summarum*, the real question is cultural-translatory om nature: are subalterns heard and, if they are heard are they listened to, are they translated properly (Maggio 2007: 438-439)? Is it a homolingual or heterolingual translatory strategy/situation (Sakai 1997: 2)? Indeed, based on this paper, has the academic scene ever attempted/allowed the possibility to explore the cultural/social/political fusional-fissional energy of the Balkan discourses/narratives from the position of their self-articulated and plural cultural/social/political grammars, from a genuine Balkan web of perspectives, explanations, symbols, texts, arguments, identities and findings (transformable an transferrable) everyday practices and routines, unlimited by the external categories of the predefined and monological eurocentric way, space and time of evaluation? Namely, is it possible to imagine a textual-cultural situation in which the metaphorico-allegoric relationship between the Europe trope and the Balkans trope is a tangential transmission, in a manner that the tangent point, or tangency is a gentle, very small or quantum definition of the sense by the original, while the majority of the translation of this subtle contact is its free/infinite “Balkan-linguistic” unpacking, inscription, reading and (re) constitution (cf. Benjamin 2002: 261)? Is it possible to imagine a situation in which the liminal/hybrid Balkans is Europe without the neo/post-colonial cultural imperatives and dictates?

#### 4. Fluid space: (re)construction/(re)invention/(re)formulation of the Balkans

First of all, it is worth noting a few highly relevant considerations by Naki

Sakai (1997: 153-177) concerning the very understanding or universality and particularity of the concept of West. Namely, the state of modernity is *a priori* contrasted with its historical antecedent- the state of non-modernity/pre-modernity, and this paired/dual modality of “ontic” discrepancy constitutes the discursive formula for the translation of historical qualifiers into geopolitical ones and *vice-versa*: the modern West is counterpositioned to the pre-modern non-West. Such a concept does not signal that the West has never been in a pre-modernity phase, or that non-West will never be modernized, it simply precludes the possibility of simultaneous binary existence of opposition to the pre-modern West and the modern non-West. The spatial perception of modernity along the lines of geographic divergence West/non-West is not justified except by the fabrication of putative, pre-given, unquestioned and evident unity of the West which masks the historiographic factography of its transformation and expansion over the last two hundred years. It has, on the one hand, become a subject constructed/unified/uniformed as discourse, but on the other, also an object that is discursively constituted, a synonym for regions, communities and people who are culturally, politically or economically superior to other regions, communities and people (*ibidem*: 154). The West is not only a cluster of some specific qualities like geographic area, identity, style, ethnicity or market, it is also self-declared as a rejection of any kind restrictions, namely by transcendence of all potential particularizations. By refusing the identification or recognition by others, the West is in a perpetual process of controlled metamorphoses, self-generated (re) codifications of semantic matrices of what it is or wants to be, thus providing for itself a universal position/role of identifier or recognizer, rather than the identified or recognized.

With respect to the above, we should mention that Edward Said (2003 [1978]: 4-5) begins his seminal volume *Orientalism* with a general observation that Orient is not a pre-given/extant natural phenomenon, but is discursively designed/constructed, i.e. “orientalized”, that it is a genuine imaginary, set or network of, by definition, rigidly dogmatized ideas or doctrines with the authoritative language, grammar and history. It is less of a spatial framework, but rather a heuristic/logical/cognitive formula or a way of knowing, an *episteme* (ἐπιστήμη) with the

inherent tendency to impose its own norms, protocols and rules as exclusive/orthodox/supreme criteria of truth and objectivity, knowledge thus being an ideological complement to colonial power. This in no way implies that the discursive scheme of Orientalism can be automatically transposed into the discursive scheme of Balkanism, just as it is absolutely impossible to constitute Balkanism by the a priori amputation of Orientalism. At any rate, the Balkans, as a “powder-keg”, a trope from the beginning of the twentieth century, as a state/process of the radical political fragmentation/partialization/stratification and the consequent antagonization and confrontation, but also as a more obscure pejorative term “Balkanization”, semantically inaugurated after the First and Second Balkan War (1912-1913) as a synonym for primitive/uncivilized/devolutional, are two most frequent discourses, meta-narratives, metaphores, allegories, stereotypes, codes or algorithms of the imperial Occidental geopolitical strategy/paradigm of monochromatic representation or a “representational system” (*ibidem*: 202-203) by which an area, a spatial/territorial/geographic concept has been culturally-politically-semiotically created, essentialized, homogenized, objectivized, clichéed, textualized and, for quite a long time, has also been (self)understood and thereby also hegemonically dominated and directed as a heteronomous/hierarchized spiritual profile, “world view”, standard, pattern or way of “common-sense/everyday” learning, thinking and reasoning (Kovacs 1941: 39; Brauch 1983: 75; Bakic-Hayden 1995: 920-921; Gallagher 2001: 2, 10; Cioroianu 2002: 212; Goldsworthy 1998: 4, 2002: 32; Hammond 2002: 7; Todorova 2009: 3; Grumeza 2010: v; Saric *et al.* 2010: xvi; Lazarevic Radak 2013: 12-13).

Toponymically, the Balkan region has until the nineteenth century been more or less *terra incognita*. In German-speaking countries, the term Balkan Peninsula was first launched in 1808 by geographer Johann August Zeune, who, according to contemporary practice, named it after the most well-known (Bulgarian) mountain range- Balkan Mountains (by analogy to the Iberian/Pyrenees or Apennine peninsulas), previously named Haemus after the blood shed by the snake-like mythological monster (*haima*) Typhon in the battle with the supreme Hellenic god Zeus (Jezernik 2007: 1; Todorova 2009 [1997]: 26; Ogden 2013:

163; Stoianovich 2015 [1994]: 1). In the Anglophone lexic sphere, the term Balkan/Balcan saw its inauguration in the works of Frederick Calvert (1767: 149), Lord of Baltimore, Robert Walsh (1828) and George Thomas Keppel (1831, 1831a), Earl of Albemarle. The ancient toponym for its western part was Illyricum and its eastern part was known as Thrace, while the etymology of the word Balkans is associated with its Turkish equivalent, a word derived from Persian (Stoianovich 2015 [1994]: 1), denoting a mountain, mountain range, wooded mountain or passage through densely wooded or rocky mountain (Todorova 2009 [1997]: 26).

Theoretically, the territorial, physical, “macro-relief” or geographic aspect of the Balkan Peninsula should encompass/cover land south of the line drawn between the northern edges of the Adriatic and Black Seas. However, that border of identity differentiation, similarly to the geographic definition of Central Europe, never fully coincided with some constant number of state or ethnic entities, so what makes up the Balkans was radically subjectivized in a manner that makes it susceptible to symbolic oscillations of differently formulated geopolitical narratives/requirements (cf. Kostanick 1972: 427). In that sense, the notion of the “real” Balkans includes a whole spectrum of various combinations: from ex-Yugoslav states, Bulgaria and Albania, to ex-Yugoslav states, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece and Turkey. Impossibility to determine a precise spatial demarcation between the Balkans and the rest of Europe caused geographic criteria to be replaced with multiple symbolic interpretations, so the Balkans features rather as a trope, discourse/meta-narrative, text or form of representation than as a fixed spatial unit/region.

During the eighteenth and the nineteenth century when emancipating national movements were initiated in most Balkan states leading, through insurrection and uprising, to the gradual dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, most western travelers perceived/interpreted/defined the area in an ultra-infamous/ultra-pejorative narrative mode, as an obscure, barbaric, immature, inferior, violent, magico-pagan, backward, chaotic or morally depraved antipode to the narratively glorified, enlightened, cultivated, progressive, modern, pacified, orderly, superior and civilized West. Together with Eastern Europe, the Balkans narratively denoted

the first European Orient and was interpreted according to the previous historically formulated/articulated European colonial-expansionist cultural-political paradigm which began with the era of great geographic discoveries (from the second half of the fifteenth to the first half of the sixteenth century). Thus, according to Captain Harry de Windt (1907: 15), correspondent of the then liberal *Westminster Gazette*, the peripheral/animalistic/marginalized Balkan countries, less familiar to an average Briton than the “Darkest Africa”, were best expressed by the syntagm “savage Europe”: “Because [...] the term accurately describes the wild and lawless countries between the Adriatic and Black Seas”. Variations of the colonial leitmotif are also encountered in the writings of Martin Conway (1908: xiii-xiv) who noted that: “Travellers and missionaries have made us at home amongst African natives. But it is safe to assert that the average man understands nothing whatever about people and affairs in the Balkan Peninsula”; or in H. Charles Woods’ (1911: 5) assertion that: “The Balkan Peninsula and Asia Minor may always be the scene of insurrection or massacre, on account of the many diverse peoples who inhabit the different districts of which they are composed”.

Although problematic in terms of credibility (Wolff 1994: 81), the first “serious” travelogue predecessor of Karl May,<sup>4)</sup> author Joseph Marshall (1772: 126, 243) made some observations concerning Russia and Poland, but also illustrative/indicative for the Western meta-narrative of the Balkans that we will also add. Even if they are complete fabrications/forges/fiction/improvisation, they are also a reflection and filter, as well as the invention and creation of the prevalent text/discourse of the respective epoch. Namely, by uncritically/arbitrarily side-stepping the systemically framed (“plantation”) slavery component of contemporary Europe, Marshall noted that in both Poland and Russia, the slave status of peasants prevailed, while in Russia’s case, the level of debasement, oppression and abjection was greater than in the Polish version of tyranny. Overall, it makes sense to say that, regardless of very clear-cut colonial line of

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4) One of the most widely read authors, German adventure/travel novel writer from the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century who wrote about the American Old West/Wild West and Middle East, without ever having set foot in any of them. However, when it comes to the Middle East, his works were not completely improvised since they relied on the travel and geographic literature of the time.

demarcation/gap between the dominators and the dominated, or the imperializers and the imperialized, Western travelogue writers were more favourably disposed to the conquerors than to the subordinated population (Hammond 2004: xii). Simultaneously, in the late nineteenth century, an inverted narrative started to emerge - a narrative of reverse colonialization, including both geopolitical fear from the colonization of the civilized part of the planet by its rudimentary/primitive counterpart, as well as a sense of guilt, where reverse colonialization represents a critique of the ideological concept of imperialism, a never administered, but fully justified sanction for the colonial incriminations and inculpations (Arata 1990: 623). It should be noted that this “feedback” or law of “colonial action and reaction”, is not some form of resistance of the colonized, but an immunological reaction of the colonial center. Only with Rebecca West’s book *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey Through Yugoslavia* (1994 [1941]) a need was voiced for the rearticulation/reformulation/problematicization of traditional European bifurcation to the barbaric/backward East and civilized/developed West. Although West’s entire cartography is based more on the subjective/introspective interpretation than on describing Europe, invention of the Balkans and attribution of its meanings, it is still an indispensable contribution to the contemporary and historical spatial positioning of both the Balkans and Europe.

At any rate, the renaissance contrasting binomial South Europe, as a symbol/construct/algorithm of the civilized, developed and progressive, *vis-à-vis* North Europe, as a symbol/construct/algorithm of the barbaric, rudimentary and regressive has since the period of Enlightenment been replaced by the abstract interpretative binomial of East Europe- West Europe (Wolff 1994: 5). East Europe and the Balkans, featured not only as constructs which antithetically defined West Europe, but also as mediating, transitory locations, cultural buffer zones, which were ambivalently embraced or rejected by the dictate/invention of the European cultural “epicenter/hypocenter”, treated and positioned as stigmatized social mediators between Europe and the Orient, exposed to civilizational, intellectual-spiritual “contamination/intoxicaton”: the strategy/platform of semi-orientalization (*ibidem*: 7), or tactic/programme of semi-balkanization. With this

in mind, the liminal Balkans can be understood/perceived more as a partially “acceptable, private alien-extra”, as an “autohton/endogenous marginal”, as a “friendly/hybrid internal Other”, than as a “complete, total, diametrically opposite, alochtone/exogenous alien”, a “hostile external Other” (cf. Stojanovic 2015: 58-73). Such a position, although presenting the “primordial”, proto-European imaginary of backwardness (Wolff 1994: 9), does not exclude the possibility of exerting a considerable influence on the local and global historical courses (Fleming 2000: 1229).

The paradigm/project of the Balkans, as the first percept/experience/epitomy/practice of the European Other can be contrasted by the paradigm/project of the Balkans as an integral part of the first Europe (Stoianovich 2015 [1994]: 2-3). Contrary to the western/northern narrative optics of Europe and the Balkans, stemming from the excommunicating capacities of the narrative mix of economic, political and military power, it is a cultural perspective of articulating Europe on Hellenic postaments, a perspective of incorporating the Balkans read in relation to ancient, classical Greece, whose avoidance or disregard would have devastating effects for the very construct/imaginary of Europe. It could be said that the current use of the terms Orient and East is not strictly associated with Asia, that it is more connotative than denotative and that we can register several overlapping formulations/articulations/constructions of the Orient, or East, as a meta-narrative of Other (Inden 2000 [1990]: 49, 50). In that vein, the term East is still used, for example, to denote former communist countries, while its counter-term West, aside from the countries of Western Europe and the United States of America, inconsistently also includes developed Asian countries such as Japan.

## 5. Balkan discursive/narrative constellations: from Orientalism to Post-colonialism

Milica Bakic-Hayden and Robert Hayden (1992: 2) think that the linguistic structures of colonial political and economic subordination don't disappear with its institutional premises, but that they, in the post-colonial constellation, become “accepted” power discourses. Not only is Orientalist vocabulary a vector of

colonial rhetoric for the suppression of the East by the West, but it is also a hegemonistic project symbiotically installed and internalized by those it is intended to control. When the focus is on the Balkans, orientalist variations are in use (Bakic-Hayden 2006), as a phenomenon of “nesting of orientalism” (Milica Bakic-Hayden (1995: 918), or the reproduction, perpetuation or multiplication, namely, recursion or fractalization, allegory of “Manichean dualism” of the binary opposition relation Europe-Balkans as an authentic post-colonial code.<sup>5)</sup> So, this interpretation not only presupposes orientalist meta-narrative in contexts not featuring a classic colonial experience/structure, but also implies an intra-spatial, graded coding of orientalist bifurcation. Thus, for the West, Asia is more East or Other than Eastern Europe, for Eastern Europe the Balkans is the “easternmost”/superlative east, while every Balkan state, in turn, has its own gradient of “orientalization/Easternization”. Not only are Balkan countries the extreme/ultra “Balkan/Orient/Other” to each other, as a field of declarative, publicly promoted orientalization and discrimination, but the stigmatization/labelling also happens at the level of internal self-racist/self-chauvinist (Russell-Omaljev 2016: 209-221) culture of each, the narrative “Balkan virus” is pandemic.

More or less, the above implies the need for a transcendental/metaphysical Balkan script, for the strategic invention of some subalternized, fabricated Balkan ethno-racio-cultural type, mentality, character, topos or identity, a “hologram-like” *homo balkanicus*: regardless of the Balkans’ actual existence and discursive elaboration, it is necessary that it is “(re)invented and narratively (re)balkanized”, since the representation of its historical legacy is at least as important as any legacy itself. On this scale, the Balkans is bivalent/bifocal, given its two equally problematic and contradictory perspectives. Externally, it is a cultural “Procrustean

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5) Phraseologically/colloquially, Manichaeism, the name of an ancient christian-pagan sect’s teaching, refers to a simplified situation of confronting two diametrically adverse agendas/options (Baker-Brian 2011: 1). The “Manichean dualism” allegory reflects the imperialist/colonialist model of power, as well as the cognitive map based on interchangeable binary opposites like: whites/blacks, good/bad, superiority/inferiority, civilization/barbarism, intelligence/emotions, rationality/sensuality, self/otherness or subject/object; phenomenological, physical, potentially “neutral” differences are escalated to the level of metaphysical differences and pervade all aspects of the imperial mentality/character (JanMohamed 1985: 61, 63).

bed”: an imposed/fabricated/falsified complex or bloc of unified/isomorphous conflict-prone Balkan states and civilizationally “rudimentary” Balkan societies and ethnicities, arbitrarily imputed or amputated marginalizing qualities completely “homomeric” for the Euro-centric (post-)imperial projection/creation. Internally, it is a discursive formation, a cluster of rigorously perpetuated, disjunctive, antithetical and antagonistic identity narratives totally invisible for the (post-)colonial vector/perspective/vortex of absorption or assimilation. The Balkans is thus discursively both visible and invisible, both present and absent, accepted and rejected, activated and deactivated, a “façade” and the “armature”. It is a pro-ontological discourse of simultaneous sameness and difference (cf. Fleming 2000: 1219).

Dismissing the post-colonial syntagm “provincialization/off-centring of Europe”, due to the “de facto” spatialized Balkans-within-Europe, Balkans as an integral part of Europe, debatably eliding the interpretation of Europe as a profoundly internalized, installed or engraved imaginary formula that stereotypes/essentializes/objectivizes the European contemplation of political modernization (Chakrabarty 2000: 3-4; Todorova (2009 [1997]: 17), it still leaves the possibility of the out-of-Europe Balkans. This out-of-Europe Balkans, of course, with its pseudo-heuristic status of “semi-colony”, is not the product of spatial specification, but in fact a self-proclaimed and self-professed sphere of autonomy, self-awareness and self-affirmations of liminal/transitory/converting distinction with considerable hermeneutic implications. In that sense, the discourses on sameness and difference are joined by the discourse on ambiguity. The Balkanism meta-narrative is not solely about the external sameness or induced identity difference (everyone in the Balkans is the same at least in their wish to be different) it is also intrinsically unstable, fluid/mutable in identity, more about the (European-metropolitan) identity/cultural ambiguity than about (European-metropolitan) identity/cultural counter-position. In that sense, departing from the external view of Europe as a universe grounded in the orientalist/post-colonial vocabulary, as already noted, Balkanization can also be perceived through the internal perspective of “firmly” distanced pluriverses of parallel self-sufficient projects/programs/platforms/imaginaries about how every Balkans has its own Balkan

ghetto/periphery, but also its separately interpreted Europe/metropolis, as well as through the complex holistic multiverse, an interpretively generated European reality consisting of convergent or divergent projects/programs/platforms/imaginaries of the “soft” logic of coexistence of different Balkans within one Europe/metropolis.

Todorova classifies the study of the Balkans *per se*, terming it as Balkanism, as a separate discipline, as an authentic historical situation/context incorporating the study of discursive presuppositions/premises for any knowledge about the Balkans as an entity, or understanding of the Balkans aligned with specific conceptual/genealogical “amalgam” of coterminous/overlapping or separate/sequential historical periods, traditions and legacies (Todorova 1994: 454; 2010: 184-185). Contrary to Said’s (1985: 105-106; 2003 [1978]: 339) evaluation of his own text *Orientalism* as the universal critical perspective oriented at the intellectual quintessence of the West through the dramatic script that in the final outcome/instance leads to the dilution of identity differences, to the cultivation of the (non)/anti-totalizing and (non)/anti-systemic, or decentered/de-metropolitized awareness that can be integrated into capitalist modernity, Todorova’s point of departure (2010: 19) suggests the affirmation of constitutive differences and paradoxes as decisive factors in the representation of the Balkans as imputed liminal/transitory ambiguity (variants within the Western type), as opposed to the imputed, analytically acute but, in the ultimate “meta-instance” surmountable, Said-ishly identified typological bipolar disparateness of the West and Orient.

The cognitive/speculative architecture of the Balkans is, therefore, a unique meta-narrative/discourse which, at the level of study, cannot be moderated/reduced as either sub-type, mode or sub-category of Orientalism, or to the textual “mutation” of orientalist/post-colonial rhetorical formulas. Balkanism may interface with Orientalism only through the “generic” conversion between any meta-narrative/power discourse or language of modernization, progress, civilization, race, ethnicity, religion, etc. (Todorova 2009 [1997]: 11). However, contrary to the strict and implacable segregation from Orientalism, Todorova (2010: 191-192, fn. 4) actually pleads for the affirmation/apology of Balkanism on account of its conceptual/analytical distinctiveness sufficient for the autonomous

creation of an original discipline with a differentiated research framework and agenda. However, due to the ontologizing emphasis on the western aversion/resentment for the Balkans' incomplete self, or Balkan hybridity and mongrelization, Mary Neuburger (2004: 5), still contends that Maria Todorova's stance is characterized both by the full segregation of Balkanism and its greater perniciousness than Orientalism. Consistent with her post-colonial approach, hybridity and mongrelization as important features of the external and internal perception of the ontological and metaphorical Balkans, are not mutually excluding but rather, mutually invigorating.

The research particularity of Balkanism, or the Balkans as a separate spatial, cultural and political entity is premised on the merging of different elements, like (cf. Todorova 1994: 455; cf. 2009 [1997]: 11-20, 62): (1) the lack of unambiguous colonial legacy, the colonizers and the colonized, or the colonizers' undisputed hegemonic cultural elements (distancing from the Ottoman and Habsburg empires as late colonial empires), but also academic interest, literature and knowledge proportionate to those dealing with and concerning Orientalism (intellectual focus/invention of the Balkans dates only from late eighteenth century and until recently, was materialized mainly in travel literature of adventurous or travelogue nature); (2) the tripartite confessional concept including not only the discrepancies between Christians and Muslims, but also differentiation/fractures between orthodoxy and catholicism; (3) reality, brutality and poverty of the Balkans in contrast to the ethereality, opulence and exoticism of the abstract Orient (unlike the ecstatic-corybantic nature of the Orient, in its most favourable interpretations, the Balkans is a regression to simplicity and basic instincts/impulses of Nature and a distant hint of the Orient's subtlety, hence *Lux Balcanica est umbra Orientis*, or Balkan light is oriental shadow); (4) different endogenous/exogenous evaluations of the geopolitical/geostrategic importance of the Balkans separate from the Orient; or (5) the existence of several different Balkan self-identities rooted in the uncompromising/ "encapsulated" Balkan perception of the Orient as a definite Other.

In the Balkans' case, the political is not only substance but also a method of representation, political differentiation does not correspond to the methodological

differentiation (Bjelic 2002: 5). The implication of this is that the discursively uniform, decentered/demetropolized unifying awareness does not necessarily preclude orientalism, that it can result in the reification of ethnicity and shared while neglecting, for instance, class and gender elements in relation to the representative complex, but also in the generation of new margins and peripheries for the benefit of both pro-European dictate and exercise of national power and that consequently, such fundamentalism, petrification and homogenization have to be dismissed in favour of the full and thorough epistemologically dimensioned historicity in the sense of contingency/situation/context (cf. Dirlik 1998: 12; cf. Ahmad 1992: 172, 184). In other words, although post-modern world perception is inherently hybrid, overlapping and interpenetrating, the possibility of a decolonized culture becoming a univocal/monosemic rhetorical program, of its assuming the hegemonic functions of the abandoned imperial cultural coding, should be avoided.

In her case analysis of Great Britain, exploring a wide range of genres - English literature from romanticism to horror-novels and travel books, Vesna Goldsworthy (1998: x, 2) starts from the premise that, regardless of the absence of real, or traditional-economic, colonial Balkan “conquista”, characteristic for the Ottoman rule, Occidental imperial conquering of the region took place through the cultural-textual exploitation of the Balkans as the alterity resource of literary-entertainment industries. Such Balkan perspective has become a specific identity paradigm, grammar or “semanteme”. In that sense, the submissive narrative coding, i.e. textual instruments or repertoires were employed to establish the “anastatic” (self-) dialogue of the superposed/prevalent imperial culture, mainly with itself. It is an imaginative, metaphoric-figurative and/or stylistic colonization and its consequent textual practice that, by formulating new conceptual algorithms/codes/sceneries, reconfigure the existing patterns of thinking and thus, performatively open the space for the “most direct” impact on reality, as methodological-epistemological pattern/procedure which is universally applicable, but which is extremely/frontally evident in the Balkans due to the deficit of conventional/classical/concrete imperialism (*ibidem*: 211). In so doing, the Truth about the Balkans oscillates depending on the number of those seeking to promote their perspectives as

unanimously/uniformly true, and is “aleatory” and “apostolic” and thus what seems to be the only effective aspect of this interpretative conjunction is its focus on the imagological flexibility/dynamics of metamorphosing, but also clichéd perspectives and visions in the understanding/presentation of the truth.

By indicating that Said never presents colonialism as a purely noumenological position, but as a “concremental” interaction between the intellectual-spiritual pattern and the political and economic, or imperial, system/structure of domination, rule or exploitation, as a formative material component of European culture. Katherine Fleming (2000: 1223) immanently criticizes Goldsworthy for her excessive/subversive argumentative over-reliance on Said. Namely, whereas for Said the matrix of representation implies a permanent conversational interpenetration with the imperial structure/apparatus, for Goldsworthy the matrix of representation is *per se* an imperial structure/apparatus/dispositive. That, of course, does not mean that the imperial imagination is pure imperial delusion or provincial confabulation. We should reiterate that the perception of the Balkans as the Balkans is a direct consequence of the two centuries-long history of colonial/imperial engagement of the West both in both its imagination and invention, in the continuous production of its controlled typological spiritual subalternation, cultural and economic inferiority.

Even nowadays, with the circulation of attempt at axiological recoding of the connotatively more “neutral”, or “politically indifferent, correct or nuanced”, the promotion of the narrative strategy of Southeast Europe, the compromising/degrading, or perhaps post-colonial semantic zone has not been completely evaded or annihilated. We are seeing the process of re-balkanization, or never fully completed de-balkanization of the term Southeastern Europe. In short, not only is the Balkans balkanized, but this is also true of the academic, as well as colloquial exculpation of the term Southeast Europe, perhaps most evident in the introduction of a highly problematic concept of the “Western Balkans”. It would therefore be wrong to think that re-balkanization is just an inadequately carried out symbolic protocol/procedure/platform of the enlightenment de-balkanization, or Europeanization. Indeed, the narrative of de-balkanization/europeanization has simultaneously produced re-balkanization itself, since it reaffirmed the binomial/

bifocal polarization as a condition and consequence of its discursive unipolar/monofocal “mission”. According to Andrew Hammond (2004: xv-xvii), we can identify two ways of analysing the relations between the Balkans and the West, taking account of the fact that this is the Anglo-American imaginary/perspective/context of what makes the Western civilization: (1) through the use of knowledge and power, or control systems/apparatuses based on/enabled by the lens of the Western civilizational bloc; and (2) through the observation of mutually empowering/intertwined/interactive discourses, the discursive mosaic/cluster made up of both pro-Western perception and the autochtone, Balkan conceptualizations of self-representation, as well as of the Balkan representation of the West and the Western composition of self-perception. Not only did the Balkans represent an “occidental” algorithm/protocol, but it also proactively intensified/affirmed the identity of the West.

*Summa summarum*, the Balkans can be approached from two theoretical-methodological perspectives: “orthodoxy” ontological, that we can also designate as genealogical, the historical legacy perspective and “heterodoxy” figurative one (through metaphoric, allegorical, personifying, metaleptic, parabolic, synecdochal, metonymic or some other figurative component/function dependent on the interpretative perspective), that we can term as the perspective of post-colonial cultural hegemony. The first perspective is best reflected in Maria Todorova’s (1994, 2009 [1997], 2010) concept which implies that if the Balkans is elaborated from the angle of distinctive, unhomogenized and unessentialized, overlapping historical legacies (Byzantine, Habsburg, Ottoman or socialist-communist), it implies that, with their disappearance, through a gradual processual transmutation (whatever its duration), it becomes integrated with the European institutional order/paradigm, manifested as a multilayered discursive “palimpsest” made of differently formulated entities. In that case, the “Balkanization of the Balkans” loses its substance which becomes permanently eclipsed, dissolved or extinct. In so doing, Todorova (2009 [1997]: 195; 2010: 179) argues that the Ottoman and Habsburg empires cannot be regarded as colonial powers due to the absence of: (1) institutional and legal discrepancy between the metropolis and the periphery; (2) stable/isolated colonized entities; (3) civilizational-enlightenment mission; and (4)

hegemonic cultural sediment in colonized societies.

When we debate the latter perspective, we must first note that it arises as an expression of discontent with the meta-narrative matrices and theoretical models of the paradigms of modernization, development and the world systems approach, as a shift from the sociologically/economically pointed analyses towards cultural/semiotic/discursive/narrative ones, or to post-structural/post-modern analytical focuses on the installing, re-installing and de-installing of power (cf. Loomba *et al.* 2005a: 34). Leaving aside without disregarding the disputable credibility of the constant body of objections concerning the relations between empiricism/positivism/factography/materialism on the one hand, and discourse/narrative/culture/symbolic order, on the other, since post-colonial paradigm at least reformulates the ways of academic interpenetration of social and economic parameters and new aesthetic/art forms, discursive histories, space imaginaries, narrative pro-ontological identities and/or epistemological issues, post-colonialism can be said to be a meta-narrative perceptive formation. But its meta-narrativity is of strategically argumentative, it is there to offer a critical insight, to open the space for plurality/polysemy, for a dialogue whose outcome should reflect the “dethroning” of the exclusivity of subaltern agency by superior groups, or empowerment for their self-representation.

In that sense, the concept of atopia is important in consideration of the Balkans. Atopia can be understood as an anomalous place impossible to locate but existing, as a subjectively coded/existing “nowhere place”, without sovereign borders or space, as a variation of Foucault’s heterotopia (for more on heterotopia, utopia, dystopia and borders (see Stojanovic 2017, 2018). It is a virtual place conceivable as a territory, but not of utopian, dystopian or purely discursive nature (Robinson 2007: 162). Although historically generated, the state of post-colonial peripherality/marginality produces atopia as a signifier in metaphors and narratives, nowhere becomes an aestheticized political territory (*ibidem*: 7). Thus, the undefineable/elusive Balkans can be anywhere or nowhere, in the west, east or in the metaphoric, in the absence of official, capital of Europe- Brussels (Goldsworthy 1997: 10). The atopian Balkans is a topological space that could be “endogenously/exogenously” activated or deactivated, narrowed or expanded as

needs be, but that absolutely cannot be “erased” or reduced to just one set of meanings and a definite, fixed territoriality. In this sense, the metaphor of the Balkans as a “bridge between the East and West” is quite disputable, since its position is undeterminable: it is often unknown where its “banks” lie, and moreover what is a “bridge” on one side could be a “wall” on the other, and *vice versa*.

## Conclusion

Apparently quite legitimately, Balkans as a scholarly subject can be detected/decoded/researched in the metropolitanized pragmatic-enlightened intellectual key of the positivistic-empiristic methodological nature, through attempts to causally examine, avoid or prevent socio-politico-economic tumults, turbulences and aberrations that have more or less been its constant, cyclically escalating in a “panicky-dramatic” manner. However, the utility of the established western-scientific rationality seems insufficient and incomplete for its thorough observation/elaboration. On the one hand, the idea that the Balkans can be rectified/redacted like some defective “social mechanism”/script by allegedly value-neutral, universal and ahistorical enlightenment ideals, or scientifically-methodologically verified procedures, instruments or even “engineering”, disregards the fact that in the very genotype of the so conceived measures/knowledge/rationality, there is a corruptive meta-narrative “chromosome”. It is a Foucauldian discursive instance which, paradoxically, keeps generating the Balkan underdevelopment, backwardness, abstruseness, liminality or Otherness in order to scientifically correct/reform it, or scientifically corrects/reforms it in order to identify the futility of such attempts. In other words, for scientific interventions to be effective, Balkan socio-politico-economic-cultural “mechanisms”/texts should not be corrected, they must be dictated: first anatomized/decomposed/disintegrated and then, with the same unpackaged/dismounted cultural fragments, replaced/remounted with completely new assemblages/relations stemming from the supremacy of Eurocentric/Enlightened reasoning, methods and principles. The so conceived issue of domination and

power is, for instance, manifested in the translation of linguistic Balkan logic/geopolitics/script/algorithm/grammar into the “more sublime” linguistic logic/geopolitics/algorithm/grammar of Southeast Europe and the “more brutal” logic/geopolitics/algorithm/grammar of the Western Balkans.

The Balkans, therefore, is not solely a liminal geopolitical entity but also a hybrid trope/culture: before the Balkan politics of “topographic” border geometry, we must consider the politics of its controlled cognition through permanent locating, dislocating and relocating of “topological” markers of heterotopic (heterotopian) and/or atopic (atopian) rhetorical “arbitrarinesses” and styles. It is a relational space-time Balkans, open to different non-linear, as well as simulacral, (re-) combining of cartographic-spatial coordinates and historical-temporal intervals/sequences. What the Balkans as a sign/symbol/icon/index is will depend on the actors/narrators of discourse who read/upload it through particular and non-consecutive historical constellations and meanings. It would be erroneous to think that complicated Derridian deconstructivist agenda which dismisses the one-dimensional/monosemic relationship between the signifier and the signified, has a camouflaged pro-ontological pseudological limitation. Namely, the Balkans is conceptually reduced/directed by the Europe-set coding manoeuvre space: the Euro-centric meta-narrative/discursive inscriptions, adscriptions, proscriptions and prescriptions; but, simultaneously, through the process of post-colonial fractalization, the process of auto-chauvinism and auto-racism, it not only reproduces, but also extends or narrows the subaltern position, or reanimates or amplifies the imputed imperial supremacy, affirming and upgrading the (self-) representation of Europe as a meta-commanding cultural center or cultural axis. Accordingly, the problem is not that anyone, anywhere, anytime and in any way may express/construct/aestheticize/recycle the Balkans, but that the Balkans itself is instrumentalized for this purpose and that this project/platform also expresses both resistance and reaffirmation of the Balkan post-colonial subordination (cf. Demetropoulou 1999/2000: 7). The issue is that the post-colonial Balkan text/trope/culture should be a subject rather than instrument of explanation/definition: an explanandum/definiendum rather than an explanans/definiens.

The constructed, intelligible Balkans as something that is always Other than

how it is perceived or self-perceived, as something elusive and different from the absolutely external and absolutely internal Europe, qualifies as a liminal space that shifts the internal difference towards the intrinsic, internal logic of submissive “enculturation/acculturation”: external Balkanization becomes internal Balkanism, externally induced/coded identity becomes internal identity prerequisites/codes. Absurdly enough, the strategy of resistance against Balkanization becomes the strategy of its affirmation. Even the nineteenth century procreation/promotion/initiation of the meta-narrative clichéing or stereotyping of the text of sidelined and ghettoized Balkans was less the matter of region defined/fixed by geographic/political borders (until the 1878 Berlin Congress, the Balkans semantically referred to the Ottoman Empire as European Turkey or Turkey in Europe), and more a matter of third, heterotopian, atopian or representational space of elastic/variable/fluctuating forms and irreducible meanings. Is it possible to talk about erasing the Balkanizing borders of the Balkans *in toto*, in a situation when the “old” generic legacy/code scheme/representation of the Balkans as “wild barbarianism” is now replaced/recycled by new linguistic qualifiers/vocabulary/pathology of neo-racist ranking of the Balkans as a West European “poor and primitive” Other (as in the case of EU members Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania)? It is therefore evident that Balkanism will not disappear with the incorporation of the Balkans in the EU, but rather lose in its orthodoxy and gain in cultural hybridity. Respecting the fact that the West is only one of the possible cultural semantic networks/matrices of meaning and not the semantic meta network/meta-matrix of civilization *per se*, as much as the cultural remission of post-coloniality is, on the one hand, an outcome of globalizing processes and open confrontation with the Euro-centric vector of (neo)colonial prescriptions and proscriptions, there is also a growing need on the other for a steady resistance/collision with the (neo)colonial engagement/text of invasive American power.

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