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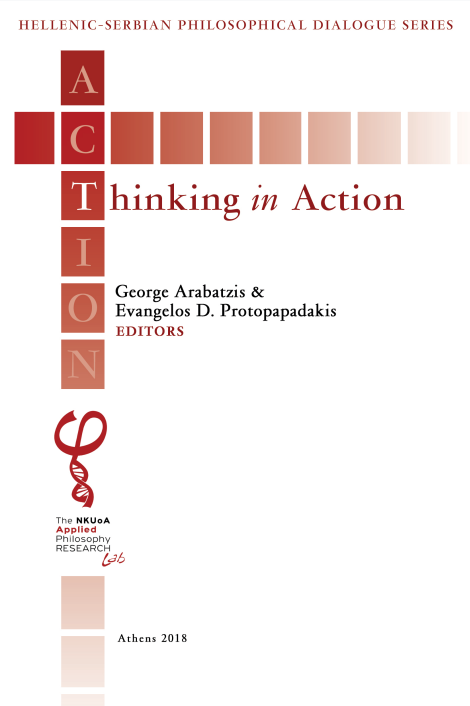

Chapter

Resistance to otherness

Dragan Prole

Thinking in Action

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doi: 10.12681/aprlp.16.397

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https://epublishing.ekt.gr | **e-Publisher:** EKT | **Downloaded at:** 29/11/2026 21:57:30

RESISTANCE TO OTHERNESS

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Abstract: *The author discloses European long-term tendency to interpret otherness as a threat. One presumes that social reality of the culture of difference is always a sort of a combat zone. The endless Christian confidence and routine approach towards cultural difference was uncovered as a result of self-justification by means of own absolute righteousness in the battle against evil. That field of operations coined the key mechanism which established the history of Christianity as a history of exclusion of the heterodox. The Rennaisance emphasis on the general and common was interpreted as a major civilizational leap forward, due to its creation of the preconditions for the acknowledgment and cultural appropriation of the cognitive praxis which were not even conceived, nor created in the wider framework of the European religion or civilization. Enlightenment activates image of the cultural differences as a means of the creation of an assumption for transcending our own cultural backwardness. The contemporary exchange of knowledge between cultures is dictated by market success or failure, because the knowledge which no one want to by becomes utterly irrelevant. In order to sell the difference, one creates the ideal "representatives" of it, following the strategy which combines ideological values of metropolis and exoticized image of foreignness. The author concludes that ideal representative of the difference does not show us a foreign world.*

Keywords: *difference, otherness, culture of knowledge, ideal representative.*

The classical Greek experience of the culture of difference was at the same time both encouraging and dramatic. It shows us that knowledge can be perceived as anything but power. It would be more appropriate to say that knowledge was the agent of activation of the power instances of the community, in order to protect itself from the possibility of change. If we take a closer look at this tradition of continued violent conflict with the concepts of different lifestyles and the establishment of different knowledge, we come to see that our contemporary understanding of the difference as an enriching feature is nothing but an attempt of amortization of the long-term tendency of the community to interpret otherness as a threat. The social reality of the culture of difference is per se a battleground.

Perhaps the historical development of Christian monotheism provides us with the most credible testament of the institutionalized practice of disablement

and neutralization of otherness. The eradication of the classical age culture of knowledge presented the first condition of establishing a belief as the authentic medium of establishing humanity. The function of Tertullian's rhetorical question "What do the Academia and Golgotha have in common?" was to create, once and for all, an unbridgeable gap, an annulment of knowledge as a possible opponent – or rival – to belief. After science was practically exiled and the Academy closed, the forms of otherness had nothing left but to manifest themselves through belief. However, *heterodoxia* did not mean a neutral term for different forms of belief, but hid in itself a dangerous potential to connect *heresy* and *choice*. Even though we no longer see any type of connection between the two, the ancient Greek word *hairesis* referred at first to the personal aspect of choice, which left a lasting mark in the word *heresy* as well. To have a *different* belief was to have the *wrong belief*. At the heart of a wrong belief was not an omission in theory, but a potentially fatal wrong choice. Its crucial source is ethical, not cognitive. In the belief framework, heresy was not reducible to otherness of convictions, but implied an utterly awful and problematic personality without which the wrong choice would never have been made. The correction of belief, therefore, becomes possible as a correction of a person that makes a choice, and in line with that choice, makes decisions. With that, the otherness of belief becomes a latent object of violence which styled itself in an unblemished form of humanization. The steps to correct the wrong choices have historically multiplied in various forms of coercion, ostracism and elimination. Their endless confidence and routine self-legitimization was justified, by default, by the absolute righteousness in the battle against evil. The origin of evil was also well known. Beyond the metaphysical speculation, the seeds of evil pointed to corruption, straying away and wickedness, features easily found in all those subjects whose choices smelled of heterodoxy.

The archetype of purity, whose function Plato reserved for the practice of philosophizing as an individual duty, necessary for *the purification of one's soul*, with St. Paul achieves its form in plural and becomes reserved for a special quality "of our" belief. Given that the attribute of impurity implied sickness, decay and death for centuries, the separation from the impure, and their ostracism from the community was an understandable act of preservation of the healthy, veracious and "normal". Pointing out "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God"[1], this evangelist of love opened a wide front in the war of the righteous against the heretics. Above all, he noted the conflict with every form of different understanding, with all forms of believing thought or action for which the *heteron* is determined when compared to the official church dogma. The appearance of otherness in the understanding of the Teaching is automatically branded as *an offence against the Teaching*. Promising accursedness to all who confess "a gospel contrary to

[1] St. Paul, *To the Corinthians* II, 2, 17.

what you received" (Gal, 1. 9.), St. Paul prophesized death to many. It initially hit all those different-thinking within the one faith, and then moved to the countless "pagans", beyond the Christian world. The key mechanism which established the history of Christianity as a history of exclusion of the heterodox was noted by Jan Assmann in the formation of the irrational belief as the essential specificity of the community: "Jewish criteria of affiliation, the abiding of the law, was replaced by Christians with 'belief' in Jesus as the Christ, in the salvation through Jesus. You do not 'believe' in the law, you abide by it […] the belief in Jesus as the Christ liberated the Christians from the Jewish law […] opening the door for different forms of political and theological re-paganization"[2].

Renaissance: The culture of translating the difference

If there is something to signify the renaissance as the rebirth of the spirit of classical antiquity, then it was the restoration of a more trustworthy relationship towards the knowledges and traditions which were created beyond the Christian cultural sphere. Greek polytheism was able to easily identify gods of other religions, and to name a Greek equivalent based on a most recognizable trait. The readiness to acknowledge the properties and qualities from other cultures is an essential trait of the renaissance way of thinking. It shows us how knowledge can become power only if we allow it to be what it is. The insight that knowledge was able to find its own place, during the most intensive "purifications" by the Inquisition, is most admirable. Perhaps its power indeed had to be witnessed through the sacrifices of those who held it. As if the introduction of the other and different knowledge is in direct correlation with the establishment of the chthonic, the underground, the most ancient. A specific ritual of the transition from one culture of knowledge into another is linked to the making of a sacrifice, with the execution of the bringer of news of the discovery of a different cognitive horizon. Because of that, the death of Socrates does not portend the death of Julius Caesar or Jesus, as was once suggested by Hegel, but the burning of Giordano Bruno. Sadistic capital punishment: to be burned at the stake for believing in knowledge. However, may we still claim the eternal validity of the rule according to which "when the purpose is achieved, they fall apart, the empty shells with no core"[3]?

Unlike Hegel that the dynamic of *diachrony* always leads to the ruin of historical individuals, the spirit of the renaissance emphasized above all the synchrony, thanks to which it seeks in all knowledges for the confirmations of the unique core. The renaissance humanism functioned with syncretism, a belief that one truth is articulated in different ways in religious teachings and mythological legends. If we consider that Giovanni Pico della Mirandola by default took into account

[2] Jan Assmann, *Politische Theologie zwischen Ägypten und Israel* (München: Siemens Stiftung, 2006), 123-124.
[3] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1961), 76.

different cultural, religious and linguistic traditions to find the confirmation of single-mindedness and harmony – "the dignity of the liberal arts, which I am about to discuss, and their value to us is attested not only by the Mosaic and Christian mysteries but also by the theologies of the most ancient times […]"[4] – then from his perspective, the interpreters of the highest and the hardly attainable truths had to be very competent translators. Based on the idea that the *inventio* is the greatest achievement of the spirit of man, man is no longer convicted of the burdensome mimicking of the eternal role models. He may now open the doors into the area in which he will mostly face himself. The encounter of the Renaissance man with himself liberated the perception of other cultures, and spurred the idea that all creations of the spirit are mutually convertible. Even though we could see such a model as productive and useful for the modern unification and levelling of the ever-present differences, it should be pointed out that the renaissance translation of the symbols from one religion or culture into another religion or culture was founded on the premise that reality functionally never changes. Naiveté, which has significantly devalued the results of the renaissance translational enthusiasm, came from a completely ahistorical view that reality is the same everywhere, which in turn meant that the differences are not all that different. It is clear that such a view was the consequence of the intention to lessen the centuries-long Christian cultural exclusivism, but we should also note that the "openness" of the Renaissance for different knowledges from other religions and cultures was empowered thanks to the neutralization of the diplomatic power of the difference. Focused on the unity of the human spirit in its different iterations, the renaissance thinkers neglected the power of the difference to present something unequal, which defied synthesis, to be something "which can negate itself and change"[5].

On the other hand, if reality is the same everywhere, then it cannot be changed even by the liveliest possible exchange of knowledge, which means that is in essence immune to any type of translation. The emphasis on the general and common in the case of the renaissance meant a major civilizational leap forward, as it created the preconditions for the acknowledgment and appropriation cognitive achievements which were not even conceived, nor created in the wider framework of the European religion or civilization. However, the same emphasis had as a result the differences becoming indifferent, as they could neither negate nor question anything. There, where they were mutually indifferent, the differences lost their specificity and stopped being valid. Therefore, one of the important lessons of the renaissance experience is that an overtly aggressive emphasis on the general and the common can hardly avoid the levelling, and in the final stage, the disappearance of the different as such. And there, where nothing is considered different anymore,

[4] Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, trans. A. R. Caponigri (Chicago: H. Regnery Company, 1956), 25.
[5] Georg Wilchelm Friedrich Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik I*, Werke Band V (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969), 127.

nothing can be the same either. If the ancient lesson noted that the distance towards the other necessarily leads to self-execution, then the lesson we can obtain from the experience of the renaissance is that too much sensitivity towards the similarity in difference in the end has to be paid in the cancellation of identity, or the specific representation of the world in which – together with the disappearance of the difference between objects – the connection also fades. Starting with the renaissance, the human spirit reflects on itself. It no longer represents a speculum of a higher order but the confrontation with its own capacitates and deficits, with its own virtues and limitations. In that we can find the renaissance affirmation of the "philosophy of freedom"[6]. With its support, the road was pawed towards the century of enlightenment, or its core idea of the progress of humanity.

Enlightening the difference

Enlightenment changes the direction of the difference, as it no longer reflects on the difference between cultures, nor is its focus on the difference between its subjects. On the contrary, the difference is now displayed in the immanence of the subject. Because of this Diderot can say that his protagonist, Rameau, is more different from himself then from others. Enlightenment requires the individual to change – the change that requires us to ascend above immaturity or corruption. Because of this, the dynamic of the inner difference is crucial for enlightenment, and the instance that it induces must not remain irrelevant. The only way to recover from corruption is to establish firm and permanent communication channels with the incorrupt. The enlightenment thinkers do not tie the incorrupt with the privileged sphere of the *sacred* but with the representatives of those human characters that would have been considered outsiders. Overcoming one's immanent affectations can be induced through the contact with the wild, childish and foreign. It thus became possible to use the construction of the cultural difference as a corrective against pathologies which are considered normal for the sole purpose of becoming the comprehensible, everyday part of our own culture. Montesquieu's image of the Parisian life from the perspective of Persians, activates the cultural differences as a means of recognition, caricature, or the creation of an assumption for transcending our own cultural backwardness. The Enlightenment's individuation of the difference goes hand in hand with the creation of the greatest possible generality. *Le Genre humain*, the human kind, represents a loan from biology, which, though the historization of knowledge became the basis of the optimistic view, was founded on the idea that tomorrow will be better, and more ingenious.

Truth be told, the promoters of the idea of the human kind did not plan on promoting the vertical anthropological hierarchy. Inspired by egalitarian ideas,

[6] Jean Delumeau, *La civilisation de la renaissance* (Paris: Arthaud, 2005), 358.

Turgot points out that "The human kind, always the same in its turns, like seawater in a storm, always moves to its perfection"[7]. However, the liberal orientation did not stop the French philosopher of history to also note that "unequal progress" necessarily fades, because in the long-term temporal perspective the tempo of progress becomes levelled. With that, the sole problem can be seen in the knowing that "the world is not eternal", which means the mutual economical oncoming of nations with a drastically different level of development will have to wait. Until such time, we can only state that the model of progress under the auspices of the entire human kind has given an amazing opportunity for one side to consider itself superior to the other.

Even though, thanks to the Enlightenment's emancipation of the difference, for the first time we see the opportunity to have the specificities of a foreign cultures become useful as incentives for encouraging home-grown practices, the imperative of progress will take lead in the intercultural communication. The status of the progressive, leading and "modern" will, until this day, preserve its aura, in whose background we will see the practice of casting aside or ignoring the insufficiently progressive, backwards, "non-modern". Through that, the same epoch of Enlightenment can be presented as the period of the emancipation of the difference, but also as the foundation of the long-lasting manifestation of the difference between cultures. It is not by accident that the Enlightenment's emancipatory principle emanated in the individual plane, while the idea of universal progress of the entire human kind is rightfully accused as the key stronghold of imperialism, colonialism, assimilation: "Civilization by itself becomes the criteria of value: the judgment is passed in the name of civilization […] it was allowed even to ask for the greatest sacrifice in the name of civilization, which means that in the service or defence of civilization, if need be, it is justifiable to use violence. The uncivilized and the savage must be stopped from bringing harm if they cannot be educated or converted"[8]. The 18th century discovery of the subjectivity of national language and national spirit is proof enough that enlightenment did not focus solely on the individual and the general, as even today, the imprint it made on the specific is still valid. The occupant of Plato's cave, who desperately tries to leave the kingdom of shadows, and to converse with the characters of the true reality, through Enlightenment takes the form of the *collective subject* and becomes the *national spirit*, for which the creative work on language is the base feature. Exaltation becomes possible as a collective act, enabled through the mutual action of all actors within a language community. It is mostly intersubjective, a social achievement, and not an individual feat.

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[7] Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot, *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*, Œuvres II (Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1966), 628.
[8] Žan Starobinski, *Od boljke i lek. Kritika i opravdanje pritvornosti u veki prosvećenosti*, trans. T. Đurin (Sremski Karlovci/Novi Sad: IKŽS, 2014), 36.

From colonialism to market historicism

The variations of the Enlightenment's instrumentalisation of difference and the appropriation of otherness found their place in the strategies of the colonial powers: "The initial phase of the wise adjustment and improvisation is joined by the second phase of assimilation - the adaptations of the foreigners to us"[9]. From there, most of the protest against the European tradition, whose addressants had the respect outside of the European cultural roots in common, could be read as a means of resistance against the *second phase of assimilation*, whose consequence is the denigration of the entire "oriental thought", or in European terms, being accused of nurturing the shameful "logical Balkans"[10].

Following the criticism of orientalism, the official rhetoric of all the participants in the cultural knowledge exchange shows that it no longer wishes to be associated in any way with the colonial concepts of otherness. Instead of the former logic of unequal development and imperial "uplifting" of otherness, the lead role has now been taken by the *market shaped historicism*. The ideology of historicism primarily states that there are no qualitative differences between cultures. Every culture should be regarded as an individual with its own tempo, but also as something beyond any comparison, a specific self, something distinct, that cannot be attributed to any other individual. Through that, the statement that every culture has something important to deliver is created. However, the crucial question here relates to the position from which we deduce what is actually important.

The actual exchange of knowledge between cultures is dictated by two conditions. The first relates to the market opportunities. Knowledge that no one will buy becomes irrelevant and doomed to failure. Considering that the market is not prone to ideological censorship, it will strongly promote even the most rigid criticism of current western ideology, provided it sells well. It is pointless to accuse the market for non-democratic action. On the contrary, it will, even with the spiritual sciences, incite ideological colours of the entire spectrum, like the Benetton Company, as long as they contribute to better sales and increased profits. Market opportunities in the exchange of the culture of knowledge get a significant help from the other condition which implies a representational demonstration of the difference. Why does the market follow the logic of the marketing industry and, instead of true quality, always support the stereotypical idea of "true representatives"?

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[9] Hinrich Fink-Eitel, *Die Philosophie und die Wilden. Über die Bedeutung des Fremden für die europäische Geistesgeschichte* (Hamburg: Junius, 1994), 105.

[10] The term "logical Balkans" dates back in 1879, and we owe it to a Hegelian – Friedrich Theodor Vischer. His expressed "colonial", or pejorative interpretation of the term comes from labeling utter confusion, which is not even at the level of opposites anymore, but at the level of pure chaos, as "Balkan". Friedrich Theodor Vischer, "Mode und Zynismus", in *Die Listen der Mode*, ed. S. Bovenschen (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), 62.

Emphasizing the moment of representation in correlation with the immanent scientific criteria is necessary because of the modern *crisis of the difference*. Regardless of whether its origin is tied to the "democratization of the foreign"[11] in the post-industrial societies, in which the empirical basis of the former homogenic identity has been lost, or whether it's the saturation with the everyday media presence of foreigners in the global village, there is no doubt that the modern claim for foreignness cannot be even remotely compared with the rich supply. By its own, the difference in modern societies has lost its former exclusivity: "The Other, by losing all of his fullness, is no longer hostile or confrontational, but *indifferent*."[12] Keeping in mind the loss of interest for the difference, the initially fragile market opportunities get strengthened by the additional argument that we are not dealing with just any difference, but an exclusive difference, because it represents in an exclusive manner, the midst from which it originates.

The postcolonial logic rightfully insists on self-representation. Unlike the colonial approach which denies the voice of the foreign in advance and speaks for it, the modern stance lets it present itself and speak freely on its own behalf. However, after a decennial practice of postcolonial thinking, we would expect the flourishing of translational activities, thanks to which Indian, Chinese, Brazilian or African intellectuals and novelists would be represented in our libraries and book stores more than ever. If the distinguished representatives of certain countries or regions finally have a chance to present themselves in a manner they think they should be understood, then it is to be expected that our knowledge of those countries and regions is significantly more serious than that of the generations before us. So why do such expectations always have a disappointing outcome?

According to Vladimir Tasic, a Novi Sad mathematician and novelist who has been teaching for over two decades at the New Brunswick University in Canada, the flourishing of the exchange within the global culture of knowledge never happened because the dominant cultures consistently uphold to the strict terms of acceptability. Unlike the *hard sciences* in which cultural differences play an insignificant role, as the exchange is broken down to instrumentalisation[13] of knowledge accumulated by others, with no interest for the cultural foundations such knowledge creates, in the things related to the cultural exchange, the lead is still carried by the inherited oppositions – metropole vs. periphery, or prestige vs. anonymity.

This means that there is no direct communication with the countries and languages in which the noted authors live and work. On the contrary, the first condition of acceptability is reduced to the *place of production* of the exclusive

[11] Ulrich Bielefeld, "Exklusive Gesellschaft und inklusive Demokratie", in *Faszination und Schrecken des Fremden*, ed. R.-P. Janz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), 41.
[12] Gilles Lipovetsky, *L'ère du vide. Essais sur l'individualisme contemporain* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), 78.
[13] Shingo Shimada, *Grenzgänge-Fremdgänge. Japan und Europa im Kulturvergleich* (Frankfurt am Main-New York: Campus, 1994), 227.

representation of the difference. This place can only be the metropole, not the periphery. Tasic, who writes natively in Serbian, convincingly points out that Khaled Hosseini, Azar Nafisi, Moshin Hamid, Jhumpa Lahiri, Ha Jin, M. G. Vassanji, all come from different countries (Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, India, China, Kenya), but the biographical similarities between them are far more striking that the differences: all graduated from elite Western universities, all write in English and are one way or the other, thematically tied to their country of origin. Such a policy of representation practically means that the metropole does not dare directly import cultural goods. It also implies the ancient tendency to buy raw material from the "third world", and then sell it back to them, meanwhile refined. Of course, in this situation, the raw materials are gifted young men and women, and their refinement is the education in elite Western universities. The triumph of the entire process is ensured if it so happens that those authors become authoritative, esteemed voices in their countries of origin, backed up by the "international success" and the recognition of elite western institutions.

Instead of translating the most significant works written in the country of origin, the metropole rather favours the intermediate way, in which the representatives of the periphery are conditioned on a long-term plan to become exclusive representatives of their own countries. That conditioning is not so much related to adopting certain contents, but to adopting the formatting, which is to serve as a sort of lens through which the difference should be displayed. Adopting the perspective of the metropole in a personal representation of the periphery becomes more convincing, mostly thanks to a more or less painful emigrants' experience. As if the only "true" contact between the cultures and knowledge can happen only if it's attested by a person who is "neither here, nor there"? That sort of double allegiance is especially seductive, because it implies the absence of a stable reference framework, whose "hybrid" productivity lies on the free movement between the peripheral world of origin and the reality of the metropole. However, according to Tasic, there are few indicators that attribute to Said's strategy of immanent subversion of the metropole' hegemony. The market with its official theoretical support, for now, presents an unbridgeable obstacle for its plementation. Unlike the hope in the subversive action of emigrants in the heart of the metropole, Tasic points out that their work perfectly reflects the modern imperative of neoexoticism: "Neoexotic must fit into the system of expectations and symbolic exchange, it must be recognizable. It must be tamed, but not as before, with the help of theoretical subduing or colonial violence: it must tame itself and show that it wants to be tamed"[14].

Unlike the old, naïve exoticism which bragged about the things that it was not familiar with, neoexoticism is a far more complex phenomenon. The difference

[14] Vladimir Tasić, *Udaranje televizora. Kolebanje postkulture* (Novi Sad: Adresa, 2009), 84-85.

is no longer displayed form the position of complete protection and is self-explanatory superior to what is being displayed. On the contrary, it is revealed by an "authentic" representative, who lives and works in the metropole, and also writes in its language. No matter how well situated he may be in the metropole, the authentic representative has interiorised the moment of non-domestication and sense of not belonging. Should we ask ourselves, why the drama of personal existential foreignness is so highly appreciated, the above noted *horizon of expectations* will help us with that dilemma.

The superficial, mediated discussion about the difference is not as convincing if it's not presented by a strong subjectivity, one completely domesticated and happy in the metropole. The presentation of the difference must not appear to be condescending, coming from a well situated and confident subject: that way, it would resemble the colonial presentations of foreignness. A subject whose bond to his homeland proves to be especially firm and solid is also unacceptable. Such a subject would be immune to the perspective of the metropole, and thus out of the question, as he/she could not be differentiated from the natives from his/her country of origin. What is left is the position of a vulnerable, meek subject who experienced certain advantages and charms of his/her country of origin, but the outside power (politics, ideology) prevented him/her from enjoying those. That fragile subject is aware of the advantages of the metropole, but at the same time does not lose sight of the unfeasible desire to belong to it, to merge with it completely.

His/her position floats and wavers between two impossibilities: the complete affiliation which is externally disrupted and the chronically incomplete assimilation. The existential framework from which he/she speaks is marked by the essential discomfort in the present. That discomfort enhances his/her vigilance and further sharpens his/her perception of the world. On the other hand, the experience of undomestication and not belonging gifts him/her with a strong sense of freedom, which is followed by an even greater degree of independence and a more relaxed attitude towards reality.

Because of this, we consider the modern representative of the difference to be strategically manufactured in the metropole as an *ideotypical image of our age*. Like a conjointment of vigilance and relaxation, it is the embodiment of the neoliberal spirit, in which not belonging and vigilance are necessary because of the desirable mobility on the labour market, and also for gaining elasticity which will come in very handy after losing a job, difficult working conditions or an absent security in life. On the other hand, the relaxed attitude will enable him/her to successfully cope with these troubles. Unlike the domesticated subject whose tensions surfaces with every disruption of the pre-set balance, the conjointment of vigilance and relaxation will help our subject recover no matter how bad thing get. The ideal representative of the difference thus does not just show us a foreign world. What he/she does on the narrative plain can be considered secondary when compared to the sophisticated optics thanks to which, like a common thread, it pulls through an

ideology of a desirable life attitude in our own contemporaneity.

Reinhard Koselek has taught us that the discord between the real situation and the horizon of expectations creates a crisis. However, we do consider that *the origin of the crisis of the modern social sciences is intricately tied to the overly met horizon of expectations of the metropole*. In fact, the problem with the production of the difference via its ideal representatives is that it neutralizes and wipes out the foreignness of that difference. Being respectful of the perspective of the metropole, they display the difference in accordance with the expectations, strictly minding that they do not step out of the hermeneutical frameworks they have adopted during their education and life in the metropole. With that they willingly "tame" the difference, erasing from all their products the different models of memory, disloyal understanding of history (disloyal to the metropole), censoring the heterogenic values and moral criteria. All of this is removed from the display by the representatives, as an unwanted "wilderness", incomprehensibility and foreignness. Instead of a productive dialog with the difference, they actually perpetuate the same, already seen and explored. Hence, the perspective of the metropole brings nothing new. If so, we could note that the burden of responsibility falls on the countries that are not in the centre of cultural production and the elite educational system. It indeed seems reasonable to reprimand the periphery that it needs to try harder to become visible in the metropole. It is highly probable that because of such remarks, for decades there have been state funds created specifically to help the translation of indigenous, domestic authors, mostly into English. Regardless of the fact that fiction is the sole beneficiary here, that works from the fields of social sciences have almost zero chance of getting state support, we do consider that the situation would remain the same, even if the countries quadrupled their funds for translations, and translate into English the entirety of their production in the field of social sciences.

When making attempts to face the criteria of the metropole, such attempts have no chance as they do not meet the above mentioned horizon of expectations. What the metropole needs, it can produce on its own, while the foreign contents seem like a principle of endangering whose criteria are made from beyond the system. Such a constellation is responsible for the drastic reduction in quality of production in the periphery. In fact, being frustrated with the near certain failure if it disobeys the criteria of the metropole, the periphery takes on the same matrix, and creates its own products *as if they were* the products of the metropole. In that manner, it mostly neutralizes what it has to offer, and that is a different, dissimilar view. Seeing things in a different manner implies seeing different things. Refusing that, in mimicking the metropole, the periphery adopts its horizon of expectations. Through that, it enables a voluntary colonization. In the alleged tendency to escape provincialization, it becomes even more provincialized. Its products by default become the pale shadows of the metropole. The alternative to the voluntary colonization is argued by Vladimir Tasic by calling the authors of the periphery to remain true to their mother tongue: "The resistance is what the theoretical branch

of the hegemony presents as a futile nonsense: emancipated writing, ambitious and courageous writing, learning from the best and creating a hybrid literature in the best sense of the word, but one that is created in its own language, which lives in that language and does not enviously glance at the media success in the metropole"[15].

However, even if somewhere the audacity and freshness are preserved, the results in the metropole will be equally weak. The breakthrough of the foreign contents into the heart of the metropole is destined to fail in advance as the metropole mechanisms of choice of the "ideal representatives" do not allow that. Speaking of the cognitive achievements of other cultures, it actually speaks about itself and affirms itself as the unmatched and irreplaceable standard of cognitive policy. With that in mind, it is clearer why the "critical discourse, as it currently functions in the West proves to be surprisingly homogenous […] that homogeneity is greatly attributed to the fact that the critical discourse in the West primary circulates as goods on the media market"[16].

The homogeneity of the critical discourse is perhaps the most solid signal that the culture of difference, which we have pointed out as the source and foundation of Western civilization, is at an all-time low. The plea for the *reconstitution of the culture of difference* would have been a worthy response to the phenomenon named by Bernhard Valdenfels as *disassociation of modernity*. Being that it is constituted in thanks to the radical asymmetry, modernity must by default deviate as: "the instance which excludes the foreign at the same time rejects all that it itself means to the foreign. The Exclusion of the foreign takes on the shape of self-exclusion […] the foreign expands inward"[17]. The productivity of the meeting with the knowledge of other cultures is based on the premise that the relation with the foreign cannot be reduced to the relation of the subject and object. On the contrary, it inevitably includes a certain relationship of the singularity with itself. However, that feedback loop of the relationship with the foreign is never revealed in the form of a triumphant acclamation of selfness after a successful showdown with the foreign. The defeat of the foreign does not imply the strengthening of the singularity. The settling of accounts with the foreign does not benefit but hinders the singularity. On the other hand, during the meeting with the foreign which does not lean toward exclusion, we have an opportunity to see the limits of our insights from within. With that we actually work towards a dynamic of our own scientific culture.

We doubt in the usefulness of the exchange which implies in advance acclamation and agreement. Instead of a programed harmony between the singularity and the foreign we endorse the capacities of the foreign to bring in additional dynamics into the scientific area. Because of that, it is necessary to go

[15] Tasić, *Udaranje televizora*, 110.
[16] Boris Groys, *Das kommunistische Postskriptum* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), 69.
[17] Bernhard Waldenfels, *Der Stachel des Fremden* (Frankfurt am/M.: Suhrkamp, 1990), 33.
[18] Johannes Feichtinger, *Wissenschaft als reflexives Projekt* (Bielefeld: Transit, 2010), 535.

back to translation work and cultural exchange which will come from all directions, and to understand that their starting points and lines of movement must not necessarily cross. Only then can we provide a proper resistance to the asymmetrical exchange and conduct "the politics of anti-politics"[18].

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