

## **Romanticists or Double Insiders? An Essay on the Origins of Ideologised Discourses in Balkan Ethnology**

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**Romanticists or Double Insiders?**  
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**Balkan Ethnology**

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*Nativeness and anthropology do not belong to the same register.*  
Kirsten Hastrup

**I.**

There is a touch of Twainian irony in the fact that the study of ideology should still provoke a considerable interest among social scientists more than forty years after its prophesied end. It is perhaps soothing, though in a perverted way, to know that with the flow of time the “end of ideology” thesis itself has come to be considered as a sign of the trend of ideologisation of social sciences. At this moment, there is reason to believe that the spectre of ideology will continue to haunt every new generation of social science scholars, sentencing them to life-long “rethinking” of problems caused by it, and perpetual “reinventing” of answers to them.

In this paper an attack on the widely distributed set of ideas which can be labelled as the “unilineal descent theory of ideology in Balkan ethnology” will be attempted. This theory names the Romanticist heritage as the primary factor that induced ethnology to succumb to the charms of ideology. Unfortunately, its obsession with questions like: who is the veritable genitor of all that ideological mess, and to which intellectual lineage can his progeny be ascribed, as well as the circular answers it often offers to them, force the “descent theory” to reproduce the conception that ideology is in the blood of Balkan ethnology. To give a new twist to the metaphor, the theory explains the bad morals of the progeny in terms of inherited parental sins. The thrust of the challenge that will be presented here is not directed at a revolutionary overthrow of the arguments of the theory, but rather at their reorganisation, and thus at a possible broadening of perspective. In other words, the approach I am proposing aims to explain the consequences of ego-committed ideological sins by relating them to the logic of the situation in which they were committed, instead of invoking parental sins as a satisfactory explanation. Thus, far from being considered as the central explanatory factor of ideologising tendencies in their disciplines, the long-lasting and profound affection of Balkan ethnologists for key Romanticist conceptions itself deserves to be explained.

Such a challenge can be faced if reflection is directed towards the analysis of the characteristics of social contexts in which ethnological thought was and is constituted. If, following Karl Mannheim, we accept the assumption that human

thought generally does not constitute itself freely in free social space, but is, on the contrary, usually rooted in a precise location in that space, then we can concentrate on two key aspects of the social “entrenchment” of ethnological ideas (Mannheim 1929). The first of them may be termed as the existential position of the thinking subject, and can be considered to be of constitutive importance for his mental activities. In the Balkan context, the existential position of the ethnologist (or of the intellectual devoted to the study of the traditions of local groups in the period before ethnology became a discipline) is characterised, strictly individual factors notwithstanding, by the double insider syndrome: The ethnologist<sup>1</sup> in principle belongs to the group he studies, and shares its language, traditions, dominant values, as well as interests – that is, he more or less consciously identifies himself with his object of study.

At the same time, the ethnologist belongs to the special social subgroup (intellectuals, or intellectuals that double as politicians), of his group whose task is to study, consolidate, and, if needed, invent the identity and interests of his wider group, as well as to defend them by force of arguments when they are questioned by rivaling groups – that is, he functions as the intellectual advocate of his object of study. As a member and advocate of his group, the ethnologist will be particularly tempted to react if he perceives his group to be in a position of cultural or any other kind of inferiority, and if his group and its culture are perceived as victimised.

One of the central theses of this paper is that the specific existential position of Balkan ethnologists, expressed by the double insider syndrome of which they generally suffered, profoundly influenced their professional attitudes and should be considered as one of the primary factors leading to the ideologisation of their disciplines. It is further assumed that the effects of this factor are further amplified by other factors, which are also induced by particularities of the history of Balkan states. Thus, both the nature and the degree of ideologisation of Balkan ethnologies are considered here to be determined by the interplay of the existential position of ethnologists and of historically imposed political, economic, and social conditions, rather than by the otherwise unmotivated lingering on of outdated intellectual conceptions. If we resort to metaphors, then no talk of sin is viable until the snake itself is explained away.

## II

In order to do so, a distinction between belief systems, ideologies in the loose sense of the term, ideologies in the strict sense, as well as ideological and ideologised discourses can be introduced. The relationship between these concepts is considered here to be hierarchical and inclusive. Belief systems, which encompass

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<sup>1</sup> The words “ethnologist”, “folklorist” etc. are taken to include both male and female scholars.

all other categories, can be defined as sets of propositions about the world which are more or less coherently structured, and considered as valid by their holders. Some belief systems can be considered as ideologies in the loose sense of the term, inasmuch as they are organised sets of ideas that are value-laden and action-oriented towards the political sphere of human existence. They incorporate a comprehensive theory of the external world and of the human condition; have a program specifying desired forms of social and political organisation; incorporate a belief in the necessity of struggle for the realisation of the program; demand full commitment from their adherents; exhibit intolerance towards competing programs; demand wide adherence, but attribute a special role to the learned; and finally, display a tendency to associate with institutions charged with strengthening and realisation of the beliefs and values in question (Cranston 1974). The strict sense of the term ideology differs from the loose one principally because it is legitimated by scientific or quasi-scientific, instead of theological or other types of argumentation. Or, as Raymond Boudon put it: *“Le mot idéologie s'impose au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle parce qu'il décrit une réalité sociale nouvelle, à savoir la tentation de plus en plus communément répandue de fonder l'ordre social et l'action politique sur des analyses de type scientifique”* (Boudon 1986: 45).

In that sense, can we be sure that Boudon's answer is right, and with it the criterion proposed in this paper as distinction between the loose and the strict sense of the term ideology? In his seminal article Edward Shils stressed that no ideology has ever regarded the disciplined pursuit of truth as an integral part of its obligations (Shils 1968: 73). Does this mean that science should be ruled out from any definition of ideology? I believe not. For, if it is true that the systematic pursuit of verifiable or falsifiable truths by rational means is generally not the primary aim of various ideologies, it is also true that in order to enhance the probability of attaining their non-scientific aims, almost all ideologies, when operating in a science-based world, need them to be scientifically legitimated. To be honest, Shils did allow for one exception to his rule – Marxism (1968: 74). The question is, should he not have included in his list of exceptions many other “isms” – liberalism with its background of economy and political philosophy, neoconservatism with the sociology it feeds on, or, to be provocative, nationalism and with it history, linguistics, ethnology and geography? The paradoxes of the ideologisation of science become more transparent when the affinity of modern ideologies to science is not obscured.

The question of the gnoseological premises of ideology adds its share to the paradoxes of ideologisation of the social sciences. If most scholars would agree with the statement that ideologies are not particularly devoted to the pursuit of truth, not all would accept that ideologies are by definition false. Researchers who define ideology as an “outlook” or a “symbolic system”, among them Geertz, consider the question of veracity as misleading in the study of ideology. In the other camp are scholars like Parsons, who stated that “the problem of ideology

arises where there is a discrepancy between what is believed and what can be [established as] scientifically correct” (Geertz 1964: 50). Boudon goes so far as to include this criterion into his definition, according to which ideology is considered as “doctrine reposant sur une argumentation scientifique et dotée d’une crédibilité excessive ou non fondée” (Boudon 1986: 52). It seems to me that a definition of ideology based on the relation it has to science need not necessarily imply its falseness. Some ideologies do have a keen eye for reality, while the history of social sciences offers numerous examples of false or even unfalsifiable theories. On the other hand, ideologies are generally better equipped for the task of changing the world or at least forcing a status quo upon it, than for the rational and verifiable investigation of its functioning. Heuristically more provocative than the credo of the falseness of ideologies, shared by Marx, Parsons or Boudon, are two possible refinements. The first of them implies that the exercise of systematic doubt in the validity of one’s own premises, while obligatory for the accumulation of verifiable facts, can have counterproductive effects on the logic of self-fulfilling prophecies, which Popper rightly considered to be a prominent feature of ideologies.

Ideologues striving to implement a given set of values and ideas tend to behave intolerantly towards those conceptions of reality that grant no place to their desires. The second refinement has much to do with the way Karl Mannheim has gnoseologically neutralised the Marxist idea of ideology as false consciousness, turning it into the concept of socially conditioned thought (Milić 1978: xxi-xxv).

Nontheoretical factors, stemming from life conditions of social groups and from their collective desires, and related to interests and types of engagement, are not merely stimuli for thought. They are integrated into the very flow and logic of thought, and in that way determine the nature of group consciousness and of ideologies. In that sense, the way the world is understood by social groups depends on the type of their voluntary relations towards various life conditions. Under certain conditions, social groups can be completely unaware of the grip that determines their consciousness, making it incongruent with reality. On the other end of a possible continuum of types of ideological consciousness, there are situations in which groups can consciously manipulate other social actors, making beliefs of these actors about social reality the object of their play. Whether an attempt to impregnate science with ideology is made by persons whose social condition completely disables them to become aware of the incongruency of their conception of the world and of existing social facts, by calculated “Macchiavellians” ready to exploit the misconceptions of others, or by cautious and benevolent “piecemeal social engineers”, is of cardinal importance to the nature of such a venture.

The last and least inclusive, but rather important category of ideologised discourses can now be defined. They represent organised verbal or textual sets of statements of non-ideological origin centred on a certain topic or problem, more or less consciously impregnated with value-laden attitudes originating from an

identifiable ideology. It is obvious that the meaning of the term discourse is defined in approximately the same way as in linguistics, where it denotes verbal utterances of greater magnitude than the sentence, and not in the one used in post-structuralism and semiotics (O'Sullivan 1994: 92–95). The Foucaultian concept of discourse as social process of creating and reproducing senses determined by the structure of social relations characteristic of a given historical context, and representing various subjectivities or institutionalised interests, already implies an ideological dimension. In the Foucaultian optic, the everyday struggle of discourses is deciphered as a symbolic way of establishing power relations between competing institutions or subjectivities. If we view the battle of all discourses as a concrete contextualisation of the wars of ideologies, there is some reason to consider all discourses to be verbalisations of ideologies. But if such a “logic” is followed, it becomes rather difficult to consider any verbalisation or textualisation of sense as not being ideological. By employing the term discourse for denoting all possible ideological utterances, we obtain little more than an accentuation of the well-known fact that all verbalisations of ideology tend to be organised, and eventually rhetorical.

However, if every meaningful utterance that is discourse is ideological, then both the concepts of discourse and of ideology lose a great deal of their heuristic and explanatory potential. Foucault's strategy of the conceptual locust is evidently provocative, but probably fatal – or, to stay in tune with his type of wit – fatally provocative, but provocatively fatal. I believe that we can obtain more if we: a) guard the distinction between utterances in which information about the weather is expressed and those which insist that the exploitation of the working class by capitalists must result in a revolution; b) use the term discourse to denote both; and c) reserve the term ideologised discourse only for the second type of utterance. In that sense, ideologised discourses can be the product of what I have labelled the double-bind relationship of ideology and social science. Ideologised discourses are not to be mistaken for individually voiced and context-bound fragments of a given ideology, for which I would reserve the term ideological discourses. Thus, in this paper, I will start from the anti-Foucaultian belief in their distinct natures, but will be interested in the logic of their articulation, that is, in the way they are knitted together. In other words, it is the ideologisation of science, demonstrated by the efforts of those willing to add the titles of their dissertation to the names on the would-be weeping-walls of political, sexual or any other revolutions, that should inspire our attention.

This rather lengthy discussion of key concepts was necessary because it can lead to several conclusions of vital importance to the analysis of ideology in Balkan ethnology:

The social sciences need research-orienting values, while at the same time modern ideologies depend on scientific legitimation, thus sufficient conditions exist for their “double-bind” relationship. This, however, does not imply that

social sciences should be considered as a sub-species of ideology but rather as part-time victims. In that sense Balkan ethnology is no exception.

Because ideology need not be defined as necessarily false, the concept of ideologisation of science does not necessarily imply that such a process separates science from the pursuit of truth – it is rather the type of relation a given ideology builds towards existing social relations, together with its political aims, that is considered to determine the degree of veracity of ideologised discourses coming from within the science it has impregnated.

### III

We are now ready to approach the quicksand of what can be named as “unilineal descent theory of ideology in Balkan ethnology”. As can be imagined, the “theory” is in fact an “ideal-type” in the Weberian sense. It is constituted by a more or less coherent piling-up of existing individual voicings, and intended to facilitate the grasping of a more complex, if somewhat chaotic empirical reality. The various proponents of the theory attempt to explain the “natural” inclination of Balkan ethnology for ideology principally by referring to its intellectual genitor and to the lineage of thought it belongs to. The reception of Romanticism, it is believed by the proponents of the theory, sparked off most of the maladies in Balkan “imagined communities” from 19th century proto-nationalism to modern ethno-nationalism, brought about the “scientific” ideal of a nation-building discipline like 19th century *Volkskunde* with its custom-as-home-of-the-soul-of-the-nation dogma, froze the intellectual “national-worker” in a mirror-gazing posture and reflection-adoring disposition, and drowned the good science-loving spirit of rationalism in the muddy waters of sentimentality. Once again, there is some irony in the fact that the theory has a considerable number of adherents among its “natives”, namely Balkan ethnologists.

Certain authors think that a combination of an unsuccessful digestion of the ideas of the Enlightenment philosophers, an all too rapid reading of Herder, plus the already invoked ressentiment-laden local version of Romanticism would be a more precise way of presenting the intellectual heritage of Balkan ethnologies. Such is the conception held by the French scholar Claude Karnoouh, whose ideas will be extensively cited because of the indicative way in which they blend intellectual scrutiny with subtle ideologisation. However, such ideas are only refinements of the principal theory inasmuch as they present a more detailed portrait of the intellectual genitor of ideologised ethnology, but not a rivaling concept of how it came to be what it is now.

As is obvious, the theory has a number of key presuppositions upon which the main argument is built. To begin with, it is considered that the parental sin was of intellectual origin. Or, as Karnoouh (1990: 78) put it:

*“Ce sont une fois encore, et comme toujours, des idées qui préparèrent le terrain à ce qui, un demi-siècle plus tard, constituera l’aspiration des peuples à l’indépendance politique fondée sur des principes éthiques et scientifiques s’articulant autour des traditions paysannes et, un siècle après, marquera le début des grandes boucheries nationalistes au nom d’une identité nationale qui aura su confondre la démocratie de masse avec les plus prosaïques intérêts économiques des États-nations.”*

However, if we see in ideas not only sui generis phenomena and universal “un-moveable movers”, but also conceptual constructions that can be instrumentalised both as symbolic tools and as social weapons, we should be more sensitive to problems of individual, group, and institutional behaviour motivation and questions like: who is trying to do what, and in which way, when he is invoking an idea or ideology in a given historical context. In that case we avoid explaining the persistence of ideas and ideologies by the persistent nature they possess.

If we return to the ideas of Karl Mannheim and Edward Shils, we can note that Romanticism was considered to exhibit features typical of ideologies. Both authors were more or less explicit on that point. Shils noted: “Romanticism has fed into and swelled the seas of ideological politics by its cult of the ideal and by its scorn for what is mediated by calculation and compromise” (Cranston 1974: 196). He has an even more straightforward way of putting it: “The romantic spirit is naturally driven towards ideological politics” (ibid.). Such a thesis is important for the theory we are exploring. For, if Romanticism was an ideology, then its intellectual heirs might well have inherited the disease. Novalis offered an implicit confirmation of the ideology-thesis in his famous definition of the romantic element (quoted from Wolff 1971: 186 f.):

*“The world must be romanticized. That is the way to its original meaning. Romanticizing means nothing but raising to a higher level of quality. Through that operation the lower self is identified with a higher self, since our soul consists of a series of qualitatively different levels. In giving a noble meaning to the vulgar, a mysterious appearance to the commonplace, the dignity of the unknown to the known, the semblance of infinity to the finite, I romanticize it.”*

So, the theory goes, if ethnology is prone to ideology, it is because it was conceived in an ideological tradition of thought. Luckily, it is not our task here to track down the precise ways in which Schelling’s organistic philosophy, Fichte’s idea of the closed state, together with Burke’s theory of historical continuity and Chateaubriand’s “esprit de finesse” conspired to turn the Herderian legacy Romanticism was built on into an ideology of political reaction (Tadi 1972: 119).

The aspect of Romanticism as ideology that more concerns us here is the way it turned folklore into a weapon of politics and national pride, for it explains directly whence came the need for a science of the people as such (Cocchiara 1984: 229–342). The explanation offered is perhaps the most stimulating aspect of the “descent theory of ideology” in ethnology. The “external” dimension of such



a “politics of folklore” stems from the pains that Napoleon’s victories inflicted on the souls of those who believed that their mission was to probe, express, or protect the German *Volksgeist*. Such a pain, as well as the one inflicted by the social success of their Enlightenment competitors, offered spiritual fuel to the forest fire those Romanticist and Pangermanist movements indeed were. Paradoxically enough, the threat stemming from German reaction to national resentment, together with the one supplied by Napoleon’s canons, induced a similar resentment among the Russian and other Slav intellectual elites, and gave birth to Panslavism (Greenfeld 1992). The paradox was noticed by Ernest Renan who, in a letter to a German friend, commented: “Comparative philology, which you carelessly transferred to the domain of politics, can take a bitter revenge on you: it exalts the Slavs” (Cocchiara 1984: 341). The Slavs, or should we say the Slavophiles and later Panslavists, were not the only ones sensitive to the way Germans reacted to their own uncertainties. To make things more complicated, other members of national elites, like the Greek ones, reacted not only to Pangermanism, but also to Panslavism (Prevlakakis 1995: 105f.). Thus, a chain reaction of mutually imposed national frustrations and reactive exaltations was burning bright in the remote, and in the not so remote areas of Europe throughout the 19th century. Those frustrations and reactive exaltations were the driving force of Romanticism, and they were inherited by the brainchild of Romanticism, Folklore or Ethnology.

Karnoouh makes an effort to analyse the “internal politics” dimension of some of these reactive practices, those that could be labelled as etatistic instrumentalisation of folklore or, more neutrally, “folklorism”:

*“Aussi, ce que certains nommeront plus tard, le folklorisme, doit-il être entendu comme «discours» et mise en scène du paysanisme nécessaire et essentiel à l’affirmation de la légitimité historique de l’Etat-nation. Ce trait fondamental – parce qu’il tient aux fondements mêmes de la possibilité de l’Etat-nation – repose sur le «folklorisme» parce qu’il peut, à lui seul, et donc économiquement, créer le consensus culturel général où se rencontrent, unis dans une foi unique, d’une part, l’aristocrate foncier et le paysan et, d’autre part le fonctionnaire, le commerçant, l’artisan et l’ouvrier issus directement des campagnes. Seul lieu où se manifeste au moindre coût la communion nationale dans le co-partage d’un savoir minimal commun, le «folklorisme» aura pour fonction de ré-interpréter toutes les différences, sociales, économiques et historiques dans le cadre d’une unité culturelle originelle plus ou moins imaginaire. Ré-interprétant les différences internes, tout en accusant les différences externes, le «folklorisme», quelles que soient ses ambitions esthétiques, n’oublie jamais qu’il est aussi au service des ambitions de l’Etat”* (Karnoouh 1985: 57).

For such deeds to be done professionally, a profession was needed. Thus, the theory goes, was created the scientific superego of the nation-state: the discipline of ethnology (Volkskunde, Folklore, laographia). Conceived by local romantic nationalists – Europe-gazing intelligentsia, independent-kingdom-seeking princes,

and historical-revenge-hungry officers – the new Leviathans of the Balkan nation-states were usually in dire need of both a nation and a state, or at least of an independent state. The need was felt for a science, or a group of sciences, that could perform tasks of “national” importance:

- a. Confirm that there really existed a nation (by enforcing cultural and linguistic unity upon heterogeneous peasant populations).
- b. Confirm that in its pretensions to an independent state the nation had historical legality (by unveiling forgotten glorious kingdoms or inventing them if needed), and/or at least cultural legitimacy (by gathering massive volumes of indigenous oral literature, by proclaiming that they are of Homeric quality, and by insisting on their uniqueness among the multitude of rival neighbouring cultures).
- c. Confirm that the nation had a continuity of territorial possession (ideally by invoking the principle of “autochthonous descent”, and by sketching numerous “ethnographic charts”);
- d. Create “liturgies”, as well as “shrines”, where the cult of the Nation and of its emanations could be performed under adequate intellectual scrutiny (the prototypes of which are folklore festivals and national ethnographic museums).

The intention of blending the archaic “liturgical” with modern ideological components for which the last task of the new science provides evidence was unmistakably perceived by Karnoouh: *“En effet, le musée national d’ethnographie, représente bien le lieu d’un nouveau culte laïque, celui de l’ethnie-nation en ses nombreuses incarnations, se pratiquant sous les auspices des deux muses de la modernité: La Culture et la Science”* (Karnoouh 1990: 149). Thus, the conception of ethnology as a “national science”, together with all that goes with such a social duty, should be considered as a Romanticist invention.

Uniting the accusations for “external” (nationalist territorial pretensions and persecution of minorities) and “internal” (forced cultural homogenisation of autochthonous population) sins, Zador ventures to unveil completely the ugly face of the Central and East European ethnological and folkloristic Medusa:

*“Le folklore devint non seulement une réalité imaginaire, mais encore une réalité mythique qui parlait d’un peuple imaginaire, d’un peuple mythique pour ne pas dire mystifié, qui plaçait d’emblée le folklorique dans le champ des mythologies nationales. Ce sont ces contenus mythologiques qui fournissent les formes parfaites des identifications abstraites et a-sociales – c’est-à-dire des formes irrationnelles et essentiellement émotionnelles qui se prêtent à la genèse des unifications étrangères à toute conception de la démocratie et du libéralisme politique. Leur abstraction même offre une base à toutes les formes d’intolérance qui alimentent les conflits nationaux reposant sur la négation extérieure, cependant qu’au même moment s’instaure l’intolérance intérieure. Et c’est bien cette intolérance intérieure qui donne au folklore imaginaire son véritable sens, parce qu’il propose une unification collective oppressive.*

*Ces formes apparaissent lorsque l'unité nationale est plus idéologique que sociale, quand l'unité se réalise moins au travers des aspirations et des solutions sociales que pour satisfaire à des buts exclusivement politiques. En raison de l'évolution singulière prise par les nations du Centre et de l'Est de l'Europe, cette forme de folklore fut très largement employée par les Etats-nations de la région; et seules des différences dues à leur niveau de développement particulier provoquèrent les variations que d'aucuns sont à même d'observer localement” (Zador 1985: 30).*

Further evidence coming from the other side of “the anthropology/ethnology divide” would be of extreme importance to the theory. Interestingly enough, such evidence does not lack. Vintilă Mihăilescu expresses with elegance his view on the role of Romanticism in the formation of Romanian identity:

*“On peut aisément imaginer ce qu'il y avait d'attractif pour la jeune culture roumaine dans la vision romantique du monde: celle-ci lui apportait la légitimation, dans et par un discours «moderne», des «anciennes» valeurs communautaires. Née en réaction au sein même de la modernité occidentale, l'«hérésie» herderienne conférait au projet culturel roumain la possibilité de principe de faire son entrée dans la modernité, tout en gardant sa charge «holiste»... D'autre part, par la structure même de son discours, la culture roumaine «moderne» s'appliqua à donner à la société rurale l'image d'identité nationale. En retour, cette image finira par s'appliquer à la société roumaine tout entière, la plaçant dans une identité ruraliste par excellence ... La «roumanité», comme identité nationale, s'est forgée à partir d'un mélange stratégique de «ruralité» et de «latinité», selon une recette romantique sui generis” (Mihăilescu 1991: 82; more examples can be found in works listed in his bibliography).*

When pushed to its extreme, the “unilineal descent theory of ideology in Balkan ethnology” transfigures itself into what could be labelled as the clash-of-disciplinary-world-systems theory. To a number of scholars it seems more than obvious that problems such as those referred to in the preceding paragraphs must come from Romanticist scientific barbarians living in a radically other intellectual and professional world. As we have already seen, Karnoouh is among those authors ready to trace the limes separating the two worlds: “...cependant, c'est seulement au-delà du Rhin, en direction du Nord, de l'Est, du Sud-est, que l'ethnographie et le folklore (avec la philologie et l'histoire) servirent, outre de gages et de preuves scientifiques au politique, de fondement au discours politique des origines” (Karnoouh 1990: 141).

Karnoouh is not the only proponent of the “geopolitics” of ethnology, as can be witnessed from the following lines by Carol Silverman (1989: 149 f.):

*“Eastern Europe is a particularly fruitful area in which to explore the relationship between nationalism and folklore. In Eastern Europe, the emerging nation-states sought their definitions and rationalizations in the peasant traditions which survived foreign invasions and dominance. The native peasants*

*were viewed as the soul and identity of the nation, and folklore was the legitimate expression of the peasants. It is not an accident, then, that the rise of nationalism coincided with early collecting activities in folklore. The collection and publication of folklore was part of the rationalization of cultural and political unity”.*

However, it should be remembered that the obsession with the implementation of cultural or spiritual borders is perhaps as dangerous as the compulsion for the “stretching” of geographic or ethnic ones. What is certain is that they belong to the same ideological arsenal. Thus, approaches centred on the hunt for intellectual heritage much too often tend to produce intellectual wildlife reserves (or ‘fruitful areas’) with restricted access to privileged marksmen. On the other hand, reflection on social origins and functions of ideas and ideologies can help in the development of a comparative perspective. Advocating such an approach, Joel Halpern and Eugene Hammel remind us that social science in a society forms “an important part of its subjective ideology about itself and the world and thus a part of its own folk theory about the relations of man to society and of men to men” (Halpern/Hammel 1969: 17). In the same text, they punch hard all unilineal descent theories of ideology in Balkan ethnology, respecting at the same time existing historical differences: Ethnology and associated disciplines are by their origins and nature profoundly political in all nations, but the kind of political background involved in the growth of British social anthropology or American ethnology and that associated with Yugoslav ethnology are very different, and the resulting disciplines – an ethnology related to colonization and one associated primarily with a developing nation-state – each strongly reflect their different histories (ibid., p. 18].

#### IV

If we follow the ideas of Halpern and Hammel, then we can say that the explanation of the logic of instrumentalisation of folklore by local intellectuals and by states, and the analysis of the shared aspects of the rhetoric of Balkan ethnologies and of Balkan nationalism certainly rank among the more vital parts of the theory under investigation. When carefully inspected, however, the theory reveals several shortcomings:

- a. It does not offer the explanation of all, nor of the majority of empirically existing types of ideologisation of Balkan ethnology, and can thus be considered only as a partial theory.
- b. It bases its argument on the supposed effects of one central factor, the Romanticist heritage, which upon reflection turns out to be a historical fact itself demanding explanation.

- c. It overestimates the importance of intellectual traditions, and underestimates the importance of the logic of historical situations for the understanding of motivation and behaviour of social actors.

Contrary to opinions already presented, it is considered here that the principal source of ideologised discourses in Balkan ethnology should not be sought in its Romanticist roots, but rather among the various “life conditions which produce ideologies” to which Balkan ethnologists as well as their predecessors were exposed in the 19th and 20th centuries (Mannheim 1929). As we have seen, these conditions can be approached from at least two angles. On one side, there is the fact that each thinking subject has a specific existential position which can significantly influence the logic of his reflection. In the case of Balkan ethnologists, the common aspect of their existential position can be termed as the double insider syndrome. That is, they in principle belong to the group they study, and share its language, traditions, dominant values and interests, while simultaneously belonging to a special social subgroup whose task it is to study, invent, and eventually defend the “cause” of the larger group. It is important to note that both of the insider-situations are potential factors of ideologisation of ethnological discourses. The only difference between them lies in the fact that the ethnologist can in the first case be engaged in an ideologisation of which he himself is not fully aware, while in the second case he ideologises his discourse deliberately. These two types of ideologisation are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, a combination of their effects is the probable outcome in the Balkan context. It is for such a mutually stimulating combination of unconscious and intentional ideologisations that I have reserved the term *double insider syndrome*. On the other side, the historically determined political, economic, social, and cultural conditions of Balkan societies created a climate extremely favourable to the production or adoption of all-encompassing ideological solutions (Greenfeld 1992). The “misery of the small nations of South-East Europe” had a number of focal points:

The specific constellation of historical factors (collapse of local feudal states; incorporation of the remaining ethnically and culturally non-homogeneous agrarian populations into large, culturally distinct empires; unbalanced, peasant-dominated social structures which induced the taking of power by a semi-educated intelligentsia and military elites whose efforts had to be oriented both towards liberation, state-building or rebuilding, and nation-building or “unification of the nation”, further inducing dictatorial instead of democratic approaches to politics) turned the nascent or recently liberated countries into, at their best, half-successful “latecomers” to the general trends of European political, social, and economic modernisation.

The unquestionable backwardness created a burning feeling of resentment, and led the local intellectual elites to consider Romantic nationalism a viable strategy of overcoming the historical problems their group was faced with (Greenfeld 1992).

The feeling of resentment induced the disposition to overcome national inferiority by the sheer emotional force of national exaltation, instead of means suggested by rational planning.

The most important feature of the resentment-driven “Eastern” nationalism was its paradoxical nature, for in order to preserve their cultural identity, i. e., their sense of nationhood, in the face of military, economic, and cultural “super-powers” or threatening neighbours, they had to imitate the very oppressors or potential aggressors they hoped to overcome, and in that way undermined their own foundations in the way of their fathers.

Thus, there was a double sense of ambivalence to overcome, stemming from two rejections to be made – that of the foreign dominator for which the only way was his overcoming by standards he himself introduced, as well as that of the traditions of the ancestors, which had to be cherished as symbols of identity, but had also to be considered as obstacles to a desired future.

The ambivalent emotions induced by running away from backwardness which was nevertheless the source of one’s identity favoured impatient and illiberal, not to say undemocratic and intolerant political solutions, that is, solutions which profoundly marked the history of such countries as “not-yet-European” (Plamenatz 1973).

Put in other words, Balkan historical contexts enhanced the general importance of ideologies in social life, and brought about the ideologisation, or over-ideologisation, of a number of “strategic” sciences, like historiography, philology, and ethnography. In that sense, it went hand in hand with, and further strengthened the effects of the double-insider syndrome on the intellectual production of Balkan ethnologists. Furthermore, not only did such a combination of factors induce an increase in the percentage of ideologised discourses in the overall scientific production, it also determined which of the existing ideologies were to have priority as factors of ideologisation of ethnological discourses. Thus, the unconscious bias that threatens the ethnologist doubling as native, the need for a calculated fact-twisting approach that usually goes together with the role of the ethnologist as his group’s advocate, merged together with the burning desire to rapidly overcome the “unbearable and undeserved” position of the society as a whole characteristic of the ethnologist as object and subject of history, and conspired to produce a fiery blend, the ethnologist as ideologue of the Nation. If, however, the group to which the ethnologist is affiliated, and whose interests he defends, is defined not as *ethnos*, but as class, then we encounter the other local variety, the ethnologist as ideologue of the oppressed classes, or, to be more precise, of the avant-garde of such classes. For nationalism and, somewhat later, Marxism/communism/socialism were the two ideologies that could satisfy most effectively the historically determined social needs of Balkan intellectuals, as well as those of considerable parts of the populations.

It seems to me that the presented approach offers the advantage of being able to point to a number of factors which induced a strong feeling for the Romanticist legacy among Balkan ethnologists, while on the other hand allowing for the explication of other, non-Romanticist sources of ideologised discourses in the discipline. Thus, we should interpret the reception and lingering on of the set of Romanticist ideas in Balkan ethnologies in the light of the means they offered to double insiders for the symbolic transgression of the embarrassing positions of their respective groups. In that sense we perhaps understand better why it happened that the Romanticists, and not the Rationalists, were the ones to mould the intellectual identity of ethnology in the Balkans.

But, as we have already seen, Romanticist conceptions were not the only ones that could perform the task. Thus, if we take the “pre-history” of ethnology in Serbia as an example, we can note that the first cases of ideologised discourses were not supplied by Romanticists, but rather by Rationalists. They belonged to two types. On the one hand there were burning critiques of pre-Christian superstitions, church rituals, and customs and traditions in general, that were considered by Rationalists such as Dositej Obradović to keep the Serbs ages away from civilised Europe (Kovačević 1981: 71–91). On the other hand was the production of idealised national characterologies, such as the one compiled by Joakim Vujčić. Rationalist characterologies presented the Serbian population as being intellectually and morally equal or even superior to the historically more fortunate nations (*ibid.*, 151–160). But in both cases, ideologised discourses were produced by local rationalist intellectuals aspiring to win a better future for the suppressed and backward group they belonged to. In other words, there was a strong national component in their humanism.

Thus, the ideologisation of the humanist reflection on man which was later to grow into Serbian ethnology, commenced independently of Vuk Karadžić’s Romanticist revolution, but in the same spirit. The Rationalist approach was only less well adapted to the specific social tasks it had to perform. Moreover, the practice of ideologisation of ethnological discourses in Serbia did not end together with the Romanticist era. Marxist ethnologists, championed by Špiro Kulišić, fervently fought for the dignity, equality, fraternity and unity of nations and nationalities of Socialist Yugoslavia that were presumed to be endangered by the spectre of Serbian nationalism and/or unitary Yugoslavism as expressed in the pre-war works of Jovan Cvijić or Jovan Erdeljanović (Kulišić 1951: 27–31; *idem* 1967: 75–83). It is not without irony that the diligent pursuit of such Marxist antinationalism finally drove Kulišić to the standpoint of extreme Montenegrin nationalism and separatism (Kulišić 1980). Thus, it can be said, though with some simplification, that the central political, economic and social dilemma of the region, the love-hate mortal coils of Nationalism and Communism, left as their legacy to the history of 19th and 20th century Balkan social sciences two dominant models of ideologisation of scientific discourses.

Furthermore, ethnologists were not the only double insiders of the Balkans. The Balkan intelligentsia as a whole, or at least its humanistic and literary circles, could be considered as tainted by the double insider syndrome. Apart from ethnologists, there were many historians, philologists, but also poets, writers, or journalists, who belonged to the people they wrote about, and shared the belief that they could endow it with a more dignified future by means of their pens. In that sense, it is hoped that the model presented here can explain the logic of ideologisation not only of ethnological discourses or texts, but also of several other types of intellectual production in the Balkans.

If the model can be trusted, then the Balkans are not to be considered a natural reserve of intellectuals eager to overturn the ill fates of their groups by the fiery force of their ideologised discourses. Nor is ethnology to be considered as the indisputable champion in the field of ideologisation of science. The logic of ideologisation in Balkan "Romanticist" ethnology can be considered as similar, or at least comparable to the logic of ideologisation in feminist anthropology, various native anthropologies, or advocacy anthropology. Thus if we encounter an intellectual specialist who is at the same time a member of a given group and its advocate, and if that specialist perceives his group as being threatened, deprived or oppressed by other groups, then we can expect the specialist to engage in the production of ideologised discourses in order to influence the change of his group's position, regardless of the fact that he comes from the Balkans or from America, and of the fact that he is engaged in the practice of "ethnology" or "anthropology". However, the double insider syndrome describes only one particular situation among the many possible ways of practising engaged and ideologised social science. Hopefully, it does so in such a way as to open a comparativist perspective, instead of offering just another brand of Orientalism or Balkanism. A rudimentary comparison matrix can easily be constructed on the premises of the presented approach:

1. Belongs to the studied group

A) yes                      B) no

2. Advocates the studied group

A) yes                      B) no

3. Perceives the studied group to be in disadvantaged position and/or victimized

A) yes                      B) no

By grouping the answers to the matrix questions, a continuum describing possible existential positions of researchers and their perceptions of the political, economic, or cultural position of the studied society can be constructed:

1. 1:A + 2:A + 3:A

2. 1:A + 2:B + 3:B

3. 1:B + 2:A + 3:A

4. 1:B + 2:B + 3:B



In that sense, the double insider syndrome (1:A + 2:A + 3:A) could be considered as representing one pole on the constructed continuum. This pole would encompass East European and Balkan “Romanticist” ethnology, feminist anthropology, as well as some brands of native anthropology. The other pole would be occupied by what can be labelled as the Malinowski, or double outsider, syndrome (1:B + 2:B + 3:B), which characterised early Western anthropology. Somewhere around the middle would be located such hybrid species as the rather recent Western advocacy anthropology (1:B + 2:A + 3:A) or the voluntarily disengaged Eastern “anthropology at home” (1:A + 2:B + 3:B). As is obvious, the principal value of the presented matrix and continuum lies in their capacity to generate questions instead of answers.

Instead of a conclusion, I would like to restate two scientific ideals whose blending was, if somewhat clumsily, attempted on the previous pages. The first of them has to do with impartiality: *“It may well be almost impossibly difficult for social scientists to remain objective and not allow their hopes and fears to colour their beliefs; but there is a world of difference between setting out to do something very difficult, and setting out to do something which makes no sense”* (Ryan 1970: 240 f.).

The second one gives a necessary human dimension to the first:

Whatever our birthplace, as anthropologists we cannot afford to be fundamentalists without jeopardising the most cherished value of anthropology: its ability to speak in a language in which one can maintain the unique and the shared at the same time – and thereby make room for alternative ways of seeing the world (Hastrup 1996: 80).

Together, they remind us of the paradoxical lesson which such supposedly fanatical Balkan Romanticists as Vuk Karadžić or, later, Jovan Cvijić have managed to pass on to posterity. Namely, even if we do have a non-scientific cause to defend, if we champion it in the most chivalrous way known to us, the results might not be lost to science. As far as chivalry in scope of science is concerned, this means respecting at least the rules laid down by Max Weber (Weber 1922). As for the wider scope, there is still no better guideline than Kant’s categorical imperative: So to act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in another, always as an end, and never as only a means.

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## Zusammenfassung

### **Romantiker oder ‚Doppelte Insider‘? Ein Essay über die Ursprünge ideologierter Diskurse in der Balkanethnologie**

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Auch wenn sie nicht als der wichtigste Erklärungsansatz für die Ideologisierungstendenzen im Fach anzusehen ist, bedarf doch die anhaltende und tiefe Zuneigung der südosteuropäischen Ethnologen bzw. Volkskundler zu romantischen Ideen der Erklärung. Eine der zentralen Thesen dieses Beitrags ist, daß die spezifische existentielle Stellung der Balkanethnologen, die ihren Ausdruck in einem „doppelten Insider Syndrom“ findet, an dem sie generell leiden, ihre fachliche Einstellung zutiefst beeinflußt hat. Sie sollte als einer der primären Faktoren für die Ideologisierung der Disziplin betrachtet werden. Ethnologen bzw. Volkskundler auf dem Balkan gehören im Prinzip der Gruppe an, die sie untersuchen, und teilen deren Sprache, Traditionen, dominante Werte und Interessen, während sie gleichzeitig jener Sozialschicht angehören, deren Aufgabe die Untersuchung, Festigung, Erfindung und oft auch Verteidigung der „Sache“ eben jener Gruppe ist. Weiterhin wird angenommen, daß die Wirkung dieses Faktors noch verstärkt wird durch andere Faktoren, die durch die Besonderheiten der Geschichte der Balkanstaaten bedingt sind. In anderen Worten, die besonderen historisch bedingten politischen, wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Gegebenheiten der Balkangesellschaften haben ganz wesentlich dazu beigetragen, das im „doppelten Insider Syndrom“ enthaltene Ideologisierungspotential der Ethnologen noch zu verstärken. Der hier vorgetragene

ne Ansatz hat den Vorzug, daß er sowohl die Faktoren, die eine starke Orientierung der balkanischen Ethnologen am romantischen Erbe bedingen, als auch jene Faktoren, die auf nicht-romantische Quellen zurückgehen, aufzuzeigen und so die Ideologisierung der Fachdiskurse besser zu erklären in der Lage ist.