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# VICISSITUDES OF POST COMMUNIST IDENTITY

*A Discourse Analysis of  
Czechoslovak and Czech  
Constructions of Political  
Identities 1989-2000*

**MA Thesis**

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## ABSTRACT

*This thesis presents a discourse analysis of the way Czech politicians 'construct' the political entities of Czechoslovakia, the Czech Republic and Europe in period from 1989-2000.*

*Theoretically, the thesis takes its outset in a social constructivist approach, asserting that such political entities are not present as empirical facts, but continuously created and recreated through the way people talk about them. This verbalization of reality helps to construct the world, and creates the basis of political visions and identities. The main argument behind this approach is that states and other political entities, and not least political visions, are solidified by articulating differential relations to certain representations of the world outside, which are excluded from the Self-understanding of entities such as Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic and Europe.*

*The analysis presented is based on a model, which is established for the purpose of examining the way people construct the identity of these political entities. The model suggests that the excluded representations (labeled 'the Other' as opposed to the 'Self' of the entities) can be described in terms of an 'ontological', an 'axiological', and a 'praxeological' dimension, the latter suggesting the political response towards the Other. Moreover, a theoretical mission here is to assert that the construction of the Self does not have – at least not exclusively – to rely on the articulation of 'radical Others', portraying a sense of enmity towards the Other. This is reflected in the model, which suggests that that images of the Other should be analyzed as a continuum, signifying that the degree of difference from the Self may vary, implying that the construction of the Other is not to a matter of asserting absolute difference.*

*The model is employed in a discourse analysis locating the excluded representations used by Czech president Václav Havel and former Czech Prime Minister Václav Klaus to construct Czechoslovakia, the Czech Republic and Europe. Texts by Havel and Klaus are selected as empirical sources, since they – beyond any doubt – has been the two most dominating agents in Czech politics during the 90s. Specifically, the analysis is focused on speeches and writings produced by these public figures in three different phases of Post-Communist Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic; 1989-1992, 1993-1997, and 1998-2000.*

*The analysis points out that Havel and Klaus construct two dissimilar images of the Czech and the European Self through different representations of the Other. Both construct the Czech Republic against a radical Communist Other, which is used to construct two widely different Self-images. Conversely, Havel and Klaus construct the Self of Europe by means of dissimilar Others. Havel builds both entities as historical and cultural communities based on a discourse of values and morality, while Klaus constructs them as communities of individuals rooted in a 'free market' dis-*

*course. This is mirrored in the representations located throughout the analysis. The representations of the Other, and even more so the representation of the Self, changes only slightly over time, most notably in the case of Havel.*

*In addition, it is concluded that the analytical model demonstrates its usefulness. Its employment in the analysis shows that strong political discourses can be constructed on the basis of non-radical Others.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE TO THE PDF-VERSION .....</b>	<b>V</b>
---	----------

<b>PREFACE .....</b>	<b>VI</b>
----------------------	-----------

<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
----------------------------	----------

<b>THE CZECH REPUBLIC AS A CASE .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>APPROACHING THE CASE .....</b>	<b>3</b>
THE THEORETICAL APPROACH .....	4
<b>CHAPTER OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>8</b>

<b>2 THE CONCEPTUAL SETTING.....</b>	<b>9</b>
--------------------------------------	----------

<b>CONCEPTUALIZING IDENTITY .....</b>	<b>9</b>
CONFIGURING IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE .....	13
<b>DISCOURSE THEORY .....</b>	<b>14</b>
THEORETICAL ROOTS .....	15
THE CONCEPT OF DISCOURSE .....	17
THE ARTICULATION AND REARTICULATION OF DISCOURSE .....	19
DISCOURSE AND SOCIAL IDENTITY .....	20
<b>SOME FINAL REMARKS .....</b>	<b>21</b>

<b>3 THE ANALYTICAL SETTING .....</b>	<b>24</b>
---------------------------------------	-----------

<b>IDENTITY IN SPACE AND TIME .....</b>	<b>24</b>
INSIDE/OUTSIDE – THE SPATIAL DIMENSION OF IDENTITY .....	24
BEFORE/AFTER – THE TEMPORAL DIMENSION OF IDENTITY .....	25
THE USE OF SPACE AND TIME: THE CASE OF THE CZECH “RETURN” .....	26
<b>APPROACHING THE SELF AND THE OTHER .....</b>	<b>28</b>
AVOIDING THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF THE RADICAL OTHER .....	28
TYPOLOGIZING OTHERS .....	30
<b>USING THE MODEL: READING IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE .....</b>	<b>34</b>
INDICATORS: METAPHORS .....	34
HOW TO CLASSIFY THE OTHER .....	35
GROUPING MULTIPLE OTHERS: ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTS .....	38
<b>WHAT TO READ AND HOW TO PROCEED .....</b>	<b>38</b>
TEXT SELECTION .....	38
THE ANALYTICAL SETTING .....	39

<b>4 THE HISTORICAL SETTING .....</b>	<b>42</b>
---------------------------------------	-----------

<b>A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CZECH LANDS .....</b>	<b>42</b>
1938-1947: THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH .....	43
1948-1968: COMMUNIST TAKE-OVER AND ATTEMPTED REFORMS .....	44
1968-1988: NORMALIZATION AND DISSENT .....	44
1989: THE VELVET REVOLUTION .....	47

## **5 1989-1992: POST-COMMUNIST CZECHOSLOVAKIA .....48**

<b>VÁCLAV HAVEL 1989-1992 .....</b>	<b>50</b>
HAVEL 1989-1992: THE CONSTRUCTION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA .....	50
HAVEL 1989-1992: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE .....	58
HAVEL 1989-1992: SUMMING UP .....	63
<b>VÁCLAV KLAUS 1989-1992 .....</b>	<b>64</b>
KLAUS 1989-1992: THE CONSTRUCTION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA .....	65
KLAUS 1989-1992: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE .....	68
KLAUS 1989-1992: SUMMING UP .....	69
<b>CONCLUDING REMARKS 1989-1992.....</b>	<b>70</b>

## **6 1993-1997: THE RISE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC .....72**

<b>VÁCLAV HAVEL 1993-1997 .....</b>	<b>73</b>
HAVEL 1993-1997: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC .....	73
HAVEL 1993-1997: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE .....	80
HAVEL 1993-1997: SUMMING UP .....	86
<b>VÁCLAV KLAUS 1993-1997 .....</b>	<b>86</b>
KLAUS 1993-1997: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC .....	87
KLAUS 1993-97: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE .....	93
KLAUS 1993-1997: SUMMING UP .....	97
<b>CONCLUDING REMARKS 1993-1997.....</b>	<b>97</b>

## **7 1998-2000: GETTING READY FOR EUROPE .....100**

<b>VÁCLAV HAVEL 1998-2000 .....</b>	<b>101</b>
HAVEL 1998-2000: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC .....	101
HAVEL 1998-2000: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE .....	107
HAVEL 1998-2000: SUMMING UP .....	112
<b>VÁCLAV KLAUS 1998-2000 .....</b>	<b>113</b>
KLAUS 1998-2000: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC .....	113
KLAUS 1998-2000: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE .....	116
KLAUS 1998-2000: SUMMING UP .....	119
<b>CONCLUDING REMARKS 1998-2000.....</b>	<b>119</b>

## **8 CHANGE AND CONTINUITY .....121**

ONTOLOGY 1989-2000 .....	122
AXIOLOGY 1989-2000 .....	124
PRAXEOLOGY 1989-2000 .....	125

## **9 CONCLUSION.....128**

THE CONSTRUCTION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA/CZECH REPUBLIC 1989-2000	128
THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE 1989-2000	130
STRUCTURING CATEGORIES	131
EMPIRICAL REFLECTIONS	134
COMMENTS ON THE THEORETICAL APPROACH	137

<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>141</b>
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# **PREFACE TO THE PDF-VERSION**

This version of my MA thesis is slightly edited, and therefore not completely identical to the thesis I handed in on 10 May 2001 at the University of Copenhagen. However, only minor additions and corrections have been made, and the basic content of this paper appears the same as in the original thesis.

Mads Bielefeldt Stjernø

*Copenhagen, August 2001*

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# PREFACE

This thesis concludes my MA studies in Political Science at the University of Copenhagen. During my years of studying, I have been around a great variety of topics and theories. This includes my great interest in European Studies, and especially historical, sociological, and ethical aspects of International Relations. These theoretical interests merge with a more passionate interest for East European politics and society, which was further encouraged when I had the honor of participating in a one-semester program for foreign students at VŠE, Vysoká škola ekonomická (University of Economics) in Prague, Czech Republic, during the 1998 spring semester. It was an illuminating experience of a country, in which propriety and intellectual capacity goes perfectly together with an omnipresent sense of fraud and chaos.

References throughout the thesis are stated according to the following guidelines: Articles, books, and chapters in books are referred to by the name of the author and registered in the list of references. References to official documents and empirical sources are made directly in footnotes.

Finally, I shall use this opportunity to thank my supervisor Ole Wæver, my sister Trine Bielefeldt Stjernø, as well as my good friends and student colleagues Pouline Terpiger, Lars Fremerey, and Lars Jannick Johansen for their invaluable comments on various drafts of this thesis. Additionally, I am grateful to another dear friend, VŠE student Veronika Kudlova, who has been a great help when my scarce abilities in the Czech language called for assistance.

This paper contains approximately 238.500 characters including spaces.

Mads Bielefeldt Stjernø  
*Copenhagen, May 2001*



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Now, more than a decade has elapsed since a series of political revolts in late 1989 put an end to Communist rule in the former Soviet satellite states in Europe. In the years following this abrupt end of the Cold War, Post-Communist states in Central and Eastern Europe were left with a heritage of some forty years of authoritarian rule and the challenge of building a new kind of society.<sup>1</sup> These countries had to develop a new political system and renew the wrecked relations between the state and its citizens.

Concurrently, these new states were geographically situated in the periphery of a Western Europe of *integrating* states, who were – and still are – increasingly coordinating and managing political decisions through a network of common institutions, commonly known as the European Union (EU). The enticement to be a part of the family of stable democracies made participation in the project of ‘Europe’ a cornerstone in many Post-Communist political visions, along with the efforts of setting up new frames for political life at home. This thesis starts out from this dual challenge of simultaneously building a new political entity at the national level, while at the same time having to come to terms with the EU and other influential ‘Western’ institutions at the international level.

During the Cold War, the world of politics was narrowly defined as bipolar: a situation of two competing spheres – the West and the East. After the 1989 revolutions, the Post-Communist countries were searching for a new path, and both domestic and international political environments seemed to dictate immediate orientation towards the West. The idea of being inherently *European* was actualized in many countries in Central- and Eastern Europe (and in the Baltic countries as well). This is reflected in the fact that most Post-Communist countries struggled – at least verbally – to declare themselves a part of Europe. An omnipresent catchphrase proclaimed that the countries were experiencing a ‘return to Europe.’<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, the general use of the adjective ‘Post-Communist’ simply denotes ‘formerly Communist’. Likewise, the noun ‘Post-Communism’ refers to this situation *per se*, and does not imply any specific attributes.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Address by Václav Havel to the Polish Sejm and Senate, Warsaw, 25 January 1990; See also Jedliński (1990), Holy (1996, p. 151 and 202-3), and Lagerspetz (1999).

In early 1999, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary became members of NATO, and within a few years, these and other countries are supposed to be welcomed as members of the EU. Yet, it took almost the better part of a decade to get this far. It seems appropriate now to take stock of the past ten years and examine some of the aspects that have gradually made these countries reliable political entities both in their own right *and* as committed partakers in European integration.

This historically specific combination of the integrating Europe and the eager Post-Communist efforts to set their countries back on the feet as individual political entities is a situation launching the question of *self-perception*. I shall assert that self-perceptions of political entities (their 'identities') have an immense political impact, since any conduct of politics rests on fairly stable definitions of particular political entities and some degree of certainty about their positions in the world.<sup>3</sup> In the Post-Communist world, we might wonder how configurations of identities affect the ideas of political unity in those countries in a context of increasing European integration, and whether there is a potential conflict between national and European identity.

## **THE CZECH REPUBLIC AS A CASE**

Being one of the chief candidates for relatively rapid EU entry, there is good reason to examine how the Czech Republic has tackled the task of constructing a new political self-perception along with the prospect for integration into West European structures.

To sufficiently narrow the scope of this project, I shall concentrate on attempts by domestic Czech politicians to define the identity of the Czech Republic in Europe during the period from 1989-1999. I.e. from 1989-1992, the country in focus will be *Czechoslovakia*, which on 1 January 1993 politically decided to split up into two separate entities (the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic – or simply Slovakia).

This comparatively peaceful separation makes it even more interesting to do some work on the building of 'new' identities in the Czech Republic.<sup>4</sup> Of the two successor states, the

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<sup>3</sup> E.g. the construction of Denmark as a nation state defines the social and geographical borders as well as the cultural and political affiliations of the entity of "Denmark" and that has consequences for the Danish choice of policy.

<sup>4</sup> I could have chosen to exclude the pre-separation years, but it seems to me that the inclusion of the period from 1989-92 might reveal some interesting differences (or similarities) compared to the years following the split-up.

*Czech Republic* is preferred to Slovakia, since it is the most advanced in terms of assimilation to EU standards.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the Czech Republic represents a superior position when it comes to historical continuity. The Czechoslovak state was originally established by Czechs, and both before and throughout the era of Communism the country was continuously ruled from the Prague.

After some time, the apparent success of the Czech reform process in the first couple of years was getting a bit stained. The country is marked by many common Post-Communist teething troubles such as a considerable measure of political uncertainty (system disputes, populism), and problems of privatization, and becoming accustomed to a new way of production, and – at least to some degree – ethnic discrimination and racist violence.<sup>6</sup>

The Czech Republic thus features both an ‘advanced’ and a ‘problematic’ side of Post-Communism, and this is one major reason for considering the Czech Republic an excellent case for an investigation into Post-Communist identity.

## **APPROACHING THE CASE**

Theoretically, the thesis will be based on social constructivist<sup>7</sup> theories of identity, and one basic assumption made here is that identities are constructed through language and social interaction, drawing on various images we have of the world that surrounds us. Thus, revealing the ‘nature’ of Czech or European identity is not of interest. Rather, the attention is drawn to the question of *how* these identities are constructed, and how this construction influences political affairs.

Following the considerations made in the above sections, the thesis will address the overall purpose of investigating Czechoslovak and Czech configurations of political entities in

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<sup>5</sup> During the 90s, Czech foreign policy has been steadily aimed at future integration in European structures. This political line has impelled the Czechs to assimilate their own political structures to what is generally accepted in Europe as a whole, but primarily and particularly the European Union.

<sup>6</sup> The 1998 and 1999 Reports on the progress in the EU applicant countries (published by the EU Commission 4 November 1998 and 13 October 1999) both suggests that the Czech Republic has certain difficulties in fulfilling the criteria for entrance, especially when it comes to administrative skills, implementation of EU-legislation, and not least discrimination of the Roma population. The 2000 Report is generally more positive, though the same problems are restated in a milder manner.

<sup>7</sup> I use the term *social constructivism* to designate a category of theoretical approaches that are all critical towards the possibility to reveal objective truths in political and social reality. They all set out from the basic argument that phenomena in the social world are ‘constructed’ in the sense that they are intersubjectively incarnated and not objects that exist somewhere ‘out there’.

the period from 1989-2000, and analytically it will be explored how Czech politicians establish such images through language.

Two main political entities at play in the Post-Communist scenario of the Czech Republic are: (1) the Czech state, and (2) the concept of Europe. Thus, the main questions addressed in this thesis can be drawn up very briefly like this:

- How is the Self-image of the Czech Republic established in the language of Czech politicians from 1989-2000?
- How is the Self-image of *Europe* established in the language of Czech politicians from 1989-2000?
- What are the change and continuities in the construction of these images from 1989-2000?
- What basic patterns can be detected in these constructions, and what are the main implications on Czech-European relations and the environment of Czech Politics in general?

The first two questions will be answered by undertaking an analysis of three different phases in Post-Communist Czech history, while the third point will be a comparison of the three phases. The latter point addresses some more general reflections on the analytical results.

### **THE THEORETICAL APPROACH**

The thesis takes its outset in a conceptualization of identity ultimately based on discourse theory, the common name for a certain branch of social constructivist approaches, claiming that the social world is not just 'there' to be observed, but is to be seen as a collection of phenomena established by the way we talk about them.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to the more thorough conceptual details, but basically *discourses* are seen as socially constituted conceptual frameworks, which are constructed and reconstructed whenever we speak, write, or act. Discourses add meaning to the world and install the perception of difference between words, categories, and things. Not least, they offer identity to individuals and groups by defining a certain perception of the *Self*.

To uphold a Self-perception of political entities, we need perceptions of *Others*: representations embodying what 'We' are *not*.<sup>8</sup> Some theorists claim that the Other has to be fundamentally different from the Self. Sometimes, it is even claimed that the solidity of a political entity such as the state relies on the perception of enmity towards the Other. One theoretical mission here is to reject this suggestion and establish a conception of identity, which does not necessarily involve seeing the Other as an enemy.<sup>9</sup>

Consequently, I shall focus on finding images of the 'Other', which are constitutive for the Self-perception of the Czech Republic and Europe since the 1989 revolution, when the Communist order collapsed and left the Czechs (and the Slovaks) in a political – and discursive – vacuum, calling for new ways to come to terms with the political sphere of life.

### *Analyzing Identity*

Text and textual elements are the main catalyst of communicating images of the Self and the Other. The world of politics is a major purveyor to the constitution of collective identity, since political action is able to communicate such images on a wide scale. That is also a weighty reason why actors of the political sphere appear to be predisposed to engage in questions of identity.<sup>10</sup>

Accordingly, the 'data' for the analysis I am going to conduct here will be political texts, which will be analyzed based on a theoretical frame developed in Chapter 3. What I am going to find in those texts are discursive constructions of Czech and European 'identity'. The *method* of analysis might therefore be dubbed 'textual analysis' or 'discourse analysis'. Further details about the actual reading strategy will be given towards the end of Chapter 3.

Two major pre-analytical concerns are, first, the *selection* of the empirical sources for the analysis, and second, the *availability* and *validity* of sources.

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<sup>8</sup> The Self/Other nexus producing identity is only one dichotomy among others assisting us as we think and talk about the world. E.g., perceptions of the Past and the Future, of inclusion and exclusion, of the hierarchy of superiority and inferiority in social relations, are usually incorporated in the frame of 'our' identity.

<sup>9</sup> Numerous authors assume that perceptions of enmity are constitutive for states (e.g. Campbell 1992). I shall briefly return to this discussion in Chapter 3.

<sup>10</sup> The area of foreign policy stands out as a symptom of this: the balancing of the political entity 'inside' and the relations to the world 'outside' the state is a direct result of the stable discursive configuration of the state as a political entity.

*Sources of Czech discourses*

Any text is produced by *actors*. Actors are themselves partly discursively defined, and in the sphere of politics, certain actors are more analytically significant than others. This is the case when actors are discursively positioned as holding more 'articulation power' than others. I am thinking of 'Leaders', 'Presidents', 'Ministers' etc. It might also be distinct powerful groups, such as various governmental bodies (though these are also, in the final analysis, made up by individuals).

In order to limit the span of possible sources for my investigations, I have selected representatives, who are both interesting and dominant in Czech public debate. According to Andrew Strohlein, among others, there have been at least three dominant discourses in the Czech Republic in the 90s. Strohlein identifies these in terms of "Three Václavs".<sup>11</sup> That is Czech president *Václav Havel* (born 1936), former Prime Minister *Václav Klaus* (born 1941), and the early Bohemian *Prince Václav* (c 907-935 AD). From this perspective, Havel represents an 'intellectual' and Klaus a 'neo-liberal' discourse, while Prince Václav symbolizes a national discourse focused on the virtues of Czech history and frequently to national superiority.

Indeed, the latter occasionally stridently manifests its presence in the Czech debate. At the extreme end of this category we find the skinhead movements, and not least the Republican Party (SPR-RSČ<sup>12</sup>), led by Miroslav Sládek, which has been rather vociferous in various political contexts, including election campaigns. The party is notorious, not only for its hostile attitudes towards the Roma (gypsy) population, but also for a strong anti-NATO and anti-German position.<sup>13</sup>

This extremist version of the 'national Václav' (or the *nationalist discourse*) is left out of the analysis for a number of reasons. One is that, in spite of its noisy rhetoric, the extreme right has never gained much success in Czech politics. It has never enjoyed any massive popular support during elections, and it is no longer represented in any of the two chambers of the parliament.

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<sup>11</sup> Strohlein 1999.

<sup>12</sup> SPR/RSČ = Sdružení pro republiku/Republikanská strana Československa (Rally for the Republic/Czechoslovak Republican Party).

<sup>13</sup> One rather typical example is Sládek proposing that the age of criminal responsibility be lowered from 14 to 0 years of age – for the Roma population exclusively. Sládek justified this by the argument that "the fact that they are even born is a criminal act in itself." (Sládek quoted in the German weekly *Jungle World* no. 25, summer 1998 – original quote: "Es ist schon ein Verbrechen, daß die überhaupt geboren werden").

Conversely, the two remaining discourses, the *intellectual* and the *neo-liberal* ones, have indeed been able to dominate the agenda in the Czech Republic throughout the whole period considered here. President Havel (in office since December 1989) and former Prime Minister Klaus (in office from 1991 until November 1997) are by far the most quoted politicians both within and outside the country and during the 90s, they have epitomized the political 'face' of the Czech Republic.

Thus, the nationalist discourse has not been excluded from the analysis because of any lack of discursive distinctiveness, but rather because it has not been able to dominate the political agenda in a manner like Havel and Klaus. This thesis, in other words, aims at an investigation of *dominant* discourses rather than *marginal* ones.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Data availability and validity*

A great advantage of this type of textual analysis is that the wanted 'data' are already produced. It does not require any extensive gathering of information through surveys or interviews. Thus, the traditional 'experimental situation' does not have any effect on the informant, who is not aware that he or she is submitted to a certain kind of analysis, just as the researcher cannot influence the informant by his presence.<sup>15</sup> Yet, it is very important to take a great interest in the *context* in which the text is produced. Both the recipient of the specific text (whether written or spoken) and the historical situation are parts of a discursive space, which in most cases narrows the articulatory practices of the narrator.

When dealing with an analysis based on linguistics, first-hand sources are clearly preferable to mere quotations or translations. Quotations might hide or distort the original context, and translations might hide important nuances in the original language, which could disturb the interpretation of discursive patterns on the hand of the analyst. Unfortunately, my knowledge of the Czech language is rather limited, which means that when dealing with texts originally produced in Czech, I *do* have to rely on English translations. The important thing in this situation is that the translation should be made as 'close' to the author as possible (preferably by his own staff, or with his probable consent).<sup>16</sup> At the same time,

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<sup>14</sup> As stated by Laclau & Mouffe (1985, p. 112) all discourses ultimately aim at becoming dominant, and it is perfectly possible that discourses now regarded as marginal some time might become more influential (see also Neumann 1996, p. 3). Nevertheless, acknowledging that it is impossible for me to cover all marginal discursive positions in the Czech debate here, I choose to concentrate on the two major representatives of the debate.

<sup>15</sup> Jørgensen & Philips 1999, p. 31.

<sup>16</sup> This of course, might narrow the possibilities of finding a sufficient range of texts. Fortunately, in this specific case, speeches and writings of Václav Havel and Václav Klaus are rather widely available in English, implying that the analysis should not be too flawed by an inadequate quantity of sources.

we should be aware that there might be a bias involving the risk that speeches and writings selected for translation are handpicked for a foreign audience, and possibly even with some measure of strategic intent.

Many empirical sources are acquired through the Internet. This might alarm some readers, because of the limited possibilities of controlling the validity of the documents. In that regard, it should be clearly emphasized that texts are exclusively provided from sites that are thoroughly checked for their reliability, or generally known to be trustable (such as the official website of the Czech president). The use of Internet sources often proves to *widen* the possibilities of sources, since it may provide access to texts, which might not be published elsewhere, or may be obtained only with difficulty in print.

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Following this introductory first chapter, **Chapter 2** will consider in some detail the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis, i.e. a conceptualization of 'identity' and a brief portrayal of discourse theory and its epistemological basis. **Chapter 3** is intended to refine and focus my analytical perspective, including an account for a differentiated concept of the Other and a discussion of a few political discourses relevant for the Post-Communist situation. In **Chapter 4**, I will present a short history of the Czech Republic to mark up the empirical setting of the analysis, whereas the actual analyses will be conducted **in chapter 5 through 7**, each of which deals with a distinct phase of Post-Communist Czech politics. The three phases are compared in **Chapter 8** to detect possible changes, while the main conclusions of the thesis are summed up in **Chapter 9**.



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## 2 THE CONCEPTUAL SETTING

In this chapter, the theoretically ambiguous concept of *identity* will be accounted for. The basic argument is that we cannot deal with identities as objectively defined categories. To further clarify (or qualitatively complicate) the concept of identity, I shall introduce the notion of *discourse* – socially established constructions of meaning. The concept is crucial when analyzing the importance of language in politics and political strategies, and to do so on the grounds of a non-positivistic and non-essentialist epistemology.

Thus, this chapter is a matter of getting the basic concepts clear and in addition a few words is dedicated to the epistemological stance of the theory. Further details about the *methodological* approach will appear in Chapter 3, in which I intend to develop my analytical apparatus.

### CONCEPTUALIZING IDENTITY

The word ‘identity’ derives from Latin *idem*, which basically means ‘the same’<sup>17</sup> According to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English it means (1) “who or what a particular person or thing *is*” or (2) “sameness; exact likeness”. These elementary definitions suggest a concept of essential and durable *being*; something, which can be defined or described, and which is more or less permanent in appearance.

This corresponds – at least in a very general way – to the traditional utilization of the concept within psychology and the social sciences. Here it often serves to label the uniqueness of one subject as opposed to other subjects (or – to be precise – as opposed to the rest of the world).

But from where does such uniqueness originate? To the extent that identity arises from some sort of *objective* quality of particular subjects or objects, identity would be something

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<sup>17</sup> The word in Latin could also mean “one and the same” or “the very same” (Fink 1991, p. 205).

that remained itself over time, detached from any factors of outside disturbance.<sup>18</sup> In the final analysis, it would be possible to discover or reveal the *nature* of a particular identity, which would then be the true and objective *a priori* quality of the subject. We might call this perspective *essentialist*, since identity is seen as having a true, unalterable ‘essence’ or ‘nature’ regardless of human construal.<sup>19</sup>

However praiseworthy, the clarity of this conceptualization of identity is also its major weakness. Interpreted as objective facts, identities are taken to be static attributes of individuals and society. If this was the case, proclamations of ‘identity crises’ and the tendency to lament any ‘loss of identity’ would be no more than a question of finding what is lost.<sup>20</sup>

Claiming the objectivity of identity supports the position (or the assumption) that identity, once acquired, is a *static* fact of life, which could be either examined as such or merely ignored. This has been used politically to unite nations around a myth of a ‘common course’, which has in turn legitimized actions of the state such as collection of taxes, military conscription, and ultimately warfare. At the very extreme, identity could be claimed to be *natural*, avowing its origin in ancestral affinities, e.g. factual kinship through race, land, nation, religion or family.<sup>21</sup>

The main argument here is that identities are *not* objectively given. Nor do I support the view that identities could be treated *as if* they were objective, since it imposes an immense rigidity in political possibilities. Instead, it is argued that the way political entities (and their representatives) portray themselves in the world is an important factor when political agendas are established, and that this portrayal has an impact on the options and constraints for political action. Seeing identity as objective makes it difficult to examine identity as a political factor, since the shifts and diversities in identities, are exactly what set the stage for political debate. What we need is a more *dynamic* concept of identity.

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Hall 1996.

<sup>19</sup> Epistemologically, essentialism might be described as a name of theoretical approaches, accepting that reality possesses certain objective qualities, and that objective human cognition of these qualities is possible. This includes labels such as positivism, epistemic realism, rationalism, empiricism etc.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Laclau 1994, p. 2

<sup>21</sup> When thinking of World War II, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, or the events in Northern Ireland during the last 30 years, it is evident that people or groups taking a very rigid or intransigent stance on the nature of identities take the risk of provoking severe political conflict or even violence.

*Towards a Dynamic Conceptualization of Identity*

To add more dynamics into the concept of identity, we need to abandon the claim of a stable 'core' of those phenomena to which identity is ascribed. In doing this, we are compromising the original meaning of the concept: identity in this understanding is *never* 'the same'. Instead, it is seen as a momentary self-understanding of a subject, which is – at least in principle – unstable and therefore exposed to constant modifications. This perspective could be labeled *non-essentialism*, since it claims that identities do not possess any essence prior to human interpretation, but are *constructed* through a continuous claim of its existence.

In this way, identity becomes a matter of its own construction, a project of isolating the meaning of one identity as opposed to others by creating a certain image – or *representation* – of oneself. It is a "process of *becoming rather than being*: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves."<sup>22</sup> Identities are never fully complete, but always partakers in a continuous process of *identification*. Consequently, the perception of *identity* as something confined and durable is actually a matter of 'effective' identification: Whether the subject in question is an individual or a group, it continuously presents itself to the world in a certain way by relating itself to representations of history, culture, and language.<sup>23</sup>

Some communal identities, such as religions or nations, are often celebrated as reaching back through time, referring to certain perennial roots that are seen as the 'beginning' of identity. This momentum of history in current interpretations of the Self is not just a matter of building the Present upon the Past. Rather this relation should be reversed: History, interpreted in terms of present-day definitions of reality, is used to shape a certain tale or image of the Present. This is what has elsewhere been called *presentism*.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, theoretically, identities are dynamic and subject to constant change. This assertion in itself might not make much sense when dealing with situations in which people act *as if* identities were actually static depositories of meaning.<sup>25</sup> However, to examine the phe-

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<sup>22</sup> Hall 1996, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Hall 1996, p. 4; Jørgensen & Philips 1999, p. 58.

<sup>24</sup> Bartelson 1995, p. 55; Friis 1998, p. 130.

<sup>25</sup> Hall 1996, p. 4; Bartelson 1998, p. 297.

nomenon of identity we need to approach its apparent objectivity bearing in mind the fact that it is socially constituted, and not an objective truth.<sup>26</sup>

### *The Necessity of Identity*

The sense of being *someone* or *something* is “an inescapable dimension of being”.<sup>27</sup> It is a psychological need of any individual or group to point out itself as a subject in the world. Collective identities are necessary, both as a resource of identification for the individual, and for the existence of social groups and human society as such. Without an idea of ourselves, we would be unable to categorize the world around us and vice versa. An identity adds to individuals and groups a sense of being unique, or at least relatively clear, entities with defined borders. These borders will exist as long as we believe them to exist – or believe in the *belief* of their existence.<sup>28</sup>

The continuous struggle for identity ultimately rests on an anxiety of the *indeterminacy* of being.<sup>29</sup> The necessity of identity is established in contrast to the unpleasant alternative of ‘nothingness’, which in this way becomes the very condition of possibility of social organization and identity.<sup>30</sup>

Such reflections on the necessity of identity are not to be seen as a claim that individuals and groups need a sense of *fixed* or *absolute* identity.<sup>31</sup> As stated by Connolly, one might be able to “appreciate contingent elements in one’s own identity”.<sup>32</sup> It can only be concluded that *some* form of willful identity is a true prerequisite for ‘being’, and we hold open the possibility of constant change of identity in both time and space. As the context changes, we take on an identity suitable for the particular situation, but we still – at least to some degree – need to speak *as* somebody.

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<sup>26</sup> This does in no way mean that identities are ‘false’. Identities are not to be interpreted as either ‘true’ or ‘false’, even if their status as representations automatically makes them fictitious (cf. Friis 1998, p. 131).

<sup>27</sup> Campbell 1992, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Žižek 1993, p. 202.

<sup>29</sup> Norval 1994, p. 132.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Laclau & Zac 1994, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> Favoring the dynamic concept of identity, we cannot assume that *particular* identities, like the state of being a Dane or an Eskimo, fulfils a need that requires an a priori configuration exactly as that of a Dane or of an Eskimo (Cf. Eriksen 1993, p. 60f).

<sup>32</sup> Connolly 1991, p. 171f.

Hence, when something or someone is perceived as posing a threat to identity, or when the idea of a particular identity is somehow violated, subjects are entering an *identity crisis*. This is where identities are introduced as a problem or as a political issue.<sup>33</sup>

### *Level in Focus: Group Identity*

The concept of identity applies on a variety of levels. *Linguistically*, it is used to define the meaning of one word as opposed to other words, *psychologically* it signifies the construction of an 'I', while *socially* it set forth the configuration of a 'We'<sup>34</sup> These three categories are all about assigning a certain meaning to objects and subjects and the drawing of borders between them. They are also to some extent interdependent, because they act as resources for each other.<sup>35</sup> The linguistic level is not in focus here (although elements of it indirectly appears below when dealing with the concept of *discourse*). Nor is any great attention paid to individual identity and psychoanalysis. The level taken up here is the social one.

Through social interaction, the attributes of collective subjects are designed in a particular way, and this process provides the possibility of an 'imagined community' as the bearer of identity.<sup>36</sup> Groups of any size – societies, formal institutions, and casual ideological groupings – form collective identities in order to establish the affiliations among their members. In practice, I will – as a starting point – stick to the identity of *groups of current political importance*. In this specific context, it will be the well established imagined communities of the Czech state and of Europe.

To explore these phenomena and their consequences, we need some elaboration of how specific identities are established. Therefore, I shall now turn to the *relational* character of identification – the constitution of identity through difference.

## CONFIGURING IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE

Identity is founded on a *mutually* constitutive relationship with *difference*.<sup>37</sup> In order to secure the idea of a confined 'We' with fairly precise borders, we need an idea of 'Them', representing everything *outside* the constructed identity space of the subject. As stated in

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<sup>33</sup> E.g. Nielsen 1991, p. 10.

<sup>34</sup> These categories are partly deduced from Stuart Hall's presentation of the importance of *difference* (Hall 1997c, p. 234ff).

<sup>35</sup> An example might be that individuals, observing their historical and spatial context, identify with certain groups, of which they perceive themselves as 'members', making elements from the established collective identity elements of their own subjectivity.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Anderson 1991, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Connolly 1991, p. 9ff; Woodward 1997.

the introduction, this excluded sphere is usually referred to as *the Other*.<sup>38</sup> This concept will be employed here using initial capital, along with its counterpart *the Self*, which represents the identity or self-perception of the subject.<sup>39</sup>

When identity is always perceived in relation to what it is not, it is a product of *making difference*. A group striving for identity has to integrate an image of the Other in the establishment of the Self. Theoretically speaking, to get a sense of a full and confined Self, this picture has to be observed from the 'outside'.<sup>40</sup>

Saying 'Other' does not signify anything but the assertion of an immediate, perceived difference between the Self and the Other, and it does not refer to the quality or degree of this difference, except that the difference between the Self and the Other should be greater than any differential relation within the subject of the Self.

Since there is no way we can obtain absolute identity, identification is always a matter of naturalizing subjective understandings of reality on the social level, thereby producing or reproducing relatively absolute representations of identity and difference. Sometimes such representations do no longer fulfill their task. This happens for instance when old identities are challenged by new ones, or when old ones do no longer fulfill the task of supplying adequate content to society. This is a part of the story of what happened in Central and Eastern Europe in the late eighties.

## DISCOURSE THEORY

Collective identity formation always takes place in a certain temporal and spatial *context* from which it derives its *meaning*. Meaning is always communicated through *language*. According to Stuart Hall, language can be described as "the privileged medium in which we 'make sense' of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged. Meanings can only be shared through our common access to language."<sup>41</sup> And if meaning is dependent upon

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<sup>38</sup> Hall 1996, p. 4f; Connolly 1991, p. 9ff; Eriksen 1993, p. 60; Hansen 1998, p. 113; and others.

<sup>39</sup> To avoid an unaesthetic use of inverted commas, *initial capitals* are used to designate various discursively defined categories.

<sup>40</sup> This is a clear parallel to the identity formation of *individuals*. French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan sees individual identity as constituted by 'internalizing the Other' during the so-called 'mirror stage' in which the infant child (mis)recognizes itself as a unified subject by seeing himself or herself from the position of the Other (Hall 1997c, p. 237). Further exploration into these matters is a delicate venture. Casten Bagge Laustsen (1995, 1997 and a true bulk of others) has done laudable attempts of bringing such considerations into political science.

<sup>41</sup> Hall 1997a, p. 1. Because language works as a *representational system*, it enables people to build up shared understandings of the world. Indeed, the notion of language (or *text*) encompasses more than just the spoken or written *words*. We also communicate meaning through ges-

language, human cognition is always interpreted through language. Every time we inscribe certain understandings of the world, we also either reify or alter the language structures by which we interpreted the world in the first place. Those seemingly solid concepts that constitute our 'reality' are actually unfinished structures of our own making, built upon already established meaning or order.

The term *discourse* is used to describe such structures of meaning. The concept of identity developed above is very similar to this notion – as are many of those familiar concepts that work as repositories of identity production (such as history, culture, etc.). Indeed, identity might be seen as a discourse of the Self.

### THEORETICAL ROOTS

The term *discourse* was made famous as social/political theory of the social by authors such as Michel Foucault and Ernesto Laclau & Chantal Mouffe, but is now shared by many others. The inspiration for theories of discourse are manifold, but for the purpose of comprehensibility, one might line up two distinct branches of thinking that has contributed to the development of discourse theory; the philosophy of *non-essentialism*, and theories of *linguistics and structuralism*

#### *Non-essentialism*

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, 'non-essentialism' represents a certain group of philosophical or epistemological positions opposed to the stance of *essentialism*. Non-essentialism states that the world has no a priori existence until exposed to human interpretation. Instead, 'essence' is *constructed* through a continuous claim of its existence. This non-cognitivist approach has inherited a great deal from *nihilistic* or *perspectivist* projects, like those proposed by Nietzsche and his followers.<sup>42</sup> All essence is pure interpretation, and therefore, *theoretically*, everything might take any form.

However, it is not *possible* for humans to 'be' without meaning. This is where the concept of discourse appears, because – as we shall see below – a discourse is a framework of meaning that adds some order into the intrinsically chaotic and unessential world. Dis-

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tures, sounds, images, and practice. Through all these media, we use signs, symbols, and metaphors to represent our thoughts, concepts, ideas and feelings in social interaction (Hall 1997a, p. 4).

<sup>42</sup> Larsen 1995, p. 32.

courses are not just there. They are put into action by human practice. In a sense, we might say that humans tend to create meaning where there is none.

In sociological theory of knowledge, this has led to the approach known as *constructivism*, represented e.g. by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. This approach, however, merely sees itself as a *supplement* to essentialist theory.<sup>43</sup> Such semi-essentialism is contested by discourse theory. Essence is substituted by discourse, and discourse becomes the dynamic center of meaning, which makes the world *seem* like it is built up by essential totalities. We put meaning into a world of undecidability and ambivalence by *stating* that it is actually ordered and decisive.

#### *From Linguistics to Poststructuralism*

According to various theories of discourse, the physical world *is* there – only it does not gain any *meaning* for human beings before we communicate its presence to ourselves (or others) through language. This way of thinking derives from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, who argued that there is an arbitrary relation between language and reality. Language is made up of *signs*, which are defined as the unity of a signifier and a signified; the *signifier* being the ‘form’ or ‘expression’ – the actual word or image – of a *signified*, which is in turn seen as the *content*, the conceptual ‘idea’ in our heads that the signifier refers to. The inherently ambiguous relation between the signifier and the signified is fixed by linguistic or social codes, and this provides the meaning – the identity – of the *sign*.<sup>44</sup> Our perceptions of the world through language are thus *representations*, and do not refer to any cognitive experience.

For Saussure language is two-tiered: A dynamic, changeable ‘everyday language’ called *la parole* and a fixed ‘basic’ linguistic structure, *la langue*. *Parole* always draws on *langue*, the preset formation of all existing signs, each of which is assigned with a certain meaning in the structure because of its relation to other signs: each sign has a meaning because it is *different* from all other signs (e.g. the word ‘dog’ is assigned meaning through everything it is *not*).<sup>45</sup> According to Saussure, these relations are final when first established, and the basic meaning of signs to *langue* cannot change, even if the sound-image might vary. This point of final, closed structures spilled into the social sciences by the later work of *structuralism*

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<sup>43</sup> Berger & Luckmann 1966, p. 187f. The approach of constructivism as an “appendix” to essentialist theory repeats itself within International Relations theory, where constructivists are generally seen as explaining the foundations of the “realist” way of theorizing, without actually questioning the results generated from such theory, in spite of the fact that its prerequisites are philosophically undermined.

<sup>44</sup> Saussure 1991 [1916], p. 419; Hall 1997b, p. 31; Laclau & Mouffe 1985, p. 87; Torfing 1999, p. 87 and 305.



(Claude Levi-Strauss among others), which saw social relations as dependent upon fixed structures. This idea also has some distant roots in different versions of Marxism, which tended to explain the world as organized around class structures (Louis Althusser, Antonio Gramsci).<sup>46</sup>

*Post-structuralism* retains from Saussure and the structuralists the relational construction of the meaning of signs and the idea that language is not directly referring to a given reality. It breaks, however, with the picture of a *finite* structure organizing language and thereby perceptions of sociality.<sup>47</sup> Discourse is a kind of structure but it opens up the possibility of change, since it is based upon a non-essentialist epistemology, which means that the structure cannot enact the absolute closure of a static structural system.<sup>48</sup>

### THE CONCEPT OF DISCOURSE

A very preliminary definition of discourse could be this: a discourse is an analytical way of describing “a certain way of talking about and understanding the world (or a part of the world)”<sup>49</sup> Discourses do not *exist* anymore than the objects it tries to give meaning. It is a theoretical and analytical concept, used to describe the way human beings establish social units, entities, identities, and categories, thereby designing the meaning and purpose of subjects and objects, and of mere concepts as well.<sup>50</sup> Principally, outside discourse, no cognition is possible, and no perceptions of reality could exist.<sup>51</sup>

I shall not go into any great detail with the conceptual jungle of discourse theory, but a few concepts are necessary to get the picture straight. Discourse should be seen as a *dynamic structure of meaning*, a relatively finite totality of different linguistic *elements* (signs or clusters of signs) allowing us to comprehend the empirical world in a certain way.<sup>52</sup> Usu-

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<sup>45</sup> Saussure 1991 [1916]; Hall 1997b, p. 31; Torfing 1999, p. 87; Jørgensen & Philips 1999, p. 19.

<sup>46</sup> Torfing 1999, Ch. 1 and 2; Jørgensen & Philips 1999, p. 19ff.

<sup>47</sup> Famous exponents of post-structuralism include thinkers like Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Slavoj Žižek, and – in a more politically oriented, thoroughly conceptualized version – the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe.

<sup>48</sup> Torfing (1999, p. 81-82) suggests that the concept of “discourse” in post-structuralism replaces that of “structure”. Structure offers an *explanatory* function in relation to social phenomena. To some extent this is also the case regarding the concept of *discourse*, but discourse is able to overcome the closed and self-contained character of mere structure, since it makes structure into dynamic constructs of contingency. Therefore discourse does not *explain* as much as it *guides* social action.

<sup>49</sup> Jørgensen & Philips 1999, p. 9.

<sup>50</sup> In this way, any theory of discourse is itself a discourse – a way of inscribing meaning into a part of the world.

<sup>51</sup> Laclau & Zac 1994, p. 15 and *passim*; Torfing 1999 p. 84-85. Others (among them the early works of Michel Foucault) would claim that there is more to the world than mere discourse. I am, myself not absolutely sure.

<sup>52</sup> Laclau & Mouffe 1985, p. 105; Jørgensen & Philips 1999, p. 36. Laclau & Mouffe uses the term “moments” to describe elements, which has been assigned a certain meaning in this way. I choose to refrain from distinguishing between moments and elements, since it will have no relevance for my use of the concept of discourse.

ally, one or more of these elements are more significant than others in the unification of a discourse. Laclau and Mouffe call such elements *nodal points*. Examples of nodal points are the unifying, but conceptually empty, signifier of 'the State' – a concept around which we associate certain elements, such as 'sovereignty', 'politics', and 'power'.<sup>53</sup>

The perceived totality of a discourse is based on a partial *closure* of the way its elements relate to each other. The closure is *partial*, since discourses can always be threatened by alternate configurations. The partial closure of a discourse is an attempt of dominating a certain discursive terrain by limiting the possible meaning of nodal points and the web of signs surrounding them.<sup>54</sup> A discourse gains its strength by reducing possible understandings of a phenomenon in the world through the exclusion of other possible meanings.<sup>55</sup>

Discourses can overlap or struggle in a relatively defined terrain and make up *discursive formations*.<sup>56</sup> Also, one might assert that discourses can constitute parts of other discourses. Some discourses might work as comprehensive *meta-discourses*, whereas more particular content might be given by *sub-discourses*.<sup>57</sup>

According to Torfing, Laclau & Mouffe and others, the more or less exact *limits* of a discourse are established through the assertion of *radical* difference to elements perceived to be *outside* the discourse. Thus, the apparent totality of a discourse is dependent on the assertion of a "positive negativity" of a *constitutive Outside*.<sup>58</sup> As we shall see, this is a view, which I will try to modify later.

### THE ARTICULATION AND REARTICULATION OF DISCOURSE

Discourses are produced and maintained through *articulation*. Somewhat simplified, humans construct and remodel discourses whenever speaking or acting. Through articulatory practices, inherently empty elements (signifiers) of language are linked together in a

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. Torfing 1999, p. 98; Jørgensen & Philips 1999, p. 37.

<sup>54</sup> Torfing 1999, p. 98.

<sup>55</sup> The excluded signs (the 'field of discursivity' to use a term of Laclau & Mouffe) stands out as "a reservoir of inscriptions of meaning, which signs have had or have in other discourses, but which are ignored in the specific discourse in order to create clarity" (Jørgensen & Philips 1999, p. 37).

<sup>56</sup> Jørgensen & Philips (1999, p. 69f) prefer Norman Fairclough's concept of 'discursive order', but in line with Torfing (1999, p. 300), I prefer the concept 'discursive formation' originally inaugurated by Foucault (1972, p. 38).

<sup>57</sup> One should keep in mind the fact that when establishing meaning through difference and radical difference, the *perspective* means a lot. Usually, we might find articulations of radical difference between a liberalistic and a social democratic political party. On certain occasions, however, they might meet in one discourse arguing for 'liberal democracy', expanding the limits of discourse to include both parties, while the radical otherness is represented by Nazism or Communism (cf. example of British Labour and Conservatives during World War II in Torfing 1999, p. 125).

<sup>58</sup> Torfing 1999, p. 124; Andersen 1999, p. 96; Laclau & Mouffe 1985, p. 128-9.

way that makes them meaningful.<sup>59</sup> In this process, articulating actors draws upon already established meaning. This is the phenomenon of intertextuality: when creating new meaning, we inevitably draw upon structures of meaning already known to us.<sup>60</sup> One might also talk of *interdiscursivity* to the extent that discourses partially draw on other discourses to establish meaning discourses.<sup>61</sup>

Articulations are made through an ongoing, meaning-establishing ponder, in which multiple discursive articulations struggle to obtain a dominating position in the constitutive process.<sup>62</sup> Certain discourses are able to expand and attain “moral, intellectual and political leadership” and “hegemonize” the meaning of signs in a certain constellation.<sup>63</sup> They are able call a truce in the ongoing discursive struggle by convincingly monopolizing the constitution of meaning within a certain context. It does not signify, however, the discursive or violent *imposition* of principals or certain ideologies upon others. Instead, it creates a situation where a certain discourse become dominant in a terrain which was before tangled by alternative or conflicting discourses, which are then internalized in or subjugated to the hegemonic ones. Some discourses might even reach a point, where they are carried on virtually unquestioned: a stage of *objectivity*.<sup>64</sup> One illustrative example of this is the discourse of mankind as intellectually superior to animals. Thus, objectivity in this sense does not refer to any natural quality, but to a condition of *well-sedimented* discourse.<sup>65</sup>

Nevertheless, hegemony or sedimentation does not signify that the closure of discourse is full-blown. There is always a lack of totality, which makes the discourse vulnerable to alternate modes of thinking. Otherwise, hegemony would not be necessary at all. According to Laclau, this ‘threat’ stems from the constitutive Outside, which then becomes both the *condition of possibility* of the discourse, and at the same time, the reason for its lack of completion, i.e. its *impossibility*.<sup>66</sup> At some point, this tension might lead to a dislocation of the

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<sup>59</sup> Laclau & Mouffe 1985, p. 105.

<sup>60</sup> Hall 1996, p. 4, Atkinson & Coffey 1997.

<sup>61</sup> Jørgensen & Philips 1999, p. 84f.

<sup>62</sup> This struggle for creating meaning is called *politics* by Laclau & Mouffe. Thus, politics “is not just a surface reflecting a deeper social reality, on the contrary, social organization itself is a result of continuous political processes.” (Jørgensen & Philips 1999, p. 47)

<sup>63</sup> Torfing 1999, p. 101.

<sup>64</sup> Jørgensen & Philips 1999, p. 48 and 60-1. There is a lot more to the concept of hegemony in the Laclau-Mouffian sense, but I shall stick to what is strictly necessary here.

<sup>65</sup> Laclau & Mouffe (1985) and Torfing (1999) uses the notion of *sedimentation*, which is derived from the geological concept of *sediments*, i.e. layers in the ground, of which some are old and firmly compressed. Translated to the universe of discourse theory, we can observe different degrees of durability of discourses depending on the relative success of a process of sedimentation (Torfing 1999, p. 70-1).

<sup>66</sup> Torfing 1999, p. 124.

discourse, when it is no longer able to internalize or subjugate alternative discourses in the discursive terrain, which it dominates.<sup>67</sup>

### DISCOURSE AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

The resemblance between the concept of discourse and the concept of identity is striking. Discourse, however, is analytically the more encompassing of the two. The concept of identity employed here is *discursive*, and the construction of identity refers to subject positions offered by discourses, which are not necessarily 'identity containers', but which nevertheless structure those spaces that call for identity. Identity, in turn, contributes to the repetitive articulation of certain discourse that establishes a social space. As a part of this process discourses set up and maintain subject positions offered to individuals (or sub-groups) through *interpellation* – i.e. a process that 'calls the subject into place.' Identities can be seen as the meeting point – the point of *suture* – between the structuring discourse and the discursive 'subject'.<sup>68</sup>

In this thesis, identity can be seen as a partially closed *idea of subjectivity*. We might say that identities are certain discursive structures (or nodal points) articulated as subjects. Particular social identities are represented by discursively constructed communities that articulate themselves as *subjects* (and are – indeed – articulated as such by others as well). They address themselves as a 'We'-group in accordance with the discussion on identity earlier in this chapter. The unity of a Nation, e.g. the Czech nation, can stand as an example: Whenever someone actualizes the Czech nation, all Czechs are deemed 'the same' as opposed to the sphere of the non-Czech (whether embodied as named entities, ideologies, or mere objects) are joined together on the Outside as 'threatening' alternatives.

The 'We'-identity of the social subject thus represents the equality of elements *inside* of a 'subject discourse', thereby unifying any differential identities within the group. This construction of affinity is created through the relatively more different relation to the terrain *Outside* populated by the Other.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Dislocation might be triggered by a major political event like the breakdown of Communism, which generated alternate articulatory practices trying to activate another efficient closure of discourse in the destabilized discursive terrain (e.g. politics in Eastern Europe after Communism, or the Western loss of an constitutive Outside).

<sup>68</sup> Hall 1996, p. 5.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. the discussion of the constitutive Outside (Torfing 1999, p. 124).

Following the logic of identity/difference, the Self/Other nexus is a *dichotomy*. Dichotomies are conceptual oppositions, or the perception of two contradictory phenomena, logically complementing each other. Thinking dichotomously enables us to divide our experience of the world into phenomena such as good and evil, known and unknown, safe and unsafe. If the Self is seen as the 'Inside' of the Self/Other dichotomy, the parallel structural character of other dichotomies could be employed as an analytical tool, when assessing of whether a phenomenon is seen as a part of the Self or the Other. In short, by finding dichotomic patterns in a text, we can get an idea of where the demarcation lines are drawn around specific discursive entities.

## SOME FINAL REMARKS

During the last decade or so, the constructivist and discursive approaches have gained an almost annoying popularity among students of the Social Sciences. The argument for *not* escaping this 'mainstreamization' of these approaches is rather clear: Examining the construction of reality simply makes sense in a world that seems to be changing every second. With an increasing flow of information, the infinite character of discourse is easier exposed, because opposing discourses easier can reveal themselves.<sup>70</sup> This bare fact makes it tempting to take 'one step backwards' and carry out what Andersen calls *second order observations* – that is to look not to what *is* out there, but to question the things we take for granted, and examine how they are constituted.<sup>71</sup>

The instability, infinity, and incompleteness of discourses are the very reasons that we can even talk about a distinct phenomenon called 'politics'.<sup>72</sup> That is a major reason why discourse theory is extremely relevant, when dealing with political matters, and during the last few decades, theories of identity and discourse has seized some importance, especially within various work on democracy, political identity, public administration, and not least in the field of international relations (IR).<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Hall 1996, p. 4.

<sup>71</sup> Andersen 1999, p. 12ff.

<sup>72</sup> Andersen 1999, p. 92.

<sup>73</sup> The latter discipline has been dependent on a worldview in which states are seen as *objective* political agents acting in a space *outside* the state, while everything *inside* the state has been left for others to attain (or, in the case of certain "liberal" scholars of IR, it is only one factor among others). It could be argued that the whole discipline of IR is discursively constructed by emphasizing this distinction, and when first established along these lines, IR theories themselves help maintain the declared essence of their space of interest (e.g. Walker, 1993).

The work presented here is not an exercise in IR, and yet it certainly relates to topics usually found under this label (such as the concept of Europe and the state as an actor in an international environment). I shall also to a large extent deal with topics that some might label ‘national politics’, for instance the construction of political positions, minorities, and other ‘internal Others’ (constructs which are discursively excluded and yet geographically or formally situated within a political entity).

Even though traditional, essentialist theories often appear to be advantageous in many cases of concrete politics, they occasionally seem to paint rather absurd images of the political world. Sometimes they even tend to create images of conflict where there might be none, thereby contributing to a potentially dangerous discourse of enmity.<sup>74</sup> In other situations, traditionalist concepts seem obsolete when applied on the present context. The category of ‘state sovereignty’ is a fine example, since the meaning of this concept is nowadays firmly contested.<sup>75</sup> With a traditional approach, we are stuck within the ‘original’ concept, when analyzing such matters. In the words of Andersen, traditionalists ask *from* the concept, instead of asking *to* it.<sup>76</sup>

I shall refrain from making any further criticism of so-called traditional approaches to politics, but I should emphasize that, *epistemologically*, this thesis principally opposes any essentialist categorization of sociality, including the realist and the liberal schools of IR, as well as the so-called constructivist scholars.<sup>77</sup>

Some critics might yell “relativism!” when confronted with the ambiguity set forth by the concept of discourse, and in some sense it is true. Post-structuralism *does* assert that it is not possible to judge objectively between right and wrong. Nonetheless, we are – even as discourse theorists – always-already stuck within discourse, and this is reflected in human behavior, and therefore inherently tied to moral norms and categories established by discourse.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> A prominent example is Samuel Huntington’s prophecy of a world troubled by so-called “clashes of civilizations” (1993; 1997a), i.e. conflicts according to pre-established cultural lines. The same man has declared that the disintegrating identity of multiculturalism in the US is an enemy to American national interests (Huntington 1997b).

<sup>75</sup> E.g. by virtue of the distribution of competence within the EU structures, and not least the so-called “peacemaking” efforts made around the world by international forces.

<sup>76</sup> Andersen 1999, p. 9-10.

<sup>77</sup> Examples being the “IR constructivism” of Alexander Wendt (1992, p. 423) and, more basically, the so-called “sociology of knowledge” of Berger & Luckmann (1966, p. 189).

<sup>78</sup> Connolly 1991, p. 59. James Der Derian (1992, p. 168, n. 20) laconically questions whether relativism or even nihilism is to be considered a greater danger than totalitarian truth.

Though indebted to the epistemological assumptions of discourse theory, some aspects of my *analytical* approach will appear more structurally fixed than radical adherents of post-structuralism would normally accept. Even as a discourse analyst, one has to reduce reality in order to make a focus. Here, I also need a focus sufficiently concentrated to fit within the scope of an MA thesis.

During the 90s, all Post-Communist countries have had to cope with the more or less sudden dislocation of political discourse prompted by the 1989 revolutions.<sup>79</sup> The holders of political power could no longer tell the narrative of the Czech state according to the structures of Communist discourse, if they ever could. The outset here will be that the Czech Republic as a Post-Communist state, will tend to reverse the failed discourse of Communism by drawing upon discourses that are perceived as oppositional to Communism, which are here seen as the discourses of the liberal-democratic state and the concept of Europe.

The theoretical frame established in the next chapter will try to line out how to deal with these problems analytically.

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<sup>79</sup> Torfing (1999, p. 2ff) emphasizes that the Western countries and Western theory were experiencing a dislocation as well due to the breakdown of Communism, since the constituting Other (or Outside) represented by the Communist block is no longer available.

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## 3 THE ANALYTICAL SETTING

After presenting the epistemological and theoretical outset in Chapter 2, I now move on to the set the theoretical framework for analyzing the role of collective identities and discourses in the establishment of political entities and visions. This framework will be put to work in the analytical chapters, when examining how Václav Havel and Václav Klaus articulate the identity of the Czech Republic and Europe in the Post-Communist era. The question is how to reveal these constructions of Post-Communist identities of the Czech state and of Europe. One answer is that we have to look for constellations of the *Self* and the *Other*, i.e. the discourses of Identity and Difference.

The Chapter will start out by accounting for the role of space and time in structuring the images of the Self and the Other. Subsequently, I present a re-conceptualization of the ground figure of the Other, aiming at moderating the pure dichotomic character of the Self/Other nexus, so that the Other is not necessarily perceived as radically different to identity. In the last part of the Chapter, I consider the meaning of metaphors and intertextuality in this type of textual analysis, and suggest why it is important to consider such elements in the analysis of identity.

### IDENTITY IN SPACE AND TIME

#### INSIDE/OUTSIDE – THE SPATIAL DIMENSION OF IDENTITY

As mentioned earlier, the inside/outside distinction is what discourse is all about. Discourses tend to be built up by such dichotomic relations, establishing a totality among elements on the Inside, and a relation of significant difference between this totality and the Outside. Recapturing everything about this dichotomy is not necessary in this context, but a few words are appropriate in relation to identity.

The distinction between a defined Inside and an excluded Outside adds a sense of spatiality. Humans produce ‘spaces’ by excluding other people, territories, or concepts from in-



tervening with the interpretation of the world set forth by one discourse – the actualized or ‘our’ space. To define the Inside and Outside of a discourse reduces the conceptual frame, within which we operate, and brings on a sense of how reality is made up in a certain way. This mode of categorizing takes place at the level of states, nations, continents, religions, cultures, civilizations, and even political groupings, and other spheres, which are in one way or the other defined by spatiality in the sense that they are articulated as having borders beyond which there are no longer identity among the elements. The border is the demarcation line between a discursive entity and its constitutive Outside.<sup>80</sup>

Thus, the inside/outside dichotomy is the very condition of possibility for constructing the collective spaces that divide the world into different fragments. In the construction of identities, this dichotomy is the spatial dimension of the images of the Self and the Other. Thus, when finding the Others constitutive for the Self, they are located ‘outside’ the community, whether this is a certain physical or abstract territory.<sup>81</sup>

#### BEFORE/AFTER – THE TEMPORAL DIMENSION OF IDENTITY

The ‘Present’ is constructed as a moment, which freezes time while we talk about it. Actually, it is no more than the point of suture between Before and After: between the things, we have experienced in the Past, and the things we wish to accomplish in the Future.<sup>82</sup> We are able to construct a conception of Now as one moment in time, because it is conceived as different from what was Before and what might come After.

In constructing discursive subjects, we make use of this dichotomy, and often we refer to events in the Past as oppositional to our ‘present’ identity, and thus the Past could be discursively constructed in terms of Otherness as opposed to a Self located in the Present. One example put forward by Lene Hansen is the identity of “the *present* West, which is constructed against the *past* Soviet Union and the *present* Middle East.”<sup>83</sup> Another example is the construction of the present ‘Europe’, which is established as integrating and peaceful in contrast to a Past perceived as fragmented and plagued by selfish, bellicose nations.<sup>84</sup> A final case is the (re)construction of Central Europe in the 80s, where Central Europe was

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<sup>80</sup> Critical IR theory is well aware of the inside/outside distinction. E.g. Walker (1993) has shown how this dichotomy has basically structured the modern history of ‘international relations’ by asserting that there a community is present *within* (sovereign) states, but none *outside* or between states (Walker 1993, p. 63).

<sup>81</sup> Hansen 1998, p. 114-5.

<sup>82</sup> Andersen 1999, p. 80.

<sup>83</sup> Hansen 1998, p. 113 (*italics in original*).

<sup>84</sup> E.g. Wæver (1996)

not only differentiated from the (then) present Soviet Union, but also identified with 'Europe' by (over)stating its 'European' Past.<sup>85</sup>

Because of the intertextual character of discourses and identities, we inevitably draw upon a variety of established and sedimented discursive structures when constructing and maintaining our identities in the Present and when drawing our images of a possible Future. Hence, the Before/After dichotomy, which constructs historical 'Nows' will not rely on present interpretations of some confined Past. Instead, the Past and the Future is constructed in order to substantiate the Present.<sup>86</sup>

In establishing an identity of the Present, actors often tend to refer to *mythical* Past, which can be linked to the Present in an equivalent *or* a differential relation.<sup>87</sup> The current perception of the Past acts as a discursive *resource*, offering subject positions to a present or ideal Self or to the configuration of the Other.<sup>88</sup>

We might also find examples of the *Present* constructed as Other, a situation that according to Lene Hansen "involves a low evaluation of the national Self".<sup>89</sup> This might be a part of mobilizing the population e.g. in preparations to war, but it might also be a strategy for motivating a population to a political struggle such as the building of a country after a major dislocation of political structures.

#### THE USE OF SPACE AND TIME: THE CASE OF THE CZECH "RETURN"

Such a dislocation took place, when the Czech Republic was set free, first from a Communist public discourse, and subsequently from a Czechoslovak discourse and identity. A re-configuration of the political Self was needed in order to meet the demands of a new historical context. The Revolutions of 1989 might metaphorically be seen as a *departure* towards a new Self. This is reflected in an extensive use of the metaphor of 'returning' in

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<sup>85</sup> For a prominent example, see Kundera (1984). I will get back to this understanding of Central Europe in Chapter 4, when presenting a short account of Czech and Czechoslovak history

<sup>86</sup> Andersen 1999, p. 81; Eriksen 1993, p. 73. This resembles what I earlier referred to as *presentism*: the act of using 'convenient' fragments of the Past to establish the Present (Bartelson 1995, p. 55, Friis 1998).

<sup>87</sup> Eriksen 1993, p. 71, Tismaneanu 1998, p. 9. See also Hansen 1998, p. 115-6.

<sup>88</sup> The Before/After dichotomy might also act as a metaphorical representation of the distance between the spatial Self and the Other, for example when judging a certain community as "backwards" or "immature" (Hansen 1998, p. 115).

<sup>89</sup> Hansen 1998, p. 116.

Central and East European politics, like the 'return to Europe' slogan, or the eagerness to 'regain' a position as a 'normal state.'<sup>90</sup>

Of course, we were not – and we are not – witnessing any actual 'return', since we, and the discursive spaces we construct, cannot 'go back' to the spatio-temporal context of past time.<sup>91</sup> What we can do, however, is constructing an identity of the Present *in terms* of certain discourses of the Past (represented through current construes of a Past to which we might 'return') or the Future (represented by a 'desire' or a 'vision' of what we might become).<sup>92</sup>

The widespread usage of the idea of returning signifies something about how we *tend* to construct identities. The reference to something already ostensibly established, provides an argument in favor of one's position, whereas it is much more difficult to refer to some discourse which is relatively new or merely unknown, and still gain a wide acceptance of one's statement.<sup>93</sup> We are, quite simply, more easily drawn into an already established, immediately recognizable universe than into unproven ideals or the backwoods of the unknown, which might be how visions of the Future are sometimes perceived.

Following Žižek, we could say that elements of the Past are often used to represent or exemplify that 'Thing', which We really are, and to which we have a desire to 'return'. At the same time, we are deprived of enjoying the pleasure of being Us, since the Other prevents us from getting 'there'.<sup>94</sup> The existentially *necessary* presence of the Other induces an eternal 'lack' of completeness. Therefore, when speaking of a 'return to Europe' the Czechs will never get 'there'; just as no Danes or Dutchmen have ever enjoyed the privilege of being *there*.<sup>95</sup> 'There', e.g. Europe, is never more than what our narratives of Europe tell us that it is. Nevertheless, we *do* continuously reconstruct such political identity spaces. They act as durable nodal points in time and space and they add meaning to the human world.

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<sup>90</sup> Cf. Lagerspetz 1999.

<sup>91</sup> As Heraclites formidably put it: "No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and it's not the same man."

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Koselleck (1985, p. 273)

<sup>93</sup> Lagerspetz 1999, p. 381.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Žižek (1992; 1993, esp. p. 202-4). Žižek talks of a 'Theft of Enjoyment' by the Other.

<sup>95</sup> As Žižek states "What we conceal by imputing to the Other the theft of enjoyment is the traumatic fact that *we never possessed what was allegedly stolen from us*" (Žižek 1993, p. 203). Thus, the Other always deprives Us of being Us, and that is the very fact We need to mask.

## APPROACHING THE SELF AND THE OTHER

### AVOIDING THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF THE RADICAL OTHER

Discourses and identities are produced in order to eradicate the 'original' lack of essence, by constructing themselves as unambiguous totalities opposed by a constitutive Outside – often described as a sphere of radical difference or Otherness. This tendency to produce Others is a part of the discursive struggle for *order*; the "struggle against ambiguity, and the miasma of the indeterminate and the undecided; it is a struggle against indefinability and incoherence."<sup>96</sup> The Other opposing a certain community might be a specified entity, such as a 'foreign' community, or it might be a more abstract threat, like a political position or a moral value, challenging the attributes associated to the Self.

This logic means that a constitutive Other is inclined to be in radical opposition to the identity claimed to be ours. The argument is that the procedure of transcribing *evil* (or some surrogate term) as a quality of the Other emphasizes that the Other is what oneself is not.<sup>97</sup> The unfinished character of discourse and identity, and the eager attempt of securing its unambiguousness make it vulnerable. It makes sense that if one is able to point out the Other as somebody or something *evil* or *threatening*, the contrast to the perception of Self is sustained and strengthened, and the images construed to threaten social identity becomes, simultaneously, its major condition of possibility.<sup>98</sup> Accordingly, a 'conventional' poststructuralist approach might insist on finding the *radical* Others, when conducting an analysis of political entities. This thesis will not try to break this picture completely. Following those scholars who see identity as relational, this way of categorizing is how we assign ourselves with identity and ultimately existence *per se*. Nevertheless, there might be a point in refining the image of the Other, since focusing on the temptation of radical configurations might lead to the dubious wisdom that radicalizing the Other is the most common or perhaps even the only possible configuration.<sup>99</sup>

Alternatively, the Self/Other nexus could be seen as a continuum, in which the image of the Other can take on varying levels of otherness. Apart from being configured as *different*, the Other should signify no innate moral or ontological quality.<sup>100</sup> According to the 'tradi-

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<sup>96</sup> Norval 1994, p. 132. See also Beck (1998, p. 138) and Bauman (1990)

<sup>97</sup> Connolly 1991, p. 64.

<sup>98</sup> Campbell 1991, p. 12, Torfing 1999, p. 51.

<sup>99</sup> E.g. Campbell (1992, p. 12.) claims that this is the case when dealing with U.S. state identity.

<sup>100</sup> Hall 1997c, p. 238.

tional' view of discourse theory, this ambiguity might be contained when the Other is seen as radical. But this also implies the necessitation of some form of enmity. Instead, it is argued here that even an entity constructed as friendly can be seen as different, and thus as a part of the constitutive Outside. Thus, in this thesis, the inscription of absolute difference characterizing the radical image of Other is not automatically a better catalyst for identity formation than less radical ones. Though it definitely constructs a *clearer* image because of the contrast, it is not essentially more *powerful*, since it is not possible to measure the subjective appreciation of clarity vis-à-vis the nuances, added by seeing the Other as a spectrum of varying degrees of difference.

States, configured as relatively impervious, sovereign players in an international field, are by far the most important discursive space of present-day politics. The discourse of the state is created by an ongoing hegemonic practice, which has succeeded in establishing itself as an almost objective part of public politics at all levels. It has been postulated by David Campbell that when it comes to states, the structuring concept of national security encourages the identity of states to be constructed through articulation of *radical* otherness. This is, according to Campbell, required because was the state articulated as safe from dangers, the state and its project of security would not be needed.<sup>101</sup> This postulate is reversed here. It is argued that it is the project of *security politics*, rather than that of the state as a political entity, that might be under pressure in a situation conceived as free from direct threats.<sup>102</sup> I shall claim, that what matters for a political entity to remain stable is not articulation of threat as such, but rather the conception of an Other established as relatively *more* different than the relations among the elements *inside* the entity.

To be fair, Campbell does not reject directly the possibility of identity without radical configurations of the Other, and neither do one of his main sources of inspiration, William E. Connolly. The alleged tendency to radicalize the Other is merely a *temptation* or *potential*, rather than a necessity.<sup>103</sup> However, in Campbell's analyses of American security discourse, he focuses exclusively on radical Others.<sup>104</sup> This effectively leaves out other possible configurations of difference, and in my view, this has an unfortunate theoretical impli-

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<sup>101</sup> Campbell 1992, p. 12.

<sup>102</sup> Indeed, as brilliantly shown by the Copenhagen School, configurations along lines resembling those of radical others, specifically the "articulation of existential threats" are exactly what constitute discourses of *security* (Buzan *et al* 1998, p. 27).

<sup>103</sup> Connolly 1991, p. 8; Campbell 1992, 77-8.

<sup>104</sup> Campbell claims that foreign policy is especially prone for constructing identities by nominating radical Others (Campbell 1992, p. 78).

cation, since the analysis becomes dependent upon this unnecessarily static presumption about identity construction.<sup>105</sup>

### TYPOLGIZING OTHERS

To avoid an analysis in which *radical* Others make up the most important representatives of difference in constructing political communities, I shall try to elaborate a bit on the identity/difference dyad and the corresponding notions of the Self and the Other. Inspired by postmodernist Tzvetan Todorov's (1972) analysis of medieval attitudes towards American Indians, Lene Hansen (1998) revitalizes the dyadic character of Self/Other discussion, presenting three levels of the Other:

- **The Ontological level** (perception of the Other's *being* in relation to the Self): This is based on the Self/Other dichotomy. Is the Other identical or different? Is the Other like Us or unlike Us?
- **The Axiological level** (valuation of the Other): Is the Other perceived as inferior, equal, or superior to Us? The axiological assessment is not a power-oriented positioning vis-à-vis the Other as to whom is 'stronger'. Instead, it is considered a valuation of the Other in terms of moral status, affection, or 'love' (do 'We' like the Other or not; is the Other better or worse than 'Us').<sup>106</sup>
- **The praxeological level** (practical policy towards the Other): This is the 'response' to the Ontological/Axiological representation of the Other. Although this level should always depend on empirical research, it is convenient to assume a number of 'ideal' practices: modifying the Other (assimilation, enslavement, extermination), modifying oneself to the Other (active neutrality, deliberate indifference), or submission to the Other (Self-assimilation).

This categorization is summed up in Table 3.1, which displays possible praxeologies when the configuration of the Other takes on certain ontological and axiological positions. There should be no theoretical rigidity in these 'outcomes', since practice is never foreseeable. Nor is it possible to assume any causal relations between a certain representation of the

<sup>105</sup> A critique along more or less similar lines is offered by Lene Hansen (1998, p. 52ff).

<sup>106</sup> Hansen 1998, p. 118. As Hansen observes, the axiology is assessed empirically and is not "an analytical necessity" (1998, p. 118).

Other and the ideal ‘logical’ responses. Instead, Hansen talks about a “loose correspondence”.<sup>107</sup>

		Ontological perception of the Other	
		<i>identity</i>	<i>difference</i>
Axiology of the Other	inferior	impossible	assimilation of Other, enslavement, extermination (radicalization of difference)
	equal	assimilation of Other Self-assimilation	active neutrality
	superior	impossible	self-assimilation

Table 3.1. Praxeological level of action towards the Other, related to ontological and axiological levels. Source: Lene Hansen (1997, p. 127), slightly adapted for the current text and typography.

Hansen makes it clear that that the binary relation identity/difference is not absolute, but actually a continuum. The difference between the subject and the Other can take different shapes according to the contextual setting. Thus, Hansen speaks of a *less-than-radical Other* that takes up a position between the Self and the radical Other, a version of the Other that is configured as what she calls “*difference* rather than *otherness*.”<sup>108</sup> Here, I shall take this argument even further by asserting that the concept of the *less-than-radical Other* with some advantage could be supplemented by inaugurating a concept of a *similar Other* (see Figure 3-1).

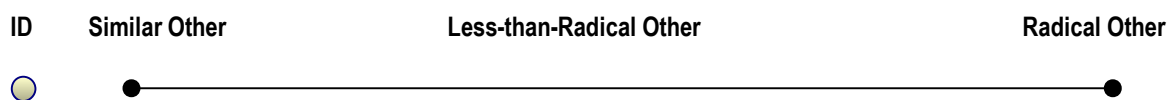


Figure 3-1. A spectrum of different configurations of the Other.

This typology illustrates different levels of otherness. To elaborate a bit, we might make use of the concepts of *politicization* and *securitization* as presented by Buzan *et al* (1998), and let them represent the different levels of othering. Politicization is seen as opening an issue, bringing it onto the political agenda, while securitization is seen as the articulation of an existential threat towards the entity, on whose behalf of the actor speaks.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Hansen 1998, p. 204.

<sup>108</sup> Hansen 1998, p. 52, p. 112ff and p. 158 (italics added). To be exact, both *difference* and *otherness* applies to the term ‘Other’. The term *othering* refers to a *conversion* of difference into otherness. By the practice of *othering*, the Other becomes a *radical Other*.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Buzan *et al* 1998, p. 23-24 and 29.

- The **radical Other** is attributed a high degree of difference from the Self. It is a securitized or highly politicized configuration of the Other. Thus, when Others are defined in radical terms, we are witnessing a configuration of the Other as a threat or maybe even an *existential* threat to the Self. In political terms, the Other is a threat to *security*.
- The **less-than-radical Other** is less distant to the Self than the radical one, though it is not close. This type of Other is *politicized*, not securitized, and is thus not posed as any direct threat against the Self.<sup>110</sup> It might well be met with some suspicion, but not in the form of immediate hostility.
- The **similar Other**, the novelty here, is set to represent a *non-politicized* or *positively politicized* difference, meaning that the difference *per se* is not configured in any negative form – it might rather be configured as a affirmative image. The similar Other represents a difference which is constituting for the Self, while at the same time perceived as being close to the Self.

The addition of the similar Other to Lene Hansen's model is introduced for two reasons. First, in order to refine the concept of the less-than-radical Other even further, and secondly, because it may be expected that the discursive vacuum in Post-Communist countries to entice the countries to 'become something they are not'. Indeed, the similar Other might be seen as a *role model*, a 'tutoring Other' which the Self wants to be *like*, but not necessarily a part of. This can hardly be a radical, or even just a less-than-radical Other. It may also be the image of a *friend* (someone close, but not identical, e.g. Sweden or Holland in the construction of Danish identity). These would still be perceived by the Self as an Other, an entity different from the Self, but, in addition, the Self possesses or actualizes a desire to possess certain elements that are interpreted as components of this Other. The point being: Role models and friends are not seen as identical to the Self unless they unite in the construction of some common identity (like an inscription of a Self on a different, more encompassing level).<sup>111</sup>

#### *An Expanded Model*

When dealing with a *similar Other*, the superiority/inferiority valuation of the Other is still in action. The superior, yet similar Other will hypothetically induce the Self to assimilate

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<sup>110</sup> Cf. Buzan *et al* 1998, p. 29.



itself to the Other. Perhaps, in the first place, this will result in a perception of overlapping identities. Conversely, the Self would tend to assimilate to similar, but inferior Other, while the similar Other conceived as having an equal axiology might result in mutual assimilation or a maintenance of status quo.

Table 3.2 is an attempt to integrate the considerations of the above sections. The Other will always be conceived as different from the Self (unless the Self is to vanish into the sea of indeterminacy), but to fulfill its function it does not have to be radical. However, as pointed out by Hansen, the ‘soft’ versions of the Other most often occur along with more radical Others, allowing the Self to be defined against “concentrically” structured Others that could be assigned various degrees of difference. As Lene Hansen points out, the analytical structure resulting from introducing additional categories in the standard post-structuralist gap between the Self and the radical Other by letting in less-than-radical and similar Others, might be seen as a *chain of identities*, which replaces the dualistic picture of identity/difference.<sup>112</sup>

		Ontological perception of the Other			
Original binary opposition		<i>ID (Self)</i>	<i>Difference (Other)</i>		
Degree of difference from the Self		<i>identical</i>	<i>similar</i>	<i>less-than radical</i>	<i>radical</i>
Axiology of the Other	<i>inferior</i>	Impossible	Defense of the Other Partly Assimilating the Other	Assimilating the Other	Submitting the Other (enslavement, extermination)
	<i>equal</i>	Assimilation of Other, Self-assimilation	Mutual respect, repetition	Indifference or active neutrality	Active neutrality or deterrence
	<i>superior</i>	Impossible	Self-assimilation	Self-assimilation	Submission, Self-assimilation

Table 3.2 (Adaptation of Table 3.1) Praxeological level of action towards the Other, related to ontological and axiological levels, conceptualizing the ontological level with three modes of constitutive difference.

In some sense, this overlap between the two poles of the identity/difference dichotomy constitutes a “bridge over troubled waters”, indicating that there is no need to panic if there are ambiguous feelings of whether the Other is a part of the simple identity of the

<sup>111</sup> It should be made clear, that the axiologically superior variant could be expected to overlap with elements integral in the Self. Thus, an ideal version of the Self could very easily overlap significantly with the image of the role model of the superior, similar Other. See also Hansen (1998 p. 119).

Self or not. The Other is *still* constitutive in cases when it is perceived as a similar Other, while when seen as a part of an expanded Self opposed to more distant Others, we are dealing with a different political space (e.g. when we speak as Europeans instead of, say, Dutchmen or Czechs).

## **USING THE MODEL: READING IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE**

When assessing the ontological difference of a certain image, or the axiological valuation of the Other, these dimensions will rarely present themselves directly. Therefore, I shall now turn to the problem of how to locate the different types of Others. For this purpose, we need some indicators to look for in the analysis, we need a guide to the classification of the Other, and we need a way to group images that are too similar to treat separately in a meaningful way.

### **INDICATORS: METAPHORS**

The manner, in which the images of the Self and the Other are established, does not always take the shape of a straightforward rhetoric of one's Friends and Foes. Self-Other relations are often constructed via *metaphors* instating certain connotative elements as associated to either side.

Metaphors are here perceived as linguistic images or representations, which substitutes another linguistic phenomenon, or, as Terence Hawkes (1972) puts it, a metaphor "refers to a particular set of linguistic processes whereby aspects of one object are carried over or transferred to another object, so that the second object is spoken of as it were the first."<sup>113</sup> Whenever we use metaphors in a specific contextual setting or as a part of an argument, it reflects our perception of the world.<sup>114</sup>

The double or heterogeneous meaning of metaphors makes them prone to divergent interpretations, which means that different languages or cultures might react differently on

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<sup>112</sup> Hansen 1998, p. 113.

<sup>113</sup> Hawkes 1972, p. 1.

<sup>114</sup> Staun 1995, p. 22.

certain metaphors.<sup>115</sup> Yet, they might also reduce the complexity of phenomena, which are inherently complex or insufficiently defined, and that is exactly the case with the never-complete discourses of identity.<sup>116</sup>

In political language, metaphors act as a strong rhetorical tool, when speaking about intrinsically complicated political matters like ‘the *Cold War*’. Like discourses, certain metaphors within politics have attained a high degree of sedimentation or objectification, and are as such very difficult to rework, because their component are tied together so strongly that it has almost become natural.<sup>117</sup>

Metaphors may prove a valuable analytical tool when locating whether an element is to be assessed as an Other or not, or when trying to determine the different degrees of otherness. This is the case, because it might provide a rather detailed record of the semiotic ‘meaning’ of the elements under consideration. Metaphors might take on dichotomic dimensions, for instance when articulating something as *natural* (as opposed to *artificial* or *unnatural*), or something as *light* (as opposed to *dark* or *heavy*). Such dichotomic representations are most often indicative of a rather radical differential relation.

### HOW TO CLASSIFY THE OTHER

The model presented above (Table 3.2) indicates a possibility of manifold combinations of ontology and axiology. In reality, the configuration of the two dimensions is most often closely linked, since the axiology will often correspond to the inherent distancing nature of the ontology. As Lene Hansen states: “The superiority/inferiority distribution is less outspoken and can be more complex, when dealing with not-radical others.”<sup>118</sup> We have not transcended the identity/difference opposition as such, but the expanded concept of the Other makes its way into areas that might at times be perceived as identity (in the case of similar Others).

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<sup>115</sup> See Staun (1995, p. 26), who refers to the somewhat hostile American reception of Mikhail Gorbachev’s 1986-statement of a “common European house”, which does not signify the same in English as in Russian.

<sup>116</sup> Staun 1995, p. 25.

<sup>117</sup> Just think of the image of the *state as a person*: A state can be *born*, it can be in good or bad *shape*, it usually has a *head* (of state), and it has *interests* and is able to socialize with other of its kind. A group of states can be perceived as a group of persons, who *bargain* or *negotiate* or *struggle* (Staun 1995, p. 25-6).

<sup>118</sup> Hansen 1998, p. 112-3.

Axiology \ Ontology	Similar	Less-than-Radical	Radical
Inferior	Normal	Normal	Ideal
Equal	Normal	Ideal	Unlikely
Superior	Ideal	Unlikely	Rare

Table 3.3. Expected Tendencies in Ontology/Axiology relations.

As pictured in Table 3.3 this aspect produces, *ideally*, a propensity of the similar Other to match a superior axiology, while the less-than-radical and the radical Other will tend to correspond to an equal or inferior axiology respectively. As illustrated, the rarity of the non-ideal combinations is different. This relates to the question of *clarity*. As already mentioned, the Self is more sharply defined as the Other gets more radical. Consequently, when a Self is established against a radical Other the image of this Other is very harsh, and the likeliness of perceiving the Other as axiologically superior is very low. Conversely, the similar Other is less sharply defined, since its difference from the Self is more ambiguous. Hence, we might expect the ontologically similar Other to be more apt for incorporating all three levels of axiology.

#### *Assessing Ontology, Axiology and Praxeology*

A variety of discursively constructed metaphors or terms is utilized in order to indicate the ontological distance from the Self, and thus the degree of dissociation from the Self. There are always numerous metaphors representing both the Self and the Other, and which ones are actualized depend on the contextual moments in time and space.<sup>119</sup>

To set up some guidelines we for the assessment of the *ontology* of the Other, it is asserted that the three types correspond to the ideal images of a 'friend', a 'stranger', or an 'enemy' signifying different degrees of dissociation from the Self. While reading, we should ask whether the Other is to be categorized as an enemy or some other kind of 'absolute' adversary. If this is the case it signifies a radical ontology, if not we should ask ourselves whether the Other could be seen as a Stranger. Again: is this the case, it signifies a less-than-radical ontology, and if not, it should be assessed whether the Other is seen as a Friend (indicating a similar ontology), or perhaps whether it is actually a part of Us, thus disbanding the differential image and internalizing the image as an element of the Self.

<sup>119</sup> Hedetoft 1990. See also Beck (1998, p. 138ff).

When presenting the model above, I also mentioned that one possible way of assessing the degree of difference is by using the notions of politicization and securitization. As shown in Table 3.4, this might serve as an additional criterion of assessment of the ontology of the Other.

ONTOLOGY	Self	Similar Other	Less-than-Radical Other	Radical Other
<b>Tentative criterions for assessment</b>	No dissociation	Scanty dissociation No politicization	Some dissociation Politicization	Hard dissociation Securitization
<b>Example metaphor signifying the degree of difference</b>	(Us)	Friend	Stranger	Enemy

Table 3.4 Tentative criterions for assessing the ontology of the Other.

As already mentioned the *axiological* differentiation is often very closely linked to the ontological. Sticking to the assessment of axiology as a ‘moral’ dimension of the Other, we could use the dichotomic relation between good and bad as a starting point, searching for attributes signifying the Other as either better than Us or worse than Us – or equally ‘good’ as Us. An example of how to read the axiological configuration of the Other is shown in Table 3.5. As was the case with the ontological dimension, the metaphors can take on many other forms than ‘devil’ and ‘role model’.

AXIOLOGY	Inferior	Equal	Superior
<b>Tentative criterions for assessment</b>	Worse than ‘Us’	The same as ‘Us’	Better than ‘Us’
<b>Example metaphor signifying the valuation of the Other</b>	Devil	-	Role Model

Table 3.5 Tentative criterions for assessing the axiology of the Other..

The praxis following a certain discursive view of the Other is always a matter of empirical action or proposals for action. Hence, the *praxeological* dimension of the images of the Other is read more or less directly from the political action proposed or carried out as a consequence of the text submitted to analysis. Logically, however, the praxeology towards the Other will most often take its outset either in the configuration of the Self (that which we want to *become*), or of superior, similar Others (that which we want to be *like*). Thus, the praxeological dimension of the Other is usually closely connected to the project of the always-already unfinished Self, and/or to the ‘prototype’ provided by the role models, reflecting the fact that we tend to build identity as a desire rather than a fact.

### **GROUPING MULTIPLE OTHERS: ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTS**

Images of the Other are usually composed of a number of elements, which are equated to each other in order to create a homogenous representation of the Other. One might metaphorically compare an enemy with a 'monster' or you might categorize apparently different Others in the same 'box', thereby making them stand out as one large bunch of similar crooks. This principle of categorizing and equating the elements of the Other is one explanation of the powers contained in the identity formations, and it corresponds to what Laclau & Mouffe call 'chains of equivalence'.<sup>120</sup>

A similar operation might be conducted on a more comprehensive discursive level. When analyzing images of the Other, nominally different Others are often equated, so that in fact they might be joined as elements under the same discursive category without violating their constitutive 'meaning' in any significant degree. Analytically, I will cope with this by gathering strongly associated Others under the label of one main Other – a complex of Others, which are sufficiently associated to stand out as components of one more comprehensive Other-image. For instance, 'Communists', 'the former system', and 'socialism' will not be dealt with as separate Others. Instead, they might be seen as elements surrounding the same main Other of Communism or whatever nodal point seems appropriate. What label is chosen as a nodal point is a matter of analytical assessment, and most likely it will sometimes be a matter of choosing between equally appropriate names. Of course it is also possible that the main Others will overlap or be interlinked in some way. Therefore, again, one needs to be careful with the categorizations, and be aware of the links between them, remembering that any Other is just an analytical category and that the label is just a name, not setting up any impenetrable borders.

## **WHAT TO READ AND HOW TO PROCEED**

### **TEXT SELECTION**

Like traditional case analysis, discourse analysis needs to start 'somewhere'. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, texts by Václav Havel and Václav Klaus have been chosen as empirical sources in preference to other political personalities in the Czech Repub-

lic. Even having chosen to analyze the sayings and doings of two individual persons, it is important to be aware that authors of selected material are not the original sources any of empirical 'knowledge', which can be accumulated, studied, and categorized by a quantitative or qualitative analysis. The authors are just 'users' or 'bearers' of socially established discourses. Through articulating action, they contribute to the continuous representation and reproduction of such discourses (and thus they become the articulating actors of the discourses, I intend to analyze).<sup>121</sup>

Of course, not every statement and every text by the selected actors is interesting. To assess what is important for our specific analysis and what is not, it is necessary to start out by reading an immense amount of texts by the chosen actors, along with various third-party analyses of the debate considered, as well as historical and political analyses of the context. This provides a detailed overview, which is valuable when assessing the importance of the importance during a second reading.<sup>122</sup> This first general step is not possible to document in any detail, nor should it be necessary. Rather, it provides us with a firm ground on which a more thorough mapping can be conducted, an idea of the concepts we are dealing with, and a general overview of the period concerned.

When the texts and relevant excerpts and quotations are selected, it is time to move on to the analysis, using the concepts of the model developed above in a more systematic manner. Phrasing and spelling of the texts (which are primarily English translations or written in English by Czechs) are preserved in all quotations presented in my analytical chapters. This means that the English grammar in the selected excerpts in some instances will appear somewhat inconsistent.

### THE ANALYTICAL SETTING

The reading strategy is relatively simple: Read and find! As schematized in this chapter, the main endeavor is to localize and classify different Others and examine the way they constitute Self-images of Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic and Europe respectively. While reading, these are the main questions to be posed, whenever a certain textual figure is to be detected as being a Self or an Other:

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<sup>120</sup> I.e. a chaining of the elements on the Outside to make them seem equally different (Laclau & Mouffe 1985, p. 127ff; Torfing 1999, p. 97).

<sup>121</sup> Prior 1997.

- What is the ontological image of this figure (is it an image of the Self, or is it a similar, less-than-radical, or radical Other in relation to Us)?
- What is the axiological image of the figure (is it superior, inferior or equal to Us)?
- What, if any, is the suggested praxeological response to this figure (how should We approach the Other; i.e. should we assimilate ourselves or try to impose an assimilation of the Other)?

These questions are answered according to the analytical techniques and the various criteria presented earlier in this chapter. It should be noted that it is far from certain, that all aspects of an image reveal themselves in all cases. There is no necessary causality between the ontology and axiology of an image and its practical implications, nor is it possible to deduce the image of any one level from another.<sup>123</sup>

The analysis will be carried out for three different periods, each representing a delimited phase in Post-Communist Czech history. The phases employed here are 1989-1992, 1993-1997, and 1998-2000. Each of these periods marks different political and historical contexts: The era of 1989-1992 was not only the first, 'premature' Post-Communist years; it was also the only Post-Communist period which was Czechoslovak, not just 'Czech'. The years from 1993 to 1997 was politically dominated by fast track privatization and reform programs activated for the most part by the Civic Democratic Party (ODS<sup>124</sup>), which also happens to be the party of Václav Klaus. The last period considered, 1998-2000, is marked by the fall of Václav Klaus as prime minister, and his resurrection when agreeing on an 'opposition agreement' with his successor Miloš Zeman. Also, this is the period when the Czech Republic joins NATO and enters into serious negotiation for EU membership.

Each phase is examined in individual chapters. Within each chapter, I will first deal with Václav Havel, then with Václav Klaus. To repeat, these two politicians are here assumed the two most important articulating actors in Post-Communist Czech politics. The presentation of my analytical findings is divided into sections according to relatively defined im-

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<sup>122</sup> I.e. the analytical procedure starts out with a pre-analytical reading of *all* collected material on the selected case, focusing partly on the basic idea of the analytical frame provided by the model above, partly on the historical context. This reading is the point in the process where certain concepts and excerpts of texts are retained for further analysis, and other parts are screened out.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Lene Hansen 1998, p. 125-6. If a suggestion for practice is found (praxeology) in response to a certain ontology and axiology, it is merely to be taken as a loose correspondence – for instance there might be two completely different ontological/axiological images of Europe, which both leads to the suggestion of seeking EU membership (Hansen 1998, p. 204).

<sup>124</sup> ODS = Občanská demokratická strana (The Civic Democratic Party).



ages found during my readings. It might be defined political entities such as 'the Soviet Union', or it might be political positions or ideas such as 'Communism'.

Main Others will be summed up in table charts after the each part of the analyses, and will be categorized by their the main associated elements, and their ontology, axiology, and praxeology. The Self-images of Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic and Europe, including main associated elements (if any), are presented after dealing with each author in each phase.

Conclusions of each phase will be compared in Chapter 8 to detect possible differences and similarities in articulations over time. Depending on the results, we may conclude on the stability of discourses on the Czech Republic and Europe, and we may get some indications whether the discourses change when the context does, for instance when Czechoslovakia (ČSFR) splits into two different units. In addition, we may detect whether the discourses of the two different actors develop in a similar pattern, or whether they take different courses.

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## 4 THE HISTORICAL SETTING

The nature of discourse theory makes it somewhat inappropriate to manufacture a historical outline of the Czech Republic. This is the case because any historical account is a limited selection of events. Claiming that one particular History represents an objective truth about the Past is contradictory to the premises of non-essentialist theory. It would be seen merely as an attempt of reproducing a certain *discourse* about the Past.

This notwithstanding, I find it appropriate to account for a few general historical events of recent Czech history both to provide the reader with a general idea of the historical setting, and to anticipate some of the historical references made by the political actors selected for analysis. I do not see the following account of Czech history as *true* in any objective sense, but as a quite general sketch of a few, historical events that are predominant within current discourses of Czech history.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CZECH LANDS

Until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Czech lands<sup>125</sup> have almost invariably been subjugated to various imperial powers, creating a sense of inferiority in power politics.<sup>126</sup> However, in certain periods, the Prague, the capital of Bohemia, hosted the imperial court of these empires. This led to immense cultural, intellectual, and architectonic developments.

The Czech lands experienced a national revival in the 19<sup>th</sup> century inspired (at least in part) by the French revolution. This movement was led by Frantisek Palačky, who up to this date is seen as one of the national heroes of the Czech lands. He and his followers did not gain much from their efforts in the first place. Later on, during the 'Double Monarchy' of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Czech intellectuals and politicians managed to set up conditions for a quantity of political influence in Vienna. This stimulated the sense of Pra-

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<sup>125</sup> The 'Czech lands' are the name of the current three provinces of the Czech Republic: Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.

<sup>126</sup> Even today this historical inferiority is seen in a typical Czech tendency to celebrate either defeat or dissidence (Holy 1996, p. 130//).

gue as a center. At the same time, the idea of ‘Czechoslovakism’ was bred.<sup>127</sup> Czech political engagement increased in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, spearheaded by Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, a Czech philosopher educated at the University of Vienna.<sup>128</sup>

The situation in what is today known as Slovakia was very different at that time. Slovakia fell under the jurisdiction of the Hungarian half of the double monarchy, which was far more authoritarian than was its Austrian counterpart. This left hardly any room for political influence and development. After the collapse of the Double Monarchy during World War I, the Slovaks were – at all levels – left with a poor degree of industrialization, low educational standards, and no experience with political participation, whereas the Czech lands was far more advanced in these areas.

Despite the differences, postulates of a distinct ‘Czechoslovak’ national identity started to surface.<sup>129</sup> During and after World War I, great efforts were made to make way for the establishment of a Czechoslovak Republic, which became reality from the 28 October 1918, when Thomas G. Masaryk was inaugurated as the first president of this new constitutionally democratic state. He remained president until 1935.

#### **1938-1947: THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH**

By the Munich Agreement of September 1938, the Western Allies sacrificed democratic Czechoslovakia for the ill-fated sake of “peace in our time”, by offering the Germans access to the so-called Sudeten German areas of North Western Czechoslovakia. The remaining parts of Bohemia and Moravia was invaded by the Germans in March 1939, and at the same time, the first ‘independent’ Slovak Republic rose as a Nazi protectorate.

In July 1940, an exile government was established in London under the leadership of pre-war president Edvard Beneš. In December 1943, Beneš signed a Czechoslovak-Soviet alliance agreement in Moscow, and by the end of the war, the Czechoslovak exile government was under heavy pressure from the Soviet Union. On 16 May 1945, it regained control under President Beneš and the Czechoslovak Republic was restored, except from Subcarpathian Ruthenia at the very east of the country, which was ceded to the USSR.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Kováč 1998.

<sup>128</sup> Wellek 1974, p. viii.

<sup>129</sup> For an brief overview of the making of Czechoslovakia, see Kováč (1998).

<sup>130</sup> Otáhal 1998. Nowadays, the Subcarpathian region is a part of Ukraine.

Approved by the allied powers, the vast majority of the German minority (nearly 3 mill. people) was expelled from Czechoslovakia immediately after World War II due to the so-called Beneš-decrees.<sup>131</sup> Apart from making the composition of nationalities in the country somewhat more straightforward (combined with the Soviet take-over of Subcarpathian Ruthenia), this arrangement has proved a difficult matter in the future relationship between Prague and Germany.<sup>132</sup>

### 1948-1968: COMMUNIST TAKE-OVER AND ATTEMPTED REFORMS

Following the 'betrayal of Munich' by the Western allies, support for the Communists was strong in post-war Czechoslovakia. Combined with the plain fact of Soviet military occupation, this culminated with an unofficial Communist coup d'état in February 1948, which led to the obscure death of Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk in March and ultimately to the resignation of Beneš in June.<sup>133</sup> The country was now facing another forty years of imperial rule – this time in the shape of a Soviet satellite state.

By the late sixties, Communist rule seemed to have efficiently wiped out alternative modes of thought in course of the vision of international socialism. But then the Czechoslovak leaders once again tried to break free from external dominance, this time by an attempt to reform the socialist system of totalitarian control. This so-called "socialism with a human face" ended abruptly in August of 1968, when Warsaw Pact troops (without the participation of the even more disobedient and nationalistic Romania) invaded Czechoslovakia without meeting any military resistance. This was partly due to the non-violent ideology of the leaders, but also because of the logistical situation of the Czechoslovak troops who, ironically, were placed at the *Western* borders of the country because of a declared non-confrontation policy towards the Soviet Union.

### 1968-1988: NORMALIZATION AND DISSENT

The failed experiments of the Prague Spring induced a tough ruled 'normalization' of Czechoslovak socialism along Soviet lines. This process, led by Gustáv Husák, aimed at

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<sup>131</sup> Burcher 1996, p. 6. Historians do not completely agree on the exact number of German expellees, though generally it varies between 2,5 millions (Holler 1963, p. 8) and "almost three millions" (Hauner 1991, p. 24).

<sup>132</sup> Strohlein 2000.

<sup>133</sup> On 10 March 1948, Jan Masaryk (son of T. G. Masaryk) was found dead underneath a bathroom window, from which he had accidentally fallen or perhaps jumped with the intention of committing suicide (Sterling 1969). Critics to these interpretations recall the fact that, throughout the history of Bohemia, *defenestration* (the somewhat bizarre act of throwing someone or something out of a window!) has been a

removing all supporters of reform from any key position in the Communist Party and the mass media.<sup>134</sup> This entailed a vast magnitude of control measures reaching into every corner of society, and gradually Czech totalitarianism was brought back on track. The only surviving element of the attempted reforms was a constitutional amendment, which turned the Czechoslovak Republic into a federation – allegedly in order to implement the right of self-determination for the Slovak part of the population.<sup>135</sup>

The events of 1968 brought about the foundation of organized intellectual circles of resistance, culminating in the creation of Charter 77. This group of dissidents was formed in 1976 (in actual fact encouraged by public lawsuits against an underground band called “The Plastic People of the Universe”). Its declared goals focused on human rights, and were inspired by the Helsinki Accord of 1975.<sup>136</sup> Among its chief proponents were historian and philosopher Jan Patočka, professor Jiří Hajek, and the current Czech president Václav Havel.<sup>137</sup> Most active signatories of Charter 77 were kept under exhaustive observation by the authorities, and frequently many of them were imprisoned for several months on charges of anti-systemic activities.

The philosophy of the dissidents was not represented by a unanimous voice. However, one aspect is interesting in relation to political identity: The reestablishment of a concept of Central Europe – or *Mitteleuropa* in the early 1980s, though this renewed focus on Central Europe as an entity, should not be confused with the pan-Germanic use of this noun in the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>138</sup>

Politically, the most important element of this new discourse on Central Europe was the conception of an essentially anti-Soviet and anti-Russian identity.<sup>139</sup> In 1983, the Czech novelist Milan Kundera, then (and still) residing in France, wrote a highly celebrated article on the matter, in which he described Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary as representing a “kidnapped” occident - a genuine piece of the West that unrightfully had fallen

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popular way of getting rid of political opponents, and that the death of Jan Masaryk most likely is a case of murder (Kramer 1999, p. 18; Johnson 1996, p. 88).

<sup>134</sup> Otáhal 1998.

<sup>135</sup> E.g. Schaeffer 1999; Brown 1994, p. 54.

<sup>136</sup> Gruntorád 1989. Charter 77 signatories found their roots in the Helsinki Accord, as well as the two UN Covenants on Civic and Political rights and on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, all of which were approved by the Czechoslovak legislature in March 1976.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. ‘Charter 77’, adopted in Prague on 1 January 1977.

<sup>138</sup> Johnson 1996, p. 266-7; Neumann 1999, p. 146ff. As Neumann observes, the two terms *Central Europe* and *Mitteleuropa* are “merely shorthand for conglomerates of loosely similar imagined communities” (Neumann 1999, p. 147), i.e. discourses of collective identity articulated in different ways.

<sup>139</sup> Johnson 1996, p. 267.

into the wrong hands.<sup>140</sup> Kundera describes the situation after the Second World War as one of three “fundamental situations”. They include “that of Western Europe, that of Eastern Europe, and (...) that of the part of Europe situated geographically in the center, culturally in the West and politically in the East.”<sup>141</sup> In the Communist situation, Central Europe is thus kept hostage between East and West, and makes it stand out as a ‘third’ Europe.<sup>142</sup> In his essay, Kundera asserts a fierce contradiction between on the one side the figures of Europe and ‘the West’ and on the other representations of ‘the East’, mainly Russia and the USSR.

Accordingly, Kundera establishes the Communist rule as radically *unnatural* to Central Europe. Central Europe is inherently a part of the West, which in turn is incomplete with Central Europe abducted by USSR. In other words, ‘Europe’ cannot be normal in the Cold War situation. As Neumann observes, it is interesting that Kundera does not differentiate between the Soviet Union and the “eternal Russia”, thereby insisting on a more or less permanent civilizational divide between the European and the Russian sphere.<sup>143</sup>

Even if this picture was not unanimous in the debate, Kundera’s essay was a core reference for many dissidents.<sup>144</sup> Yet, Kundera’s essay was not a political program, nor was it meant to be.<sup>145</sup> Politically, Charter 77 signatories and other dissidents resorted to what was called “anti-political politics”.<sup>146</sup> This indicated dissociation with ‘politics’ in its totalitarian, Communist form. It also represented an affiliation with the concept of “living within the truth” as opposed to “living within the lie” of the Communist regime.<sup>147</sup> This way, dissidence often appeared as a *morally* grounded retreat from the ‘untruthful’ public policy,

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<sup>140</sup> Kundera 1984; Perrault 1999.

<sup>141</sup> Kundera 1984. “Central Europe” is instated as Western in the sense that it belongs to the part of Europe dominated by Roman Christianity, whereas the “other” Europe is constituted by “Byzantium and the Orthodox Church”.

<sup>142</sup> Kundera 1984.

<sup>143</sup> Neumann 1999, p. 151.

<sup>144</sup> The vision of Central Europe as a distinctive spiritual sphere was also frequently used by Havel (e.g. 1985). Also, the reemergence of the whole concept of Central Europe in general, facilitated cross-border dissident relations (Strohlein 2000, p. 12).

<sup>145</sup> To be fair, it is very likely that Kundera deliberately exaggerates his voicing of these categorical images of Europe. As pointed out by Bílek (1998), there is no news in the fact that Kundera mixes fiction and authenticity in order to make his addressees aware of a political statement. According to Neumann (1999, p. 150) Kundera himself seems to disclaim the work, and insists that the essay was tailor-made for a Western audience. Even if this is true, the article became a core dissident testimony for the “unnatural” situation in Communist parts of Europe.

<sup>146</sup> Havel (1984). Havel developed this term with his Hungarian ally György Konrad. For a discussion of the philosophical origin of the concept, see Pavlík (1993).

<sup>147</sup> Havel (1978).

aimed at establishing an alternative political sphere within *society*, but detached from the *state*.<sup>148</sup>

This sphere 'outside' the state was referred to as a 'parallel polis' or 'civil society', both core concepts of dissidence in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere.<sup>149</sup> The non-state operations were supposed to be the realm of *conducting* the 'anti-political politics', which was meant to be oppositional in an anti-ideological and non-programmatic manner. As Havel states in 1984, it was supposed to be "Politics growing from the heart, not from a thesis."<sup>150</sup>

### 1989: THE VELVET REVOLUTION

From the mid-80s, Mikhail Gorbachov introduced his policy of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, which changed the political course of the Soviet Union. The subsequent loss of Soviet back-up isolated the hard-line Czechoslovak leadership both nationally and internationally, and political demands for change materialized in the course of 1989. Following the demise of the Communist regimes in Hungary, Poland, and the fall of the Berlin Wall in DDR, a huge demonstration was organized among Czechoslovak students on 17 November. The next day a general strike occurred in support of the students' demands, and on 19 November, the 'Civic Forum' was formed as a sole mouthpiece of the various independent groupings taking part in the anti-regime activities. From the very beginning, the Civic Forum was chiefly represented by Charter 77 signatories, Václav Havel among others.<sup>151</sup>

On 28 November 1989, the parliament voted to strip the Communist Party of its guaranteed monopoly on political power. Just a fortnight later, on 9 December, The Civic Forum formed a transitional "Government of National Understanding", reorganizing the governmental bodies of Czechoslovakia in order to eliminate the Communist monopoly on power.<sup>152</sup> The collapse of the totalitarian regime went reasonably smooth in Czechoslovakia compared to elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Accordingly, these events were given the symbolic name of the 'Velvet Revolution'.

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<sup>148</sup> Eyal 1998; Tismaneanu 1990; Johnson 1996, 268.

<sup>149</sup> Havel 1978, p. 112; Eyal 1998. The term "parallel polis" was originally introduced by Václav Benda (see Pavlík 1993). A sister concept, "Civil society", was used by the Polish historian Adam Michnik, who was a key opposition figure in Poland for several years (e.g. Michnik 1981). See also Tismaneanu 1990.

<sup>150</sup> Havel 1984, p.157.

<sup>151</sup> Otáhal 1998.

<sup>152</sup> E.g. Otáhal 1998.

## 5 1989-1992: POST-COMMUNIST CZECHOSLOVAKIA

This first analytical phase begins after the collapse of the Communist regime in November 1989, and ends by the time Czechoslovakia ceases to exist at the turn of the year 1992/93.

Václav Havel, the celebrated dissident, and one of the key organizers of Civic Forum, was elected president by 29 December 1989. The other main character in this thesis, Václav Klaus, became Minister of Finance. Klaus' emergence on the political scene was not based on a former career of political dissidence within Charter 77 like most other public figures of the Civic Forum. Until 1987, he had been an employee of the Czechoslovak State Bank. However, he was openly opposed to the Communist system in the 60s (causing his dismissal from the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences), and thanks to various studies abroad, he possessed a firm knowledge of market economy and its attributes. Since Czech experts on these matters were an exceptionally scarce resource in 1989-90, Klaus seemed a reasonable choice for the Ministry of Finance.<sup>153</sup> Klaus remained in this position after the elections after free elections in June 1990 until the 1992 elections, when his newly founded Civic Democratic Party (ODS) won a devastating victory, and Klaus became Prime Minister.

During these years, the Czechoslovak state prioritized its foreign relations, particularly with Western political institutions.<sup>154</sup> Accompanied by Poland and Hungary, Czechoslovakia entered into an Association Agreement with the EC on 13 December 1991. The agreements were given the name 'Europe Agreements', and were the results of negotiations following the European Council meeting in Dublin towards the end of 1990.<sup>155</sup> In mid-February 1991, Havel met with the presidents of Hungary and Poland in the Slovak-Hungarian border town Visegrád. This was the onset of the 'Visegrád cooperation', an ef-

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Ash (1999, p. 124). According to Klaus himself, he "was told there was no one else who could do the job" (Václav Klaus, interviewed by John H. Fund in *Reason Magazine*, Vol. 23, June 1990).

<sup>154</sup> To be fair, the country also engaged in bilateral agreements with e.g. Germany (1991-2) and later with Russia (1992).

<sup>155</sup> Mayhew 1998, p. 21-3.



fort of the three countries to coordinate their common venture of establishing closer liaisons with Western organizations.<sup>156</sup>

Domestically, former dissidents seemed to acquire a profound prestige position in society by the time of the 1989-revolution, especially among the Czechs.<sup>157</sup> By some *Slovaks*, the new central position of dissidents was seen as a renewed bias towards Czech supremacy over the Slovak nation.<sup>158</sup> This gave rise to acts of nationalism and stubborn political discussions that contributed significantly to the split-up of Czechoslovakia by the turn of the year 1992/93.<sup>159</sup>

The June 1992 election results heralded very different policy lines in the Czech lands and Slovakia.<sup>160</sup> Backed by almost one third of the electorate, Klaus felt safe to reinforce his stance on the matter of the Czech-Slovak question. He thus opposed any confederative solution – he rather saw *either* a federal reform, *or* a definite segregation, which could rid the Czechs from the heavy economic obligations in Slovakia. On the Czech side, the latter solution was expected to ease reforms in the Czech lands, and at the same time, the Slovak national populist, Vladimír Mečiar, resumed pressures for increased Slovak autonomy. This seemingly served as a justification for the Czech government also to support this alternative, and Klaus and Mečiar agreed on the disintegration of Czechoslovakia and formed a transitional government.<sup>161</sup>

Václav Havel, who was strongly opposed to Czechoslovak disintegration stepped down on 17 July 1992, leaving the federation without a head of state for the last five months of its existence. Negotiations between Klaus and Mečiar put down the formalities for the final break-up of the federation. The question of a possible referendum was ruled out, probably because it might compromise the separation plans – one poll after the other showed that a

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<sup>156</sup> Šedivý 1994.

<sup>157</sup> This notwithstanding, it should be noted that Charter 77 did not enjoy any widespread popularity before 1989. According to the Czech historian Milan Otáhal, the moral radicalism of Charter 77 – along with the heavy persecution of its members – was a major reason why the Charter could show no more than 2000 signatories by November 1989 (Otáhal 1998). Havel reflects over this problem in his essay “An Anatomy of Reticence” (Havel 1985), in which he blames a popular sentiment that allegedly reckons the dissident objectives utopian or overly solemn.

<sup>158</sup> Brown 1994, p. 55-6. Brown states that dissent during the ‘normalization’ era was predominantly a Czech phenomenon, and that the 1989-revolution, though supported by most Slovaks, was mostly a *Czech* victory (Brown 1994, p. 55). For the opposite opinion, see Holy (1996, p. 102), who follows Leff (1988, p. 245ff) in maintaining that the Communist Husák government was a disillusionment to most Slovaks, given that the *formalized* Slovak autonomy of the 1969-reform did not generate any *de facto* autonomy.

<sup>159</sup> The quarrels included the so-called ‘hyphen debate’ in 1990: A discussion of whether or not to insert a *hyphen* between ‘Czecho’ and ‘Slovakia’ in the official name of the country to emphasize a difference between the two main nations of the federation. The compromise name was The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (CSFR). From this debate grew a lengthy dispute over the constitutional state of the republic, the Slovak side pleading for a confederative solution, intended to give more autonomy to the Slovak republic (e.g. Ravn 1996, p. 81).

<sup>160</sup> Stroehlein *et al* 1999.

majority was in favor of a continuation of the federation. The Czech lands and Slovakia, it was claimed, would benefit from taking separate future paths. No doubt though, the decision also originated in the stubborn unwillingness of the parties to agree on a compromise.<sup>162</sup>

## VÁCLAV HAVEL 1989-1992

Václav Havel was reelected president on 5 July 1990 after the June elections. We shall now see how Havel constructs Self-images of Czechoslovakia and Europe in the first two years of Post-Communist Czechoslovakia.

### HAVEL 1989-1992: THE CONSTRUCTION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In the following sections, we shall see how Václav Havel constructs a Self-image of Czechoslovakia against three different Others: Communism, the Soviet Union, and Europe.

#### *Communism as a Radical Other*

Havel began his career as a spokesman of the republic on New Years Day 1990. He started his New Years address with these words:

»For forty years you heard from my predecessors on this day different variations on the same theme: how our country was flourishing, how many million tons of steel we produced, how happy we all were, how we trusted our government, and what bright perspectives were unfolding in front of us. I assume you did not propose me for this office so that I, too, would lie to you.«<sup>163</sup>

The representatives of the Communist system, which broke down a little more than a month before this statement, is pointed out as 'liars', while Havel pictures himself as the opposite. It is worth noticing that this wording is a direct reference to Havel's dissident

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<sup>161</sup> Brown 1994, p. 59; Ravn 1996, p. 80.

<sup>162</sup> Stroehlein *et al* 1999. One might add that allowing the countries to taking different directions above all was to the political benefit of ODS and HZSD, and that institutional weakness was a considerable factor in making way for the highly debated process of separation (Schaeffer 1999). The split-up, thus, was not a nationalistic one, but rather a matter of Klaus and Mečiar taking advantage of their privileged electoral positions (Richova 1993).

<sup>163</sup> New Years Address to the Nation by Václav Havel, Prague, 1 January 1990. This and henceforth any other reference to speeches and writings by Havel are, unless otherwise stated, retrieved from the official English archive of the Czech president at [http://www.hrad.cz/president/Havel/index\\_uk.html](http://www.hrad.cz/president/Havel/index_uk.html).

discourse, which were repeatedly established around the core dichotomy of 'lie versus truth'.<sup>164</sup> A bit more flamboyant, we might say that the Savior (Havel) replaces the Sinner (Communism).<sup>165</sup> Communists are also, elsewhere in the same speech presented as "our homegrown Mafia", who "do not look out of the plane windows and who eat specially fed pigs", a statement equivalent to 'liars'.

The construction of the Communist leaders as 'liars' provides the ontological image of a *radical* Other, which is axiological *inferior*. The Communists were morally substandard, claiming that everything was all right, when it was not. If we stay for a moment in the metaphorical universe of the past Self as a Sinner, it might logically give rise to a praxeology of 'repentance' in order to *detach* the present Self from its former configuration. The lustration act of 1991 is a prominent concrete example of this, even if Havel himself was somewhat unenthusiastic about it.<sup>166</sup>

The image of Communism as a radical and inferior Other prevails in almost every speech by Havel in these years. The main associated element is the image of the dubious societal legacy, the old regime left for Post-Communist times. Along these lines, the image of Communism is associated to elements of the Present as well as the Past. This applies to Havel's reflections over what he calls "our own bad traits":

»Our main enemy today is our own bad traits: indifference to the common good, vanity, personal ambition, selfishness, and rivalry. The main struggle will have to be fought on this field.«

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Havel inscribes a radical difference to certain attributes of the Post-Communist situation, which, in turn, is seen as a product of the totalitarian rule:

»The most dangerous enemies of a good cause today are no longer the dark forces of totalitarianism, with its hostile and plotting mafias, but our own bad qualities. My presidential program,

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<sup>164</sup> Cf. my historical account, p. 46.

<sup>165</sup> This metaphorical construct is not as corny as it might sound. Elsewhere in the same speech, the same basic figure is used when he addresses the Communist legacy as "a sin we committed against ourselves." Stroehlein (1997) has a few reflections on the same subject, presenting Havel's role as the "martyr who, Christ-like, absolves the Czechs of their sin".

<sup>166</sup> In the years following 1989, most Post-Communist countries sought political justice vis-à-vis the former Communist leadership. While in most countries this was realized through legal proceedings (or rapid symbolic gestures like in Romania), it was different in Czechoslovakia. Here, the parliament chose to deal with the Past through legislation. In October 1991, Havel reluctantly signed the controversial *lustration act*, which was seen as an attempt of "purifying" and legitimizing public affairs in the wake of Communism. Lustration (screening) were aimed at barring prominent former Communists, collaborators with the secret police (StB), and others, from achieving high-ranking public offices. It was a system much like the *Berufsverbot* in West Germany (Dvořáková 1994; Williams 1999)

<sup>167</sup> New Years Address to the Nation by Václav Havel, Prague, 1 January 1990.

therefore, is to bring into politics a sense of culture, of moral responsibility, of humanity, of humility and respect for the fact that there is something higher above us.«<sup>168</sup>

The radical and inferior Other of the Past Communist Self is here matched by a radical and inferior Other of the Present – “bad traits” or “bad qualities”. In the same instance, this is contrasted to a notion of morality (and an almost theological allegiance in the sentiment of “something higher above us”).

This Bad Past and its current counterpart of the Bad Traits are constitutive for a Good Past and Traditions, which comes to represent the Czech Self. Thus, Havel seeks to establish the identity of the Czech people as having a sense of democratic and participatory ‘spirit’, partly stemming from a virtuous Past acting as a source of good traditions:

»I think there are two main reasons for the hopeful face of our present situation. First of all, people are never just a product of the external world; they are also able to relate themselves to something superior, however systematically the external world tries to kill that ability in them. Secondly, the humanistic and democratic traditions, about which there had been so much idle talk, did after all slumber in the unconsciousness of our nations and ethnic minorities, and were inconspicuously passed from one generation to another, so that each of us could discover them at the right time and transform them into deeds.«<sup>169</sup>

Here, the Czech Self is metaphorically set up as a human being with spiritual and physical abilities (it has a moral awareness, it can *slumber* or be *killed*). Havel implants a kind of moral imperative in the Czech people, a quality that the Communists were not able to overrule. Secondly, he asserts that the wisdom of “humanism” and “democracy” has just been “slumbering” deep beneath the Communist surface. As such, those attributes are seen as ‘true’ qualities of the Czechoslovak people as opposed to the ‘false’ Communism, which tried to “kill” these qualities. Thus, Communism is again pictured as a radical Other, who has been threatening the ‘true’ Czechness during its forty-one years of rule. Conversely, the Self-image of the Czechoslovak people is equaled to the notions of ‘humanism’ and ‘democracy’ (which are then set forth as a prospect for the Future), and the fall of Communism is articulated as a result of the “civic courage and civic prudence” of the people. It is also worth noticing that the We-identity is constructed as “our nations and ethnic minorities”, signaling that Havel makes an attempt of avoiding a construct that might seem exclusively Czech as opposed to e.g. Slovak, Hungarian or Romany.

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<sup>168</sup> New Years Address to the Nation by Václav Havel, Prague, 1 January 1990. Repeated in a speech before the Polish Sejm and Senate on 25 January 1990.

<sup>169</sup> New Years Address to the Nation by Václav Havel, Prague, 1 January 1990.

»Our state should never again be an appendage or a poor relative of anyone else. It is true that we must accept and learn many things from others, but we must do this in the future as their equal partners, who also have something to offer. Our first president wrote: “Jesus, not Caesar.” (...). I dare to say that we may even have an opportunity to spread this idea further and introduce a new element into European and global politics. Our country, if that is what we want, can now permanently radiate love, understanding, the power of the spirit and of ideas. (...) I dream of a republic independent, free, and democratic, of a republic economically prosperous and yet socially just; in short, of a humane republic that serves the individual and that therefore holds the hope that the individual will serve it in turn.«<sup>170</sup>

Havel refers to the Communist Past as a submissive situation, which is radically different, thus being constitutive for the goal of securing the *independence* of Czechoslovakia (“Our state should never again be an appendage”). Czechoslovakia also has “something to offer”: He refers to Masaryk (“our first president”), thus indicating identification with one of the founders of Czechoslovakia, which comes to represent the “good” (actually Christian!) values. Havel conveys his future vision of Czechoslovakia as related to an image of the Past: the image of the country as a ‘spiritual’ center, which ‘We’ might once again become. In other words, this is an example of *presentism*.<sup>171</sup> Taken together, he here constructs Czechoslovakia as a source of ‘radiation’ of ‘goodness’ – an image of Czechoslovakia as a ‘moral center’, not only of Europe, but of the entire world as well.

Before the Council of Europe in May 1990, Havel explicitly excludes Communism and constructs Post-Communist Czechoslovakia as a state in *transition*:

»[W]e quickly overthrew the totalitarian system that had dominated our country for forty two years. We have set out on the road to democracy, to political pluralism, and to a market economy. (...) The overthrow of totalitarian power was an important first step, but it was just the beginning of our journey. We shall have rapid progress, but there are many pitfalls ahead.«<sup>172</sup>

After othering the Communist Past, and suggesting a praxeological assimilation to “democracy”, “pluralism”, and “market economy”, Havel firmly emphasizes that there is a long way to go for the Czech state, before it reaches the goals, which in Havel’s eyes would be desirable. This is suggested by the use of what we might call ‘travel metaphors’: “We have set out on the *road to democracy*”, “it was just the *beginning of the journey*”, and “there are many *pitfalls ahead*”. Czechoslovakia in this situation is constructed as transitory

<sup>170</sup> New Years Address to the Nation by Václav Havel, Prague, 1 January 1990.

<sup>171</sup> Cf. p. 11. Another example representing this strategy is Havel ending his first New Years Address in 1990 with the words “Your government has returned to you.” The statement points back to the time prior to the 1948 coup d’état, establishing once again the Communist era as a radical Other, while at the same time inscribing a sense of identity with interwar Czechoslovakia.

<sup>172</sup> Address by Václav Havel to the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 10 May 1990.

– an entity striving to become something else. In this fashion, the present situation is an obstacle to the mission for a better the Future, and accordingly a radical Other, aligned with the Bad Traits from the Communist Era.

In sum, the Communist Past and its present counterparts (the Bad Traits) constitutes a Self *that is not yet itself*, and this is completely in line with the conception of identity as a construct of *desiring* the unattainable absolute.

#### *The Soviet Union as a Less-than-Radical Other*

The present Soviet Union is another excluded figure. In a speech at the NATO Headquarters in March 1991, Havel makes a statement about the Czech position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union:

»Certain aspects of the development in the Soviet Union give us valid reasons for concern. (...) Conservative forces are clearly mobilizing in the effort to turn back the wheel of history and renew (...) the centralist and authoritarian system. The Soviet Union witnesses a growing tension and instability, which may have an unfavorable effect on the entire international situation. As immediate neighbors of the Soviet Union we may be hit by a disintegration of the economy and social frustration in that country harder than anyone else because we are still economically dependent on it and are not sufficiently prepared for such eventualities as, for instance, mass migration of population or the possible disruption of supplies of basic raw materials for power generation.«<sup>173</sup>

Developments in the USSR are at least *politicized* (having a potential “unfavorable effect”) internationally, and maybe even *securitized* on the part of Czechoslovakia (“we may be hit...harder”). Thus, the Soviet Union, or at least its Communist hardliners (“conservative forces”), represent an ontologically less-than-radical (though almost radical) Other vis-à-vis both the international “situation” and Czechoslovakia. It is axiologically inferior since it is presented with keen disaffection (e.g. the potential “unfavorable effects”). Elements associated to the Soviet threat are potential “mass migration” and the “possible disruption of supplies” to a Czechoslovakia still vulnerable from its dependency on the Soviet provision of goods. Additionally there is a threat of “turning back the wheel”, which directly links the Soviet Union to the Communist Other presented above.

The logical praxeology would be a dismissal of the vulnerability by dissociation from the dependency of the Soviet Union. In this context, with the NATO members as an audience,

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<sup>173</sup> Address by Václav Havel, the NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10 March 1991.

the strategy is presented as enhanced connections not only to the North Atlantic alliance, but also bilaterally to a row of Western countries and even the Soviet Union itself:

»For us this means, first of all, rapidly creating a system of bilateral agreements with our neighbors and other states. We are preparing new agreements with Poland, Hungary, Germany and the Soviet Union and we should also like to negotiate an agreement with France and other countries. (...) We attach particular importance to the agreements with Poland and Hungary. (...) [W]e feel that cooperation can considerably facilitate our return to democratic Europe. (...).«<sup>174</sup>

Thus, even if the Soviets are not totally excluded from taking part in some form of cooperation with Czechoslovakia, the praxeological orientation of Czech Foreign Policy is set as eagerly 'westbound'. This is again a fact emphasizing a status of the USSR as a less-than-radical Other to Czechoslovakia.<sup>175</sup>

#### *The West and Europe – Self and Similar Other*

In contrast to the Communist and the Soviet Other, we find 'Europe' and 'the West' as important elements in the *Self-image* of Czechoslovakia. In May 1991, in a speech mostly concerning a possible unification of Europe, Havel made the following statement:

In acknowledging today that we belong to what is called the West, we are chiefly recognizing a certain civilization, a certain political culture, certain intellectual and spiritual values and universal principles, not just the existence of wealthier neighbours. At the same time, this is not a civilization, a culture, and a set of values that have suddenly after the collapse of the communist system caught our fancy, but a civilization, a culture and a set of values that we feel to be our own, because over the centuries, we have contributed to their creation. This is not fascination with another world. On the contrary, it is a longing, after decades of unnatural misdirection, to return to the path that was once our own path as well.<sup>176</sup>

In this way, the West is constructed as identical and to the Czech Republic ("we" are "recognizing a certain civilization"; "we have contributed to their creation"). This is constructed against the radical Communist Other presented as "unnatural misdirection" making the association to the West 'natural'. At the same time, however, the West is set up as something 'We' are "longing" for, something that *once* was "ours", but not anymore. Something similar goes for Europe:

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<sup>174</sup> Address by Václav Havel, the NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10 March 1991.

<sup>175</sup> The joint efforts of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to "return to democratic Europe" finds an expression in the Visegrád co-operation launched in mid-February 1991. In October 1991, the Visegrád state leaders adopted the 'Krakow Declaration' uttering their concern about the disintegration of the Soviet Union of August 1991 (Šedivý 1994).

<sup>176</sup> Václav Havel accepting the International Prize of Charles the Great, Aachen, Germany, May 9 1991.

»We are a small country, yet at one time we were the spiritual crossroads of Europe. Is there a reason why we could not again become one?«<sup>177</sup>

Czechoslovakia is constructed as *wanting to become* European, rather than *as* European, thus giving Europe an ambiguous status of a similar and superior Other, while the long-gone status as the “spiritual crossroads of Europe” rearticulates an ideal Self. This border case between the Self and the similar Other might be theoretically hazy, but there is no doubt that the image of Europe as a ‘role-model’ gives way for a praxeology of *becoming* European – or to “return to Europe”.<sup>178</sup> Thus, Europe (and the West) is a part of the Self *and* at the same time at least temporarily excluded as a mere *option*, which sustains the foreseen theoretical indistinctness between the Self and the similar Other.

Central Europe, in its dissidence configuration, is not articulated quite as pretentiously in Post-Communist Czechoslovakia<sup>179</sup>, though there are clear indications of a common project among Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland:

»The years of similar destinies and struggles for similar ideals ought therefore to be assessed in the light of genuine friendship and mutual respect (...). This authentic friendship (...) should ultimately inform a proper coordination of our policies in a process we both refer to as “the return to Europe.” We should also coordinate our efforts as best we can with Hungary (...) and with other nations in our part of Europe. (...) The idea of a paradise on earth failed, and there will be many difficult periods ahead of us; but what has triumphed is the realistic hope that together we can return to Europe as free, independent and democratic nations«<sup>180</sup>

Here, Central Europe is an ontologically similar and axiologically equal Other (“friendship”, “mutual respect”) to Czechoslovakia, but at the same time as “our part of Europe” instating both an intermediate identity sphere between Europe and Czechoslovakia *and* associating it to a broader concept Europe. The praxeological response is a coordination of the return strategy, which is thus projected as a common praxeology of Central Europe towards Europe.<sup>181</sup> This includes a closer link to the circle of ‘advanced’ European countries, represented by the EC.

<sup>177</sup> New Years Address to the Nation by Václav Havel, Prague, 1 January 1990.

<sup>178</sup> E.g. speeches to the Polish Sejm and Senate, Warsaw, 25 January 1990, and to the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 10 May 1990.

<sup>179</sup> To be fair it should be noted that in less political speeches, Havel actually accentuates the kinship. At the Salzburg Festival on 26 July 1990, he thus presented an image of Central Europe as a cultural unit constructed around a common perception of a historical *fear of lies*.

<sup>180</sup> Speech before the Polish Sejm and Senate, 25 January 1990.

<sup>181</sup> The same image can be found in Havel’s speech at the Joint Session of the US Congress, 21 February 1990: “Czechoslovakia is returning to Europe. In the general interest and its own interest as well, it wants to coordinate this return both political and economic with the other returnees, which means, above all, with its neighbours the Poles and the Hungarians.”



“The highest level of integration has no doubt been achieved by the twelve countries of the European Economic Community. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe (...) now look upon the EC as a distant and almost unattainable horizon. When seeking to get closer to it, they should coordinate their journey.”<sup>182</sup>

The EC is seen as a role model for European integration, and thus as a distinct associated element of the ‘true’ Europe. For Central Europe, the praxeology is reasserted as coordination, and once again as a journey not yet taken.

In conclusion, Havel for the most part *identifies* Czechoslovakia with Europe (including central Europe, but partly Europe also plays the role of a similar and superior (role-model) Other to the Czech Republic, an Other identical enough to the Self to be something worth striving for. Theoretically, this is a delicate case, since identity should normally only be instated among axiologically *equal* elements, and Europe and Czechoslovakia – or Poland and Hungary for that matter are not articulated as equal – Europe is clearly seen as superior. This reveals the predicted lacking consistency of the theoretically developed border between the Self and the similar Other.

### *Summing up*

This analysis of Václav Havel's speeches in the beginning of the Post-Communist era uncovers three main Others: the radical Other of Communism, the less-than-radical Other of the Soviet Union and the similar Other of Europe. This is summed up in brief in Table 5.1.

OTHERS	Associated elements	Ontology	Axiology	Praxeology
Communism	Bad Traits	Radical Other	Inferior	Building the ‘good’ state
Soviet Union	Conservative forces Communism	Less-than-Radical	Inferior	Westward orientation
Europe/the West	Community of values EC Western Europe Central Europe	Self/Similar	Equal/Superior	‘Return to Europe’

Table 5.1 Václav Havel 1989-1992. Constitutive Others of Czechoslovakia.

The ‘bad’ Communist Past, has a complex of *current* Bad Traits associated to it, which is used to establish a present situation of an unfinished identity. The USSR is seen as somewhat unstable, through an association with ‘conservative forces’ in the country, while Europe and the West are seen as a community of values to which Czechoslovakia does

<sup>182</sup> Speech before the Council of Europe, 10 May 1990.

rightly belong. There are different, though interlinked praxeological strategies in response to these images:

- Discarding the Bad Past (Communism). Involves erasure of the 'traits' of the Communist era – exemplified for instance by the laws of *lustration*, and westward orientation in foreign policy to dissimilate Czechoslovakia from the USSR and its 'conservative forces'.
- Pursuing the Good Past (Democratic Czechoslovakia). Czechoslovakia should aim at becoming what it was before Communism made attempts of eradicating its good qualities. I.e. Czechoslovakia should aim at becoming what it 'really' is.
- 'Returning to Europe', building on the view that Czechoslovakia in the Communist period was situated 'outside' Europe, and now strives to return to this discursive unit that is associated to a community of values including democracy, human rights etc. – as opposed to Communism and the Soviet Other. This includes a joint 'return to Europe' with Poland and Hungary (the Visegrád countries).

#### **HAVEL 1989-1992: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE**

We saw above that Europe is presented both as identical to and different from Czechoslovakia. But how is the entity of 'Europe' *itself* constructed in Havel's speeches? What are its constitutive Others? This is what I try to reveal in the following sections. Main Others are the Cold War, USSR, and North America.

##### *The Cold War as a Radical Other*

Like Czechoslovakia, Europe is constructed as being in a 'transitional' phase after a long period of not being 'itself'. In February 1990, this reconstructing Europe is defined against the division of Europe and the Cold War era:

»We wish to belong to a Europe that is an amicable community of independent nations and democratic states, a Europe that is stabilized, not divided into blocs and pacts, a Europe that does not need to be defended by superpowers because it is capable of defending itself, of building its own security system. (...) I believe that the Helsinki process provides us with a rather good starting point. If it were to be accelerated and intensified (...) it may grow in time into something that would serve the function of a peace conference or a peace treaty to make a definitive end to the Second World War, as well as to the Cold War and the artificial division of Europe that grew

out of the Second World War. Then both military alliances could be dissolved, and the process of pan-European integration could be finally set in motion. So far, Europe remains divided.«<sup>183</sup>

The Cold War era is articulated as a direct result of World War II, and is associated to an “artificial division of Europe”. The artificial-natural dichotomy is well known in political language signifying a clear dichotomic difference between elements. Thus, we may conclude that the image of the Cold War is seen ontologically as *radically* different. Articulating the Cold War as artificial concomitantly constructs an *inferior* axiology, since the artificial is not to be liked. In support for this interpretation, Europe of the Cold War is elsewhere associated to the bipolar worldview, and this is in turn described as an “antiquated straitjacket.”<sup>184</sup>

In this way Havel installs the ‘natural’ Europe as an undivided one, detached from elements associated to the Cold War: a divided Europe, superpower dominance, NATO, and the Warsaw pact. Consequently, these elements are not welcome in a future Europe. Europe should be “capable of defending itself”, and is constructed as a unitary, independent, entity, which *excludes* external domination. Thus, the stable, undivided, “amicable community of independent nations and democratic states” are the positive outcome of othering the Cold War and the bipolar structure.

In addition, Havel constructs a Europe *in transition* by the statement that “So far, Europe remains divided”. He thus instates a praxeology that Europe has to go through a process that removes the Cold War division: The quest of “pan-European” unification, rather than merely integration of Western Europe. One of the more concrete ideas proposed by Czechoslovakia as early as January 1990,<sup>185</sup> was to let the Helsinki process (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, CSCE) evolve into a pan-European<sup>186</sup> security commission and let it be a comprehensive guarantor of cooperation and security in a triad of Europe, North America, and the Soviet Union.<sup>187</sup> Thus, the praxeology towards the Cold

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<sup>183</sup> Speech before the Polish Sejm and Senate on 25 January 1990.

<sup>184</sup> Address by Václav Havel at the Joint Session of the United States Congress, Washington D.C., 21 February 21, 1990.

<sup>185</sup> ‘Memorandum on the European Security Commission’ presented by the Government of Czechoslovakia, Prague, 6 April, 1990. See also Cottey (1995, p. 66-7), Šedivý (1994), and Štěpánovský (1994). The Helsinki process (set off in 1972-75) was for a great part a Soviet initiative. Therefore, on a rationalistic level, Havel’s enthusiasm in favor of the CSCE as the basis for a future European security community might be interpreted as a way of obliging Soviet “interests” to avoid political confrontation. After all, the Soviet Union was not pleased by the thought of NATO expanding to the rim of its territory.

<sup>186</sup> The notion of “pan-Europe” is one of very frequently used in Havel’s speeches, e.g. in the speech to the Polish Sejm and Senate, 25 January 1990 and the address to the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 10 May 1990, and others.

<sup>187</sup> This praxeology is restated when Havel speaks to the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 10 May 1990: “I believe that in this radically new situation both groupings should gradually move toward the ideal of an entirely new security system, one that would be a forerunner of the future united Europe and would provide some sort of security or security guarantees. It could be a security community involving a large part

War situation is directly constitutive for the virtues of the pan-European security initiative that represents the unification of Europe as one entity.

*The Soviet Union (primarily) as a Less-than-Radical Other*

The role of the *present* Soviet Union is different from that of the *past* Soviet Union, which – as a superpower – is inherent in the Other of the Cold War. The image of the post-1989 Soviet Union in relation to Europe is somewhat ambiguous:

»The future security structure of the democratic Europe is unimaginable without the participation of the democratic community of the nations of the present Soviet Union. If we support their quest for self-determination, democracy and prosperity, we are doing so, inter alia, because we wish to live, cooperate and develop good neighborly relations with these nations in a shared expanse of democracy. Their isolation from Europe and the world is, on the contrary, the goal of those in the Soviet Union who long for the restoration of the old order.«<sup>188</sup>

Havel *includes* the Soviet Union in a *future* picture of Europe, while he excludes at least some of its elements from its *present* figuration (“those...who long for the restoration of the old order”). The latter articulation slides over to stand out as ontologically *radical*. This spills over to the general picture of the present Soviet Union:

»Attempts to deal with political problems and renew the unity of the state by military force have already appeared in the Soviet Union, which is decidedly not a good signal for the international community.«<sup>189</sup>

The open criticism of the USSR, by deeming their political signals “decidedly not good” indicates the image of at least a less-than-radical Other. The praxeology is to support the democratic forces within the Soviet Union, and to drag it into some form of cooperation in order to assimilate the conservative elements.

There are also signs that the image of the Soviet Union is internally double-sided in relation to Europe:

»no future European order is thinkable without the *European* nations of the Soviet Union, which are an inseparable part of Europe, and without *links* to that great community of nations the Soviet Union is becoming today.«<sup>190</sup>

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of the Northern Hemisphere. Hence the guarantors of the process of unification in Europe would have to include not only the United States and Canada in the West, but also the Soviet Union in the East.”

<sup>188</sup> Address by Václav Havel, the NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10 March, 1991.

<sup>189</sup> Address by Václav Havel, the NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 10 March, 1991.

<sup>190</sup> Václav Havel accepting the International Prize of Charles the Great, Aachen, Germany, 9 May, 1991 (italics added)

The Soviet Union is here divided into a *European* part, and a more general part (“great community”), which merely warrant “*links*” to Europe. It should be noted that this statement was made in May 1991, three month before the attempted coup d’état in Moscow, and before any of the formerly Soviet states had become formally independent. Moreover, earlier that year, the Soviet Army had made several attacks on public buildings in Estonia and Latvia.

At the CSCE Foreign Ministers Council Summit in January 1992, i.e. *after* the collapse of the Soviet Union, Havel reiterates the vision of CSCE as the footing of European unity. What has changed is the US-Europe-Soviet triad: It is replaced by a more similar configuration of the cross-Atlantic links and the Soviet element is replaced by a blurry cooperation with “a great part of Asia”<sup>191</sup>:

»The CSCE is a political environment that might play a crucial role in this respect, first, because it unites, or will soon unite all European countries; second, because it connects Europe not only with the North American continent, to which Europe has been tied by intrinsic civilizational links, but also with a great part of Asia.«<sup>192</sup>

To sum up, the ontological configuration of the USSR (or “the former Soviet Union”) is primarily that of a less-than-radical Other, even if the elements are spread across the Similar-Radical spectrum. The axiology is inferior (though at times it seems almost equal), while the praxeology is to keep USSR within some form of institutional framework.

#### *North America as a Similar Other*

The future nexus of a Europe defined against the two former Cold War superpowers, also produces an image of present North America as an Other, since this entity is excluded from the European through the assertion of a slight difference:

»we must recognize the inherent connection between the civilization of Europe and that of continental North America. It is difficult to imagine any pan-European integration without this Atlantic dimension.

North America is seen as a necessary *contributing* element in the pan-European project.<sup>193</sup> As such the US is a *similar* Other, while the axiology usually remains equal. This equality is set forth by instating a civilizational resemblance between “Europe” and “North Amer-

<sup>191</sup> At the CSCE summit in Helsinki in July 1992, Havel uses the term “Euro-Asia” to signify some undefined parts of the earlier Soviet Union (Speech by Havel at the Helsinki CSCE Summit, 9 July 1992).

<sup>192</sup> Foreign Ministers Council of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 30 January, 1992.

<sup>193</sup> E.g. Address by Václav Havel to the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 10 May 1990.

ica" (US and Canada). The similar ontology rises from the "inherent connection" asserted between the two "civilizations" of North America and Europe respectively. Since there are two ontological entities in play here, there is no identity between the two. There is, however, a close kinship signifying the US and Canada as similar and equal Others. The notion of an "Atlantic dimension" of the Helsinki process represents a praxeological dimension to North America:

»a solid framework for the 'integrating' Europe could be provided in the future by the Helsinki process which - through its trans-Atlantic dimension - would, inter alia, be a good connection between Europe and its natural partner, the continent of North America.«

North America is a "natural partner", but not exactly one of our own – signifying again that this entity is a similar Other, rather than a part of the European Self. This constellation also implies that there is a more radical Other, namely a *less* natural partner – which may likely be the Soviet Union, even if it is not mentioned directly here.

Not too surprisingly, the image of the US is a bit different when speaking to a US audience. In February 1990, addressing the US Congress, Havel constructs the United States and NATO as *Saviors* of the victimized divided Europe, who are implicitly seen as threatened by the most radical element of the Cold War: Communist Soviet Union, the *Devil*, to whom Europe sinfully had to submit itself and break into two halves.<sup>194</sup> Thus, we can once again fit Havel's rhetorical image into the theological structure of Sin and Salvation.

### *Summing Up*

The Others with which Havel constructs Europe in the 1989-1992 are summed up in Table 5.2. Europe is in this phase constructed against a radical Other of Cold War Europe and a less-than-radical Other of the Soviet Union (before August 1991, that is). Additionally, a similar Other of North America, and its value-based association with Western Europe, is used in constructing the image of Europe.

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<sup>194</sup> Address by Václav Havel at the Joint Session of the United States Congress, Washington D.C., February 21, 1990 (a very colorful speech full of brilliant examples of the less-than-radical othering of the Soviet Union and an assertion of identity or resemblance with the United States).

OTHERS	Associated elements	Ontology	Axiology	Praxeology
Cold War Europe	Divided Europe Superpowers	Radical	Inferior	Unification through CSCE
Soviet Union (before August 1991)	European nations Conservative forces Asia	(Similar) Less-than-radical (Radical)	Inferior	Assimilation of the USSR Cooperation
North America	USA, Canada Atlantic dimension of Europe	Similar	Equal	Natural partnership

Table 5.2 Václav Havel 1989-1992. Constitutive Others of Europe.

These Others constitute what Hansen calls a chain of identities (see p. 33), since each non-radical Other is constituted against the more radical ones – North America is seen as the *natural* partner opposed to the USSR. Both, however, are constructed on the background of the common Past of the Cold War.

Havel has one main vision for Europe: pan-European integration, which should be pursued through the following practices towards its Others:

- Dissociation from Cold War terminology and thinking – and from superpower domination of Europe – should be carried out by reinforcing a formalized pan-European unity (through the OSCE) in order to substitute structures that has caused a division of Europe (EU, NATO, the Warsaw Pact).
- Europe should retain a relationship to the Soviet Union, but this requires wide-ranging assimilation of Soviet politics.
- Europe should heed the transatlantic cooperation, which is *natural* due to resemblance in basic values.

#### HAVEL 1989-1992: SUMMING UP

In this phase, Václav Havel constructs the Czech Republic as an entity featuring a Good Past and Good Traditions defined against the radical Other of Communism. A less-than-radical Other of the Soviet Union is constitutive for a Czech orientation against Europe (and the West), itself partly seen as a similar Other, which Czechoslovakia wants to resemble.

Europe is constructed as one, inherently *undivided* ‘civilization’ against the image of the Cold War (a radical Other) and against USSR (less-than-radical) and North America (similar).

Self-Entity (ID nodal point)	Elements of the Self	Others
Czech Republic	The Democratic Past Good traditions Europe	Communism (radical/inferior) Soviet Union (less-than-radical/inferior) Europe (similar/superior)
Europe	Unitary Entity The West Central Europe Transatlantic links of basic values	Cold War Europe (Radical) Soviet Union/Asia (less-than-radical/inferior) Soviet Union/Asia (radical/inferior) North America (similar/equal)

Table 5.3 Václav Havel 1989-1992. Self-Images of Czechoslovakia and Europe.

Following the discourse of Václav Havel, the Post-Communist project of Czechoslovakia in the years 1989-1992 is one of *transition*, i.e. moving towards desired goals.<sup>195</sup> The current entity is on the move and about to define itself along the lines of the Good Past and the resources provided by the role model of Europe and the West, including the EC.

Likewise, the present Self of Europe is articulated by Václav Havel, as an entity in need of being defined anew – and defined as *one* entity. This need is rooted in the alleged fact that the unnatural division of Europe associated with the Cold War still lingers on.

Thus, a radical ontology of the Past is constitutive for both entities, while a Good Past represents the ‘true’ Czechoslovakia, and an ancient ‘natural’ Europe represent the ‘pan-European’ identity.

## VÁCLAV KLAUS 1989-1992

In this phase, Václav Klaus was not as publicly dominating as was Václav Havel. It should be recalled that Klaus in the period concerned held the post of finance minister, and for this reason was a bit less prone for public exposure than was Václav Havel. Also, it is important to know that Klaus is a self-declared devotee of Milton Friedman, Margaret Thatcher, and not least Austrian econometrist and philosopher Friedrich August Hayek (1899-1992), who is a prominent theorist from the so-called Austrian school of econom-

<sup>195</sup> Proposed (or actual) praxeologies are even more interesting in times of such indeterminacy, since they set the stage for future configurations of the Other and its praxeological dimension.



ics.<sup>196</sup> Following Hayek, Klaus asserts that any social arrangement must develop *spontaneously* as opposed to ‘constructed’ social arrangements such as economic redistribution and regulation of the free market.<sup>197</sup>

### KLAUS 1989-1992: THE CONSTRUCTION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Klaus’ contended adherence to the ability of the market forces to generate social coherence is a first clue to the pattern of Klaus’ construction of a vision for Czechoslovakia, which is – as we shall see – constructed against one main Other, namely that of Communism profoundly associated to numerous current inheritors.

#### *Communism as a Radical Other*

Thus, unsurprisingly, Klaus’ image of Czechoslovakia is constructed against an othering of the former Communist rulers and their policy:

We lived not only in an economic autarchy; we lived in an intellectual autarchy as well, which was – probably –even more dangerous, frustrating and debilitating. (...).<sup>198</sup>

In this way, the Communist Past is ontologically seen as a radical and inferior Other (it was “dangerous” etc.) and connected to an economic and intellectual “autarchy”. Consequently, present Czechoslovakia lacks a renewed political codex, and in Klaus’ view, this is provided by a new, capitalist Self:

»The aim is to let the invisible hand of the market act and replace the hand of the central planner.«<sup>199</sup>

In this way, the praxeology of the general image of Communism as a radical, inferior Other is primarily to create a capitalistic market economy (here represented by Adam Smith’s legendary ‘invisible hand’), which is based on a community of free individuals acting in a free market:

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<sup>196</sup> The Austrian School is famous for its devotion to the virtues of the free, unregulated market and a profound distrust of the functionality of socialist economies. Apart from Hayek, prominent names of the Austrian School are Ludwig von Mises (1881-1973) and Carl Menger (1840-1921). For a short introduction to the theories of Austrian scholars, see for instance Dunleavy & O’Leary (1987, p. 86-94).

<sup>197</sup> It is worth noticing that Klaus’ understanding of Hayek and the ‘spontaneous orders’ is far from being unchallenged wisdom. See for instance Pavlík (1999), who argues that Klaus misinterprets Hayek’s concept of spontaneity to include the mere rise of legal rules. According to Pavlík, Hayek sees the certainty provided by established legal rules as essential for the market to create spontaneous orders in the first place.

<sup>198</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Annual John Bonython Lecture, The Regent, Sydney, 25 July 1991. Retrieved from <http://www.cis.org.au/JBL/jbl91.htm>.

<sup>199</sup> Klaus in *Forum*, no. 18, 1990. Quoted in Holy (1996, p. 153).

»Basic human virtues such as thrift, honesty, and fidelity can grow and flourish only in an environment of individual freedom and self-responsibility. Communist totalitarianism deprived people of both of them, made them more passive, more cowardly, and more resigned than in countries with political pluralism, property rights, and market structures.«<sup>200</sup>

Communist totalitarianism is radicalized by saying that it “deprived” people of the “environment of individual freedom and self-responsibility”, which are seen as a prerequisite for enjoying “basic human virtues”. Thus, a Czech Self rid of Communism will be taking an outset in a community of ‘free’ individuals acting within “market structures”.

In August 1990, Klaus stated that the introduction of a market economy was a return to “the normal order”.<sup>201</sup> This indicates that any force perceived as a *threat* to the market is seen as ‘abnormal’ and radically different from the proper political objective, which Klaus repeatedly labels “market economy without any adjectives.”<sup>202</sup> This rejection of “adjectives” links on to Klaus’ counterpart to Havel’s ‘Bad traits’, namely a range of elements in the Present that could be associated to Communism:

»Adjectives like ‘social’ or ‘environmentally conscious’ are nothing other than attempts to restrain, limit, block, weaken, dissolve, or make fuzzy the clear meaning of a market economy and to introduce into it non-market elements. I feel I should now advocate the use of adjectives, but adjectives with a totally different meaning. We need an unconstrained, unrestricted, full-fledged, unspoiled market economy.«<sup>203</sup>

Here Klaus conducts an othering of “social market economy” and “environmentally conscious market economy”, both elements generally known as elements in the field of ‘welfare economics’. Such adjectives are seen as doing harm to the functionality of “pure” capitalism, and are thus both ontologically radical, and axiologically inferior. Another akin element of the Present associated to the Communist Past is represented by Third Way economics (regulated market economy). Václav Klaus became famous for his statement that “The third way is the fastest way to the third world”.<sup>204</sup> An element associated to this as-

<sup>200</sup> Klaus interviewed in *Religion and Liberty*, Vol. 2, No. 6, November 1992.

<sup>201</sup> Klaus in *Literární noviny*, 2 August 1990. Quoted in Holy (1996, p. 153).

<sup>202</sup> E.g. Václav Klaus, interviewed by John H. Fund in *Reason Magazine*, Vol. 23, June 1990.

<sup>203</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Annual John Bonython Lecture, The Regent, Sydney, 25 July 1991. Retrieved from <http://www.cis.org.au/JBL/jbl91.htm>.

<sup>204</sup> World Economic Forum, Davos, January 1990. The Third Way is intrinsically linked to the unsuccessful Czechoslovak efforts of reforming the Communist system in the late 60’s: “To pursue a so-called Third Way is foolish. We had our experience with this in the 1960s when we look for a socialism with a human face. It did not work, and we must be explicit that we are not aiming for a more efficient version of a system that has failed” (Václav Klaus, interviewed by John H. Fund in *Reason Magazine*, Vol. 23, June 1990). This nexus is expanded further by association with both Western social democrats, and the Soviet *perestroika*, which is called a “misleading concept” (8<sup>th</sup> Annual John Bonython Lecture, The Regent, Sydney, 25 July 1991. Retrieved from <http://www.cis.org.au/JBL/jbl91.htm>..

semblage of 'regulatory' elements is the advice to economic reform given by economists in the West:

»I am again and again surprised that distinguished Western Sovietologists, after years of accurately describing the wasteful economic activities of a command economy in their sophisticated, now partly obsolete, textbooks criticise us for our inability (and, of course, unwillingness) to orchestrate Keynesian, expansionary macroeconomic policies and/or interventionist industrial sector policies. I have to add that such notions are frenetically applauded by our old central administrators as well as by their intellectual supporters in the academy.«<sup>205</sup>

The alleged Western call for Keynesian politics and interventionism is skillfully equated to the "old central administrators" and their "intellectual supporters", supporting the status of the Western economic model as radically different and inferior to the ideal of unregulated capitalism.

To sum up, welfare adjectives such as 'social', 'environmentally conscious', and the radically different images of the Third Way and Keynesianism, are all equated to each other as a cluster of non-capitalist element associated to the main radical Other of Communism. The *praxeology* towards this constellation of equated Others is to pursue the path of 'capitalism without adjectives'. This goal is not yet accomplished, and as we saw in the case of Havel, Czechoslovakia of the Present is constructed as being in *transition*, though for Klaus this transition is oriented towards a configuration of a community of individuals acting in a market freed from regulation imposed by political institutions. The act of articulating all these elements under the same main category, and rejecting any other path than unconstrained capitalism, establishes Klaus' image of the Czechoslovak Self almost exclusively in terms of 'the market'.

### *Summing Up*

From 1989 to 1992, Klaus presents only one main Other when constructing his image of Czechoslovakia: a radical and inferior representation of Communism.

As shown in Table 5.4 the Communist Other is constructed as large web of associated elements, including of course the Communist Past, but also several current (Western) forms of political approaches challenging the purified version of capitalism, which is the praxeological goal of Klaus' reform proposed reform strategies. In this way, the Past is used as a resource for othering the present 'reproductions' of Communism.

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<sup>205</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Annual John Bonython Lecture, The Regent, Sydney, 25 July 1991. Retrieved from <http://www.cis.org.au/JBL/jbl91.htm>.

OTHERS	Associated elements	Ontology	Axiology	Praxeology
Communism	Political regulation Welfare Economics The Third Way Keynesianism	Radical	Inferior	Deregulation Free market

Table 5.4. Václav Klaus 1989-1992. Constitutive Others of Czechoslovakia.

The ideal image of Czechoslovakia as a super-capitalist entity (even set up as a precedent for the West and others who compromises the ‘pure’ market), provides the praxeology of conducting a strict reform program:

- Detaching Czechoslovakia from the Communist Past and its legacy by replacing it with a deregulated free market.
- Reforming Czech society along the lines of ‘Capitalism without adjectives’.
- Resisting present non-capitalist political programs prevailing in the West, including the ideas of welfare economics, the Third Way, Keynesianism etc., which are seen as obstacles a purified capitalism, and more or less as clones of the former regime.

This program stands somewhat in contrast to the one put forward by Václav Havel (relying on the resources of good traditions, values, and Europeanness), since Klaus, unlike Havel, talks within a rather limited, but fairly clear, discourse of the market exclusively constructed through *radical* difference.

#### KLAUS 1989-1992: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE

##### *No Construction of Europe*

As for Klaus’ image of Europe during the Czechoslovak phase of the Post-Communist era, there is not much to say. Klaus concentrates on the Czechoslovak economy, and actually, I have not been able to localize any construction of Europe in the text material manufactured by Václav Klaus in this period.

It might be because of a sparse supply of text translated into English in this period, which would stand out as a flaw in my text selection. Nevertheless, there might be another reason, sustained by the fact that the concept of Europe is hardly mentioned by Klaus *anywhere* in what could be made available. Václav Klaus’ primary interest as minister of finance was, of course, economics and economic reform, and this is apparent in his work.

Most of the texts are interviews or speeches made in a foreign context, and it is plausible to conclude that if any image of Europe as an entity has appeared during this phase, it would have been likely to turn up some way or the other within in the selected material. Thus, I find it appropriate to draw the conclusion that Václav Klaus has more or less refrained from producing actual Self-images of Europe as an entity from 1989 to 1992.

The only indication might be a vague association of Europe with the “civilized world” and “market economy”:

»As a slogan of our ‘gentle revolution’ we chose ‘the return to Europe’, including the adoption of an economic system which is characteristic of the civilized world and which shows that, in spite of all its shortcomings, no better arrangement of economic relations exists.«<sup>206</sup>

Apart from this, Klaus frequently refers to “Central- and Eastern Europe”, but this is merely in a strict nominal way, which does not construct the region as a discursive entity.<sup>207</sup>

#### KLAUS 1989-1992: SUMMING UP

The Czech Republic is constructed by Klaus as an entity in transition, heading for the vision of a “market economy without adjectives” (see Table 5.5).

Self-Entity (ID nodal point)	Elements of the Self	Others
Czech Republic	Free Individuals Market economy without adjectives Deregulation	Communism (radical/inferior)

Table 5.5. Václav Klaus 1989-1992. *Self-Images Czechoslovakia and Europe.*

This vision is constructed against the Communist Other and its associated configurations of Political Regulation, including Western measures of welfare economics and the idea that it is possible to make a society more ‘fair’ than the one which grows spontaneously from the agency of ‘free’, unregulated individuals. There is no observable strategy of ‘returning’ to a Past Self as we saw when dealing with Havel.

In this phase of Post-Communism, no Self-image of Europe is constructed by Klaus.

<sup>206</sup> Lidové noviny, 10 March 1990, quoted in Holy (1996, p. 151).

<sup>207</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Annual John Bonython Lecture, The Regent, Sydney, 25 July 1991. Retrieved from <http://www.cis.org.au/JBL/jbl91.htm>.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS 1989-1992

Both Václav Havel and Václav Klaus agree that the Communist Past is ontologically a radical Other and axiologically inferior. The elements of this era should be dissociated from the Present and excluded from future visions of the country. The difference to the former regime is thus *ontologically* and *axiologically* the underpinning of both Havel's and Klaus' discourses. A closer look into the structure of the associated elements reveals that we are dealing with two different ways of using the Communist Past as an Other. For Havel, Communism represents a 'lie' constituting a Self of 'truth' (found in values, morality, religion, and traditions), while Klaus primarily excludes Communism because of its regulation of the market and its individual agents.

The analysis of the texts by Havel reveals a variety of ontological and axiological images, while Klaus establishes his vision exclusively by articulating *radical* difference and *inferior* axiology. This should (at least in theory), make Klaus' Self-images more clearly defined, and this seems to be the case: The Self is one of Capitalism, and there are no ambiguous compromises like we find in Václav Havel's Other of Europe vis-à-vis Czechoslovakia, or – to a lesser degree – the Soviet Union vis-à-vis both Czechoslovakia and Europe.

Both Havel and Klaus constructs the present Czech Republic as a country in transition – the Self is not yet the Self. According to the theoretical concept of identity put forth in this thesis, this comes as no surprise, recalling the argument that identity is always what we *want* to be, rather than what we *are*. The transitional character, however, might be even more outspoken in this phase due to the recent dislocation of the former political structures.

While Havel constructs Europe as a unitary and independent entity against the radical Other of the Cold War and the present Soviet Union and North America, Klaus does not portray any Self-image of Europe at all. Klaus' role as a minister of finance with a 'national' focus could explain this to some degree. This might also explain why Klaus makes use exclusively of the 'internal' or 'ideological' Other of Communism (and its associated elements), whereas Havel also draw on 'external' Others of a more 'territorial' or 'institutionalized' character, such as the Soviet Union, Europe and North America.



## 6 1993-1997: THE RISE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The event marking the beginning of the second analytical phase is the split-up of Czechoslovakia, formally implemented by 1 January 1993. The country split up into two independent states: the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic – or simply ‘Slovakia’. The entity of Czechoslovakia is henceforth replaced by that of the Czech Republic, where both Havel and Klaus remain deeply involved in politics.

As for foreign relations in the Czech Republic, the Visegrád coordination efforts stagnated these years, mainly because the Czech government overtly declared its dissatisfaction with the other participating countries.<sup>208</sup> The Czech Republic entered into the so-called Partnership for Peace (PfP) agreements with NATO in 1994-5, and the government lodged its application for Czech membership of the EU in January 1996.<sup>209</sup>

Internally in the Czech Republic, this phase was the era of rapid economic reforms and Klaus was the initiator of the so-called ‘voucher privatization’ program, which was intended to offer to all Czech citizens a share of formerly nationalized industry and other businesses.<sup>210</sup> It became a success only after a number of investment funds entered the scene, and offered huge returns to citizens who purchased shares and signed them over to the funds. For a long time, everything seemed to be going smoothly, but signs of an economic destabilization became evident around 1996 and gave rise to renewed political crisis. This setback was epitomized by a series of bank failures and cases of fraud, and it was revealed that a major part of the investment companies involved in the voucher privatization seemed to be engaged in rather shady businesses.<sup>211</sup>

During 1997, it became increasingly evident that the country was somewhat destabilized politically as well as economically. In late 1997, Klaus was forced to resign after a series of

<sup>208</sup> Cottey 1995, p. 83. See also Strohlein *et al* (1999), and Štěpánovský (1994).

<sup>209</sup> In 1997, the EU adopted a detailed paper on the eastward enlargement, the so-called Agenda 2000, which regarded the Czech Republic as one among five front candidates for membership of the Union.

<sup>210</sup> This scheme was initiated in 1992 in Czechoslovakia. The voucher privatization was carried out through two waves of public auctions, and a fairly high foreign investment rate were the measures by which an impressive 70 % of assets owned by the state were transferred to the private sector from 1992-1994 (Schwartz 1997).

<sup>211</sup> Strohlein *et al* 1999.



financial scandals within his party (see p. 65), and this event marks the end of this second analytical phase.

## VÁCLAV HAVEL 1993-1997

First, we are going to take a look at Václav Havel's construction of the Czech Republic and Europe. Havel was not too fond of the disintegration of the Czechoslovakia. This notwithstanding, he agreed to run for the presidency of the newborn Czech Republic, and he was elected by the Parliament in January 1993 for a 5-year term.

### HAVEL 1993-1997: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

In this section, we shall see, how Havel again establishes the Czech Republic against a radical Other of Communism, while the Other of the Soviet Union and Europe/the West are dismantled and replaced by a less-than-similar Other represented by Václav Klaus and a similar Other represented by the EU.

#### *Communism as a Radical Other*

The figure of Communism retains its position as a main structuring Other for Václav Havel in this early post-Czechoslovak phase. He talks about the "damage done to our country as well as to our souls by the decades of Communism"<sup>212</sup>, and when speaking in Dresden in 1995 on the shared Communist experience of DDR and the Czech Republic, he claimed that

»we both know well indeed what Communism was like and how skillful it was in bending backs and destroying human souls.«<sup>213</sup>

In general, thus, Communism is a "damaging" and "destructive" force, i.e. an Other of radical ontology and inferior axiology. Likewise, Communism is represented as a radical Other through the *natural/artificial* dichotomy, when he states that

"For a long time, communism brought history, and with it all natural development, to a halt."<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> "Czechs and Germans on the Way To a Good Neighbourship", lecture by Václav Havel at the Charles University, Prague, February 17, 1995.

<sup>213</sup> Technical University of Dresden, Dresden, October 30, 1995.

<sup>214</sup> George Washington University, Washington D.C., 22 April, 1993.

Communism brought *natural* development to a standstill, thus instating that any alleged progress made by Communism was *artificial*, holding the country in a backward state compared to Nature.

In this respect, the Communist Past fulfils the same function as in the first phase, instating the rulers of the new Czech Republic as natural in comparison with the former regime. Like then, a web of associated elements of the Present are appended to it. The Bad Traits of the Communist Past reoccurs as a theme after the split-up of Czechoslovakia. One example is Havel referring to the “disastrous legacy of Communism”.<sup>215</sup> In his inauguration speech as president in February 1993, he elaborates a bit on this:

»Taking care of what I perceive as our good traditions is definitely more difficult than it was in the moment of big historical overturn and the following enthusiasm. (...) This also means a permanent struggle with bad traditions. For example, a struggle against spineless compliance, unrestrained greediness and cynicism pretending to be realism. If these features should overrule the atmosphere of our social life, we all would suffocate without difference.«<sup>216</sup>

Havel states a warning against certain features, which are thus excluded in the particular perception of Czechness that Havel wants to instate. Those features are “bad traditions” (elaborated as “spineless compliance, unrestrained greediness and cynicism pretending to be realism”). These are clearly ontologically radical, and axiologically inferior Others, due to their negative connotations and obvious moral shortfalls. The implicit praxeology is the abolition of such wrongful attributes, so that society will not “suffocate” (this human metaphor of possible death radicalizes the otherness of these “traditions”, by stating an *existential* threat).

From Communism and Bad Traditions rises, like in the 1989-92 phase, a Czech identity associated to a Good Past and Good Traditions, which becomes the discursive resource for a praxeology toward elements like the Bad Traditions, which derives from Communist times:

»I think, we are able to follow our good tradition; there is nothing to be afraid of. Anyway, we have revived it lately and certainly, it hasn't caused any harm: The human way, by which we have thrown off a non-human order, has got a general appreciation.«<sup>217</sup>

<sup>215</sup> George Washington University, Washington D.C., 22 April, 1993.

<sup>216</sup> Speech by Václav Havel when inaugurated as president of the Czech Republic at Prague Castle, 2 February 1993.

<sup>217</sup> Speech by Václav Havel when inaugurated as president of the Czech Republic at Prague Castle, 2 February 1993.

Opposed to the “non-human” (and therefore radically different, and axiologically inferior) order of Communism is the Good Tradition from which We should establish Our society. These Good Traditions are captured as inherent elements of the Czech identity:

»[W]e should understand the worthiest values and ideals that originated in our home; we should consciously build on them and develop them (...). Our nation possesses a fair number of such values: the specific type of democratism that has developed in the Czech environment, the realism, the desire for peace and non-violent settlement of disputes, the humanism, linked with Masaryk's name, which always saw the Czech issue first and foremost as a human issue and derived all political imperatives from moral ones. How very relevant Masaryk's thoughts are now! In today's interconnected world where the fate of each and every individual is tied directly or indirectly to the fates of all, Masaryk's commitment to universal responsibility, which he combined with enduring opposition to Czech egotism, parochialism and provincialism, speaks to us with renewed urgency.«<sup>218</sup>

Havel asserts a historical continuity of *values* and *morality*, and he recommends a pursuit of the (alleged) Czech values as the praxeological response to the radical Others of “egotism, parochialism, and provincialism”, which are elements of the Bad Traditions inherited from the Past. The (ideal) Czech Self is associated to the “Czech” values of “democratism”, “realism”, “desire for peace”, “humanism” and not least with T. G. Masaryk and his thoughts of universal responsibility and morality.<sup>219</sup>

The construction of the Good Traditions suggests that the establishment of a new and better societal system is a matter of creating conditions, which were there some time in the Past. This is also obvious when Havel draws on the dissidence discourse of Truth, and asserts this idea to be intrinsically connected to both Czech and Czechoslovak history:

»Our constitution says that we want to link onto all good traditions of old standing both Czech and Czechoslovak citizenship. (...) [F]rom the dramatic actions, that created our history, there is, in some form or another, showing up one individual and indisputably clear idea (...). This idea is a belief in truth (...); truth as a moral credit, a will for understanding, modesty and tolerance, respect of humans as an unique being, (...) a sense of co-responsibility for common matters of human community, coupled with a critical sense, and of course, a tough will for peace, and as far as possible non-violent conflict solutions.«<sup>220</sup>

Here, Havel installs an image of a long Czech history as building on the idea of ‘truth’. He makes the Czech Past a long Past; a continuous flow of events linked together by being

<sup>218</sup> Speech by Václav Havel at the Czech National day, 28 October 1995

<sup>219</sup> The close observer will recall from Chapter 4 that T. G. Masaryk was the co-founder and president of the first Czechoslovak Republic from 1918-1935.

“Czech” and simultaneously associated with elements such as “truth”, “will for understanding”, “tolerance”, “responsibility”, etc. What is more, Havel sees the Czech Republic as a direct extension of Czechoslovakia.<sup>221</sup> and at the same time, Czechoslovakia is seen as an integral part of the history of the Czech Republic.<sup>222</sup>

In sum, we have Communism as a main Other and source of the current Bad Traditions of “spinelessness”, “greediness”, “cynicism”) while we have Interwar Czechoslovakia (symbolized by T.G. Masaryk, democracy, humanism, responsibility etc.) as the Good Tradition, which should be used as a resource for breeding a new, ‘good’ society of ‘truth’ different from the evils of Past and Present. This corresponds to the abstract structuring image of Sin and Salvation, which was also obvious in the 1989-92 phase: The Good Past and its ideas of truth represent the ‘true’ Czech virtues, which are now sinfully ignored and this situation calls for Salvation.<sup>223</sup>

#### *Václav Klaus and the ODS as a Less-than-Radical Other*

In his New Years Address 1994, Havel constructs his visions of the Czech Republic against another main Other - that of the policy of Václav Klaus and his government:

»The massive disengagement of the state from the economy must, in my opinion, quickly find its counterpart in civic and public life. Faith in the individual as a genuine creator of economic prosperity should be deliberately, and far less timorously than it has been so far, extended to include faith in the individual as a citizen capable of assuming his share of the responsibility for the affairs of society. Naturally, there are duties that only the state can and must carry out if it is to have any meaning at all. There may even be more such duties than our present government will admit. (...) [I]f our daring economic reforms are not accompanied by a purposeful and persistent concern for the proper development of all aspects of civil society, our life will soon become one-dimensional and arid. It will become limited to a race for profits, accompanied by an apathy toward public affairs and a dependence on the state to do everything for us.«<sup>224</sup>

<sup>220</sup> Speech by Václav Havel when inaugurated as president of the Czech Republic at Prague Castle, 2 February 1993.

<sup>221</sup> This is mirrored when Havel states that “the Czech Republic is a direct coheir of the Czechoslovak statehood” (‘Czechs and Germans on the Way To a Good Neighbourship’, lecture by Václav Havel at the Charles University, Prague, 17 February, 1995).

<sup>222</sup> This continuity of ‘Czechness’ is captured in the following statement from 1993: “[T]he horizon of what we call a country, narrowed significantly. (...) In spite of this we haven’t lost our home. (...) [T]his country is rich through its spiritual and economic potential; a country destroyed by previous regimes, but a country of hard working and creative people that can rely on it and unite in it. We definitely don’t have to start from the very beginning.” (Speech by Václav Havel when inaugurated as president of the Czech Republic at Prague Castle, 2 February 1993). One might add that Slovakia is completely ignored as an element of Czechoslovakia in this interpretation. This could lead to the claim that this was also typical for the Prague-centered discourse of Czechoslovakia from the very beginning in 1918.

<sup>223</sup> There is a gradual transition between the image of the Sinner and that of the Victim. The Czech Republic is victimized by the Communist Other, but is also seen as having a (sinful) responsibility for this victimization. In speech of the 50th Anniversary of V-E Day on May 8, 1995, Havel states that “our nation must acknowledge the depth of the failure of those of its members, many as they were, who remained passive in the face of evil or even abetted it.” See also Stroehlein (1997).

<sup>224</sup> New Years Address to the Nation, 1 January 1994.

Havel politicizes the ODS government's excessive focus on the free market, and the "timorous" attitude towards the development of a "counterpart" to the free market, the so-called "civil society".<sup>225</sup> The economic reforms of the government (to a large extent designed by Klaus) are seen as "daring" and oriented towards mere "profit". This posture is seen as problematic, though not directly threatening. Hence, they represent a less-than-radical Other with an inferior axiology ("one-dimensional" and "arid", which are both seen as unaffectionate attributes). The praxeology here is to encourage Civil Society to develop. This notion is built on Havel's well-known value-based discourse:

»We should (...) guard against recognizing (...) the illusion that everything standard, everything usual, is automatically good as well. I am calling for a standard civil society. But what does that mean? (...) It simply means respect for life and its mystery, confidence in the human spirit, and an opportunity for all non-standard beings who derive pleasure from occasionally doing something that gives pleasure to others.«

Civil Society is here constructed against the worshipping of "standard" systems, which happens to be a favorite expression of Klaus – therefore the above statement is the installment of Klaus as a less-than-radical Other to Civil Society in Havel's configuration. Civil Society is seen as a tool to encourage "respect for life and its mystery", "confidence in the human spirit", pleasuring "others" – expressions of the 'soft' values that Havel often constructs his visions around. In this regard, Havel also seeks to abandon any *a priori* hostile attitude toward the State, which in Havel's view is a core element in a 'good' political system:

»If we regard [the state] as nothing but an anonymous bureaucratic monster using thousands of regulations and directives to meddle in our lives, we shall hardly be prepared to give it our ardent love and make for its sake any sacrifices it may require.«<sup>226</sup>

The State is installed as a central protector of society as such, and therefore the praxeology against the neo-liberalist Other comprises regarding the State as a good State (as opposed to a "monster", which I dare to take as a reference to Klaus' anti-state rhetoric<sup>227</sup>).

In sum, Havel sees his the ideal Czech Republic as led by a political system having *both* a State able to guide its citizens in a 'good' direction, *and* a Civil Society securing the plural-

<sup>225</sup> 'Civil Society', in Havel's rhetoric, usually refers to decentralized power structures involving citizens, various political civic groupings, NGOs, non-profit organizations etc. There is some resemblance to the dissident use of the same term or that of a "parallel polis" (see Ch. 4), since Havel sees the Civil Society as a realm 'outside' the State. For a critical discussion on the concept of Civil Society see Walzer (1992).

<sup>226</sup> Speech at the National Day of the Czech Republic, Prague, October 28, 1995.

<sup>227</sup> Klaus – as we shall see later – openly opposes any political cultivation of interest groups and other political formations outside the state. This should minimize the size of the state and the regulations of society and allow civic groups to be established spontaneously.

ity of 'ideas' vis-à-vis the State. The pursuit of this goal stands out as a general praxeology against a less-than-radical Other represented by the anti-state sentiment and exclusive focus on the free market represented by Václav Klaus and his followers. This vision of the Czech Republic is once again structured around a core of morality and values.<sup>228</sup>

*Europe as Self and The European Union as a Similar Other*

As we have seen, the Czech Republic is equipped by Havel with a long and unbroken history, and this also goes for the Europeanness of the Czech Republic:

»Our nation has for a thousand years been an active part of the area now known as Western Europe and has fully participated in shaping its values. You can find in our country the same kind of cathedrals as in France, and town centres similar to those in Germany; Charles University of Prague was one of the focal points of European spiritual life in the Middle Ages; the Reformation started in the Czech lands earlier than in the big Western European countries; the first Czechoslovak President was a European at heart whom all Europeans held in high esteem.«<sup>229</sup>

In this way, the Czech Republic is seen as being intrinsically European – and even as “Western European” for centuries. Havel once again draws on the Past as a resource for telling the story of the Czechs as European, including Czechoslovakia as a part of Czech Self.

No one should doubt the identity asserted between The Czech Republic and Europe as a historical entity, but the Czech Republic is at the same time constructed by Havel as ontologically different from the *European Union*:

»The new European democracies that have emerged from the ruins of the Communist world are seeking membership in the European Union. (...) it is evidently in the interests of the whole of Europe that these countries should progress toward membership in the Union, which has been a cornerstone of European integration.«<sup>230</sup>

Here, the EU takes on the ontology of a similar Other – an entity of which the country seeks to become a member. The EU is seen as a *cornerstone* in European integration in general, which is desirable, and therefore instills the EU as superior on the axiological dimension. The praxeological strategy is obvious: The Czechs should, together with the other

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<sup>228</sup> Havel is heavily criticized by Slavoj Žižek (1999), who – and he is probably not totally misguided – describes Havel's continuous moral endeavor as “New Age ruminations”.

<sup>229</sup> Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe Conference, Mons, Belgium, April 27, 1995.

<sup>230</sup> Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe Conference, Mons, Belgium, April 27, 1995.

“new European democracies” try to become a part of this exclusive circle of states, which is fundamentally associated to ancient European values:

Yes, we are able and happy to surrender a portion of our sovereignty in favour of the commonly administered sovereignty of the European Union, because we know it will repay us many times over, as it will all Europeans (...) Unrest, chaos and violence are infectious and expansionary. We Central Europeans have directly felt the truth of this countless times. (...) The European Union is based on a large set of values, with roots in antiquity and in Christianity, which over 2,000 years evolved into what we recognize today as the foundations of modern democracy, the rule of law and civil society. «<sup>231</sup>

Havel expresses a historically based fear for “unrest, chaos, and violence”, which could be avoided by “surrendering” a part of the Czech sovereignty to the EU, which is build on values with which Havel can easily identify. “Modern democracy, the rule of law and civil society” are associated to the EU, and to strive for the formal Czech attachment to them, makes EU-membership a ‘role model’ for solidifying these values.

The very same values are seen as fundamentally *European*. When the Czech Republic came into being, it also rid itself from the last common borders with the former Soviet Union, and compared to Czechoslovakia it had moved geographically westwards. The slogan “return to Europe”, which dominated the first intense months of Post-Communist Czechoslovakia is no longer used explicitly, though there might be some reminiscences in longing for the solidification of the Europeanness of Czech values through membership of the EU. However, the Czech Republic seems to *belong* to Europe now – meaning in my terminology that the image of Europe (not the EU) has moved from the ontology of a somewhat ambiguous constellation of being both Self and similar Other into an unequivocal ontology of the Self. This situation is seen in the repetitive articulation of the Czech Republic as the ‘center of Europe’ or the ‘heart of Europe’.<sup>232</sup>

### *Summing Up*

Table 6.1 shows the main Others of Havel’s construction of the Czech Republic in 1993-97. The Czech Republic is established against the radical Other of Communism (now appended an associated element of nationalism), a novel less-than-radical Other of Václav

<sup>231</sup> Address to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, March 8, 1994.

<sup>232</sup> Address to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, March 8, 1994. This Europeanness also surfaces when using a human metaphor of the country’s ‘feelings’: “Our country feels it is a legitimate part of Western Euro-American civilization, and shares all of its fundamental values. It does not see itself as someone looking for a new home. We have our home. For centuries, we have helped shape its spiritual and political values.” (Havel at a luncheon hosted by President Clinton for the Presidents of Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, Prague, January 12, 1994).

Klaus and his party, and finally against a similar Other of the EU, which is associated to Europe in general.<sup>233</sup>

OTHERS	Associated elements	Ontology	Axiology	Praxeology
Communism	Bad Traditions Nationalism	Radical	Inferior	Building the 'good state'
Václav Klaus & ODS	Anti-state sentiment Free-marketeering 'Standard' systems	Less-than-Radical	Inferior	Civil Society Value-based state
European Union	Ancient values Europe	Similar	Superior	Membership

Table 6.1. *Václav Havel 1993-1997. Constitutive Others of the Czech Republic.*

The latter association adds a little confusion to the image, since the Czech Republic *is* seen as European. However, the Czech Republic *is not* a member of the EU. The Czech Republic is seen as historically European – i.e. based on certain values rooted in ancient history, values which are seen as most firmly fixed within the EU. The formalized status of this situation combined with the current problematic situation within the Czech Republic makes the EU an superior, similar Other.

We find the same moral core as in the 1989-92 phase: the 'good' state and society are constructed against the 'bad' main Others of Communism, its present counterparts, and Klaus' free-marketeering. This makes way for the following praxeologies:

- Pursuit of the 'good' state (drawing on the Good Tradition) as opposed to Communism and Klaus' alleged hostility against a regulatory role of the state.
- Pursuit of a Civil Society, which should *complement* state power and the forces of the market – as opposed to the 'standard' political system promoted by Klaus.
- Seeking membership in the EU – allegedly to solidify the Europeanness of the Czech Republic.

#### HAVEL 1993-1997: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE

Turning to Havel's construction of Europe, we should recall that the former Other of the Soviet Union formally dissolved itself in 1991. What is remarkable here is that in the case

<sup>233</sup> The Soviet Other found in the 1989-92 phase is no longer present, which of course partly derives from the fact that USSR does no longer exist. It is interesting, though, that the menace of Moscow-centered political chaos from the first period is not taken over by Russia or others in the construction of the Czech Republic.



of Europe, *Russia* has taken its place (which was not the case when constructing the Czech Republic above), while the two remaining Others of the 1989-92 phase, the Cold War and North America are retained. First, I shall deal with the Cold War, then with Russia, and finally with North America.

*Cold War Europe as a Radical Other*

Again, the era of the Cold War is a main excluded element in Havel's construction of Europe:

»Europe was divided artificially, by force, and for that very reason its division had to collapse sooner or later. History has thrown down a gauntlet we can, if we wish, pick up. If we do not do so, a great opportunity to create a continent of free and peaceful cooperation may be lost.«<sup>234</sup>

As in the 1989-92 phase, Havel installs an image of a current, 'natural' Europe by proclaiming that Europe of the Cold War was "artificially" divided, establishing this era as a radical Other, which takes on an inferior axiology – there is nothing likable about Cold War Europe. The praxeology for Europe is to engage in "free and peaceful cooperation", which is an "opportunity" of the Present as opposed to situation during the Cold War. Thus, the image of Europe is still one of being in transition – a Europe about to decide which way to go. Havel is not glad to see that his prospect of a pan-European confederation has not progressed much since he first launched this idea in 1990:

»Europe appears not to have achieved a genuine and profound sense of responsibility for itself as a whole, and thus for the future of all those who live in it. (...) the main task of Europe today is to grasp the spirit of its own unification, to understand the moral obligations that flow from that, to assume genuinely, and not just superficially a new type of responsibility for itself (...) Twice in this century all of Europe has paid a tragic price for the narrowmindedness and lack of imagination of its democracies. These democracies first failed when confronted with Nazism (...). They failed a second time when they allowed Stalin to swallow up one half of our continent and bring history there to a halt.«<sup>235</sup>

A lack of 'wholeness' is seen as a present, radically different (and inferior) element associated to the Cold War division ("Stalin swallowed up one half..."). The praxeological action to be taken towards this hesitation of Europe to recognize 'itself' is Unification, which should be founded on the 'fact' that the elements of the European entity share certain values:

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<sup>234</sup> European Parliament, Strasbourg, 8 March 1994.

<sup>235</sup> The Council of Europe Summit, Vienna, 8 October 1993.

»the common basis of any effort to integrate Europe is the wealth of values and ideals we share. Among them are respect for the uniqueness and the freedom of each human being, for a democratic and pluralistic political system, a market economy, and for the principles of civil society and the rule of law.«<sup>236</sup>

Thus, European Unification should build on the “values and ideals we share”, including elements like ‘democracy’, ‘pluralism’, ‘market economy’, and not least the “principles of civil society”, which links this image of Unification to Havel’s own configuration of a Civil Society. Havel presumes that such values *exist* (they are remarkably unquestioned), and in this way he naturalizes the discourse of Europe as a community of values.

#### *Russia as a Less-than-Radical Other*

At the CSCE Summit in Budapest in December 1994, Havel addresses the position of Russia vis-à-vis Europe in this fashion:

»Russia has a very specific position in Europe. It is an enormous Euro-Asian power that is going through a dramatic transformation. Without a close and, to some extent, an institutionalized cooperation between what is called the West and Russia, or perhaps with the Commonwealth of Independent States as another developing regional structure, it is impossible to imagine any meaningful European order today.«<sup>237</sup>

Russia’s involvement in the European project is represented as “Euro-Asian”, assigning to Russia some kind of semi-European status (it is *Asian* as well as European). Note that Russia is also as a “power”, which brings in an indirect undertone of its Cold War status as a superpower. This is more obvious when Havel, discussing the position of Ukraine, differentiates between a Euro-American “world” and Russia as a Euro-Asian “power”:

»Ukraine (...) finds itself in the gravitational fields of two powerful bodies: on the one hand, the Euro-American world whose underlying values are protected by the North Atlantic Alliance; on the other, the Russian Federation, which has always been and will remain a big Euro-Asian power.«<sup>238</sup>

I do not intend to enter into a discussion on Ukraine, but the quote above suggests that Havel sees Russia as a significantly different from the “Euro-American” sphere (or NATO), which is connected by *values*. In this way, Russia is seen as too distant to be a similar Other. Neither is the othering taken as far as the radical ontology (it involves no severe threat), meaning that Russia takes the middle position of a less-than-radical Other.

<sup>236</sup> The Council of Europe Summit, Vienna, 8 October 1993.

<sup>237</sup> Address by Václav Havel at the CSCE Summit, Budapest, 6 December, 1994.

The position of Russia as a Euro-Asian power is emphasized by articulating Russia as a *perpetual* power (“always have been and will remain...”), in which the Past and the Future of Russia are sutured in an assertion of this static appearance.

What is more, Russia is singled out as a distinct entity *itself*, signifying a considerable difference both to Europe, and to the Euro-American (or Euro-Atlantic) world. This is done almost explicitly:

»Russia, for its part, is a huge Euro-Asian power with a great gravitational potential of its own; it has the right to maintain its own identity and to create its own regional links, which it is already doing. Both Western and Russian policies toward each other should be based on the concept of good partnership between these two great entities. This would not isolate Russia from Europe; quite the opposite: a truly authentic and amicable coexistence between Russia and the increasingly integrated Europe is possible and imaginable only if both partners know and respect each other's identity.«<sup>239</sup>

Europe and Russia are articulated as two different “entities”. Again, we are leaning against a less-than-radical Other, even if words like “truly authentic” and “amicable” shows up in the latter statement. The clear segregation of Russia and Europe seems stronger than these expressions of some kind of future similarity, even if there is a praxeological suggestion of cooperation, though this cooperation cannot be too close.<sup>240</sup> Even if both the image of ‘Russia as a power’ and as a self-contained ‘entity’ might seem morally positive in some way, the overall axiology of the Russian Other is definitely *inferior*. Russia is seen as democratically and politically immature:

»As long as the broadening of NATO membership to include countries who feel culturally and politically a part of the region the Alliance was created to defend is seen by Russia, for example, as an anti-Russian undertaking, it will be a sign that Russia has not yet understood the challenge of this era.«<sup>241</sup>

The Russians, in other words, are singled out as being less capable than Us, since they have “not yet understood the challenge of this era”.<sup>242</sup> This underlines the inferiority of the

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<sup>238</sup> Taras Shevchenko National University, Kiev, 1 July, 1997.

<sup>239</sup> Vilnius University, Vilnius, 17 March, 1996.

<sup>240</sup> Another example: “Russia is a vast Euro-Asian power, one of the largest states in the world, so specific and influential that one could scarcely think of any reasonable way in which it might be integrated into a security structure grown out of different historical traditions and in a different spiritual environment” (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe Conference, Mons, Belgium, April 27, 1995).

<sup>241</sup> Speech at Harvard University, 8 June 1995.

<sup>242</sup> In the mid-nineties, when Russia was eagerly opposing an eastward enlargement of NATO, Havel articulates this as a direct offshoot of the divisionary thinking of the Cold War: “Many in Russia have interpreted this hesitation in their own way: as a recognition of some sort of remnant of the Iron Curtain” (Speech at Vilnius University, Vilnius, 17 March, 1996).

element of Russia, once again installing it as a less-than-radical Other since the construction is neither threatening, nor close to the Self.<sup>243</sup>

The *praxeology* towards the less-than-radical and inferior images of Russia found in this phase (Russia as a 'Euro-Asian power', and Russia as a self-contained, backward entity) is "cooperation" and "partnership", but nothing like *integration*. Neither is there any explicit wish to assimilate Russia to Europe. Russia definitely has things to learn, but unlike the scenery set up in 1989-92 about the Soviet Union, it is in this phase rather questionable whether Russia will ever become a part of Europe.

#### *North America as a Similar Other*

As indicated when dealing with the Russian Other above, Havel talks of a "Euro-American world" complementing the Euro-Asian Power of Russia. He describes it as a "Euro-American political and cultural realm,"<sup>244</sup> and in a speech given in Lithuania in 1996, he captures a more precise content of this image in the following statement:

»In the Europe of today there is no working democratic defence structure better than NATO. This alliance connects Europe and North America, two continents that share a close relationship derived from their common spiritual traditions, common values and a common political culture.«<sup>245</sup>

Europe is seen as closely connected to North America through common "spiritual traditions", "values", and "political culture". This constructs North America as a similar Other, while the axiology is equal. Actually, this suggests a rather uncontested situation on this dimension, making way for the construction of the common identity of "Euro-Atlantic" region. Unlike the association with the Cold War Other in the 1989-92 phase, NATO is now as 'the best' possibility of defending the common values.

Thus, Havel constructs Europe as a partaker in the 'Euro-Atlantic' or 'Euro-American' community of values, which comprises the two *distinct* entities of Europe and North America as well as institutions such as NATO. North America is still an Other, but a similar and equal one, which should be met with a *praxeology* of 'alliance'.

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<sup>243</sup> To some degree, this image corresponds to the Western image of Russia as the eternal "learner" as located by Iver Neumann (Neumann 1999, p. 110-2).

<sup>244</sup> Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe Conference, Mons, Belgium, April 27, 1995.

<sup>245</sup> Speech at Vilnius University, Vilnius, 17 March, 1996.

### *Summing up*

There are three main Others of Europe in Havel's speeches in the 1993-1997 phase. The Cold War stands out as a radical Other, Russia as a less-than-radical Other, and North America as a similar Other. This is schematized in Table 3.1. It is worth noticing that like in the first phase, these three Others compose a *chain of identities* – only this time, with the Soviet Union no longer in existence, Russia takes the place of the less-than-radical Other. This chain is even clearer here since Havel relates the entity of Europe to a *similar* Euro-Atlantic and a *less-than-radical* Euro-Asian sphere.

OTHERS	Associated elements	Ontology	Axiology	Praxeology
Cold War	Division of Europe by force	Radical	Inferior	Unification
Russia	Euro-Asian Power Independent entity	Less-than-Radical	Inferior	Cooperation respecting different identities
North America	Euro-Atlantic World NATO	Similar	Equal	Alliance through NATO

Table 6.2. Václav Havel 1993-1997. Constitutive Others of Europe.

One might wonder about this distinction between the Euro-Atlantic and the Euro-Asian sphere, which seems more or less a direct derivative of the Cold War division, only pushing the demarcation line between the competing poles to the Russian border. Even though Havel attaches the prefix “Euro-” to both spheres, the “true values” of Europe as an entity corresponds much more to the Euro-Atlantic than to the Euro-Asian order. The Euro-Atlantic relation is constructed as one of shared values, associated with elements that are intrinsically a part of Havel’s image of a European Self, while the relation to Russia is kept on a more formal level. NATO has moved from being an element of the Cold War to be associated to the similar Other of North America.

The main praxeologies of Europe as constructed by Havel towards these Others could be summed up like this:

- Europe should ‘unify’ because of its shared values, and this is to be achieved by expanding the EU, whereas the European values (akin to those of North America) are best protected through NATO.
- Europe should nurse its formal relations to Russia, while Russia could not be a part of a European security structure, and is not a member of the same value communities as the Europeans.

### HAVEL 1993-1997: SUMMING UP

Havel constructs the new Czech Republic against the radical Other of Communism, the less-than-radical Other of Klaus, and the similar Other of the EU. Europe is constructed within a chain of identity of the similar Other of North America, the less-than-radical Other of Russia, and radically against the Cold War.

Similarly to the first phase, both Czech and the European Self are related to the ideal of a value-based community. As for the Czech Republic, Havel's construction of the 'Good Traditions' against the Communist Other instates a full-blown kinship with the Czechoslovak era. Not only does Václav Havel construct the new Czech Republic in much the same way as he constructed Post-Communist Czechoslovakia, he also sees the Czech Republic as direct inheritor of everything Czechoslovak, generally ignoring the Slovak element.

Self-Entity (ID nodal point)	Elements of the Self	Others (ontology/axiology)
Czech Republic	Good Past Good Traditions Europe	Communism (Radical/Inferior) Václav Klaus/ODS (Less-than-radical/inferior) European Union (Similar/Superior)
Europe	Unitary Community of values Euro-Atlantic civilization	Cold War (Radical/Inferior) Russia (Less-than-Radical/Inferior) North America (Similar/Equal)

Table 6.3. Václav Havel 1993-1997. *Self-Images of the Czech Republic and Europe.*

Europe is also constructed much like in the first phase. It is seen as *one* entity, related to the Euro-Atlantic 'civilization' vis-à-vis the instable 'Euro-Asian' element of Russia and the division of Europe during the Cold War. Again the Past provides the basic, underlying radical Other in a chain of identity.

### VÁCLAV KLAUS 1993-1997

Václav Klaus became the Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia in 1992 and retained this position in the Czech Republic. As mentioned earlier (p. 72), this period signified a glorious period for Klaus and his party (ODS), who enjoyed internationally fame for a series of apparently outstanding political-economical results. This notwithstanding, Klaus and ODS ran into trouble during 1996-97. Not only did the party lose its absolute majority in the Czech Parliament in the 1996 elections, it also suffered from stagnating political results. On

top of that, a series of financial scandals related to the funding of the ODS was uncovered by the media, eventually forcing Václav Klaus to resign on 30 November 1997.<sup>246</sup>

### KLAUS 1993-1997: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

#### *Communism as a Radical Other*

In 1993-97, we still find the Communist Past as the core underlying radical and inferior Other in Klaus' articulation of the present Czech Self. This is obvious, when Communism is described as "evil, (...) harmful, (...) extremely inefficient and irrational"<sup>247</sup> and when the people cooperating with the former system are described as "guilty".<sup>248</sup> In othering Communism, Klaus retains the structuring natural/artificial dichotomy:

»We believe in the universality of human nature and, along with Adam Smith, in the strong internal motives people have to improve their lives, fates, and well-being. (...) What we have to do is remove all the barriers, restrictions, and constraints that have been artificially created in the past, and establish new rules (...). Free society and market economy are universal concepts.«<sup>249</sup>

The Communist system imposed "artificial" constraints on "human nature". In this way, Klaus (like Havel) installs the Communist Past as an ontologically radical and axiologically inferior Other, while establishing (unlike Havel) a praxeology of the untamed free market as *natural* to humanity as such and to the Czech 'We' on whose behalf he is talking.

Thus, Klaus continues to construct unregulated capitalism as his main vision for the Czech Republic. In this phase too, this is not only constructed against the Communist Past, but also against associated non-capitalist elements of the Present:

»[S]tructurally, communism was nothing but a more extreme version of the constructivistic, paternalistic and interventionist state whose milder forms are found in Western democratic countries. Our oversensitivity, stemming from our tragic experience, helps us to see it very sharply.«<sup>250</sup>

<sup>246</sup> Several ministers stepped down during 1997, among them Finance Minister Ivan Kočárník and Foreign Minister Josef Zieleniec. The coalition parties left the government on 30 November 1997, finally provoking the resignation of Václav Klaus himself.

<sup>247</sup> "The Czech Republic Between the Past and the Future", Malcolm Wiener Lecture by Václav Klaus, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, May 2, 1995. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).

<sup>248</sup> "The Czech Republic Between the Past and the Future", Malcolm Wiener Lecture by Václav Klaus, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, May 2, 1995. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).

<sup>249</sup> "The Czech Republic Between the Past and the Future", Malcolm Wiener Lecture by Václav Klaus, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, May 2, 1995. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).

<sup>250</sup> "The Czech Republic Between the Past and the Future", Malcolm Wiener Lecture by Václav Klaus, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2 May, 1995. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).

Even if Communism is articulated as “more extreme”, the current “constructivistic, paternalistic and interventionist state”<sup>251</sup> (found in the West) is equivalent to Communism and ontologically just as radical, since these attributes in Klaus’ rhetoric depict a deeply negative image equally threatening to his overall objective of Capitalism. Moreover, Klaus asserts that the experience of the Communist Past makes the Czech Republic better equipped to see the dangers of non-capitalist society, and therefore the axiology of the Western “interventionist state” is inferior, since it is not aware of these fatal shortcomings. Such present variations over the threatening realm of Non-Capitalism are directly equaled to Communism like this:

»Our task now is to avoid the reappearance of restrictive and unproductive state interventionism and dirigisme, which are advocated these days under new flags but are no less dangerous than in the past. (...) [T]he danger is the introduction of new policies based on special interests, on the ideology of corporatism and syndicalism, on theories of so-called fairness, on aggressive environmentalism, on accusations of “social dumping”, on communitarianism, and so on. Those are the dangers as I see them.«<sup>252</sup>

Note how “dangerous interventionism”, in Klaus’ discourse, is as applicable on welfare measures (“so-called fairness”, “aggressive environmentalism” etc.) as it is on the “ideologies” of “corporatism”, and “syndicalism”. In this way, Klaus asserts equivalence among these current elements, which are all associated to the Communist Past (they are just new “flags” of the same image of the interventionist state). These “dangers” are radical Others, since they pose a threat to the capitalist Self, and axiologically inferior because they offer no likable influence. The logical praxeology of ‘avoiding’ these attributes implies a “negative stance” towards them:

»I believe that a negative stance toward an ambitious constructivism and toward all forms of regulation of free citizens is one of the basic revelations of truth for all of us. (...) Ultimately, we have to accept the existence of an evolutionary, spontaneous process, which establishes new political, social, and economic arrangements«<sup>253</sup>

Praxeologically, the societal ‘market’ should be left to do its “spontaneous” job, instead of letting the state seek society-building measures (that which Klaus labels ‘constructivism’,

<sup>251</sup> Klaus’ use of the term “constructivistic” has nothing to do with *constructivism* as this notion is commonly understood within social theories (see p. 16). Instead, it is used to describe the deliberate ‘construction’ of society deployed by a state. In fact, Klaus’ usage of this concept is more akin to what many scholars of political science would call the “instrumentalist” state.

<sup>252</sup> Speech by Václav Klaus at the Cato Policy Forum, 4 December, 1995. Excerpts published in Cato Policy Report, March/April 1996 Vol. XVIII no. 2. Retrieved from [http://www.cato.org/pubs/policy\\_report/pr-xviii2-klaus.html](http://www.cato.org/pubs/policy_report/pr-xviii2-klaus.html).

<sup>253</sup> Václav Klaus: *Systemic Change: The Delicate Mixture of Intentions and Spontaneity*, in *The Cato Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Fall 1994. Reprinted in *Klaus (1997)*. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).



cf. note 252). Most likely, this is a reference to the Hayekian philosophy of spontaneity and Klaus' well-known construction of all societal spheres as 'markets' still prevails. This praxeology is seen as identical to a pursuit of a 'normal' or 'standard' society, and to the avoidance of Third Way measures. Speaking to a US audience at Harvard in 1995, Klaus puts it like this:

»We (...) want to reintroduce into our country the normal, standard world in which you have been privileged to live. I have to stress this point because I am afraid of the dangerous and slippery "third ways" of constructivist attempts to crate a Brave New World (...) based on immodest intellectual aspirations. We were victims of such attempts, and we do not want to lose our freedom again.«<sup>254</sup>

Present attempts to control the direction of societal development are again equated to the Communist Past – and to Huxley's Brave New World, adding another spectacular totalitarian attribute to them. Both are seen as "based on immodest intellectual aspirations" endangering Us. Praxeologically, he wants to "reintroduce" the "normal, standard world", thereby stating that somewhere back in time, the Czech lands *was* 'normal' and 'standard', though the praxeology is *not* a return to something historically defined like for instance Havel's return to the Good Traditions.<sup>255</sup> Rather, it is the introduction of a 'minimal state', which due to its base in Human Nature will refrain from 'constructing' any objectives as desired outcomes of the societal 'market'.

While Havel sees Klaus' political universe as a less-than-radical Other vis-à-vis his praxeology of a Civil Society, Klaus associates Havel's visions in this direction to the 'interventionist state' and thereby directly to Communism in its 'present' form:

»[T]he term "civil society" seems to me a bit superfluous. (...) I would rather say "society of free citizens" who cooperate, and organize however they wish. (...) If I disagree with something, it is with the point about the evolution of nonprofit organizations: let their growth be natural and spontaneous, and not engineered by the state. (...)«

Havel's concept of Civil Society is seen as "engineered by the state" and not created in a 'natural' way like associations created from individuals in a "spontaneous order" (in the

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<sup>254</sup> "The Czech Republic Between the Past and the Future", Malcolm Wiener Lecture by Václav Klaus, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2 May, 1995.

<sup>255</sup> Klaus seems to fancy the term 'standard'. In 1994, he stated that one of the crucial aspects in Post-Communist transformation is that "Standard political parties (instead of civic initiatives, national fronts, and civic forums) start to prevail. The extreme political atomization is slowly transformed into a normal political structure with only a handful of ideologically well-defined political parties (with standard names)" (Klaus in *Systemic Change: The Delicate Mixture of Intentions and Spontaneity*, in *The Cato Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Fall 1994).

Hayekian sense).<sup>256</sup> Hence, the political discourse represented by Havel is here a radical Other, again based on the dichotomy of the “natural” (non-regulated, spontaneous individuals) as opposed to the ‘artificial’ (cultivation of human behavior through regulated markets).<sup>257</sup> This also makes way for an inferior axiology and a praxeology following Human Nature à la Klaus.

The image of Czech Republic is no longer explicitly one of transition. By the fall of 1994, he claimed the Czech transformation to be “coming to and end”<sup>258</sup> and to be “successful.”<sup>259</sup> He claims that the Czech Republic has reached an “early post-transformation stage” in which the state – directly opposing the views of Havel – should have “a standard, more or less passive, non-constructive role”.<sup>260</sup>

To sum up, the Communist Other, and its various associated elements of present forms of ‘state intervention’, including the vision of the Good State and the Civil Society represented by Havel, is a constituting Other for the ‘natural’ Czech Self as *a market of ‘free’ social agents*, whose choice of action should not in any way be conducted by the state. This construction is most often dichotomic (esp. via the opposition *natural vs. artificial*), which sustains the radical ontology and the inferior axiology of the Other in this instance.

#### *The European Union as a Similar and Radical Other*

In May 1994, Klaus explicitly articulates his country as European, and the participation in the European institutions as something worth striving for:

»Our country is and has always been part of Europe. Because we do not want to be deprived of advantages stemming from membership in European institutions, we want to become a member as early as possible. (...) We share the same European values as our Western neighbors, and we share the same belief in the importance as well as the positive impact of European integration processes. That belief is an undisputable and undisputed, therefore natural, starting point of Czech foreign policy.«<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> E.g., extract of discussion aired on Česká televize (*Czech Television*) on 25 May 1994. Reprinted in English in V. Havel, V. Klaus & Petr Pithart: *Rival Visions*, in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 7, No. 1, John Hopkins University Press, 1996.

<sup>257</sup> Holy (1996, p. 190) finds that in the Czech debate over the split-up of Czechoslovakia, the exact same metaphors (natural and artificial) come to represent the Czech state and Czechoslovakia respectively.

<sup>258</sup> Speech by Václav Klaus commemorating the fifth anniversary of the ‘Velvet Revolution’, 17 November 1994. Reprinted in V. Havel, V. Klaus & Petr Pithart: *Rival Visions*, in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1996.

<sup>259</sup> Václav Klaus: *Systemic Change: The Delicate Mixture of Intentions and Spontaneity*, in *The Cato Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Fall 1994. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).

<sup>260</sup> Václav Klaus: *Systemic Change: The Delicate Mixture of Intentions and Spontaneity*, in *The Cato Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Fall 1994. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).

<sup>261</sup> Address at the conference ‘Europe and Us’ organized by the Patriae Foundation, Prague, May 1994. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).

Looking at this excerpt in isolation, with Europe being ‘identical’ to the Czech Republic, European institutions and European integration are ontologically similar (“neighbors”) and axiologically superior (membership gives “advantages”, the integration process has a “positive impact”). The praxeology that follows is to become a part of the European integration by membership in the “institutions”, and this is presented as a “natural” starting point for Czech foreign policy.<sup>262</sup> This apparent role model image of the EU is supplemented by a more distant Other by means of associating it with the mainstay of Klaus’ political discourse: the othering of interventionist and other forms of non-capitalist government:

»in Europe today, (...) there is a tendency toward federalism and increasing centralization. This is a tendency we view with some fear and concern; (...) We see more governments and more bureaucrats, we see more an inward-looking (than outward-looking) mentality, we see more room for special interests (...), we see less democratic constraints, and more opponents of capitalism in important positions of international institutions than at home.«<sup>263</sup>

The EU is constructed as less equipped for Václav Klaus’ political visions than are the Czech Republic (“home”). This inferior axiology is directly connected to the image of the Other of Political Regulation, symbolized by large bureaucracy and the following of “special interests” etc. Also, Klaus expresses reservations about a lack of “democratic constraints” in the EU structure, and he laments that “opponents of capitalism” are employed in central positions. Hence, the EU is ontologically constructed as more distant than similar. Moreover, the explicit association with elements of the present ‘interventionist’ elements of the Communist Other suggests that the EU is at least bordering on being radical, and axiologically inferior.

So, we end up with a dual picture of the EU/European integration: One part in which Klaus is interested in “taking an active part in European integration”<sup>264</sup> and to become a member of the EU, and another part in which Klaus meets this process with some reservations. It seems obvious that Klaus’ praxeology is membership *despite* the ‘dangers’ presented by the latter.

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<sup>262</sup> This stance is repeated in Václav Klaus’ speech to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, on 30 January 1995 (reprinted in Klaus 1997) and elsewhere.

<sup>263</sup> Speech by Václav Klaus when accepting World Capitalism Prize, December 1995. Retrieved from <http://www.ctknews.com/archiv/docklau4.html>.

<sup>264</sup> Speech before the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, January 30, 1995. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).

### *Summing Up*

As recapped in Table 6.4, the two main Others constituting the Self-image of the Czech are Communism (associated to various current images of ‘socialist’ approaches to politics), and the EU seen as associated either to Political Regulation or as an opportunity of advantages through membership. The first configuration partly associates EU to the Communist one through its present configurations of Western ‘Third Way’ policies etc., but I have chosen to separate the two main Others because of the ambiguity in the ontology of the latter.

OTHERS	Associated elements	Ontology	Axiology	Praxeology
Communism	Totalitarianism Political regulation Civil Society	Radical	Inferior	Deregulation Free market
European Union	Advantages Bureaucracy Interventionist	Radical/Similar	Inferior/Superior	EU-membership Resisting regulation

Table 6.4. Václav Klaus 1993-1997. Constitutive Others of the Czech Republic.

As in the first phase, Klaus primarily constructs his political identities and ideals through the basic conceptual pair of *natural/artificial*, constructing the spontaneous societal market of free agents as compliant to Human Nature. The constitutional elements of his Self-image are in some way or the other associated to the non-market realm, while the visions are confined to his free market discourse. Like in the first phase, the Past is not used as a resource for the Self, but only as a reference of the Communist Other.

The praxeological responses to the Others of Communism and the EU may be summarized as follows:

- Introducing a completely free market to prevent the current inheritors of Communism to thwart individual freedom and the spontaneous society.
- Opposing the bureaucracy and the regulation of the EU – again to secure a liberal order of individual freedom and spontaneity.
- Despite this, the Czech Republic should become a member of the EU, since – allegedly – it features certain advantages.

### KLAUS 1993-97: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE

In contrast to the 1989-92 phase, Klaus does have something to offer I 1993-97, when it comes to the construction of a European Self. Much like the Czech Republic, Klaus' vision of Europe is primarily constructed within the terminology of a 'free market.' The main constitutive Others dealt with in the following are Interventionism and Unification.

#### *Political Regulation as a Radical Other*

Just like in the case of Klaus' construction of the Czech Republic, one main Other of Europe is a network of current elements compromising the free market.<sup>265</sup> Such political action is seen by Klaus as unrightfully trying to shape the individual, which should instead be "free":

»We want a free Europe; we want European institutions that would enhance the freedom of individuals living in Europe, we want institutions that would make our lives happier and that would contribute to the increased welfare of all of us. We do not want institutions that would try to control us, regulate us, coordinate us, organize us, prefabricate us; institutions that would try to force their own values, ambitions, or prejudices on us; institutions that would favor special interests at the cost of the interests of the whole.«<sup>266</sup>

"Control", "regulation", "prefabrication" etc. stand out as threats (and therefore radical Others) to individual freedom, the very basis of Klaus' vision of the market-based society, because they "would try to force their own values...on us", and this would allegedly be out of "special interest" instead of the "interests of the whole". This is projected into his construction of a European Self as one of 'free individuals' vis-à-vis the Political Regulation limiting their actions.

Klaus asserts that one has to find an optimal equilibrium between the freedom of individuals and regulation by the state – and that the position of Western Europe in this respect is far from optimal:

»The prevailing [West European] system is too heavy because of overregulation and overcontrol; too socialist because of generous welfare state transfer payments, which are unconnected to any achievement and undermine elementary work ethics and individual responsibility; too closed because of the high degree of protectionism; too slow because of bureaucratic and admin-

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<sup>265</sup> Such elements might ultimately be rooted in the Communist Other found in the reading of Klaus' construction of the Czech Republic, but I have chosen to use a general label of 'Political Regulation', since the association with Communism is less outspoken in the case of Europe. To be sure, I might just as well have chosen labels like 'communitarianism', 'instrumentalism', or even 'socialism' or merely 'non-capitalism'. The point is to designate the posture that political institutions should not intervene in the choice of individual agents.

<sup>266</sup> Speech before the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 30 January 1995. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).

istrative procedures; and too costly because of all those things. I do not pretend to reveal anything new and analytically unknown here, but it is fair to say that the Thatcherite (anti-Keynesian, liberal) revolution stopped halfway and is yet to be completed.«<sup>267</sup>

Western Europe (I assume that this includes most EU countries), are described as “too heavy”, “too socialist”, “too closed”, “too slow”, and “too costly”, and this image of Western Europe is thereby equated to the radical non-capitalist Other, figuring a inferior axiology. The praxeology is to follow an “anti-Keynesian” path associated to the politics of Margaret Thatcher and to liberalism in general.

Thus, the Other of Political Regulation constitutes an ideal European Self of free individuals in a free market situation with a minimum of political interference. This corresponds nicely to the image of the Czech Republic, and this is logical, since Klaus treats the regulative Other as a universal excluded category, which is not confined spatially to any particular Self.

#### *Unification as a Radical Other*

The other (related) main excluded element in Klaus’ image of Europe in 1993-1997 is the idea of European Unification:

»I am deeply convinced that the success of all of us in Europe, not the success of Europe, depends on the quality and structure of the prevailing political, social, and economic systems and not on the existence, scope and activities of multilateral European institutions (...). The more belief in the free market and free trade we have, the less belief we have in ambitious political engineering and in bureaucratic intervention and the more we favor a looser concept of integration over a tighter concept of union.«<sup>268</sup>

Unification is seen as a project that would bring about more “bureaucratic intervention”, and is thus ‘sequentially’ linked to the Other of Regulation. For this reason, the image of Unification is ontologically radical and axiologically inferior. “Integration”, in contrast, is seen as a looser concept and stands out as the praxeology towards the idea of a unifying Europe.<sup>269</sup> This is also an implicit critique of Václav Havel’s grandiose ambition of European Unification. He takes this further:

<sup>267</sup> “Economic and Political Changes in Europe” in *The Economist*, 10 September 1994. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).

<sup>268</sup> Address at the conference “Europe and Us” organized by the Patriae Foundation, Prague, May 1994. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).

<sup>269</sup> Elsewhere, Klaus states that the original peacemaking purpose of European integration has been substituted by a notion of “Europeanism” encouraging “more coordination from a single place, more uniformity in politics, common policies in many fields, belief in extensive regulation, reduction of the authority and responsibility of nation-states (or historic states), efforts to create a European identity and the like.” (Speech before the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 30 January 1995. Reprinted in Klaus 1997).

»We should not accept the misleading and false idea that something called Europe must be great, strong, united, prefabricated, and controlled from above to survive in the current economic, political, and military competition in the world. Europe is “a unity of diversities”, and any attempt to unify it artificially would do more harm than good. Our first president, T.G. Masaryk, put the same idea very clearly in 1922. He said, “The task of Europe is to bring centralizing and autonomist forces into harmony. The unity and cohesion of Europe depends on this harmony. Europe is (...) no more no less than a fragile balance of ethnic and cultural diversity.”.«<sup>270</sup>

The radical ontology of unification is emphasized by using words like “misleading”, “false”, and “improper”, adjectives that simultaneously gives rise to an inferior axiology. Klaus associates his concept of integration (as opposed to unification) to the well-known catchphrase of “unity in diversity”, thereby accentuating this difference. Moreover, Klaus relates this concept of Europe – rather carelessly entwined with its institutional manifestation – to the cited quotation by T.G. Masaryk. Thus, Klaus – like Havel – makes use of this ‘hero’ of the Czechoslovak Past as a resource in his construction of Europe. Unlike Havel, however, the consecutive Praxeology of establishing the ‘institutional’ Europe is a securing of cooperation *between* states, rather than a united entity:

»To defend supranationalism using cosmopolitan, anti-nationalistic arguments is wrong misleading, and in many respects even dangerous. (...) I do not believe the idea of Europe (...) is sufficiently strong to compete successfully with the idea of a nation-state (...) My conclusion is that European integration should be based on nation-states (or historical states) as its building blocks because only that will pave the way to a smooth, friendly, and efficient functioning of the whole Continent. The beneficiaries will be us, Europeans.«<sup>271</sup>

“Supranationalism” is here excluded based on an argument of the strength of the idea of the nation state. This argument is *binary* in some sense, since it leaves open only two possible levels of European politics: Either a ‘Europe of nations’ (=Integration) or a ‘supranational’ idea (=Unification).<sup>272</sup>

Despite this perspective, Klaus does not want the European institutions to wither completely:

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<sup>270</sup> Address at the conference “Europe and Us” organized by the Patriae Foundation, Prague, May 1994. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).

<sup>271</sup> Speech at the Zavikon conference “Between Supranationalism and Regionalism”, Dräger Foundation, Prague, 10 June 1994. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).

<sup>272</sup> This resembles the way the Danish debate on Europe has developed. As Lene Hansen has shown, this debate takes its outset in a representation of the possibilities as dichotomic: either European integration should be cooperation between sovereign nation states *or* it should be a matter of introducing supranationalism in a federal sense (Hansen, *forthcoming*).

»European institutions should not artificially divide Europe into two parts, the luckier one and the less lucky one (as in the days of the Cold War); they should, rather, create an umbrella for all the democratic European countries that want to be an active part of an old but free, diverse, peaceful, and efficient continent.«<sup>273</sup>

Here, Klaus in fact follows Havel's othering of a divided Europe, and sees European institutions as a way of dissociating present Europe from the Cold War Era.<sup>274</sup> The goal, however, is different, since Klaus puts emphasis on the notions of 'freedom' (which, as we have seen, is negative freedom in Klaus' configuration), 'diversity', and 'efficiency', corresponding to his praxeologies of non-regulation, non-supranational cooperation, and capitalism.

### *Summing Up*

Klaus uses two main Others to construct his vision of a capitalist Europe: The Other of Political Regulation, and that of Unification (see Table 6.5). Both are ontologically radical, since they are established in a dichotomic either/or fashion with the excluded elements threatening the realization of the Self-image. For the very same reason they are considered axiologically inferior.

OTHERS	Associated elements	Ontology	Axiology	Praxeology
Political Regulation	Control of the individual Special interest Socialism Inefficiency	Radical	Inferior	Free market Individual freedom
Unification of Europe	Regulation Supranationalism	Radical	Inferior	Europe of nation states

Table 6.5. Václav Klaus 1993-1997. Constitutive Others of Europe.

The combination of asserting the natural/artificial dichotomy and asserting a difference between integration and unification in terms of both a regulatory and a national argument constitutes a vision of a Europe with less political unity. This results in these two praxeologies:

- Building a Europe that secures individual freedom, i.e. refraining from intervening politically in the acts of individual agents.

<sup>273</sup> "Economic and Political Changes in Europe" in *The Economist*, 10 September 1994. Reprinted in Klaus (1997).

<sup>274</sup> Klaus elaborates a bit on this, when accepting the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Prize in Prague in December 1993. Among other things he states that "[W]e share [Adenauer's] insistence that Europe [should] not be confined to its Western Part alone", and that European integration is an imperative in joining East and West (Reprinted in Klaus 1997). However, he distances himself from Adenauer's view that a strong cohesion of the whole continent is a necessity in this respect.



- The EU should be based on cooperation between nation states, and not pursue political unification.

### KLAUS 1993-1997: SUMMING UP

As shown in Table 6.6, the Czech and European Selves of Václav Klaus in 1993-98, are both constructed according to a vision of establishing a community relying on capitalist principles. The latter is frequently associated to Communism, but EU is also seen as an opportunity for ‘advantages’.

Self-Entity (ID nodal point)	Elements of the Self	Others (ontology/axiology)
Czech Republic	Market economy without adjectives Free individuals Successful transition Communist Experience	Communism (Radical/inferior) European Union (Radical/inferior or Similar/superior)
Europe	Freedom Diversity/Europe of Nations	Political regulation (Radical) Unification (Radical)

Table 6.6 Václav Klaus 1993-1997. Self-images of the Czech Republic and Europe.

The Czech Republic is in this phase seen by Klaus as ‘better’ than the West to see the dangers of Political Regulation, since they have experienced the Communist danger. Moreover, he sees the present Czech Republic as an example of successful transition from Communism. Klaus’ own reform program is seen as reaching an advanced stage (though it is still not complete – there are still the dangers of regulation).<sup>275</sup>

Klaus’ European Self-image (appearing for the first time in this phase) is constructed along partially similar lines, since his main vision for Europe is that of a free market and individual freedom. Europe is also, however, constructed as a ‘Europe of nations’, which is too different to unify politically. Therefore, Europe should only integrate economically in the sense of creating a framework without regulation for the markets to work properly.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS 1993-1997

Just like in the first phase, both Václav Havel and Václav Klaus undertake an othering of Communism when constructing the Self of the Czech Republic. Even if the explicit rejec-

<sup>275</sup> Similarly, Druker & Walker (1999) argue that Klaus is responsible for the “myth of Czech superiority” and “the myth of completed reform”.

tion of the former regime is not as conspicuous as in the 1989-1992 period, it is still a main reference point implicitly structuring many of the elements excluded in the configuration of the Czech Republic. The difference between Havel and Klaus in the discursive representation of the Communist Other is also similar to the last phase: Havel sees Communism as an Other to the 'good state', while Klaus sees it in as an Other to the free market.

A further similarity to the former phase, is that Havel's constructions are composed of both radical, less-than-radical and similar Others, while Klaus' are almost exclusively established as radical ones – a fact once again rooted in his extensive use of dichotomic patterns with no middle course. *When*, however, Havel uses radical images of the Other (in case of the Communist and especially the Cold War Other), he tends, like Klaus to use the natural/artificial dichotomy to make his point, making this conceptual pair the most important structuring dichotomy of his radical Others in this phase.

Havel's Self-images seems to install the Czech Republic as being more 'in transition' in this phase than do Klaus'. The Bad Traits of the Communist Other are still present for Havel, making his image somewhat pessimistic, while Klaus attempts to establish the image that his ideals are actually being approached, even if his vision of the ultimate free market is *not there* yet. It is still incomplete, and the process toward it is endangered by the numerous present elements of Political Regulation associated to the Communist Other. Thus, even if both gentlemen creates images of the Present of the Czech Republic by utilizing a dubious image of the Past, Havel depict a Present *mirroring* certain 'bad' elements of the Past, whereas Klaus constructs the Present as *moving away* from such elements.

Havel's image of Europe as a unitary community of values is still constructed in opposition to the Cold War *and* as an entity between two current, non-radical blocks: Russia has taken the place of the Soviet Union as a less-than-radical Other, and North America remains a similar Other. However, there is a praxeological discontinuity in relation to the first phase in the fact that Havel seems to have abandoned his vision of the OSCE as a catalyst of European Unification – now an expansion of NATO and the EU are seen as the proper solution to the 'artificial' division of Europe associated to the Past.

In contrast to the 1989-92 phase, Klaus *does* construct an image of Europe this time. To do this, he uses the radical Other of present Political Regulation, which he claims to be pervading in Europe (much by the same token as he establishes his picture of the Czech Re-

public<sup>276</sup>). Unlike Havel, he sees Europe as a loose community of unique nation states that are too different to be united politically, but which could work together to secure an efficient deregulation of the market (in its broadest sense). Political community, he argues, is best maintained at the national level, and any attempt of engaging in *political* unification of Europe is equal to Political Regulation.

In this phase, we should be aware that Klaus has become Prime Minister and he is therefore (ideally) more prone to address broader political prospects than in the former phase, when he held the post as Finance Minister.

Simultaneously, we should recall the difference between the role of a President and that of a PM. While the President is the Head of State and often seen as a father figure to the Nation, the PM will be more directly responsible for running a functioning government and is less likely to consider abstract political visions. It is curious that this new situation does *not* seem to affect Klaus' keen insistence on talking within a econometric discourse, nor does it seem to alternate his primary affection for 'internal' Others.

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<sup>276</sup> Actually, Klaus states this explicitly in his speech to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 30 January 1995: "two seemingly unrelated but intrinsically (and structurally) similar issues: the logic and characteristics of transition from communism to a free society and the logic and characteristics of the evolution of European integration."

## 7 1998-2000: GETTING READY FOR EUROPE

The final phase of Post-Communist Czech Republic finds an analytically suitable beginning on 9 December 1997, when Havel held a thundering philippic to the Czech parliament on the exodus of the ODS-led government (see p. 65). When early parliamentary elections were held in June 1998, the winner turned out to be Social Democratic Party (ČSSD<sup>277</sup>) getting a share of 32,3% of the votes, ODS coming second with 27,4%. Following this defeat, ODS entered into a so-called ‘coalition agreement’ with the ČSSD. Chairman of the ČSSD, Miloš Zeman, agreed to support Klaus’ candidacy as Chairman of the Parliament, while in return, Klaus promised that the ODS would abstain from obstructing the formation of a Social Democratic minority government. Though contested by many observers as undemocratic (or at least unethical), the agreement secured Zeman’s position as prime minister.

This ‘conspiracy’ between the two largest parties is reflected in practical politics. As Steven Saxonberg notes, there was from the beginning “a tacit agreement that the two largest parties would negotiate on a constitutional reform that would greatly strengthen the largest parties.”<sup>278</sup> Such a reform was adopted by the legislature in late 2000, though it was only partly approved by the constitutional court, which was heard on the initiative of president Havel.<sup>279</sup>

As indicated earlier, this phase also offers developments in the Czech Republic’s association with NATO and the EU, which is another historical reason for investigating this phase separately. The Czech Republic officially entered NATO in March 1999, and at least since 1997, the country had been involved in serious negotiations with the EU for the purpose of membership.

<sup>277</sup> ČSSD = Česka Strana Socialně Demokratická (Czech Social Democratic Party).

<sup>278</sup> Saxonberg 1999.

<sup>279</sup> These apparent efforts of concentrating political power within a few hands induced the appearance of two civic movements in 1999: The mainly ‘intellectual’ Impuls 99 (obviously playing on the name of Charter 77), and the student-based ‘Děkujeme, odejdete!’ (‘Thank You Now Leave’) proclamation.

## VÁCLAV HAVEL 1998-2000

Turning to Václav Havel first, it could be mentioned that he was reelected president for a five year term by *one* vote at a joint session of the Senate<sup>280</sup> and the Lower House in January 1998, thus formally seated until January 2003.<sup>281</sup>

### HAVEL 1998-2000: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

In this phase too, we shall see Havel constructing the Czech Republic against three main Others, namely the (I dare say usual) radical Other of Communism, Václav Klaus/ODS – now ontologically a *radical* Other – and finally the Westerns institutions of EU and NATO as a similar Other.

#### *Communism as a Radical Other*

For Havel, the Communist Past remains a worthy enemy of the Czech Republic. In October 1998, Havel portrays the Communist regime as the culmination of the “bitter era” of fascism and war, characterizing the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>282</sup> The equivalence set between Communism, Fascism, and war fits the radical images of Communism we have seen in the former periods. This is restated in 1999:

»[a] totalitarian system of the Communist type could (...) as a matter of principle, never coexist with a developed civil society. Genuine civil society is the truest fundamental of democracy, and totalitarian rule can never, by definition, be reconciled with that.«<sup>283</sup>

Describing the Communist regime as a “totalitarian system” constitutes an ontologically radical and axiologically inferior Other. The resultant promotion of the opposing elements of “democracy” and Civil Society becomes part of a praxeology dissimilating the Self from totalitarian Communism. In other words, the Czech Self is threatened by totalitarianism, whenever it is not designated as explicitly ‘democratic’ and/or supplemented by Civil Society.

<sup>280</sup> The Czech Senate was not seated until after elections held in November 1996, though it was an integral part of the 1993 constitution (Strohlein *et al* 1999).

<sup>281</sup> The election of Havel might be seen as somewhat contentious from a certain perspective. One MP, the notorious Republican Miroslav Sládek, was held in police custody due to allegations of inciting racial national hatred at the time of the presidential vote, but was later acquitted of the charges (Strohlein *et al* 1999).

<sup>282</sup> Address by Václav Havel on the occasion of the Czech National Day, 28 October 1998.

<sup>283</sup> Speech by Václav Havel on the occasion of "Václav Havel's Civil Society Symposium", Macalester College, Minneapolis, U.S.A., 26 April 1999.

This situation is still actual in the post-communist situation. In his Parliament speech on 9 December 1997, Havel addressed the 1989-transformations:

“The ‘time of certainties’ – that were limited and dull, even suicidal to society, but still represented a certainty of a kind – was suddenly replaced by a time of freedom”<sup>284</sup>

Apart from reproducing the Communist Past as a radical and inferior Other (it is “suicidal”), this statement does not portray the end of Communism as a indisputable success. Rather, it ushered in a new epoch of uncertainty. This is repeated some 1½ years later, when Havel stated that the Post-Communist situation created a political vacuum, which has facilitated a political environment focusing on power rather than “truth”.<sup>285</sup>

Such descriptions of the post-1989 transformation state is related to what in the two former periods was called the ‘Bad Traditions’, the traits of Communism that were causing political trouble in present Czech politics. This image is revived here, though it is now also addressed as problems directly related to the notion of Post-Communism. He talks about the “post-communist morass” or “syndrome”.<sup>286</sup> In March 1998 during a visit in Warsaw, he states:

»We live in hard post-communist reality, (...) when all the vices engraved into us by the decades of communism are only beginning to surface, and we are often unable to deal with them.«<sup>287</sup>

Havel establishes Post-Communism as an ontologically radical Other, here associated to the main Other of Communism that has generated long-lasting “vices” in the Czech people. The axiology is inferior, since this situation is morally disliked. Again, a praxeological response is the promotion of civil society:

»In a functional civil society, a change of government does not have to mean a windstorm that leaves nothing in its place. (...) Consequently, civil society is the best safeguard, not only against political chaos but also against the rise of authoritarian forces that always emerge whenever a society feels shaken or insecure about its future.«<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Address by Václav Havel before the Members of Parliament, Prague, 9 December 1997.

<sup>285</sup> Speech by Václav Havel on the occasion of "Václav Havel's Civil Society Symposium", Macalester College, Minneapolis, U.S.A., 26 April 1999.

<sup>286</sup> Address by Václav Havel before the Members of Parliament, Prague, 9 December 1997.

<sup>287</sup> Speech by Václav Havel at the University of Warsaw, 10 March, 1998.

<sup>288</sup> Speech by Václav Havel on the occasion of "Václav Havel's Civil Society Symposium", Macalester College, Minneapolis, U.S.A., 26 April 1999.

The praxeology of building a Civil Society is thus constructed against two radical, inferior Others: 'political chaos' (found in the element of Post-Communism) and 'authoritarian forces' (associated to the main Other of Communism).

In sum, we see Communism as a stable constitutive Other of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic during the whole period considered here. Interestingly, after 1998, the Communist Other and its present offshoots do *not* result in a clear image of 'good' Czech traditions, which in the two former phases were a main resource for a democratic approach vis-à-vis the Bad Traditions here represented by the Post-Communist 'Morass'. Even if he *does* refer to T. G. Masaryk's ideas of 'civic self-governance' a couple of times and even compare this to the current term of Civil Society<sup>289</sup>, the Good Past does not come out as a clear resource related to the Bad Past of Communism. Instead, the praxeological dimension of the Communist Other in this phase is exclusively that of establishing a Civil Society.

#### *Václav Klaus and ODS as Radical Others*

It is common knowledge in Czech political life that Havel and Klaus' political standpoints had already been rather divergent for a number of years at the time of Klaus' resignation on 30 November 1997. In his speech to the parliament on 9 December that year, Havel came forth with quite a few merciless considerations on the 'Klaus era'. One part is worth quoting at some length:

»(...) the cloak of liberalism without adjectives (...) concealed the Marxist conception about a fundament and a superstructure: morality, decency, humility before the order of nature, solidarity, regard for those who will come after us, respect for the law, a culture of human relations, and many other things were relegated to the realm of the superstructure (...). Intoxicated by power and success (...) many began (...) to turn a blind eye to this and that, until they were faced with scandals casting doubts on the principal reason for our pride - on our privatization. (...) [A]ll that was left between the citizen and the state was a party with a capital P. (...) And what about the state as such? The stated objective was to make it small, but strong. I am afraid the opposite is true: it is big and weak. Perhaps because we lacked the courage to challenge the nature of the state we had inherited.«<sup>290</sup>

This line of argument directly asserts equivalence between Klaus' party and the pre-1989 Communist Party ("party with a capital P") and Marxist ideology. This relates to Havel's image of ODS and its financial misconducts becomes associated with "intoxication by

<sup>289</sup> Address on the occasion of the 150 years anniversary of the birth of T. G. Masaryk, Hodonin, 6 March 1999.

<sup>290</sup> Address by Václav Havel before the Members of Parliament, Prague, 9 December 1997.

power”, and a “big and weak” state. The failure of the ODS to come up with an explanation for its dubious funding seems to have equipped Havel with a reason to explicit his venture against “liberalism without adjectives” (that which Klaus calls ‘capitalism without adjectives’). Thus, the policies of the ODS, and Klaus in particular, are ontologically radicalized, and the axiology is again unmistakably inferior.

This fierce oratory against Klaus finds a praxeological dimension of *preventing* the ‘power intoxication’ in the political system *and* to heed the ‘soft values’, which Havel asserts has been “relegated to the superstructure”. This praxeology resembles the project of Civil Society, which also in this phase of Post-Communism must be considered to be one of his major political endeavors. Like during the former phase, this concept is openly rejected by Klaus,<sup>291</sup> but rigorously cherished by Havel:

»Humanity constitutes a subject of conscience, of moral order, of love for our fellow humans. Civil society is one of the ways in which our human nature can be exercised in its entirety, including its more subtle elements, which are more difficult to grasp, but are perhaps the most important of all.«<sup>292</sup>

Referring to Human Nature, Civil Society is here associated to an ideal Self, containing elements of what in political language is often referred to as ‘soft’ values; here represented by word like “consciousness”, “morality”, and “love”. In this way, Havel keeps constructing the Czech Self around a ‘moral’ or value-based core, asserting what some would call an ‘altruistic’ base of Human Nature, which should be followed praxeologically through Civil Society – opposing Klaus’ view of society and morality as ‘results’ of spontaneous individual agency.

As we saw during the analysis of the 1993-97 phase, Klaus is an eager advocate for representative democracy, clearly defined ‘standard’ political parties, etc. – a posture referred to by Havel in this phase:

To rely on the capability of the central state authorities or of central political bodies to always decide beforehand what is best, and what needs to be done and how, means to identify power with truth and to grant power a patent on reason. We know, or should know, what the result is of such an identification of power with the “reason of history”: It is a general decline. (...) If we

<sup>291</sup> E.g. discussion aired on Česká televize (*Czech Television*) on 25 May 1994. Reprinted in English in V. Havel, V. Klaus & Petr Pithart: *Rival Visions*, in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1996. For a more hostile Klaus-attack on the concept, see Václav Klaus: *Liberty and the Rule of Law*, speech published in Edwin J. Feulner Jr. (ed.): *Leadership for America – The Principles of Conservatism*, Spence Publishing Company, Dallas, 2000

<sup>292</sup> Speech by Václav Havel on the occasion of "Václav Havel's Civil Society Symposium", Macalester College, Minneapolis, U.S.A., 26 April 1999.



want freedom, we must grant the right of existence also to that which constitutes its natural product, its expression and its actual fulfillment; that is, to civil society.«<sup>293</sup>

Havel constructs Civil Society as a *natural* expression of freedom, thereby excluding the stance on 'individual freedom' adopted by Klaus as a radical Other, cf. the dichotomic character of the natural/artificial nexus. Thus, Klaus and the ODS is again represented as a radical, inferior Other, while the breeding of Civil Society should be the praxeological response.<sup>294</sup>

Altogether, the politics of ODS and Václav Klaus is in this phase seen as a radical, inferior Other, giving rise to a praxeology of creating a societal environment stimulating to Civil Society.

#### *The European Union as a Similar Other*

In his speech to the Czech Parliament in December 1997, Havel unmistakably identifies the Czech Republic with Europe, which he describes as "our continent" of which the Czech lands are its "very center".<sup>295</sup> At times though, belonging to Europe is also considered a chance of the Future, linked to membership of the EU and NATO:

»The Czech Republic - a small country in the very centre of Europe that has always been a cross-roads of different geopolitical interests - has, for the first time ever, a chance to become truly, firmly, and securely established on the European political scene. (...) Our principal anchors will be constituted by our future membership in the European Union, as well as by our future membership in the North Atlantic Alliance, which is no less important.«<sup>296</sup>

Membership of EU and NATO are seen as options of becoming "truly" European, and accordingly, both of these institutions are installed as similar, superior Others, featuring a more certain *political* Europeanness than the concept of Europe itself. The praxeology, then, is some form of assimilation to EU and NATO in order to obtain membership.

NATO membership was granted to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic in March 1999, while negotiations of membership of the EU commenced in December 1999. In February 2000, in a speech before the European Parliament, Havel associates the expansion of

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<sup>293</sup> Speech by Václav Havel on the occasion of "Václav Havel's Civil Society Symposium", Macalester College, Minneapolis, U.S.A., 26 April 1999.

<sup>294</sup> Note that Havel actually turns Klaus' argument upside down in the sense that Klaus' negative stance against the state "deciding beforehand what is best" is repeated as an evil – but the praxeology is the opposite: Civil society should be bred by the state to avoid a too-powerful state.

<sup>295</sup> Address by Václav Havel before the Members of Parliament, Prague, 9 December 1997.

<sup>296</sup> Address by Václav Havel before the Members of Parliament, Prague, 9 December 1997.

the EU to the praxeological requirement of a building of a Civil Society in the Czech Republic and elsewhere in the Post-Communist area:

»In the Western, that is the Euro-American, world of today, a richly structured, open and decentralised civil society, which is based on a confidence in the abilities of citizens and of their various communities, constitutes the foundation of the democratic State and a guarantee of its political stability. If the European Union is to enlarge, in the foreseeable future, by taking in the new democracies - which, to my mind, is in its vital interest - it is very important, if not most important of all, that it helps to restore and develop civil society in those countries.«<sup>297</sup>

Havel extrapolates his domestic concern for the vision of a Civil Society onto a European, and even Western scale. The EU is installed as *having* a civil society (as a part of the “Western”/“Euro-Atlantic world”), and therefore it comes to stand out as a role model for the Czech Republic. Simultaneously, Havel sees the EU as having a part of the responsibility for the building of a Civil Society in the applicant countries. This is one aspect in which the EU is a crystal clear similar and superior Other.

The praxeology towards this similar Other of the Western institutions is first of all to achieve membership. This should serve to consolidate the Europeanness of the Post-Communist countries and encourage the building of a Civil Society in the Czech Republic.

### *Summing Up*

Havel's Others of the Czech Republic in the 1998-2000 phase are depicted in Table 7.1. As will be apparent, these are nominally the same images as in the phase of 1993-97.

In this phase, Havel does not make use of any less-than-radical Others, since the Klaus/ODS Other has been radicalized in comparison with the former analytical phase. The ODS scandal of 1997 might be one event triggering this radicalization, since Havel virtually accuses Klaus' for corruptive actions by associating him to 'power intoxication'. Even if the rhetoric towards Klaus was already on the rim of a radical Ontology in 1993-1997, it got the last impetus in 1998-2000, in which it is also possible to construe this Other as an associated element of the Communist Other.

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<sup>297</sup> Address by Václav Havel before the Members of the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 16 February 2000.

OTHERS	Associated elements	Ontology	Axiology	Praxeology
Communism	Totalitarianism Post-Communist Morass	Radical	Inferior	Civil Society
Klaus/ODS	Communism Weak state Power intoxication	Radical	Inferior	Civil Society Value-based state
European Union	Europe The West NATO Solid Civil Society	Similar	Superior	Membership

Table 7.1 Václav Havel 1998-2000. Constitutive Others of the Czech Republic.

The praxeologies towards these Others are the following:

- The conditions for a functioning Civil Society should be laid down politically to avoid the risk of demoralization of the state apparatus (corruption) and to strengthen democracy as such.
- Efforts to join the EU should continue, since the EU is a catalyst for the development of a Civil Society and a confirmation of the Europeaness of the Czech Republic. NATO membership was another praxeological objective – as mentioned before, this was attained by March 1999.

#### HAVEL 1998-2000: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE

In this section, we shall see how Havel constructs a European Self against the same triad of Others as he did in the 1993-97 phase – that is the Cold War, Russia and North America.

##### *The Cold War as a Radical Other*

A major radical Other of Europe in Havel's configuration, is Europe's own history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

»Europe was hit by the plague of various forms of Fascism and later by Nazism, which the European democracies failed to stand up to in time and which developed into the unprecedented horrors of the Second World War. This bitter era culminated in decades of Communism and a divided Europe.«<sup>298</sup>

<sup>298</sup> Address by Václav Havel on the Czech National Day, Prague Castle, 28 October, 1998.

In a similar way similar to what we have seen in the two former phases, the historical Cold War division of Europe is categorized as ontologically radical. This is further sustained by the following statement:

»There is only one Europe, despite its diversity, and any weightier occurrence anywhere in this area will have consequences and repercussions throughout the rest of the continent. Nowadays, Europe - as the single political entity that it is has a chance that it has never had before in its long and eventful history: A chance to build, for itself, a truly fair order, based on the principles of peace, equality and cooperation of all. Not force employed by the more powerful against the less powerful, but a general understanding, or consensus of all (...) should be the source of the European order and of European stability in the coming millennium, and when I say "European" in this context, I naturally mean "pan-European".<sup>299</sup>

Europe is constructed as *one* entity ("pan European"), even if there are also many differences among its elements. What is excluded here is the era when "the more powerful" used force against "the less powerful". This, of course, refers to the hegemonic role of the superpowers in the aftermath of World War II and during the Cold War, associated to the "divided Europe", and this construal installs the era as a radical Other, which is axiologically inferior, since it is an undesirable situation. This is underpinned by the fact that Havel elsewhere repeats his image of the Cold War as imposing an 'artificial' division, thereby installing the unity of Europe's as 'natural'.<sup>300</sup> Thus, Europe is constructed as a natural (and therefore 'good') 'whole', and consequentially, the praxeology is European Unification.

This Self-image of the united Europe draws on the assertion of a long, unbroken European history:

»What exactly is that which defines Europe? Most important of all is probably its cultural and spiritual demarcation. Europe is an area in which various sources - primarily Classical civilization, Judaism and Christianity - merged in a remarkable way to form one historical current.«<sup>301</sup>

The "one historical current" of Europe is thus seen as a cultural and spiritual community deriving from different historical (civilizational and religious) sources, which at least indirectly links to the community of values asserted in the 1993-97 phase.<sup>302</sup>

<sup>299</sup> Address by Václav Havel before the Members of the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 16 February 2000.

<sup>300</sup> Speech delivered by Václav Havel at the occasion of the 10th anniversary of *Gazeta Wyborcza* and the award of the "First Decade Prize", Warsaw, Poland, May 15th, 1999

<sup>301</sup> Address by Václav Havel to the French Senate, Paris, 3 March 1999.

<sup>302</sup> Another example of Havel's construction of Europe as a historical community of values: "Europe (...) can begin to live more economically and more modestly, rededicate itself - in accordance with the best in its spiritual traditions - to honouring the higher order of the uni-

To sum up, in this phase the Cold War remains a radical Other constituting a Self of an undivided Europe, which is seen as a historical community of values, asserting a praxeology of pursuing the goal of European Unification

*Russia as a Less-than-Radical Other*

Havel also continues to use the 'Euro-Atlantic' value community and the vast 'Euro-Asian power' as two major orientation points of Europe. As we have seen before, the term 'Euro-Asian' is used to designate an entity, which does *not* encompass Europe, namely Russia. In a speech in Warsaw in 1998, Havel talks about "the great Euro-Asian power, which is, and has always been, the Russian Federation",<sup>303</sup> thereby instating Russia as an eternal 'power'. In Canada in 1999, Havel repeats this image:

»When NATO offers Russia its hand in partnership, it does so on the assumption that there are two large and equal entities: the Euro-Atlantic world and a vast Euro-Asian power. These two entities can, and must, extend their hands to each other and cooperate (...). But they can do this only when they are conscious of their own identities; in other words, when they know where each of them begins and ends. Russia has had some difficulty with that in its entire history, and it is obviously carrying this problem with it into the present world in which the question of delimitation is no longer about nation-states but about regions or spheres of culture and civilization. Yes, Russia has a thousand things that link it with the Euro-Atlantic world or the so-called West; but, it also has a thousand things which differ from the West.«<sup>304</sup>

Russia is excluded from the Euro-Atlantic World and installed once again as a *power* (as opposed to a Euro-Atlantic *World*, which in Havel's universe *does* encompasses Europe), linking it to the realm of the Cold War discourse, though it is not seen as a direct threat. Thus, Russia is yet again ontologically constructed as a less-than-radical Other. Moreover, Havel lets Russia retain its position as 'its own', separate entity, which is axiologically inferior, since it does not recognize its own sphere of identity. The praxeology is to establish a "partnership" (and not integration in any form) with the Russian Federation.

In May 2000, Havel made a speech in Prague at a public hearing on Chechnya. Somewhat patronizing, he states:

"Russia is facing the great task of defining itself, of finding its own identity (...) this is indeed a great task. We can help Russia fulfill this task solely by expressing our thought concerning its ac-

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verse, as something that transcends us; and, to honouring the moral order as a product thereof." (Address by Václav Havel before the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 16 February 2000).

<sup>303</sup> Speech at the University of Warsaw March 10, 1998.

<sup>304</sup> Address to the Senate and the House of Commons of the Parliament of Canada, Ottawa, 29 April 1999.

tions. We will not help it in the least by treating it as a leper deserving special care, to whom we must turn a blind eye. (...) I believe that we cannot be oblivious to the deaths of innocent people, and I do not mean exclusively the civilian population in Chechnya. I also mean the Russian soldiers who are being driven by someone into a senseless slaughterous war.”<sup>305</sup>

This is a sophisticated way of othering the actions of Russia in the course of the Chechen conflict. Here, the construction of Russia – at least in this specific situation – surpasses the boundary of the radical Other by radicalizing the “someone”, who drives the Russian soldiers “into a senseless, slaughterous war”. Even if Havel states that he can “help” Russia by stating his opinion, it seems like a rather tart remark, which has a demeaning sound to it. Indeed, Russia is once again constructed as an axiologically inferior entity.

In this phase, then, Russia lurks on the brink of the radical Other, but it would be an overstatement to conclude that Russia is *generally* seen as a radical Other in relation to Post-Communist Europe. In sum, therefore, Russia is seen as a less-than-radical Other, which is clearly inferior. The praxeology is one of cooperation with, and assimilation of, Russia.

#### *North America as a Similar Other*

The distinction between the Euro-Atlantic (or ‘Euro-American’<sup>306</sup>) and the Euro-Asian spheres is significant in the sense that Europe seems to more a part of the Euro-Atlantic one. Thus, Havel closely associates Europe with North America:

»[I]n the world of today human lives, human rights, human dignity and the freedom of nations (...) are, unfortunately, still being threatened, and collective defence of the democratic states of the Euro-Atlantic sphere of civilization, therefore, still remains a valid concept. It is merely necessary to identify all the new types of dangers and to learn to effectively resist them. It is my hope that this meeting will help us to advance in this direction, and will thus add strength to the idea of an equitable peace, that is, peace founded not on a violation of humanity but, on the contrary, on respect for human rights and liberties.«<sup>307</sup>

“Violations of humanity” are seen as a threat here, while the “Euro-Atlantic sphere of civilization” is seen as a remedy to meet this threat. It is associated to “respect for human rights and liberties”. As shown in the section on Russia, the ontology of North America is that of a similar other, while the praxeology is Europe’s involvement in NATO:

<sup>305</sup> Address by Václav Havel at the Conclusion of a Public Hearing on The Violation of Human Rights in Chechnya, 26 May 2000.

<sup>306</sup> Speech at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Geneva, 16 March 1998; Address to the European Parliament, 16 February 2000.

<sup>307</sup> Address at the Commemorative Event of NATO’s 50th Anniversary, Mellon Auditorium, Washington D.C., U.S.A., 23 April 1999.

“A Europe of peace and cooperation is simply unthinkable without a system of collective defence, and NATO is the only institution that can provide for this kind of defence at present.”<sup>308</sup>

Even though Havel has aspirations of pan-European unification in the long run, Havel still sees NATO as the best way of defending the “European” values (it is presently “unthinkable” without NATO).

One might assert that North America, in this representation, is merely an implicit similar Other, since it is really the ‘Euro-Atlantic’ entity, which is constructed. Nevertheless, I have chosen to let it remain the label of this main Other, since it still represents the *different* element in the common North American/European – Euro-American – entity.

### *Summing up*

Table 7.2 sums up the three Others located in Havel’s discourse on Europe from 1998-2000, which are identical to the Others of the 1993-97 phase (the Cold War, Russia, and North America).

Václav Havel is still opting for a pan-European community, defined against the amicable civilizational link that associates Europe with North America (as a similar Other joining Europe in the common Euro-Atlantic ‘World’), and against the Euro-Asian ‘power’ of Russia (as a less-than-radical Other). Matching the former phase, these two non-radical Others constitute a chain of identity with the Cold War as the underlying radical Other.

OTHERS	Associated elements	Ontology	Axiology	Praxeology
The Cold War	Divided Europe Communism	Radical	Inferior	Unification
Russia	Euro-Asian	Less-than-Radical	Inferior	Cooperation Assimilation of Russia
North America	NATO Euro-Atlantic	Similar	Equal	Alliance through NATO

Table 7.2 Václav Havel 1998-2000. Constitutive Others of Europe.

Consequently, the praxeologies following from these images are also similar to those of the 1993-97 phase:

- Unification of Europe – as a political and value-based community with a strong Civil Society. So to speak, Europe should ‘return to itself’ by finding its own basic values.

<sup>308</sup> Address by Václav Havel before the Members of Parliament, Prague, 9 December 1997.

- Formal partnership with Russia without direct alliance in respect of the Russian Self and the difference in values.
- Alliance with North America (through NATO) for the protection of common values.

#### **HAVEL 1998-2000: SUMMING UP**

Havel's Self-images of the Czech Republic and Europe are shown in Table 7.3.

The image of the Czech Republic is less focused on the resource of the Good Past/Good Traditions seen earlier. Instead, the Communist Other, which triggered the emergence of these historical resources, is joining the Other of Klaus in the constitution of the discourses of Civil Society, democracy, and the value-based state.

<b>Self-Entity (ID nodal point)</b>	<b>Elements of the Self</b>	<b>Others (ontology/axiology)</b>
Czech Republic	Civil Society/Democracy Value-based State Europe	Communism (radical/inferior) Klaus/ODS (radical/inferior) European Union/NATO (similar/equal)
Europe	Unitary community of values Euro-Atlantic civilization	Cold War (radical/inferior) Russia (Less-than-radical/inferior) North America (similar/equal)

*Table 7.3 Václav Havel 1998-2000. Self-images of the Czech Republic and Europe.*

The image of the present Czech Republic is one of great apprehension (as put on view by the amount of internal Others, such as the element of the Post-Communist Morass), while the *vision* of the Czech Republic is that of a 'good' society, which is best established through the concept of Civil Society, constructed in opposition to Communism and Klaus.

The image of Europe is practically identical to the 1993-97 image: Havel's articulation of Europe is an undivided community of shared values and a common history, constructed against the radical Other of the Cold War. Furthermore, the European Self is still established in a chain of identities with North America as a similar Other joining up with Europe in the Euro-Atlantic civilization, Russia as the less-than-radical Other, and the Cold War as the fundamental radical Other.



## VÁCLAV KLAUS 1998-2000

The coalition agreement with the Zeman government made it possible for Václav Klaus to bring himself back to a highly visible public position as chairman of the parliament.

### KLAUS 1998-2000: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

In this final phase, Klaus constructs the Czech Republic against one main Other: Communism. The Other of the EU, which we saw in the 1993-97 phase, is still present – only this time, it appears to be thoroughly associated to the main Other of Communism and its web of present anti-market elements, and it seems logical to deal with it under this label.

#### *Communism as a Radical Other*

As will become apparent below, the Other of Communism is at least latently present in most of Klaus' rhetorical construction of his views. Just like in the earlier phases, it is woven into a web of current associated Others, but it stands out as a main structuring reference point in this web. An example could be present policies involving governmental regulation of the economy, which are generally ousted and compared directly to the Communist Past:

»Regulation is for today's socialists what public ownership of the means of production and central planning were for their fathers and grandfathers half a century ago. Regulation is continuing to dangerously grow. (...). Most of us have the feeling now that there is far too much policy and regulation around already.«<sup>309</sup>

"Socialism" and "regulation" are seen as "dangerously" growing and thereby excluded as radical and inferior Others in a chain of equivalence that includes the Communist Past as well. This type of equating is taken a step further when Klaus, lecturing at the Heritage Foundation in April 2000, spells out a long row of concrete elements representing the current inheritors of Communism:

»The developed countries in Europe and North America have become suddenly dominated by socialist governments; by new methods of and arguments for government intervention; by myriads of regulations, controls, and prohibitions; by fashionable speculations about "Third Ways"; by fantasies about liberalism (in its European meaning) "with a human face"; by seductive slo-

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<sup>309</sup> Speech by Václav Klaus at the National Center for Policy Analysis, 16 April 1999. The argument is repeated (virtually unaltered) in Klaus' lecture at the Heritage Foundation at 22 April - published as "Liberty and the Rule of law" (Klaus 2000).

gans of communitarianism; by fallacies of environmentalism; and the like. Liberty and free markets are faced with insidious threats (...).«<sup>310</sup>

The Third Way is once again subject to Klaus' assault. The main part of Europe and North American governments are all lumped together and typecast as "socialist". The project of "liberalism with a human face" is a "fantasy", "communitarianism" provides "seductive slogans", and "environmentalism" produces "fallacies". They are radical Others as they seen as "insidious threats" towards Klaus' liberalist discourse, and even more of a threat than Communism (which is 'safer' since it is confined to the Past). This chain of equivalence integrates not only the Communist Other in an abstract sense, but also the more concretely founded Other of the EU or 'the West'.<sup>311</sup> In this phase, Klaus explicitly names the persons representing such ideas.

»I agree with one of the few of French liberals (in the European sense) Pascal Salin that "we are not the winners of the present time. So far the victory is that of social democracy". He is right. He sees Mr. Clinton, Mr. Blair, Mr. Jospin, Mr. Schroeder, Mr. Prodi (the new Mr. Europe) and I see Mr. Zeman and Mr. Havel in my own country. They all belong to the same club, at least implicitly. The "Third Way" ideas are here again, and I have to repeat my well-known phrase that was made in January 1990: "The third way is the fastest way to the third world."«<sup>312</sup>

The radical and inferior Other of the Third Way is linked to a selection of mainly Western political leaders, including EU chairman Roberto Prodi, who is ridiculed as "Mr. Europe", unambiguously dragging the EU into the realm of the Communist radical Other. Moreover, Klaus explicitly refers to Havel, who is incorporated in this ontology of the radical Other together with PM Miloš Zeman.<sup>313</sup> They are accompanied by elements such as "Socialism", "Regulation", "Environmentalism", and "Communitarianism"<sup>314</sup>, all qualifying as Others in their own sense, but thoroughly interrelated around the common discursive root of the Communist Other.

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<sup>310</sup> Lecture by Václav Klaus at The Heritage Foundation, Philadelphia, PA, 22 April, 1999. Published as "Liberty and the Rule of law" (Klaus 2000).

<sup>311</sup> Klaus is increasingly renowned for being a "Euroskeptic" in the sense that he occasionally utters harsh criticism towards the EU. For instance, Klaus has warned that "the Czech Republic could dissolve in the EU like a sugar cube in coffee" (quoted in Pehe 1999), obviously drawing on the discourse of the nation state and 'national interests'.

<sup>312</sup> Address by Václav Klaus at the Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research, Boston, MA, 21 April 1999 (retrieved from <http://www.ceip.org/files/Publications/webnote6.asp>).

<sup>313</sup> In practice, however, Zeman seems to be his political co-conspirator through the coalition agreement.

<sup>314</sup> In a speech at the National Center for Policy Analysis, 16 April 1999 (<http://www.ncpa.org/press/transcript/klaustrs.html>), Klaus conducts a radical othering of communitarianism by using the metaphorical comparison with a "virus" and linking it with "demagogy" and "romanticism". In the same instance Klaus associates communitarianism to Havel's idea of a civil society (even if Klaus labels it "civic society"), and by installing the threat of a "brave new world, which some of us know from our own experience", he connects this element to the overall Other of the totalitarian, Communist era.

Thus, this chain of what we again might call ‘regulatory’ Others, centered around the element of Communism, has a radical ontology and an inferior axiology, while the unspoken praxeology is that of dissimilating political action from these dangers, and to introduce Klaus’ version of liberalism and the free market. A final significant element of this constellation of Others is “environmentalism”. Speaking in the US in April 1999, Klaus make the following statement:

»Environmentalism with its “Earth First!” arguments represents these days “Leviathan Two” (...) menace which may be more dangerous than old socialism. (...) Environmentalists suppose that (...) the government has to step in. We know, on the contrary, that we have to enforce property rights and introduce price signals as the only way out.«<sup>315</sup>

The arguments of “environmentalists” are radicalized by comparing it to Thomas Hobbes’ Leviathan, articulating it as a threat greater than “socialism”, and linking it to Other of Political Regulation. The axiology of this image is once again inferior, since it is “dangerous” and thus intrinsically unwanted. The praxeology is to refrain from following the environmentalists. Instead, one should choose the path of Klaus’ own econometric discourse by introducing “price signals”.

### *Summing up*

As shown in Table 7.4, the magnitude of radical and inferior Others establishing Klaus’ image of the Czech Self in this phase are all structured by relations to the core element of Communism. Klaus does not hesitate to equate present political phenomena to the Communist Past - a main resource for radicalizing the Other of present Political Regulation. In this phase, even the institutions of the EU cannot be singled out as an Other in its own right, but is unambiguously equated to the elements of regulation, state intervention etc. deriving from the Communist Other.

OTHERS	Associated elements	Ontology	Axiology	Praxeology
Communism	Regulation Third Way Communitarianism Environmentalism Civil Society/Havel European Union	Radical	Inferior	Deregulation Free market

Table 7.4. Václav Klaus 1998-2000. Constitutive Others of the Czech Republic.

<sup>315</sup> Speech by Václav Klaus at the National Center for Policy Analysis, 16 April 1999 (retrieved from <http://www.ncpa.org/press/transcript/klaustrs.html>).

The elements of the Communist Other are primarily radicalized by securitizing the Other of Political Regulation vis-à-vis the 'free', spontaneous individual.

Not unlike the situation in the former period, the praxeological dimension towards Communism comprises

- the pursuit of the 'capitalist' or 'liberal' way, and thinking of society in general as a 'market', which spontaneously creates societal groupings etc.
- keeping the 'threatening' elements of the radical and inferior Other of Political Regulation on a safe distance by avoiding political intervention in the economy and assuring individual freedom.

#### **KLAUS 1998-2000: THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE**

Václav Klaus's construction of Europe is not very different from the former phase. Thus, we find the European Self-image established through the radical difference to the two images of Political Regulation and European Unification.

##### *Political Regulation as an Other*

While the EU in 1998 was preoccupied with both deepening (by drafting the Amsterdam Treaty) and widening (by preparing the eastward enlargement) the institutionalized process of European integration, Klaus looks upon these processes in a highly skeptical way. Such processes

»do not represent the true interests, dreams and ambitions of the European citizens. They are – both of them – more or less in the interest of only one rent-seeking group, the group of European bureaucrats, who are and will be the only net beneficiaries of both processes. There is – at the same time – no “concentrated” group in Europe, which could play the role of a countervailing power. With an uninvolved and indifferent majority of Europeans, who live in a nirvana of unconsciousness of what is going on (...), a small minority can have a decisive power.«<sup>316</sup>

The current efforts of European integration are seen as connected to the “bureaucrats”, who are portrayed as having a (illegitimate) special interest in the process. Since there is no other group that is able to countervail this special interest (partly due to an alleged common ignorance among the citizens of the Union), the bureaucrats – and by them, the

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<sup>316</sup> Speech by Václav Klaus at the National Center for Policy Analysis, 16 April 1999 (retrieved from <http://www.ncpa.org/press/transcript/klaustrs.html>). An almost identical phrasing can be found in Klaus (1999).

EU-system – are installed as a *threat*, and therefore as a radical and inferior Other. A discursive kinship to the Other of the Third Way and the web of non-capitalist Others is evident when he continues:

»The same decisive minority has no interest in the only European project which is worth of being done – in redefining Europe along classical liberal ideas, in dismantling “soziale Marktwirtschaft” (social market economy), in breaking down paternalism and corporativism flourishing these days in Western Europe more than in any other part of the world.«<sup>317</sup>

Thus, the “decisive minority” (itself a negative statement) of the European political processes is associated to “social market economy”, while the only worthy European project is that of introducing “classic liberal ideas” (free markets without state interference), which once again represents the praxeological dimension of Klaus’ construction of Europe. The radical ontology discredits European leaders favoring “paternalism” and “corporativism”, which hinders the evolution of Klaus’ ‘real’ Europe.

#### *Unification as an Other*

The ‘liberal’ Europe is also constructed against European Unification, in a way which is less directly associated to the Other of Political Regulation. Klaus states his opposition against a political union in Europe, which he sees as an inevitable consequence of the monetary union.

»I am convinced of the inevitability of the following path: monetary union ◉ fiscal union ◉ political union (...). And the justified question is: Do we really want a political union? (...) The existence of a monetary union without a political union means that countries delegate monetary policy to a supranational agency. It can be neutral only on condition that there is a unified economic interest. It is, however a very problematic assumption when we look at the current European heterogeneity. (...) I am convinced that Europe doesn’t need unification but a liberal order.«<sup>318</sup>

The “unions” and “supranational” agencies are singled out as Others. The ontology is radical for the reason that Klaus makes use of a strict dichotomic view on the possibilities of a European ‘project’ – he is “convinced” that it is *either* a liberal “Order” *or* Unification, a view that he also expressed in the 1993-97 phase. The praxeology is to establish a liberal order, build on a “unified economic interest.”

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<sup>317</sup> Speech by Václav Klaus at the National Center for Policy Analysis, 16 April 1999 (retrieved from <http://www.ncpa.org/press/transcript/klaustrs.html>).

<sup>318</sup> Václav Klaus: *The Current European Challenge: The View from Prague*, Kieler Vorträge, Neue Folge, No. 126, Institut für Weltwirtschaft an der Universität Kiel, 23 August 1999.

Again, this also has some roots in the distinction between the national and the supranational aspects of European integration:

»As is well-known, monetary union in Europe was created without the prior existence of a political and fiscal union. I do not believe it can bring a stable solution; it will either collapse, which I do not expect, or will require transforming the EU into a political and fiscal union. (...) Euro-land is not a nation. It has no president, no congress, no treasury department. It has only a common central bank, which is not enough. I am afraid that the Maastricht Eintopf (...) is not the American melting pot-which, in the meantime, has ceased to exist-and that it can bring about a new wave of instability and can increase a European democratic deficit. I take it very seriously.«<sup>319</sup>

The EU, *not* being a “nation”, is seen as inadequate for creating a monetary Union (the EMU). On the Other hand, the EU *should not* be a nation, and therefore the supranational Euro-project is seen as a radical Other that inevitably leads to a “political and fiscal union”, which could create “instability”. Hence, Klaus again draws on the rhetorical practice of representing the EU project either as a march towards a traditional, federal state or as a body of mere cooperation between sovereign states. The image of the nation states (and their sovereignty) being *threatened* by European integration is a widely heard argument from politicians that manifesting themselves as opposing the EU and/or its policies.<sup>320</sup>

### *Summing up*

Very similar to the 1993-97 phase, Klaus constructs Europe in opposition to a row of radically different elements associated to the main Other of Political Regulation. This includes the familiar associated elements of the Third Way, Socialism, ‘bureaucracy’, and all that. A second main Other is European Unification, which also in this phase is articulated through a ‘nation vs. Europe’ discourse and through a link to the Other of Political Regulation. These images are summed up in Table 7.5.

OTHERS	Associated elements	Ontology	Axiology	Praxeology
Political regulation	Bureaucracy Socialism	Radical	Inferior	Free market Individual freedom
Unification	Regulation Supranationalism	Radical	Inferior	Europe of nation states

Table 7.5 Václav Klaus 1998-2000. Constitutive Others of Europe.

<sup>319</sup> Lecture by Václav Klaus at The Heritage Foundation, Philadelphia, PA, 22 April, 1999. Published as “Liberty and the Rule of law” (Klaus 2000).

<sup>320</sup> Using this same type of ‘Nation vs. Europe’ discourse, Klaus repeats the exclusion of the EMU and political unification in Europe, when praising the Danes for voting no to joining the EMU at the referendum in September 2000 (Václav Klaus: Dánské referendum řeklo EURU ne! [“The Danes Said No to the Euro”], article retrieved in Czech from [www.ods.cz](http://www.ods.cz), dated 6 October 2000).

On the praxeological dimension, this results in two basic means for dealing with these Others:

- Introducing a 'liberal' (=liberalistic, free market, capitalist) order among the European states.
- Avoiding a political unification of Europe, while preserving the European nation states in a capitalist environment.

#### **KLAUS 1998-2000: SUMMING UP**

Table 7.6 sums up the Self-images constructed by Václav Klaus in the years 1998-2000. It is obvious that Klaus – no matter whether he is articulating the space of the Czech Republic or that of Europe – speaks almost exclusively within a free market discourse constructed against elements of political Regulation and (as regards Europe) the related Other of Unification.

<b>Self-Entity (ID nodal point)</b>	<b>Elements of the Self</b>	<b>Others (ontology/axiology)</b>
Czech Republic	Market Free individuals	Communism (radical/inferior)
Europe	Liberal Order (market) Deregulation Sovereign Nation States	Political Regulation (radical/inferior) Unification (radical/inferior)

*Table 7.6 Václav Klaus 1998-2000. Self-images of the Czech Republic and Europe.*

This corresponds almost perfectly to the Self-images of the 1993-97 phase: The ideal Czech Self is generally constructed as a free market and a society of free individuals in a politically deregulated sphere of 'spontaneous' action. Klaus' European Self includes this element of freedom and the free market, but the tension between Europe, and the discourse of the nation state stated through the Other of Unification, establishes an additional element of 'Europe of Nations' as opposed to supranational efforts. Europe, in Klaus' construction, is a non-political community.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS 1998-2000**

In this phase too, Václav Havel and Václav Klaus only agree on the construction of one image, Communism, which is in both cases seen as a radical Other of the Czech Republic.

Like in the two former phases, the difference between the two, lies in the elements that each of them associates to this main Other, and the contract Self-images resulting from these constellations: Whereas the Communist Other for Havel is excluded to establish a vision of Civil Society and 'the good state', it is discredited by Klaus in order to emphasize the vision of a Free Market as opposed to central Political Regulation.

During the first two phases considered in this thesis, Klaus (with one peripheral exception only) made use of mere radical Other(s) when constructing his visionary identity of 'capitalism with no adjectives', and this late period is no exception. The ontology of both the Czech Republic and Europe are exclusively radical and the axiology exclusively inferior. As a result, Klaus produces rather clear images of the Other, thereby installing a reasonably unambiguous Self-image linked to the free market, spontaneity, and the like.

For Havel, in contrast, the Czech Republic is no longer constructed against a less-than-radical Other as was the case in the two former phases. The radicalization of the image of Klaus means that Havel's Self-image of the Czech Republic seems to be constructed in a more absolute way in this phase, though he still operates with a similar ontology as regards the European and 'Western' institutions. Havel's image of Europe is still the 'usual' chain of identity – and actually identical to that of the former phase.

Klaus' speeches and writings seem to be variations over the same basic discursive themes as earlier: He keeps constructing his Self-images of the Czech Republic and Europe as matching a discourse of a liberalistic society against a web of Others associated to Communism and Political Regulation. Havel does not change his basic concepts much either: He maintains the same basic discourse of values and morality as a core element in his Self-images. Altogether, there seems to be a dual picture of regulation as a political means: Either regulation is a positive option to *create* freedom (Havel) or it represents a *threat* to freedom (Klaus).



## 8 CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

In the last three chapters, we have seen how Václav Havel and Václav Klaus have constructed various Self-images of Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic and Europe during the last decade. In this chapter, I will compare the results from each of the three analytical phases (1989-92, 1993-97, and 1998-2000). This account is for the most part descriptive in relation to empirical findings. Further reflections on the results will appear in Chapter 9 (Conclusion).

The positive configuration of Self-images has changed remarkably little since 1989. In all three phases, Havel constructs the Czech Self as a historical community with Good Traditions of 'truth', 'democracy', and 'humanism'. Likewise, he sees Europe as an ancient, unitary community of values and culture. Klaus, in contrast, constructs both entities as communities of 'free individuals' with a multitude of values and interests acting in a free market. Thus, the core Self-images of both Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic and Europe have been rather stable in the period considered here. But what about the relational *construction* of these entities? I shall now turn to a comparison between the constitutive Others utilized by Havel and Klaus to construct these entities in each of the three phases, and the policy suggestions (praxeologies) associated to these images of the Other.

Throughout the period 1989-2000, Havel has constructed the Czech Republic against Communism, the Soviet Union, Europe, Václav Klaus and his party (ODS), and the EU. Klaus, for his part, establishes his image of the Czech Republic mainly against Communism and a long chain of associated Others, which could be labeled Political Regulation (such as socialism, state intervention, Václav Havel's political visions, and even the EU system).

Europe is constructed by Havel against the Others of the Cold War, USSR, Russia, and North America, while Klaus' constitutive Others for Europe are Political Regulation and Unification.

These main Others all have associated elements, which changes only slightly during the period concerned. Such changes in associations will be mentioned below, when dealing

with the ontological, axiological and praxeological dimensions of the Others throughout the three phases.

### ONTOLOGY 1989-2000

#### *Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic*

The ontology of the various Others of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic in the three phases are depicted in Table 8.1.<sup>321</sup>

Actor	Other	1989-1992	1993-1997	1998-2000
Havel	Communism	+++	+++	+++
	Soviet Union	++	-	-
	Klaus/ODS	-	++	+++
	Europe/the West	+/=	-	-
	European Union	-	+	+
Klaus	Communism	+++	+++	+++
	European Union	-	+ / +++	-
= = Identity    +++ = Radical    ++ = Less-than-Radical    + = Similar → = associated as an element of... (dotted arrow signifies partial association)				

Table 8.1. Developments in the ontology of the Other of Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic.

Constructing the Czech Republic, Havel and Klaus agree that Communism (whatever associated) is a radical Other and remains so during all three phases.

For Havel, the Soviet Union acts as a less-than-radical Other in the first phase. A quite logical explanation for this would be that Soviet domination was very present in the mind of Czechoslovak politicians at that time, and that this contributed to a psychological need of making up with the past relation between the two countries. In relation to this, it is striking that Russia does *not* replace the Soviet Union as a constituting Other of the Czech Republic after the collapse of the Union in 1991.

From 1989-1992, Havel identifies Czechoslovakia with Europe, but in part Europe is also a similar Other to the Self, when portrayed as the ideal, superior role model whose attrib-

<sup>321</sup> The arrows signify how one main Other is integrated as an associated element in another main Other in the following phase, and consequently the former cease to stand out as an independent Other. A dotted arrow signifies a *partial* such association, coupling the two main Others in the following phase.

utes are worth striving for.<sup>322</sup> This image vanishes as the Czech Republic from the second phase is increasingly defined as a *part* of Europe. The EU, representing a *formalized* Europeanness, takes over this role after 1993, and thus the basic notion of Europe becomes associated to this institution.

Klaus and ODS is presented as a less-than-radical Other in 1993-97, while this image is radicalized in 1998-2000 – very likely triggered by the financial scandal of the ODS in 1997. This radicalization in the last phase involves no direct *securitization* of Klaus, but it does in-state a partial association of Klaus with the Communist Other, the ultimate symbol of absolute difference in the Post-Communist context.

Likewise, Klaus includes *Havel's* political aspirations as an associated element of the Communist Other, and the self-established polarization between the two becomes very visible. In general, Klaus operates almost exclusively with associations to the core Communist Other when constructing Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. The sole (vague) exception is the dual image of the EU in the second phase. Here, Klaus sees the EU as a radical Other due to its traits of Political Regulation ('intervention', 'bureaucracy'), but also – to a lesser extent – as a similar, superior Other, since EU offers 'advantages.' As this similar dimension is abandoned in the last phase, EU becomes associated to the general Communist Other, since the 'regulatory' elements associated to it are almost identical to those associated to the Communism.

### *Europe*

Table 8.2 shows the ontology of the Others used by Havel and Klaus when constructing the image of Europe in each phase.<sup>323</sup> Here we find remarkably less shifts and changes. This time, none of the images are shared by the two political actors.

Whereas Klaus in the first phase does not produce any European Self-image at all, he retaliates in the second and the third phase, in which he produces a stable, unchanging image of Europe against a network of elements organized around Political Regulation and Unification, which are both radical Others.

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<sup>322</sup> Even if Havel's construction of the Czech Republic includes both a similar, a less-than-radical, and a radical image in each phase, they do not constitute any chain of identity since this would require each of the non-radical Others to be constituted against the more radical ones. Apparently, this is not the case here.

<sup>323</sup> The double line arrow signifies that when moving from one phase to another, the former main Other is replaced by a new one taking over its attributes and constitutive function. Consequently, the former ceases to stand out as an independent main Other.

In the case of Europe, Havel presents three main Others of Europe in each face, and in all instances, they constitute analogous chains of identity. The similar Other in this chain is North America, which is closely associated to what Havel calls the “Euro-American world” (or the like). The similar Other is, in turn, constructed against the ontologically less-than-radical “Euro-Asian power” (USSR/Russia), while both are constructed against the radical Other of the Cold War and the associated division of Europe.

Actor	Other	1989-1992	1993-1997	1998-2000
Havel	Cold War	+++	+++	+++
	Soviet Union	++	-	-
	Russia	-	++	++
	N. America	+	+	+
Klaus	Political Regulation	-	+++	+++
	Unification	-	+++	+++
+++ = Radical ++ = Less-than-Radical + = Similar $\Rightarrow$ = replaced by...				

Table 8.2. Developments in the ontology of the Other of Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic.

Thus, in contrast to the construction of the Czech Republic, the Soviet Other used by Havel in the first phase is replaced by Russia when constructing Europe in the second and third phases. The functional equivalence between USSR and Russia is striking: it takes up the same place in the chain of identity. This is sustained by the articulation of Russia as a *power*, indicating at least a slight kinship with the Cold War image.

### AXIOLOGY 1989-2000

Turning to the axiological dimension of the Other, it can be concluded that the analyses do not reveal any significant developments when considering the years from 1989-2000.

It is evident that similar Others such as ideals and role models are usually set up as superior, while the analyses reveals a stable picture of both the radical and the less-than-radical Other as *inferior*. To some degree Havel and Klaus installs an image of the Czech Republic and its ideals as superior. This is particularly obvious when Klaus in the 1993-97 phase generally portrays the Czech Republic (or at least its future) as a ‘model’ of capitalist reform. For Havel this situation is seen to a lesser extent in the image of the ‘Good’ Czech

traditions, which especially in the first phase is seen as the core of what the Czechs have to offer the world.

### PRAXEOLOGY 1989-2000

#### *Praxeologies towards the Others of Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic*

The praxeologies of Havel and Klaus towards the constitutive Others of Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic are summed up briefly in Table 8.3.

For Havel, both 1989-92 and 1993-97 offer a praxeology towards the Communist Other, which has a quite clear historical dimension – a pursuit of the good qualities in Czech and Czechoslovak “tradition”. In 1998-2000, there is less direct focus on this good Past, but more substantial talk of the virtues of Civil Society – the decentralized, societal involvement in politics and governance. The reason for this might be that Havel in this phase increasingly focuses on the *present* elements of Communism (the Post-Communist Morass), and that he rather calls for concrete measures to prevent them than merely following the ‘good’ historical examples. Again, the ODS scandal of 1997 and the unredeemed ‘myth of completed reform’ set forth by Klaus in the mid-90s are likely to have had some influence on this. This is sustained by the partial association of Klaus to the Communist Other.

	Other	1989-1992	1993-1997	1998-2000
Havel	Communism	Building the ‘good’ state	Building the ‘good’ state	Civil Society
	Soviet Union	Westward orientation	-	-
	Klaus/ODS	-	Civil Society Value based state	Civil society Value based state
	Europe	‘Return to Europe’	-	-
	EU/NATO	-	Membership	Membership
Klaus	Communism	Deregulation Free market	Deregulation Free market	Deregulation Free market
	European Union	-	Membership Resisting regulation	-

Table 8.3. Others of Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic. Development in Praxeologies 1989-2000.

Havel’s use of Europe as a similar Other of the Czech Republic in the 1989-92 phase is linked to a praxeology of ‘return’ to the European sphere. As Europe is very clearly a part of the Self in the following two phases, there is no longer any ‘Europe’ to which the Czechs could return. Except, that is, from the formal/political Europeanness of membership of the European Union (and, indeed, NATO), which take over the role of a similar, superior

Other – not least because the member states are set up as examples for a ‘functioning’ civil society. This reflects a decreasing focus on the Pan-European ambitions of the first phase (see below under Europe).

As for Klaus’ praxeologies, the path is very clear: The pursuit of a completely free market through deregulation (in Klaus’ words “capitalism without adjectives”) is the main strategy. This image is disturbed a bit, when Klaus, in the 1993-98 phase, indicates that membership of the EU will be an advantage in economical terms, while Klaus concurrently instates a radical image of the political union. In the last phase, Klaus virtually stops talking about EU-membership in positive terms. Instead, he associates the EU to the Communist Other, sustaining the image of Klaus as a ‘Euroskeptic’. This also links on to his construction of Europe as a loose community of separate nation states.

*Praxeologies towards the Others of Europe*

As shown in Table 8.4, the praxeology towards the Others of Europe is quite stable in the case of Klaus (that is, after a European Self-image is instated in 1993-97). Klaus invariably has two main goals: (1) preventing a political unification of Europe through consolidation of EU as a cooperation forum between independent states constructed against the Other of Unification, and (2) to have this cooperation be founded upon principles of the free market constructed against the Other of Political Regulation.

Actor/Entity	Other	1989-1992	1993-1997	1998-2000
Havel Europe	Cold War	Unification through CSCE	Unification	Unification
	Soviet Union	Partnership Assimilation of USSR	-	-
	Russia	-	Cooperation respecting different identities	Cooperation respecting different identities Assimilation of Russia
	N. America	Natural partnership	Alliance through NATO	Alliance through NATO
Klaus Europe	Political regulation	-	Free market Individual freedom	Free market Individual freedom
	Unification	-	Europe of nation states	Europe of nation states

Table 8.4. Others of Europe. Developments in Praxeologies 1989-2000.

In relation to Havel, the image is a bit more volatile. The Cold War Other is met by a praxeology of Pan-European Unification (as opposed to the Cold War *division*). In the first phase, however, Havel proposes that this unification preferably be carried under the aus-

pices of CSCE (now OSCE) and/or the Council of Europe, while the Cold War 'remnants', NATO and the Warsaw Pact, should be left to wither. The EU (then the EC) is seen as associated to Europe, but is not a part of any actual praxeology. From the second period on, the CSCE is no longer seen as the prime means of unification. Instead, NATO and the EU are seen as the core catalysts in this respect. Havel himself refers to this as a more 'realist' approach, and it is likely that his inexperience with the rather rigid procedures of international politics in the first phase has been substituted by a more pragmatic attitude.

Havel's praxeology of 'cooperation' towards the Soviet Other in the 1989-92 phase is identical to the Russian Other in the two later phases, and this substantiates the functional equality between these two Others asserted earlier in this chapter (see p. 124). Moreover, from 1993, the emphasis on Russia as a distinct identity vis-à-vis Europe results in an additional praxeological strategy of 'respecting' this entity *as its own*, thereby quite ironically stressing the *difference* to the European entity. Relating to the Russian involvement in Chechnya, the last phase also features a praxeology of assimilating Russia (or rather, its *government*) to the 'right' values.

The North American similar Other features a praxeological change from the first to the second phase. In the 1989-92 phase, the resemblance to North America should simply result in recognition of common values. Corresponding to the image of the Cold War, the element of NATO was, from 1993 on, coupled with the mediating identity of Euro-Atlantic community of values. From this phase, the praxeology to be followed in order to solidify and protect the common European and North American values, was an alliance with North America through NATO membership, which becomes part of the foundation on which a pan-European unification should be built.

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## 9 CONCLUSION

Concentrating on the period from 1989-2000, this thesis has presented an analysis of Václav Havel and Václav Klaus' discursive constructions of the Czech Republic (before 1993, Czechoslovakia) and Europe. Three parallel textual analyses have been conducted for three different phases of Post-Communist Czech politics: 1989-92, 1993-97, and 1998-2000. The results found during these analyses were continuously compared, and subjected to a more formal comparison in Chapter 8.

First, I shall briefly sum up the results of the analysis, i.e. the conclusions made on the Czech and European Self-images, and how they are constructed against different Others. Then I shall briefly reflect on basic categories utilized in these constructions, and subsequently I present some reflections on the implications for the Czech-European relations and the Czech political environment in general. Finally, I will address a few assessments of the theoretical and methodological approach of my thesis.

### THE CONSTRUCTION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA/CZECH REPUBLIC 1989-2000

Generally, the study has revealed that Havel and Klaus produce two different, but rather stable, Self-images of Czechoslovakia and Czech Republic after 1989.

Both Havel and Klaus refer to the Communist Past as a radical Other vis-à-vis Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic, and both associates this Communism to radically excluded elements of the Present. But the resulting Self-images they produce by using Communism as an Other are very different.

As constructed by Havel, The Czech Self-image is a historical and *value-based community*, which was halted during the Communism and presently threatened by the Bad Traits produced by this era. In the first analytical phase (1989-92), Václav Havel constructs Czechoslovakia as a country of 'good' historical traditions of 'humanism', 'truth', and 'democracy'. In the second phase (1993-1997), Havel appropriates this portrayal of Czechoslovak history for the new Czech Republic, instating a continuous identity between the two countries. Good Traditions should, in contrast to Communism and its legacy,



make way for a solid Civil Society of politically active citizens and communal values. In 1998-2000, Havel has comparatively more focus on the *vision* and the *concept* of Civil Society, than on its roots in Czech History – roots that are still there though, since the very concept is intertextually embedded in the writings of T. G. Masaryk and the dissidence movements.

Klaus, in contrast, employs the Communist Other when constructing the Czech Republic as a *community of free individuals*, a unit that should ideally adhere to the ‘spontaneous’ logic of a completely free market. This freedom is seen in contrast both to the past Communist rule and to the present forms of Political Regulation. The praxeology towards the Other is thus deregulation and the promotion of a ‘market economy without adjectives’, along with a ‘standard’ political system, which does not set up pre-constructed values for its citizens.

The Czech Republic is also constructed as inherently European, chiefly by Havel in the last two phases, when the Czechs no longer need to ‘*return* to Europe’, but to some extent also by Klaus in a matter-of-fact fashion. From 1993 on, the EU comes to represent an institutionalization of Europe, which is wanted by Havel, but increasingly criticized by Klaus for being anti-capitalist – and even equaled to Communist totalitarianism during the last phase.

The split-up of Czechoslovakia does not seem to influence the conception of the Past for either of the actors. As for the image of the Present, however, the analysis of the second phase shows that Havel instates an image of Klaus as a less-than-radical Other, and that Klaus starts to openly associate Havel to the Communist Other. This struggle might very well have been triggered empirically by the circumstances of the ‘Velvet Divorce’, a matter on which the two parties disagreed fiercely, even if their discursive articulations were rather incompatible already before the Czechoslovak split-up.

The transition from the second to the third phase (1998-2000) does hardly change Klaus’ construction of the Czech Republic at all, while Havel sharpens his rhetoric against Klaus’ political visions in the last phase, excluding his ideas from the Czech Self in more absolute terms than earlier.

### THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE 1989-2000

During the whole period considered – but increasingly so in the last two phases – Václav Havel constructs Europe as a unitary community of values, which has existed since time immemorial. It shares an undefined number of these values with North America, with which it constitutes a 'Euro-Atlantic' sphere.

For Klaus, Europe is instated as a community of nation states *and* as a community of free individuals comparative to his construction of the Czech entity. Notably, Klaus has no image of Europe in the first phase from 1989-92. Most likely, this fact could be explained by Klaus' focus on domestic Czech politics in this phase, as he was then holding the post of finance minister. When appointed prime minister in 1992, his role becomes more 'representational' of the Czech Republic as a unit in international politics, and consequently the text material produced by Klaus was theoretically more likely to contain international reflections as well.

Václav Havel invariably constructs Europe through a chain of identity against a similar Other (North America) opposing a less-than-radical Other (USSR/Russia), and a radical Other of the Cold War, which opposes both of these images.

Klaus' image of Europe from 1993 on is constructed against two radical Others – one of Political Regulation (defining the community of free individuals) and one of Unification (constitutive for the image of Europe as a community of nation states). The latter relates to some extent to the former, since European unification in Klaus' universe inevitably leads to regulation.

Again, the basic images of the Self do not change to any great extent from 1989-2000. The ontological, axiological, and praxeological dimensions are stable in Klaus' configuration of Europe from 1993-2000. Basically, Europe should pursue the basic conditions of a free market, and leave any talk of political community to the nation states.

For Havel, a shift can be detected from the first to the second phase. While in 1989-1992, Havel opted for (pan-)European Unification through the Helsinki process, this plan is – on a practical level – substituted by a vision of Unification through NATO, which is converted from being an element of the Cold War image into a similar element of the Euro-Atlantic value community associated to the North American Other. It might be concluded,

that Havel seemingly assimilated himself to a discourse of 'realistic' politics, when he stops 'dreaming' about the more comprehensive CSCE-based unification.

### STRUCTURING CATEGORIES

#### *The Use of Space and Time*

In the first place, both gentlemen establishes a conceptual universe, which in turn is used as a resource of defining and delimiting the way they construct the Czech and the European entities. These discourses are largely constructed as non-territorial spaces, and confined to what we might call 'ideological' or 'abstract' spaces, which is compliant with the extensive use of 'internal' Others, i.e. threats or difference from *within* the territorially defined entities themselves. This is revealed in the fact that the Others of the Present are usually defined as differing from the Self, in terms of either political programs or basic values. Even Havel's construction of Europe in relation to USSR, Russia, and North America is presented in political rather than territorial terms.

Havel constructs Czech history as a continuous flow of efforts to heed the Good Traditions (truth, spirituality, democracy) so often thwarted by outside (read: Imperial, Nazi-German, Communist) intervention or imposition. This continuity of 'Good Czechness' as something 'We' would have attained, had Others not intervened, finds a current parallel in the image of a country in transition, opting for the 'real' Czech identity, which is prevented from flourishing because of the current Bad Traits of the Communist Past and the alleged immoral politics of ODS and Václav Klaus.<sup>324</sup> Something similar is seen in Havel's image of the European value community, which is constructed against a 'bad Past' of the Cold War, and yet anchored in a 'good Past' of an ancient culture and spirituality.

Thus, for Havel, in case of both the Czech and the European Self, the Past is both excluded and used as a resource for configuring the Self, making way for a strategy of 'returning' (in an abstract sense) to 'Europe', to 'truth', to 'democracy', or to an ancient 'spirit' once heeded.

Klaus also uses the Past when radicalizing the difference to the Communist Past in the construction of the Czech Republic, but he rarely uses historical references as a resource for the Self. Therefore, we do not find any praxeologies based on the 'return' metaphor in

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<sup>324</sup> Cf. Holy 1996, p. 119f.

the case of Klaus. Instead, he mainly relies on 'timeless' (i.e. spatial) ideological setups like Hayek's concept of 'spontaneity' and its supposed self-structuring effects on the political and societal 'markets'. One might say that Klaus uses the future 'idea' as a resource more than the Past.

The difference between Havel and Klaus in this instance, could also be illustrated when recalling that Klaus is usually the one who is accused both for 'myth making' (in relation to his own achievements),<sup>325</sup> and for national self-centeredness (in relation to his 'Euro-skeptical' attitudes).<sup>326</sup> The first depiction of Klaus is quite plausible (he has addressed his own success directly in some quotes analyzed here), while the latter is more dubious – not the anti-European sentiments itself, but the representation of it as a *nationalist* venture. According to this analysis, his skepticism is rooted in the enduring fear of Political Regulation of individual freedom, rather than in fear of Europe as an undermining of national culture. Havel, on the other hand, gladly reproduces the image of *Czech* historical continuity, the alleged *Czech* virtues of humanism and 'democratic spirit', thereby actually reproducing the national 'space' much more than do Klaus.<sup>327</sup> This is of course a way of 'positive' identification with the Past, and Havel does not see these national assets as 'ethnic' attributes threatened from 'aliens' or 'foreigners' as would an extremist nationalist discourse. Instead, they are constructed against a Bad Past and its present offshoots, which are depicted as the reason why the Czech Nation cannot 'return' to the attributes of its Good Past.

Havel's use of the Past corresponds very nicely to Žižek's contemplations about the national Thing, which is lost, stolen by the Other, and depraving us of enjoying its virtues.<sup>328</sup> Klaus, in contrast, focuses on establishing a future goal that has never been 'there', but which ought to come about. This corresponds a great deal more to Koselleck's theory of how the subject's Past ('space of experience') has to merge with a vision of the Future ('horizon of expectations') in order to establish the Present as a 'time of initiatives'.<sup>329</sup> Future goals become the reason for action. Notably, both these ways of establishing identity are reflected in the construction of an unfinished, *transitory* situation of the Present.

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<sup>325</sup> E.g. Druker & Walker 1999, Pehe 1999.

<sup>326</sup> E.g. Stein (1999).

<sup>327</sup> As stated earlier, this difference might have to do with Havel's presidential role as the father figure of the country, since it lies in the role of a president to add to his people a sense of community by making speeches on national holidays etc.

<sup>328</sup> See p. 27 in this thesis and Žižek (1992, 1993).

<sup>329</sup> Koselleck 1985, p. 267-288.

*The Use of Ontology and Basic Dichotomies*

We have seen that Havel, especially in the first phases, makes use of Others at all ontological levels, and thereby producing somewhat 'hazy' Self-images, while Klaus primarily makes use of *radical* Others, thereby in principle producing comparatively 'clearer' images of the Self resulting in ambiguity in the praxeologies as well. On the other hand, Klaus' articulation of absolute Others chained to a lot of associated elements, some of which are of questionable similarity, makes his arguments stand out as being somewhat overgeneralized, leading critics to cast doubt on the ability of Klaus to see politics as more than black and white. Yet, clarity has often proved to be a powerful asset in politics, when standpoints are communicated to a broader electorate. This might be one reason why Havel seems to have radicalized his others as he gets more 'used to' the work of practical politics in the last phase examined here. However, we cannot conclude from the present study that Klaus' virtually exclusive use of the radical Other makes his discourse *stronger* than Havel's.

While non-radical Others are found to be constructed as such through the use of diverse non-dichotomic metaphors or categorizations, the study has revealed that Havel and Klaus are establishing *radical* Others by using certain basic dichotomies. The natural/artificial dichotomy in particular is repeatedly used by both actors. They assert different 'Things' as being natural, but they both agree that Communism is to be deemed an artificial construct, which they both exclude from the Self, and use to structure other excluded categories. Thus, even if the Communist element is not always overtly present, e.g. in Havel's image of the Cold War and Klaus's image of Political Regulation in the construction of the European Self-image, these images both contain elements that link them to Communism. Thus, implicitly, Havel equates the natural/artificial dichotomy to a general moral distinction of 'good vs. bad', and 'true vs. false' by *naturalizing* 'goodness' and 'truth' as core elements of the Self, while the Communist 'evil' and its present 'bad' counterparts are artificial. Conversely, Klaus naturalizes 'freedom' as opposed to the artificial 'restraint' on an individual exposed to Communism or to institutionalized regulation e.g. by the state or EU.

It should be noted that Klaus do not assess his praxeology of the market as founded on values – in fact, he presents it as *Human Nature*, which does not (in his eyes) involve any value judgment.

Thus, Klaus uses the complex of the Communist Other to assert that Political Regulation threatens individual freedom because it is unnatural, while Havel uses it to emphasize that 'good' politics might secure a 'better' life for all people. This scenario resembles the classical discussion between communitarianism and libertarianism, or altruism and self-interest, which is thus rearticulated.

As we have seen, Havel's Czech and European Self-images could be interpreted as representing two entities, which have been, and to some extent still are, *sinning* against their 'true' Self by allowing intervention from the Others of the Communist and Cold War respectively. The othering of those two representations asserts a kind of Self-victimization – 'We' are not directly responsible, but have been forced or tempted into the 'sinful' action of accepting to be someone 'We' are not.

This image of the Self as a Sinner is especially obvious in Havel's configuration of Czechoslovakia in the first phase, but it could easily be seen as a metaphor of the Self waiting for 'salvation' in the form of finally becoming itself. This image, again, reproduces a continuity of the Czech nation as a schizophrenic entity of both Sin and Virtue. Especially in the first phase, Havel even seemed to stand forth as a Savior, an image which to some extent has been kept alive, and which may likely inscribe Havel in the endless historical row of Czech martyrs and national heroes.

## EMPIRICAL REFLECTIONS

### *The Czech Republic and Europe*

As stated in the introduction, the idea of writing this thesis partly originated in a hypothetical tension between the entity of the Czech Republic and that of Europe. So, how do Havel and Klaus see the relation between the two?

For Havel, the Czech Future is inherently and unquestionably a part of a European Future, since Havel explicitly equates the Czech political Self with Western civilization and Europe – an image which is also reflected in the fact that both the Czech Republic and Europe are constructed as value-based communities.

Klaus holds that The Czech Republic should not necessarily adhere to what is best for 'Europe' or any of the shared European values asserted by Havel. Instead, the 'natural' political elements of Europe – the nation states – should operate separately, while the Euro-

pean 'community' should merely guarantee the free trade among them (allegedly in order to secure individual freedom). Consequently, the Czech-European relationship should be one of less 'identity' than proposed by Havel.

The different praxeologies are clear: Havel wants to ensure a Czech state in a unified Europe based on values encouraged by political action. There are no inherent conflict between Czech and European identity. Conversely, Klaus increasingly constructs a strong political unity of Europe, exemplified by the EU, as a threat to the Czech nation state and its free citizens.

Following the non-essentialist premises of the theory, we cannot assume that the discourse of the Czech Republic and Europe as either historical, value-based communities or spontaneous, market-based orders will prevail until eternity. There is always a chance that they might wither, be challenged by others, or that one of them assumes hegemonic discursive power. Nevertheless, it seems plausible to suggest that *if* the current situation lingers on, we might expect two signals coming from the Czech Republic vis-à-vis Europe as the country approaches membership of the EU and gets further involved in European integration: (1) a pro-European Czech Republic oriented towards further political integration, and/or (2) a Euro-skeptical Czech Republic oriented towards mere economic cooperation and keen preservation of the national level of politics. Thus, we cannot predict whether the Czech Republic will join the group of 'skeptical' member states, such as Denmark or the UK, or whether it will support ambitions of a (con-)federative Europe – or indeed, whether the stance will be something 'in between'. At least the discourse established by Klaus does not seem to open up for this middle position, while Havel's is less tangible on this matter.

#### *The Havel-Klaus Relation and the Czech Political Environment*

The analysis has revealed that the discourses of Havel and Klaus are often represented as mutually exclusive, reflected in the fact that they frequently make use of each other as radical constitutive Others.

Havel's discourse of values and his vision of Civil Society, does not imply seeing the market forces *as such* as a natural adversary. However, the construction of this discourse (increasingly) accentuate that many political endeavors have to compromise the completely free market à la Klaus. Conversely, Klaus consistently excludes any talk of values in prac-

tical politics. Values should be no more than the result of spontaneous action and any attempt of relying on values as a political argument is seen as a reduction of individual freedom, and therefore he cannot accept Havel's focus on 'political engineering' of the 'good' society.

The alleged conflict between the Good State and the Free Market surfaces repeatedly, more or less presenting itself as *the* basic conflict in the Czech debate. Klaus and Havel increasingly portray each other in terms of absolute difference, and at times, they are on the brink of *securitizing* each other (i.e. seeing each other as existential threats). Put bluntly, we have seen a picture of the two most dominating political personalities in the Czech Republic overtly engaging in a stubborn verbal war against each other. Time and again, especially in the latest phase, either one of them present the other as an ultimate political adversary, which is substantiated by the mutual depiction of the other as a Communist derivative (i.e. either as anti-moral or anti-market). The latter maneuver is most obvious in Klaus' rhetoric, since Havel 'only' implicitly associates Klaus to the Communist abuse of power.

In general, Klaus stands out as the more extreme exponent of this polarization for two reasons: (1) he uses almost exclusively radical Others, which Havel do not, and (2) he constructs a more generalized image of the Other by articulating an ever-present chain of equivalence that associates virtually everything non-capitalist with Communism.

Now, in an open, democratic society, we should expect political adversaries to accept the legitimate political perspective of the Other, even when it is constitutive for the Self. This is hardly done by radicalizing or securitizing the Other. Doing so has the democratically unfortunate side effects of delegitimizing the political position of the Other, and praxeologically it logically involves a neutralization of the Other and his views.

By introducing the approach of a differentiated ontology of the Other, I have suggested that non-radicalized, non-securitized images of the Other are just as constitutive for the configuration of identities and discourses as is the radical one. This point is supported by the findings in the analysis of Havel's texts, revealing the relevance of this approach, even if we usually find a radical image as well.

In this light, it seems plausible to insist that political debates in a democratic society ought to be conducted in a discursive atmosphere of non-radical rhetoric. This is not the case in



the debates between Havel and Klaus, who – probably unintentionally – produce a common hegemonic venture of naturalizing the divide between Values and Market. This limits political discussions to take an outset in this abstract rupture, making necessary consensus or compromises very hard to achieve.<sup>330</sup> Principally, it is only the internal debate between Havel and Klaus, and their respective political adherents, which is restricted in this way. Nevertheless, the fact that they have been, and still are, some of the most dominating political actors in the Czech Republic, their discursive constructs are likely to affect the broader political agenda as well. This might very well contribute to an unconstructive political environment in the country.

The question is, then, for how long these two ‘grand old men’ of current Czech politics and their legacy will be able to live on as main political factors in the Czech Republic, and for how long their discursive weight will have a significant impact on other political actors.

#### COMMENTS ON THE THEORETICAL APPROACH

Finally, I find it appropriate to come up with a few reflections on the theoretical outset in discourse theory and the deployment of the model set forth in Chapter 3.

##### *Limitations of the Discursive Approach*

Discourse analysis is not *predictive* in the sense of being able to come up with precise suggestions of future political developments, like do theories based on suppositions about the *Nature* of an entity (e.g. the state as acting rationally in its own ‘interest’). Instead, discourse analysis, investigating the social *construction* of entities, offers a larger span of possible policies, depending on the mode of construction and interpretation, rather than enticed by alleged objective attributes of a particular political entity (be it a state, a nation, or an international community).

As we have seen, the discursive construction of Communism as a radical Other is able to produce diametrically different conceptualizations of the Nature of political entities and, indeed, different imperatives for political action. The discursive approach can reveal, but not explain, this difference, since it cannot draw objective conclusions on *why* different

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<sup>330</sup> Even if Klaus generally construct images that are more radical and generalizes the image of the Others, Havel is just as uncompromising when stating his value-based Civil Society argument, as is Klaus when uttering his endeavor of ‘capitalism without adjectives’. Both ventures are largely theoretical, which is also reflected in the analytical findings. This focus on abstract goals also means that they are presented as the answer to pretty well any political problem.

courses are taken. Nor can discourse analysis itself explain why certain actors seem to be dominant. This would require an analysis focusing the distribution of (discursive) power within a broader debate.

Discourse analysis offers the prospect of mapping the *way* people construct their conceptual universes, and *how* political views are made possible and being restricted through different ways of using language and its resources. On this background, one of the main contributions of discourse analysis is its emphasis on the *unpredictability* of political action, and the 'constructedness' of political communities and relations between them. In the final instance, this is also a reminder of the fact that change is possible and that the world of politics is inherently dynamic like any other social phenomenon.

#### *The Model of Differentiated Otherness*

It is constructions like Havel's, which confirm the relevance of introducing non-radical configurations of the Other, since his Self-images are – in most instances – partly constituted by them. What the study does not confirm, however, is the assumption that it is possible to construct identities *without* a radical Other. Both Havel and Klaus, in all instances examined here, make use of at least one radical Other in each construction. Further investigations into the necessity of the radical Other will require more studies of the conceptualization of the Other as a continuum of difference.

In general, the model of the various dimensions of the Other outlined in Chapter 3 has proved to be rather operative. The novelty of the similar Other has indeed been satisfactory, since one of the actors subjected to analysis (Havel) has made rather extensive use of this configuration of 'scanty' dissociation from the Self.

As the model is a theoretical construct, it has been necessary to set up some fairly strict guidelines for the distinction between the three different 'ideal' ontologies of the Other. This has worked out well, though there is always an amount of ambiguity when drawing boundaries in a continuum. The analytical construal of these borders was set in the criteria for the assessment of ontology in Chapter 3, which provided us with a framework that (at least analytically) has annulled the otherwise unavoidable interpretative dilemmas during the analysis

In case of the axiological dimension, a similar maneuver has proved to be helpful. Theoretically, it is curious that the *axiological* dimension in one instance consistently differs

from the ideal correspondence to the ontology set forth in Table 3.3 on p. 26: all less-than-radical Others found in this study are invariably seen as *inferior* as opposed to the ideal *equal* axiology. Even if this 'deviance' is seen as 'normal', it gives rise to some speculation of the logical correspondence between the less-than-radical Other and an *equal* axiology. On the other hand, this might be an empirical matter, and again, it would require parallel studies to determine this aspect.

The *praxeological* dimension has not been subject to the same strict criteria in order to assess the level of what may be called 'response' or 'action'. Neither has it seemed necessary, since the praxeology of the Other is always an empirical matter.

Altogether, establishing the model has provided a useful theoretical perspective, allowing the tool of discourse analysis to be applied in a tangible and operative manner.

#### *Final reflections*

Analytically, this author is well aware that things have been left out here due to the narrow focus on two leading politicians. We do not get the full picture of the Czech debate, nor do we get any impression of the marginal discourses on the Czech Republic and Europe.

I have chosen to deal with two politicians, who I claim were able to set the Czech Political agenda during the 90s. This postulate is built on a general knowledge of Czech politics, and though it is not underpinned by a systematic analysis of Czech political debates, this assumption seems at least plausible, even if it is not to be considered 'true' in any objective sense.

The images found during the analysis are all recurring in several texts, a fact which is also reflected in the revealed consistence of the images deployed by both Havel and Klaus. Texts and excerpts chosen for analysis are, of course, only a small selection among numerous others, and it would always be possible to question whether it would not have been possible to find other constitutive images of the Czech and the European Self than the ones presented here. This is most likely the case, since any choice of categorization, association, or labeling constrains the possible conclusions. However, the systematic use of an operative model, the coherency of the findings, and various reflections about them suggest that discourse analysis can be both scientifically credible and empirically relevant.

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