

**POLITICS AND POETICS OF EUROPEAN IMAGES
OF SERBIA (1804-1914)**

**LA POLITIQUE ET LA POÉTIQUE DES IMAGES EUROPÉENNES SUR
LA SERBIE (1804-1914)**

**POLITICA ȘI POETICA IMAGINILOR EUROPENE
ALE SERBIEI (1804-1914)**

Vladimir GVOZDEN

Department of Comparative Literature,
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad,
Zorana Đinđića 2, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia
E-mail: v_gvozden@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper deals with numerous French, Austrian, German and British travelogues about Serbia written in the long nineteenth century, i. e. between the First Serbian Uprisal (1804) and the beginning of WWI (1914). The author tries to demonstrate how the geography of imagotypical texts followed certain hierarchical lines, and how different texts delineated the boundaries and trajectories which condition the movements within the system of cultural recognition. When it comes to ideology, European travellers are indeed “Europeans”, inheritors and custodians of the symbolic capital of the West. There are two fundamental elements of that ideology. The first is “the process of nation-building”, that is to say, the quest, within Europe itself, for the models of social integration, which was always a sensitive question. The second element appears in the context of the spaces of colonial domination, and takes the shape of exoticism which, as literary and cultural phenomenon, transgresses national boundaries due to cultural hegemony of great powers (‘great nations’). The ambivalence of writing about other cultures constitutes the limits of (Serbian) nation as narration, but differences are simultaneously admitted as a threshold that has to be transgressed, erased and translated in the process of a unified ‘humanist’, i.e. European cultural production.

Rezumat

Acest articol analizează numeroase jurnale de călătorie cu autori francezi, austrieci, germani și britanici, scrise despre Serbia în lungul secol XIX, adică între Prima Revoltă Sârbă (1804) și începutul Primului Război Mondial (1914). Autorul încearcă să demonstreze cum geografia textelor imago-tipice a urmărit anumite linii ierarhice și cum diferite texte au delimitat granițe și traiectorii care condiționează mișcările din cadrul sistemului de recunoaștere culturală. Când vine vorba de ideologie, călătorii europeni sunt într-adevăr „europeni”, moștenitori și custozi ai capitalei simbolice a Occidentului. Există două elemente fundamentale ale acestei ideologii. Prima este „procesul de construire a națiunii”, cu alte cuvinte, căutarea, în Europa însăși, a modelelor de integrare socială, care a reprezentat mereu o chestiune sensibilă. Cel de-al doilea element apare în contextul spațiilor de dominație colonială și îmbracă forma exotismului care, ca fenomen literar și cultural, depășește granițele naționale, grație hegemoniei culturale a marilor puteri („marile națiuni”). Ambivalența scrierilor despre alte culturi constituie limitele națiunii (sârbe) ca narațiune, însă diferențele sunt în mod simultan admise ca prag care trebuie depășit, înlăturat și transpus în procesul unui „umanism” unificat, adică producția culturală europeană.

Keywords: image, Serbia, Europe, folklore, national-humanism.

Cuvinte cheie: *imagine, Serbia, Europa, folclor, național-umanism*

In his autobiography, Karl Popper recalls how he was at the age of 12 greatly puzzled by the behaviour of his circle of family friends. Before the World War I, many members of his circle had discussed political theories which were decidedly pacifist, and highly critical of the existing order. They had been critical of the alliance between Austria and Germany, and of the expansionist policy of Austria in the Balkans, especially in Serbia. When the war broke out he was staggered by the fact that they suddenly become supporters of that very policy [Popper 2002, pp. 9-10]. In hindsight, Popper should perhaps not have been so surprised. If we closely examine the order of national-humanistic discourse, both political views, whether positive or negative with respect to the image of Serbia, actually share the same logic: in both cases the Serbs are imagined as clear expressions of the interest and fears, as Popper notes, of the community that speaks about them.

Serbian identity, like all identities, has an external and an internal dimension. As any other country, Serbia has been situated within certain larger regional or geopolitical contexts – for example, it is part of the Europe, part of the West, part of the global community. However, simultaneously this is always questioned: it is part of Europe but not part of the European Union [Gvozden 2008], it is part of the West (for the region we now use the designation the Western Balkans), but it was previously part of the Slavonic world [see Milojković-Đurić 1994], the Eastern, or the South-Eastern Europe and it was historically, as we shall see, part of the Orient; last but not least, there is the always problematic designation of “the Balkans”, to which many scholars paid attention recently. Serbia is also part of the global community, but the dream of its power among many Serbs is exaggerated in terms of its global political influence and importance. Serbian identity is continually being renegotiated not only in relation to internal political and ethnic diversity and sub-group identities, but also in relation to these external international or transnational identities [The initial idea for the discussion about external and internal dimensions of a national identity I owe to Kymlicka 2003].

The contemporary external dimensions of Serbian identity are quite important, but it seems that they are not integrated enough into the internal image. Serbians tend to have a particular view of the role they play in the larger world or in the region, but it seems we attach less importance to how we are perceived by other countries. Indeed, the impression is that concerns about Serbia’s status in the world does not affect the way the internal dimensions of contemporary Serbian identity are negotiated. As this paper will show, Serbian researches did a great job in gathering external knowledge about their culture in the past. But the past sometime should be exactly where it is. Moreover, the external knowledge about us usually reflects the views of the great nations, and we know less about our immediate neighbours.

The reasons for the interest of the ‘Great Powers’ in Serbia were different: because of possible warfare with the Ottomans, the Habsburg monarchy used every opportunity to acquire knowledge about Serbian population and resources; the French interest in the Serbia in the first half of the nineteenth century was marked by the fear of the possibility of Russian supremacy among Slavs, and the main political issues are not particular nationalities, but the insurrections of the Slavs in Turkey, Pan Slavism, the *Illyrisme* and the South Slavs unity [see Sekeruš 2002]. During the nineteenth century after the French revolution, Napoleonic wars and Serbian upheavals against Turks, Serbia would no longer be *terra incognita* for Westerners.¹ I am of the opinion that

¹ However, this does not mean that knowledge about the Balkans was on a high level. There are many complaints in the travelogues. Most notable is the following quote written by Edith Durham at the beginning of twentieth century in her *Through the Lands of the Serb* [1904, p. 141 (Serbian translation in 1997)]: “Servia is only some twenty-six hours distant from London by rail, but for England it is an almost undiscovered country. Nor do the other nations flock thither”. Also Asmus Sørensen in a letter to Hans Delbrück in 1894 writes: “I have been dealing with languages of the eastern part of our world for years. By the acquired knowledge I got the tool for studying literature of our Eastern neighbours. Thus I managed to find my way on the soil that is terra incognita for Germans and other Western Europeans” [Zeil 1982, p. 154; quoted in Bekić 2003, p. 17].

we can explain the above mentioned and many other facets of Serbian identity if we analyse the process of constructing the external image of the Serbs in the nineteenth century and its later reception in Serbia. Although this is not its main objective, this article will integrate the numerous information of our internalisation of external images. Footnotes will indicate part of the vast library of Serbian translations of texts of foreign travellers, diplomats and journalists from Austria, Germany, France and Great Britain as well as research articles and books about them that were regularly published in Serbia from the second half of the nineteenth century until present.

In one sense, in nineteenth century as well as in the contemporary world, 'being Serbian' is just one identity within this larger set of identities. For example, in the first half of the nineteenth century Serbs lived mainly in Austria, Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, and during the nineteenth century there were political disagreements between the Slavs from Austria and the Slavs from Turkey. This division was very strong in certain periods, and even Serbs from the Principality used to call their fellows from Hungary with the ethnic designation *Швабе* (*Scwabens*),² reserved usually for inhabitants of one cultural, historic and linguistic region in south-western Germany. On the other side, the majority of sources about the Serbs in the nineteenth century actually derive from the travelogues and diplomatic reports about the Ottoman Turkey, the fact visible from many book titles mentioned here (*Unter dem Halbmonde, Eine türkische Reise, Traces of travel brought home from the East, Travels in European Turkey, Over the Borders of Christendom and Eslamiah, La Turquie d'Europe, Les Slaves de Turquie*). The main context of the period is the slow disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the appearance of the new emerging nations attracted the attention of great European powers. One Serbian historian noted already in 1854 that this implies that the image of the Serb in nineteenth century is inextricably related to the image of the Turk [Ристић 1854; see also Jezernik 2010]. Moreover, in order to render the particularities of the Serbs the authors sometimes searched for a comparison with another significant and more familiar system of images. For example, in the popular Cyprian Robert's book *Les Slaves de Turquie*, published in France in 1844 and translated in Germany already in the same year, we read: "the Serbs are, as one Muslim writer says, *les Arabes d'Europe*" [Robert 1852, p. 219]. After the works of Larry Wolff, Maria Todorova, Božidar Jezernik and Vesna Goldsworthy there is no need to provide additional evidence that the interest of the West in the Balkans and/or Eastern Europe has been almost exclusively connected with the period of troubles and wars [see Wolff 1994; Todorova 1997; Goldsworthy 1998; Jezernik 2004]. Following some of their interpretative paths, the most important 'archaeological' question I will try to address here will be: what are representative images and ideas of what the foreign travellers wishes to project to the Serbs in the nineteenth century.

The well-known story says that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was in Belgrade six months before it was conquered by Prince Eugene in 1717. During her trip from Budapest to Belgrade, she observed the Rascians as "a race of Creatures" that looked like "Vagabond Gypsies", belonged to the Greek church, and lived in "extreme ignorance" [Montagu 1965: p. 304, 316]. Twenty years later the city again was surrounded to the Ottomans, but Prince Eugene's victory publicised the idea of Belgrade and Serbia as a detachable, not integral part of Ottoman Empire. Slowly but steadily Serbia re-emerged in eighteenth century in the same frontier zone as Hungary, *i.e.* the frontier of Europe [Wolf 1994, p. 42]. After the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-1829 Serbia further changed its unstable position and step by step was becoming a 'state' of more importance to the European policy. However, the biggest change in the modes of representation of Serbia, at least among travelogues published in Germany and Great Britain, did not happen before 1860s. This also means that the images of Serbs created by Lady Mary Wortly Montagu and other travellers were redefined. However, there is always hierarchy of this or that kind and some of the travel writers that redefined the image of Serbs did not fail to speak ironically about the Gypsies and their exotic appearance. Thus, in chapter 'Turkish Travelling' of a very popular work of Eastern travel,

² They were also called *Рацмађару*, literally 'Serb-Hungarians' which actually meant Serbs from Hungary [See Kovaček 2003].

Eothen, published anonymously in 1844, we find: “Their lot is a sad one: they are the last of the human race, and all the sins of their superiors (including the horses) can safely be visited on them. But the wretched look often more picturesque than their better (...) [Kinglake 1844, p. 11].” A few years later we hear the voice of one more unconscious follower of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Edmund Spencer in his *Travels in European Turkey*: “I thought the dwellings of the good Servians sufficiently primitive, but the architectural efforts of this vagrant race were not superior to those of the beaver” [Spencer 1851, 62].

Despite this simultaneously negative and exotic othering of the Roma people by foreign travellers, Serbia of course was not described by them as the land of Swift’s Houyhnhnms. Surely the animal imagery is not representative enough, so it seems that the history of the representation of Belgrade in the nineteenth century gives a better insight into the poetics and politics of the imagining of other human beings. From the early modern period until the 1850s, today’s capital of Serbia Belgrade was seen mainly as a ‘fortress’ and it had significance on the military-strategic plan. Prevailing terms for description and representation of the city included: walls, towers, defensive channels, roads to the fortress, geographical position etc [see Калић 2003, p. 16; Костић 2003, p. 28]. The fact that the military discourse frames the image of the Serbs well into nineteenth century explains certain old and contemporary stereotypes but also an actual and frequently appearing auto-image of the Serbs.

As numerous texts show, in the second half of the nineteenth century Belgrade slowly loses the importance as a strategic site and attempts to keep pace with developed European cities. This was probably best described by British traveller Andrew Archibald Paton. During his first visit to Belgrade, in 1839, he perceived a city in which architecture, clothing and manners of the people were Oriental. During his next visit four years later Paton’s melancholy is cured and he observes the city in which were emerging European buildings, people wore European clothing and manners of the Serbs were no longer Turkish [Paton 1845, p. 53; see Момчиловић 2003, pp. 161-168]. There are many other foreign witness of Belgrade’s ‘great transformation’: in 1873 Gustav Rasch with admiration records that the Turkish fortress called Kalemegdan became the new Belgrade promenade [see Rasch 1873]; Wilhelm Runge asserts in 1875 that Belgrade became the cultural capital of the Serbs [see Runge 1875]; one year later Amand von Schweiger sees Belgrade as a modern, new city and notes new social stratification [see Schweiger-Larchenfeld 1876]; the same year Karl Braun-Wiesbaden was the first visitor to recommend Belgrade as a tourist site [see Braun-Wiesbaden 1876]. All in all, by the end of century the interest more and more went in the direction of description of architecture, hotels, newspapers, shops, cafes, education, leisure. At the beginning of the eighteenth century Lady Mary came to Belgrade to study Arabic poetry. At the end of the nineteenth century another British traveller, Herbert Vivian, noted that Belgrade in essence is a modern, almost Western city, and those who search for his historical past will not find it anymore [Vivian 1897, p. 170].

However, this does not mean that the opposition between the Oriental and the new city disappeared; it is rather strong throughout the century. For example, the ethnic mosaic of the commercial area of the city that consisted of Greeks, Serbians and Turks was seen deep into the nineteenth century as a remnant of its Oriental identity [see Đurić-Zamolo 1977]. It might be rather said that the nineteenth century was marked by the dialectics of older militarisation of Belgrade and its new aesthetization – for many travellers at the end of century Belgrade became one of the most beautiful city of this part of Europe; they also like the natural beauty of Serbia. Even one military professional celebrates the beauty of landscape: he says in a letter to Gladstone in 1876 that the natural beauty of Serbia is so perfect that it is a pity to destroy it by warfare [see L’Estrange 1884; Momčilović 1990, p. 83]. It is essential to explain this change of perspective in the last decades of the nineteenth century, which manifested itself as a discourse of aesthetization of the image of Belgrade, Serbia and, of course, Serbs. There is a kind of poetics in that process, since it is connected not only with various power politics, but also with the new way of post-

romanic auto-imagining of the Western travellers who increasingly believed in their own autonomy in the production of images.

Of course, that was just a belief, because there was no autonomy per se. It seems that poetics of binary opposition is always given in advance, that is to say it pre-exists the production of particular ethnic groups in the nineteenth century. The simple truth is that it is impossible to represent a people from the inside, since cultures are inherently plural. However there are many scholarly attempts to do so which actually lead to the very useful, but politically sensitive transformation of an ethnic group into a static object of description and research. As we know today, at root of the production of difference most often lies the system of cultural privileging. That gives even more weight to the idea that we should more thoroughly investigate internal perception and reception of external images of Serbia.

The image of frontier dominates during the nineteenth century. For example, at the beginning of British journalism about Serbia news were always coming from the frontier. The first information about Serbia were given by *The Times* (established 1785) in 1801 about the crises in the Balkans produced by *janjičars* and were taken from the more informed contemporary German media. The most important period was the time of First Serbian upheaval when *The Times* published 28 news articles, most of them actually taken from Vienna, Constantinople, Zemun, from Maine, and, of course, 'From the Frontiers of Turkey'. And they even were fair to admit to their readers that 'reports from Servia (...) as experience has thought us, are neither certain nor accurate' [*Times*, December 3, 1808; Момчиловић 1990, p. 44]. The geographical displacement was also not rare. Thus, William Macmichaels who travelled from Moscow to Constantinople mixed Serbians and Bulgarians, thought that Bulgarians are Serbs, and he described a Bulgarian wedding as a Serbian one [Момчиловић 1990, p. 52].

Compatible with the metaphor of 'frontier', there were numerous binary oppositions governing production of images of Serbs in the nineteenth century: military/civilian, Occident/Orient, West/East, Zemun/Belgrade, Christianity/barbarism, history/modernity. Zemun (now part of the Belgrade municipality) used to be described as the last stop before a traveller left the Austrian/Western/civilized soil and crossed into Turkey or, later, to the Serbian Principality. If Zemun (or Semlin) was the last outpost of the cultured world and a threshold, then Belgrade was a gate of the Orient and its mystique.³ Not surprisingly, in Belgrade the Orient starts just around the corner. For example, British diplomat Mounstuart E. Grant Duff says that he was walking down one street in Belgrade but took a left turn and it was farewell to the Christian world [see Grant Duff 1897; Момчиловић 1990, p. 73]. Poetics of binary opposition is rather strong and British traveller Edmund Spencer in his description of the crossing of Danube makes difference between the dynamic, active, Western bank of the river and the static, passive world on the Eastern side [Spencer 1851, pp. 9-28]. But there also were travellers adventurous enough to engage in a bit of cross-dressing: German traveller Franz Scherer during his travels through Serbia in 1876 wore half-Western and half Oriental clothes [see Scherer 1882; Schubert 2003].

Especially during the first half of the nineteenth century Belgrade was described as a space where the worlds of West and East mix [see for example Creagh 1875]. But some writers also pointed that two ages were mixing in this space, ages labelled by French traveller Georges Perrot respectively as the closing 'poetical barbarity' and the foreshadowing one of 'civilization' [Ehaliotis 2003, p. 202]. German engineer Wilhelm Richter travelled once with knez Miloš from Kragujevac to Belgrade and for him this journey marked not only a very slow travel through space but also movement through time, because the Serbian prince in 1839 travels in the same way as was done in Germany in the medieval period. [see Richter 1840] A decade later, another German traveller Ernst Anton Quintzman almost did not describe contemporary people, but only history [see Quintzmann 1850]. Among travel writers, the Serbian territory, especially Belgrade, was often deemed as a place where history has a lively feeling infiltrating the country far and wide.

³ „On dirait qu'à Semlin finit l'Europe civilisée et que la barbarie commence“, writes Jérôme-Adolphe Blanqui, for example [Blanqui, 1845, pp. 40-41].

The above mentioned set of oppositions was strongly connected with the increasing modernisation and europeization of Serbia. When Otto Dubislav von Pirch produced an image of the Serbian government in Belgrade in 1829 he contrasted it with the Turkish government, and noticed that the better living standard is on the Serbian side (the Serbian part of the city is clean and ordered). This contrast is further developed in his description of a Serbian trader's house in which one room is decorated in a European way (sofa, cupboards, mirror, tables, chairs, copper engravings) and another one in a Turkish style (no furniture, only pillows and rugs) [see von Pirch 1830; here quoted from Пирх 1951, p. 67]. Thus, von Pirch sees a mixture everywhere but also notes that Serbs increasingly abandon the Turkish way of life. There are many other instances of this approach: for example, the similar opposition is also present in Bois le Comte's diplomatic report from Serbia to Comte de Rigny published in 1834, although he chooses to frame it within a general binary opposition of Christians versus Turks [the excerpts of the *Report* about Serbia appeared in Serbian in 1894; see Новаковић 1894].

It seems to me that this strong opposition of Occident and Orient might be both externally and internally misleading, because it masks the opposition governing real politics in and about Serbia in the nineteenth century, when it was seen as a target of Austrian and Russian politics. Those two politics could not be seen in terms of the strong binary opposition used by foreign travellers. However, they produced the image of an important middle position of Serbia that is even today gladly accepted among many Serbs as a kind of fate, either our inferiority or superiority compared to other nations; which again masks real politics of certain agents, including the European Union and Russia, which in turn is not so strictly divided on the same lines as these old poetic of binary oppositions. In my opinion these strong binary oppositions are more products of poetics, or of the strong external and internal will to make things easier and more beautiful in the sense of possible harmony between the two elements. When something is not known enough, it is usually seen as something that incorporates heterogeneous and contradictory features. Conversely, in the world of real politics the problem is not so beautiful and neat and I would like to say that oppositions are more subtle but we again lack their proper interiorization. I think that this is the reason why the same ambivalence operates in the background of most representations of the Balkans: contradiction between the idea that the region has central role to certain politics and that the region is a marginal site.

The example of French romantics is curious and it clearly proves that the forces beyond imagining the Serbs were centrifugal and centripetal. On the one hand, in their politics and poetics of naming they saw barbarian 'Morlaques' and Illyrians, as they would say, the good savage of the eighteenth century, with all accompanying ideology (naturalism, egalitarianism, idealisation of bandits and outlaws). On the other hand, the military officers, diplomats and journalists under the influence of positivist theories of evolutionism and progress place the Serbs somewhere at the dawn of humanity, hence in need of being civilised by and led by the superior civilization [see Sekeruš 2002].

Having in mind all of this, we might pose the question: is/was Serbia the Second or Third World? Indeed, very often instead of the description of the exotic Other, we encounter the understanding of Serbian identity in an ambivalent fluctuation between 'Europeans' and the Oriental otherness. The earliest example of thinking about this dilemma I found is from the beginning of the nineteenth century. In August 25, 1815, *The Times* published an excerpt from the letter of an anonymous Serb from Orschawa: „The august council of Sovereigns, the fathers of European family are occupied at Vienna with the fate of the negroes of Congo and of the coast of Guinea, they extend even to them their generous solicitude. But that the feeling of admiration may not be interrupted, we must take care not to look around us. We must not listen to the groans of an unfortunate nation, whom the Turks are exterminating and mowing down by thousands, not more than four days journey from Vienna! We must avert our looks, we must not enquire into what is passing in Servia. All compassion is reserved for the Negroes, and none for the Servians. The ferocious Mussulmans massacre, impale them, violate their women and children, compel them to

abjure the religion of their fathers, and convert, with insatiable barbarity, all that flourishing country into one vast and gloomy tomb“ [Момчиловић 1990, p. 50]. Pro-Serbian British military officer Henry Ronald MacIver in the letter to Gladstone sixty-one years later writes that Serbs, as any other Christian peoples in the Balkan peninsula, now come to the stage of enlightenment which enables them to feel humiliation that lasted 400 years [Момчиловић 1990, p. 89]. So a nation from the European periphery must be enlightened enough to understand and feel what is humiliation. Undoubtedly, this and many other examples invite a post-colonial approach to the past and probably present external as well internal imagining of the Serbs.

In 1840 appeared the first travel guide by John Murray that covered the Balkans and other parts of the Ottoman Empire as *A Handbook for Travellers in Turkey: describing Constantinople, European Turkey, Asia Minor, Armenia and Mesopotamia* (London, 1840) and the essence of its image of Serbia is this: “The best authority in all matters connected with Servia is the learned work of Professor Ranke translated from the German into English by Mrs. Kerr. (...) The Servian language is the most refined of the Southern Slavonic dialects, and their popular poetry ranks high in Slavonian literature [see Murray 1840].” In an important current of the European Romantic thinking, especially among German and French intellectuals, the Serbs fitted aptly to the notion of the re-emerging cultured nations struggling for emancipation. However, we should always remember that this was only one among many powerful currents, and that it has different facets and ideological backgrounds. Under the influence of Alberto Fortis’ *Voyage to Dalmatia* (1774), the nineteenth century was marked by an increasing interest in the Serbian folklore.⁴ Maybe this will sound both externally and internally as a heresy but this interest in Serbian folk poetry has different sides and aspects, it has its po-ethics, *i.e.* its poetics but also its ethics. After all, it can be argued that the interest in the folklore of the Balkans did not lead to acquaintance with real people and it also perpetuated the idea of the Balkans as a radical positive or radical negative Other. This is also true in the case of images of heroism and ethos in Serbian folk poetry, which too easily became part of external negative imagining of the Serbs in the last decade of twentieth century, but it is still internally sometimes perceived as something extremely positive.

The touch of family tragicism, passions in a savage ambient, bizarre customs, the obscure motivation of protagonists, and new kinds of poetic expressions were seductive for many Western intellectuals inclined to sentimentalism which valued natural unmediated sentiments [see Ellermeyer-Životić 2007]. This poetry met many patterns of exoticism and the Romantic sense of *dichtender Volksgeist*.⁵ Also the philhelenist fashion contributed to the interest in South Slavs [Sekeruš 2002, p. 54], and this poetry has an intermediary place between the patriarchal and the modern society. The interest in the folk poetry often masked and maybe replaced the interest in real complexities of contemporary people and sometimes it even lead to their infantilization in accordance with the civilised/barbarian lines. For example, the German poet Heinrich Stieglitz, the author of *Lieder zum besten der Griechen* (1823), paraphrasing Herder, writes that Serbian folk poetry is the proper image of the people that made it, which abandon the romantic idea of individual talent. Also, we should be careful with seductive comparisons of Serbian poetry with, for example, the poetry of the French troubadours, that often appears in the nineteenth century France. On the one hand, that is a value statement. On the other hand, this means that the Serbs only belong to the medieval period. Any production of otherness which does not see individuals, but only groups and myths, has strong political background, even when it simultaneously produces a positive aesthetization of the Other.

Of course, the external and internal image of Serbian folk poetry can be surprisnlgly different. This is visible in two approaches to Owen Meredith's *Serbski Pesme, or National Songs*

⁴ *Volkslieder der Serben, Metrisch übersetzt und historisch eingeleitert von Talvj* appeared 1825 in Halle, Mme Elise Voïart, who did not know Serbian, translated in 1834 this poetry from German under the title *Chants populaires des Serviens*. See also Bowring, 1827; Ćurčin 1905; Mojašević 1983; Koljević 1982.

⁵ „L'exotisme sudslave serait ainsi l'expression d'une curiosité esthétique; les auteurs se tournent vers les pays étrangers pour y chercher le caractéristique et l'insolite, pour surprendre le public français“ [Sekeruš 2002, p. 87].

of *Servia* [Meredith 1861]. Although he is aware that Meredith's translation is not veritable, one of the leading Serbian intellectuals of the first decades of the twentieth century Pavle Popović uncritically argued that Meredith is the best English translator of Serbian folk poetry [Popović 1922, pp. 382-386]. On the other side, English Slavic scholar Lord Strangford criticizes not only the title which is not in proper Serbian language but also finds that Meredith did not translate songs from the Serbian but from a book of Auguste Dozon, chancellor of the French consulate in Belgrade [see Momčilović 1990; Dozone 1859].

Then, we might also ask: who has the right to produce an artistic pastiche and who is just an epigone? The question can be considered in relation to the typical modern Western notion of property: it was easy for Prosper Merime and Owen Meredith to falsify Serbian poetry, or the poetry of *un people savage*, as Merime writes in the Preface of 1827 edition of *La Guzla* [Yovanovich 1911], or for Goethe to write a poem “aus dem Morlakischen”. Why this was so easy? Probably because the level of real differentiation of nations and their symbolic capital in European literary system was generally rather low in the nineteenth century despite the popularity of folk poetry. This leads us to the issue of the right to subjectivity of the infantilized European Other. As it were, Serbian literature written by individual authors was established in the eighteenth and, of course, in the nineteenth century, that is to say parallel to the rise of the interest in Serbian folk poetry that lasted well into the twentieth century. However, unlike the case of the reception of folk poetry, almost nobody dared to research contemporary individual Serbian authors who wrote exactly in the frames of so the called Western poetics (and I have to say po-ethics). Even when some of them were mentioned in the press, the reason was political and not artistic. For example, the scarce traces of reception of the greatest poets of Serbian romanticism Branko Radičević (1824-1853) are not connected with his literary career, but with a political and cultural affair that took place decades after his premature death [Momčilović 1990, pp. 121-123].

Instead of a decisive conclusion I would like to say that it should be demonstrated how the geography of imagotypical texts follows certain hierarchical lines, and how different texts delineate the boundaries and trajectories which condition the movements within the system of cultural recognition. Regardless of individual intention, it is clear that most travelogues and other texts belong to broader structures of representation which are heavily burdened by ideological moments. When it comes to ideology, European travellers are indeed “Europeans”, inheritors and custodians of the symbolic capital of the West. There are two fundamental elements of that ideology. The first is “the process of nation-building”, that is to say, the quest, within Europe itself, for the models of social integration, which was always a sensitive question. The second element appears in the context of the spaces of colonial domination, and takes the shape of exoticism which, as literary and cultural phenomenon, transgresses national boundaries due to cultural hegemony of great powers (‘great nations’). Eventually, as I demonstrate in the recent book *Serbian Travel Writing and its Culture 1914-1940*, this process will lead Serbian travel writers of interwar period in the direction of self-exotization or of the re-production of colonial discourse, when they wrote about the (in)significant Others [see Gvozden 2011]. Nevertheless, there is always something more: social history (ideology) and personal history (utopia) mix in a literary image of the Other, as a history of separation and restraint.

The main issue is, then, the representative regime of the image, *i.e.* the fact that the image of the foreign, is in an important way literary. We have to deconstruct the role of a humanist conception, or ‘procedure’ of literature in 19th century, as a form of knowledge of a special kind, that differs from philosophical or scientific knowledge but could be equally, if not more, important. In an ideology of national humanism, the universal was too easily compatible with the national. Therefore, the major strategies (and, luckily, tensions) that guide the production and figuration of meaning in the travelogues are at once the writing of difference (from a specific cultural and discursive location) and a claim to general validity. The ambivalence of writing about other cultures constitutes the limits of (Serbian) nation as narration, but differences are

simultaneously admitted as a threshold that has to be transgressed, erased and translated in the process of a unified 'humanist', *i.e.* European cultural production.

When we speak about the tension of internal and external image of Serbia this national-humanist ideology lead Serbians to accept and interiorize many of the images about themselves produced in the nineteenth century, but often without awareness that they are historically made and not eternal. Politically speaking, some very important contemporary Serbian politicians and leaders owe too much to the nineteenth century, because they often wish to transgress their nationhood in the name of humanist ideological notions, but they also forget, as many imperial travellers in Serbia one or two centuries ago, that exactly this unified humanist perspective masks politics as a way to make real individual people and their interests visible. To say that this is a by-product of the colonial mindset would be heresy for many Serbs, but it seems that any interiorization of the imperial view, especially to other small nations, has certain connections with the colonial project invented in Western Europe. I think that the real task is to explain how and why Western European ideas so easily go off the rails when they are petrified and exported abroad. Or, how do they run amok when they last much longer than it was intended or admitted by their original producers.

References

- Bekić, 2003: Томислав Бекић, *Germanoslavica II*, Нови Сад: Савез педагошких друштва Војводине.
- Blanqui, 1845: Jérôme-Adolphe Blanqui, *Voyage en Bulgarie pendant l'année 1841*, Paris: W. Coquebert.
- Bowring, 1827: John Bowring, *Narodne srpske pjesme. Servian popular poetry*, translated by John Bowring, London.
- Braun-Wiesbaden 1876: Karl Braun-Wiesbaden, *Eine türkische Reise*, Stuttgart: A. Auerbach.
- Creagh, 1875: James Creagh, *Over the Borders of Christendom and Eslamiah. A Journey thorough Hungary, Slavonia, Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, and Montenegro, to the North Albania, in the Summer of 1875*“, vol. I, London: Samuel Tinsley.
- Ćurčin, 1905: Milan Ćurčin, *Das Serbische Volkslied in der deutschen Literatur*, Leipzig: Fock.
- Dozone, 1859: Auguste Dozone, *Poésies populaires Serbes*, Paris: E. Dentu.
- Durham, 1904: Edith Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serb*, London: Edward Arnold.
- Đurić-Zamolo, 1977: D. Đurić-Zamolo, *Beograd kao orijentalna varoš pod Turcima 1521-1867 [Belgrade as an Oriental town under the Turks 1521-1867]*, Beograd: Muzej grada Beograda, 1977.
- Ehaliotis, 2003: Rennos Ehaliotis, 'A Glimpse of Belgrade: Georges Perrot's Remarks on Belgrade on the Occasion of his Visit following the Assassination of Prince Michael Obrenović (1868)', *Београд у делима европских путописаца*, ур. Ђорђе Костић, Београд: Српска академија наука и уметности.
- Estrange, 1884: W. D. L'Estrange, *Under fourteen flags: being the life and adventures of Brigadier-General MacIver, a soldier of fortune*, Melbourne: G. Robertson.
- Goldsworthy, 1998: Vesna Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania: the imperialism of the imagination*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Grant Duff, 1897: Mounstuart E. Grant Duff, *Notes from a Diary*, London.
- Gvozden, 2008: Vladimir Gvozden, 'Some Remarks on the Relationship between European Identity and the European Union', *EU=Europe? Euroskepticism and European Identity*, ed. Kenneth Hanshew, *Forost Arbeitspapier*, No. 45, Jun 2008, 9-18.
- Gvozden, 2011: Владимир Гвозден, *Српска путописна култура 1914-1940: студија о хронотопичности сусрета*, Београд: Службени гласник.

Ellermeyer-Životić, 2007: Olga Ellermeyer-Životić, „Tereza Albertina Luiza F. Jakob (TALFJ, 1797-1997): prevodi srpske narodne poezije i konceptualizacija slike Srba u Nemačkoj 19. veka“, *Stvaraoci i posrednici: studije o srpskoj književnosti i srpsko-nemačkim književnim vezama*, Beograd: Filološki fakultet, Institut za književnost i umetnost.

Jezernik 2010: Božidar Jezernik (ed.), *Imagining 'the Turk'*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Jezernik, 2004: Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, London: Saqui Books.

Kalić, 2003: Јованка Калић, „Европски путописци о Београду“ [‘European Travellers on Belgrade’], *Београд у делима европских путописаца*, ур. Ђорђе Костић, Српска академија наука и уметности, Београд.

Kinglake, 1844: Alexander William Kinglake, *Eothen, or Traces of travel brought home from the East*, London: J. Ollivier.

Koljević, 1982: Светозар Кољевић, *Ка поетици српског народног песништва. Стране критике о нашој народној поезији* [‘Towards the Poetics of Serbian folk poetry. Foreign criticism of our folk poetry’], Београд: Просвета.

Kovaček, 2003: Божидар Ковачек, „Мађарски глумац Габор Егреси о свом боравку у Београду после револуције 1848/1849“, *Београд у делима европских путописаца*, ур. Ђорђе Костић, Београд: Српска академија наука и уметности, 187-195 [‘Hungarian Actor Gabor Egressy about his stay in Belgrade after the revolution 1848/1849’, *Belgrade in the Work of European Travel Writers*, ed. Ђорђе Костић, Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts].

Kymlicka, 2003: Will Kymlicka, 'Being Canadian', *Government and Opposition*, No. 38, 2003, 358-385.

Meredith, 1861: Owen Meredith's *Serbski Pesme, or National Songs of Servi*, London: Chapman and Hall.

Milojković-Đurić, 1994: Jelena Milojković-Đurić, *Panslavism and National Identity in Russia and in the Balkans 1830-1880*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Momčilović, 1990: Бранко Момчиловић, “Једна енглеска белешка о Бранку Радичевићу“ [‘One English note on Branko Radičević’], *Из историје југословенско-британских културних веза од 1650. до Другог светског рата*, Нови Сад: Филозофски факултет.

Mojašević, 1983: Миљан Мојашевић, *Јакоб Грим и српска народна књижевност. Књижевноисторијске и поетолошке основе* [‘Jacob Grimm and Serbian Folk Literature’], Београд: Српска академија наука и уметности.

Momčilović, 2003: Branko Momčilović, „Београд у путопису Ендруа Арчибалда Пејтона“ [‘Belgrade in the travelogue of Andrew Archibald Paton’], *Београд у делима европских путописаца*, ур. Ђорђе Костић, Београд: Српска академија наука и уметности, 2003, 161-168.

Montagu, 1965: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Robert Halsband, Vol. 1 (1708-1720), Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Murray, 1840: *A Handbook for Travellers in Turkey: describing Constantinople, European Turkey, Asia Minor, Armenia and Mesopotamia*, London: John Murray.

Novaković, 1894: „Србија у години 1834: писма грофа Боа-Ле-Конта де Рињи министру иностраних дела о тадашњем стању у Србији“ [‘Serbia in the year 1834: letters of Bois Le Comte to the foreign minister de Rigny about the current situation in Serbia’], прир. Стојан Новаковић, *Споменик*, Српска краљевска академија, 24.

Pirch, 1830: Otto Dubislav von Pirch, *Reise in Serbien im Spätherbst 1829*, 2 Bände, Berlin. Pirch, 1951: Ото Дубислав Пирх, “Београд 1829“, *Стари Београд: из путописа и мемоара* [‘Belgrade in 1829. Old Belgrade: From the Travelogues and Memoirs’], прир. Ђуро Гавела, Београд: Ново покољење.

Paton, 1845: Andrew Archibald Paton, *Servia, the Youngest Member of the European Family or, a residence in Belgrade, and travels in the highlands and woodlands of the interior, during the years 1843-1844*, London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans.

Popović, 1922: Павле Поповић, „Један енглески преводилац наших народних песама“ [‘One English translator of our folk songs’], *Српски књижевни гласник*, V, 5, 382-386.

Popper, 2002: Karl Popper, *Unended Quest. An Intellectual Autobiography*, London & New York: Routledge.

Quitmann, 1850: Ernst Anton Quitmann, *Reisebriefe aus Ungarn, dem Banat, Siebenbürgen, den Donaufürstenthümern, der Europäischen Türkei und Griechenland*, Stuttgart: J. B. Müller.

Rasch, 1873: Gustav Rasch, *Der Leuchststurm des Ostens, Serbien und die Serben*, Prag: F. Skrejšovský.

Richter, 1840: Wilhelm Richter, *Serbiens Zustände unter dem Fürsten Milosch bis zu dessen Regierungs-Ensagung im Jahre 1839*, von, Leipzig: A. Frohberger.

Ristić, 1854: Јован Ристић, „О историчној важности успомена старих путника који су кроз Србију прошли, а особито Бертрандона де ла Брокиера“ [‘On historical significance of the memories of old travellers through Serbia, particularly Bertrandon de la Bro(c)quière’], *Гласник Друштва српске словесности*, 6, 1854, 209-226.

Robert, 1852: Cyprian Robert, *Les Slaves de Turquie. Serbes, Monténégrins, Bosniaques, Albanais et Bulgares. Leurs ressources, leurs tendances et leurs progrès politiques. Edition de 1844*, Paris: Prassard.

Runge, 1875: Wilhelm Runge, *Reisebriefe aus Serbien*, Dortmund: Köppen.

Scherer, 1882: Franz Scherer, *Bilder aus dem Serbischen Volks- und Familienleben*, Neusatz: Verlagsbuchhandlung von Luka Jocić & Comp.

Schubert, 2003: Габријела Шуберт (Gabrielle Schubert), „Франц Шерер о Београду и Србима“ [‘Franz Scherer on Belgrade and Serbs’], *Београд у делима европских путописаца*, ур. Ђорђе Костић, Београд: Српска академија наука и уметности, 2003.

Schweiger-Lerchenfeld, 1876: Amand von Schweiger-Lerchenfeld, *Unter dem Halbmonde: Ein Bild des ottmanischen Reiches und seiner Völker*, Jena: Costenoble.

Sekeruš, 2002: Pavle Sekeruš, *Les Slaves du Sud dans la miroir français*, Beograd: Zadužbina Andrejević.

Spencer, 1851: Edmund Spencer, *Travels in European Turkey in 1850, through Bosnia, Servia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thrace, Albania and Epirus; with a Visit to Greece and the Ionian Islans and a Homeward Tour through Hungary and the Slavonian Provinces of Austra and the Lower Danube*, Vol. I, London: Colburn & Co., 9-28.

Todorova, 1997: Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Vivian, 1897: Herbert Vivian, *Servia, the Poor Man's Paradise*, London: Longmans, Green & Co.

Wolff, 1994: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Yovanovich, 1911: Voyislav M. Yovanovich, *La Guzla de Prosper Mérimé: étude d'histoire romantique*, Paris: Hachette.

Zeil, 1982: W. Zeil, ‘Asmus Sørensens Beitrag zur Slawistik und deutsch-slawischen Wechelseitigkeit’, *Zeitschrift für Slawistik*, no. 27, 1, 1982.

