

HIERARCHIES OF KNOWLEDGE IN CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPEAN ANTHROPOLOGY

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The issue raised in this paper is exceptionally sensitive, since I address, in fact, the mutual relations between the so-called Western anthropologists working on 'postsocialism' and the anthropologists who work on, but at the same time work and live in, the 'postsocialist countries' of Central and Eastern Europe (hereafter CEE). A characteristic of the problems discussed here causes me to refer to the scholarly production of the people that I personally know, many of whom I consider friends (and I hope they will still consider me as such afterwards), some of whom I have collaborated with, and among whom several have been helpful to me in one way or the other. I take it for granted that they will read this piece as a preliminary attempt to ponder the issue of the hierarchies of knowledge whose existence is visible and undeniable. This is what I will attempt to show below. Therefore, it should be our preliminary task to find out what the historical and political reasons are for their emergence and perpetuation. This kind of undertaking asks for something that Bob Scholte a long time ago called the 'anthropology of anthropology.' We are eager to criticize hegemonic political discourses, unveil works of culture as a mask legitimizing domination in class inequalities, and even deconstruct the ideological character of other academic disciplines' output. Anthropology, as a part of culture and a domain of social practice, can be studied and analyzed in similar terms. This move should enable us to understand conditions structuring the field and creating

this pecking order of wisdom. As in any other domain of life in which inequities have surfaced, raising consciousness has been a first step in the process of overcoming them. This should open the field for further communication and an exchange of ideas that should, in turn, contribute to the undermining of stereotypes and gaps. As a matter of fact, this is the thrust of anthropological endeavors. This is the way, I trust my fellow anthropologists, friends and colleagues will read what follows.

Some 'patterns of anthropological production' of Western and Polish scholars

There are quite a few 'Western' anthropologists who study 'postsocialism,' particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. In the case I know best, the Polish one, the list includes such names as Carole Nagengast, Elizabeth Dunn, Deborah Cahalen, Lisa Gurr, Elizabeth Vann, Christie Long (née Evans), Marysia Galbright (all of them American scholars), as well as Chris Hann, Frances Pine, Edouard Conte, Françoise Bafail and Stefanie Peters (Western Europeans). Some of them have, in fact, withdrawn from research, either due to the fact that they have shifted their interests, or opted out of academia to pursue other professional activities. Other key figures in the wider Central European area include Katherine Verdery, Martha Lampland, David Kideckel, Robert Hayden, Sam Beck, Susan Gal, Gail Kligman, Gerald Creed (all U.S. scholars), Michael Stewart, Deema Kaneff, and, again, Chris Hann (all three

coming from the UK), Don Kalb, Matijs Van den Port (both from the Netherlands), and Steven Sampson (Sweden). A remarkably distinct area of studies have emerged for Eastern Germany (e.g. Daphne Berdahl, Uli Linke, John Borneman, Hermine G. De Soto), but, paradoxically, research in this area has not always been deemed fully comparable to the other 'postsocialist' studies – as if the act of the swallowing of the former GDR whole by its Western 'big brother' had miraculously erased its communist past. Due to the limited space and purposes of this article, I will mainly focus on the 'Polish studies' and, partly, in my more general considerations on 'Central and Eastern European studies.' Here I treat research in the area of East Germany and the former Soviet Union as 'other continents' and will not address scholarly endeavours there at all.

It is remarkable that the majority of anthropological celebrities working on CEE are Americans, although some are of British descent. Surprisingly, there are few recognized authorities coming from continental Europe. It seems that Central and Eastern European ethnography has not really managed to attract, with few exceptions, German, Spanish, Italian, Scandinavian or French anthropologists. Of course, there are exceptions – for instance some persons mentioned above – but a certain pattern emerges from the above list. Only recently have younger scholars ventured into Dracula's, Tito's, Havel's and Wałęsa's lands, but it will probably take some time for them to establish themselves as internationally recognized personalities. For the time being, however, most scholars have chosen topics and countries that can either be described as: (a) rural communities and working class as well as their poverty, property, gender relations and forms of social organization (civil society); (b) urgent (wars and ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia); or – in their view – (c) exotic (Roma people, Romanian folklore¹). Usually, these studies

¹ Reverence to Romanian folklore can be witnessed also in anthropological documentaries

have been commonly labelled as 'post-socialist'² or 'transitological.' No matter how diversified in their topics and agenda, Western anthropologists do their work according to Western scholarship paradigms which may be diversified, but nevertheless comprise a Western-defined scholarly paradigm. Western anthropological publications on CEE show a remarkable shortage of references to local ethnographies, not to mention theories. Again, there are exceptions as, for example, Katherine Verdery outlines very briefly in her project of 'post-Cold War studies:'

[T]he orientation I am advocating would give voice to the "natives" as analysts of their own condition. Although it is not yet clear who would be the Franz Fanon of this corpus, his or her forerunners surely include the Eastern European dissidents and other scholars – people like Rudolph Bahro, Pavel Câmpăanu, Györgi Konrád, István Rév, Jadwiga Staniszkis and Iván Szelényi – whose writing spurred us to seek an understanding of socialism different from that offered by Cold War categories...' (2001: 20).

None among these names is an anthropologist and for Verdery discovering an anthropological "Fanon" in CEE is clearly a

on Romania. Apparently visual anthropologists are fascinated by the richness and exoticism of them. I base this opinion on my experience as a jury in three editions of the 'Astra Film Festival,' the biannual event of visual anthropology and documentary film event held in Sibiu, Romania (2000, 2002, 2004).

² Peter Skalník has paid attention to the interesting feature that in the Western academia there is a propensity to call the communist system socialism (or 'really existing socialism') and its aftermath 'postsocialism,' while in the East an 'emic' term applied is rather 'communism' and 'postcommunism.' He even claims that: "Because the common denominator of so-called socialism in CEE was the hegemony of communist party elites, the proper terms denominating adequately this hegemony and its aftermath should be communism and or post-communism and their adjectives" (2000:194).

distant dream and maybe as complicated as finding a Panchen Lama. The body of indigenous scholarly production inherent in her and other Western anthropologists' publications is conspicuously low. References are made mostly to works coming from the fields of history, sociology and political science, but extremely rarely to anthropology or ethnology.

Let us first consider two examples of research on socialist Poland. Both of them were carried out in rural communities following, in this respect, a general pattern of anthropological studies in the region under communism. The first book was written by Chris Hann: *A Village without Solidarity: Polish Peasants in Years of Crisis* (1985). He made a tremendous effort to include native scholarship into the body of his publication. Half of the entries in the selected bibliography are authored by Polish scholars, and one third of the whole list covers items published in Polish. However, only two among them are ethnographers, some are sociologists and others are historians, political scientists and economists. The other example I know very well is Carole Nagengast's interesting monograph, *Reluctant Socialists* (1991),³ which, at the same time, emerged as a real attempt at integrating several native scholars' perspectives into the account. Its bibliography covers ten pages and includes circa 220-250 entries. Still, even if it shines positively among several similar works in the field, fewer than thirty entries refer to Poland-based authors who had the fortune of having their texts published in English, often abroad, since only four publications cited are in Polish; there are also some references to national statistics. Authors most quoted are historians, some of them political analysts and economists, but very few sociologists; not a single indigenous ethnologist or anthropologist is named. Nagengast's fieldwork was carried out in the 1970s, her arguments were revised at the end of the

1980s, and the monograph was published in 1991. One may wonder how is it possible that *Volkskundists*, as they were/are often pejoratively portrayed, were so openly disregarded while at the same time, in common Western opinion, they were painstakingly preoccupied with rural communities and folklore, a trait for which they were otherwise scorned. Was it a conspiracy, ignorance, or a paradigmatic inconsistency? According to Western scholars working at that time in CEE, it was certainly the latter, and there is no reason not to trust them.

One might expect the 1989 breakthrough to change the existing fissure and advocate partnership. However, the pattern of one-sided theoretical input and confidence shown virtually only to Western scholars has proved to be well entrenched and perpetuated. Let us consider three very influential anthropological edited volumes. In 1993, a book on *Socialism* was published (Hann 1993). None of the contributors comes from the 'East,' although some of the authors were migrants or ex-migrants from the bloc. The same rule applies to a sequence of other recognized and often cited volumes in which the native point of view is practically nonexistent: *Uncertain Transition* (Burawoy and Verdery 1999), *Fieldwork Dilemmas* (De Soto and Dudwick 2000), *Altering States* (Berdahl, Bunzl and Lampland 2000), and, last but not least, *Postsocialism* (Hann 2001) which closed the circle that started in 1993.⁴ Altogether, there are 53 articles in these four volumes, but some scholars feature in several enterprises and have contributed more than once. With one exception, none of the authors is based in a former 'real socialist' country, although two originate from there, but have lived and worked for a long time in the West (i.e. Igor Barsegian and Slawomira Zbierski-Salameh).

³ See for example Buchowski 1997 where I implicitly expressed my respect in the title that directly referred to hers and in the polemics with her inspiring arguments in the text.

⁴ I have focused on these volumes in order to illustrate the case. Of course, there are other anthropological books on CEE published in the West that here and there include anthropologists coming from the region, but the pattern I discuss seems to be recurrent (cf. Hann 1996).

The only exception is Dobrinka Kostova who 'merely' co-authored a text on Bulgarian agriculture with Swiss scholar Christian Giordano in the last book mentioned above. Chris Hann, the editor of the volume, openly regrets this lack of balance: 'A [...] significant deficiency in our coverage is the absence of "local scholars," the many who practice some form of anthropological enquiry in their own country, and on whose support and cooperation most external researchers crucially depend [...]. [W]e shall endeavour to do better on future occasions' (Hann 2001a: xii). But the fact remains that a dozen years after the Polish 'Roundtable Revolution,' no more than a single indigenous author from CEE has made it into this exclusive 'club.' Similarly, in the book series on CEE published in the West and edited by Cornell University Press, not a single scholar coming from the region has ever managed to publish anything – all authors are U.S. based anthropologists.

Once again one may ask, is this Western domination of anthropological study merely an issue of obstacles in the way of the flow of communication, or does it result from a more inherent structural relationship? After all, many 'Eastern' scholars have proven to be open to anthropological ideas and practice, and 'compatible' with Western paradigms. I have a hunch that implicit structural obstacles play a role, that the emotional hurdle dividing the former blocs is still in place, and this separation cannot simply be explained by technical barriers. After all, the Atlantic is wider than the Oder River, but it does not prevent transatlantic cooperation between 'Western' scholars. Meanwhile, there are still difficulties in establishing effective East-West collaboration that would imply a bi-directional exchange of ideas.

Of course, there have been many attempts to do away with the existing mental border as well as intellectual segregation. For example, a book edited by Édouard Conte, Carole Nagengast and this author entitled *Poland Beyond Communism* (2001) is an interdisciplinary endeavor to present this country's historically conditioned current

transformations that, at the same time, is a purposeful attempt to join forces of scholars coming from Poland (7), of Polish origin but working in the West (2), the United Kingdom (2), France (2) and the USA (3). Although published in the West by the University of Fribourg Press in a series entitled 'Studia Ethnographica Friburgensia,' its circulation has been limited due to the fact that the publisher does not operate internationally nor have a worldwide distribution network. Another example is a series published in the West, but often directed to a sort of niche public (cf. Köstlin et al. 2002). A similar rule also applies to journals that sometimes host editors and authors coming from the non-Western tier of the Euroatlantic zone (cf. *Anthropological* 2003, edited by Kiliánová). However, this principle pertains even more harshly to several editorial attempts undertaken by scholars in CEE alone. They have tried hard to publish in English but the readership of these volumes is practically limited to their circle of friends and the people they give them to or (very seldom) the sales garnered by carrying them around to international meetings. Apparently, they have to rely on this mode of exchange typical for 'stone age economics' in a late capitalist environment. I cannot list all these initiatives, but some of them are worth mentioning since they are undertaken notoriously in: Zagreb (two ethnological volumes on war in the former Yugoslavia, especially Cale-Feldman et. al. 1993), Cluj (cf. Anăstăsoaie et.al 2003), Prague/Pardubice (cf. Skálik 2002), Ljubljana/Piran ('Mediterranean Ethnological School Summer School Series' and 'Ethnological Contacts Series'), Budapest (the journal 'Replika') and Poznań (the journal 'Ethnologia Polona,' cf. also Posern-Zieliński 1999; Buchowski 2001). Time and time again, Western scholars are invited, and do contribute to these native enterprises, but the market for these publications is, for obvious reasons, restricted because they do not happen to be published by reputable major publishers. Therefore, a mode of operation of the free market also contributes to the reproduction of hegemonic patterns in a way comparable to the domination of McDonald's' food range

and popularity over scope and recognition of local cuisines.

What is, then, the attitude of Eastern Europeans, particularly Poles, towards Western anthropological production? Quite a few translations have been done, nearly all of them within a domain of general anthropological theory. (I have made a small inquiry among my anthropological friends across the region and this pattern is just about universal.) Lévi-Strauss, Leach, Herzfeld, Geertz, Clifford, Appadurai, Murphy, Kuper – these are the authors that have translation currency in Central Europe. Interestingly enough, ethnographic monographs on overseas countries can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Hardly any anthropological monographs on CEE have been translated. The exceptions can be easily listed off: a couple of books on nationalism published in the former Yugoslavia, and a few edited volumes in local languages that include some articles by Western anthropologists.

Translation policy and market demand is part of the picture. The other aspect, no doubt related to the above one, is the ‘anthropological’ production itself. Several Polish and other Central and Eastern European anthropologists eagerly and profusely refer to Western theoretical ideas. Various conceptual works have been published, but they are often ‘recycled goods’ considering that they frequently address trendy issues invented by ‘continental tyrants’ such as postmodernism, deconstructed ethnicity, globalization, hybridity, transnationalism, media and advertisement. Zygmunt Bauman, Richard Rorty, Clifford Geertz and James Clifford, and other anthropological, philosophical and cultural studies savants are cited and recited as in a litany. This preoccupation with theory may be related to a desire to make a ‘postsocialist public’ more informed about world trends in the discipline. However, it leads to an understanding of anthropology as a purely theoretical, almost philosophical enterprise. It appears as a new Central European version of cultural studies jargon with anthropological references and jargon. Several scholars have

assumed that it is enough to reflect on general topics merely in conjectural terms. For them, an anthropologist is like a *flâneur* wandering in the library and searching for ideas. Fieldwork is not an integral part of this project; or, to put it more radically, it need not be at all. It may arise from an implicitly shared postmodernist conviction that ‘reality’ is constructed anyhow, so why bother about it? This leaning also has its roots in the late ‘real socialism’ period when a new generation of anthropologists desperately tried to detach themselves from traditional, ‘socialist’ and *Volkskundist* ethnologists by referring directly to Western theories and by escaping traps of crude positivism. It is a paradox that this ‘postmodern/postsocialist’ mode of operation and writing makes it attractive to local publics, but simultaneously hardly corresponds to the practice of anthropology espoused by Western academics working on and in CEE.

Theoretical considerations comprise only part of the anthropological routine in Poland (and to a certain extent in CEE). The other strand takes place somehow independently of the theoretical reflection carried out on an abstract level. Several scholars write in a style that perpetuates the *Volkskundist* tradition and are in fact immune to any outside impact. Others apply general and/or more particular anthropological theories (e.g. about kinship, alternative medicine, nationalism) to local phenomena and events. New, more ‘Westernized’ topics are addressed: dominated groups of varying social status and origin, from religious and ethnic to sexual ones, youth culture, poverty, gender studies, the adaptation of rural communities to structural changes, the transformation of social relations at the grass roots level, border communities, ethnic identities, etc. However, in this kind of research, anthropological works of non-native scholars doing their fieldwork in Poland are, in the case of most authors, neglected. Again, there are exemptions (cf. Warmińska 1999; Nowak 2003; Buchowski 1997), but I am talking about the mainstream.

Tentative (shallow) interpretation

How can these phenomena be interpreted at an anthropological grass roots level and through the pragmatics of daily life? No doubt, historically and socially conditioned reasons come into play. Language competence may still play a role. Some scholars, trained in the milieu in which the knowledge of English was not a priority, have difficulties in getting acquainted with Western literature on the subject they themselves study. This insulates them from the impact of ideas and findings written in the modern *lingua franca*. Also, access to Western publications can still play a role, although in a contemporary situation it is of secondary significance. More important reasons are both mental and epistemological. On the one hand and in the case of the above mentioned ‘theoreticians,’ it is an inferiority complex, a conviction that cultural/scholarly centers produce valuable and attractive theories that ‘we’ at the ‘periphery’ should learn practically by heart. On the other hand and in the case of ‘empiricists,’ it is a superiority complex that nobody else but ‘us’ can say more about ‘ourselves,’ i.e., our own societies. One of the assets of anthropological insights, for instance an outsider’s view or a ‘view from afar’ on local culture, is denied. Central and Eastern European ethnologists and/or anthropologists do not seem to be unique in this respect. Since the 1960s until today there has been a vibrant discussion on the presence of Anglo-Saxon anthropologists in the Alpine region and the value of their scholarly output. For example, Norbert Ortmayr wrote a very critical article entitled ‘Amerikaner in den Alpen’ (1992) and Reinhard Johler published a text on ‘The idea of “Alpine society,” or do we need the Americans in the Alps’ (1998) [cf. Viazzo 2004].

How can this phenomenon be explained on the Western side of the barricade? Using the same psychological terminology as above, I would call it a double superiority complex. On the one hand, ‘we’ Westerners cannot really learn anything from those backward Easterners since their paradigm is outdated (both nationalist and positivist at the same

time). Something that John Davies said about southern European countries seems also to apply to a surreptitiously (politically correct) held opinion about the majority of Central and Eastern European scholarship: ‘a contemporary ethnographer from France and England or America, carrying the very latest lightweight intellectual machine gun in his pack, may be suddenly confronted by a Tylolean or Frazerian professor appearing like a Japanese corporal from the jungle to wage a battle only he knows is still on’ (1977: 4). The only difference between Southern and Central Europe seems to be that until now nobody has in fact ‘waged the battle.’ The only line of battle runs through Central and Eastern European scholars themselves. In short, most Western scholars *a priori* and implicitly think that their socio-cultural anthropological paradigm is of better quality than any indigenous one. In anthropology there are no exceptions, and I emphasize ‘in anthropology,’ since they occur in philosophy (Žižek, Erjačević, not to mention émigrés such as Pomian, Kolakowski or Bauman) sociology (Endre Sik, Hankiss, Mokrzycki) and the political sciences (Staniszkis, Wnuk-Lipiński and others mentioned also by Verdery above). Think seriously about whether you have ever heard about any anthropological theory coming from CEE? Yuri Bromley’s concept of *ethnos* was concocted for political purposes and for the same reasons it was a propagated hoax! Malinowski? Yes, but he put forward his ideas eight decades ago, and after all, he belongs to the British tradition.

A provisional cultural critique of the East/West relations

At some point Adam Kuper wrote that ‘Scholars in Eastern European countries tended to share a traditional, nationalist preoccupation with peasant traditions, and their work had little theoretical content or comparative range’ (citation according to Príca 2004). First, I wonder how Kuper arrived at this without the comprehension of a single Eastern European vernacular? Second, the nationalist obsession was not the universal feature of CEE scholarship and many

anthropologists were well acquainted with Western scholarship and theories for decades. The nationalist motive might have some relevance in some newly established nation states (the Ukraine, the Baltic and former Yugoslav republics), but it has not really been the case in Poland since the 1970s. The same also applies to theoretical and comparative concerns. Much about anthropological theory has been re-produced in Central Europe; studies in Africa, Asia and Latin America have been carried out by scholars based in Poland, but also, as far as I know, in the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Besides, as Ines Prica (2004) remarks, this instant dismissal of 'nationalist' ethnologies has led to several quirks of fate. First, nationalist ethnologies, by impeding communist internationalism, contributed to the collapse of the authoritarian regimes in CEE, a fact appreciated by nearly all. If this were the case, then, they were not that bad after all. Second, in order to diminish ideological impact, Western anthropologists insist on 'basically empirical tasks, which do not happen to be the research of local, and deviated intellectual legacies, but social realities as they are' (Prica 2004). Such firmness has led to a certain degree of positivism aimed at the reconstruction of life under socialism and the description of changes at a grass roots level in 'real communism' and postsocialism. Indeed, the topics tackled seem rather 'traditional', i.e., largely focused on rural communities and their transition to the market economy, such as land reform, privatization, and class, gender and labor relations. Altogether, Western 'postsocialist studies' are blamed for not being able to produce any significant anthropological accounts that could have wider theoretical applications and contribute to any theoretical breakthrough, or, they are even reproached for being 'epistemologically regressive' (as one can read on the HESP Project's *Postcolony and Postsocialism* website⁵). The essence and irony of all these traits of Western anthropological studies on CEE is that these were exactly the arguments

ascribed by Western anthropologists to nationalist ethnologies in Eastern Europe. Accused in the recent past of empiricism and traditionalism, Polish and other Central and Eastern European scholars are keen to look to theories that will help them to renounce these pejorative stigmas. No wonder that among 'anthropologized' ethnologist intellectual endeavors such as the comparison between postsocialism and postmodernism or postcolonialism are more fashionable than anthropological monographs based on painstaking ethnography. They worked previously in this paradigm, although using intermittent fieldwork methodology, and are still told that they did it wrong! Now foreign anthropologists arrive and do something similar, although they write in English and are interested in slightly different issues, and 'native ethnographers' are now told that this time it is right! Many joined former 'Western' critiques of 'nationalist and traditionalist' ethnology, waged intellectual battles against *Volkskundists* by referring to subtle anthropological theories, and are today taught that those criticized socialist positivists were, at least in a sense, doing proper anthropology.

There is a degree of colonial mindset in this predicament. At least three grounds can be specified for this argument. First, local intellectual traditions are dismissed and are not included in the picture. Down-to-earth ethnography infused with selective Western ideas about the problems addressed is presented as genuine anthropology. I suppose it is, but would it not be much fairer if local scholars' theories featured in them as worthy re-consideration and rational critique rather than being merely ideologically contaminated, devoid of any scientific value and therefore ignored? Second, and related to the first, indigenous anthropologists often acquire the status of the objects of study, regular informants, while their scholarly work does not matter at all. Third, and most importantly, in some accounts, the postsocialist period is perceived as a chaotic transitional period, lacking in moral structures. However, it is questionable whether this is the experience of the people on the ground. Several arguments

⁵ The cited page of the project can be found at <http://www.inv.si/hesp/project.htm>.

can be given that the lives of CEE societies are a never-ending series of major or lesser changes. Even if life after 1989 is perceived as less stable than in the past, this does not automatically mean a lack of morality or social vacuum.

The latter point leads us to a more fundamental question that I can only touch upon here: in what way, and to what extent, is the field of postsocialist study an invention of Western scholarship, including anthropologists? This would be a case similar to orientalism, as defined by Edward Said (1978). For him orientalism is, first of all, a set of discursive practices through which the West structured the imagined East. Orientalism is also “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and ... ‘the Occident’” (Said 1978: 2). The *Orient* exists and people live in the region concerned, but the European representation of these people is a typical cultural creation that enables the powerful to legitimize their domination over the subjugated. The hierarchical dichotomy between the Occident and the Orient and its constant perpetuation proves that a powerful cultural hegemony is at work. Discursive hardening permits stronger groups to define weaker groups. It is enough to substitute ‘postsocialism’ for ‘Orient’ to realize what I have in mind in this respect.

East/West relations and their refraction in the domestic Eastern realm

Since I introduced a metaphor of ‘orientalism,’ let me play on it. Western liberal ideology denied socialist ideology in politics, economics and culture. It appears to be a larger culturally embedded pattern that applies equally to the above characteristic of the Western anthropological scholarship, located in the centers of knowledge production and eastern, provincial practice of anthropology and/or ethnology. This is a story about relations of power and discourses ossifying. If I am right, then anthropology, despite critical voices towards the quasi-colonial situation in the post-socialist countries, partakes in the very same project

and contributes to the reproduction of inequalities. Is this a case of (semi)orientalization?

One can look at this issue through the situation produced at domestic anthropological/ethnological encounters. Before I get to them, let me say that in the domain of politics and in public discourses, the way socialist societies were presented in the West was almost invariably negative. The borderline was drawn on the geographic map and the division was clear. The mutual Others were ‘spatially incarcerated’ (Appadurai). The same applied to eastern ethnologies. However, in fact long before 1989, the situation became more complicated, because many native anthropologists opposed the *Volkskundists* by embracing Western ideas. Despite this, the region was perceived as ‘anthropologically retarded’ (*vide* Kuper’s opinion). This opinion has been discursively hardened and still holds for many Western anthropologists. After 1989, more and more eastern ethnologists have claimed that they are anthropologists, and in several cases it is not just mimicry but a real shift of paradigm. At the same time, the sticker of anthropology has been even more emphatically used as a tool in local fights with legendary *Volkskundists*. The latter have become a symbol of the internal Others, impregnated against post-modern Western liberalism in the domain of anthropology. Is it a sort of domestic orientalism *à la anthropologie*?

Instead of conclusion: what can be done?

Relations between anthropologists from CEE and Western anthropologists working on CEE are not merely multiple and complicated, domestic divisions within national anthropologies also play a role. The subaltern status of scholars living in postsocialist countries in relation to their Western colleagues seems to be a fact of life that has various historical, psychological and, last but not least, material grounds (access to grants, equipment, disparities in salaries). It leads to an intellectual domination of the West, the perpetuation of hierarchies of knowledge, and creates a one-way street in the flow of ideas. I

believe that Western anthropologists should try harder to overcome the existing borders by involving 'postsocialist' scholars and ideas into their projects and discourses. On their part, anthropologists in CEE should do their best not to merely embrace abstract anthropological ideas or down-to-earth ethnography. The old dilemma between lofty ideas and traditional ethnography is long passé and there is no need to be torn between the two. A combination of ethnographic detail and theoretical insights can produce an indigenous anthropology that will be recognized by the international interpretive community of scholars. It will ultimately create a well established field of scholarship similar to postcolonial studies exercised by indigenous authors. It seems that in many respects, both in the past and today, 'we' anthropologists from CEE have not produced the ideas that could attract general anthropological attention, although fifteen years already passed since 1989 (or many more years, if one considers the much longer postcolonial history). Hopefully, one day we will be able to produce a scholarship recognized internationally and in mutual dialogue with our colleagues from elsewhere. Yes, indeed, we are still waiting for a Messiah, for the Franz Fanon of postsocialism! But will he or she be recognized by Western anthropologists?

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