Orientalisms and Occidentalisms: Evolution of Concepts and Divergence of Connotations

Orientālismi un okcidentālismi: jēdzienu evolūcija un nozīmju šķelšanās

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Abstract

During the most part of its long history, the term 'Orientalism' has had several interrelated meanings with neutral or positive connotations, some of which are still preserved, for instance, in art, architecture, design, and music, where it refers to Oriental influences and works inspired by Oriental themes and sounds rather attractive and romantic. As an academic term, it was used to denote the European tradition of Asian studies, suggesting a thorough exploration of Eastern cultural heritage, in particular, languages, literature, and artifacts. After the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978, the term gained new negative meanings, related to postcolonial theory where it denotes mainly the biased, haughty attitude of the West towards an essentialized East and manifestations of Western colonial discourse in literature, science, and politics, such as the justification of Western imperialism, colonialism, and racial discrimination. The redefinition of the term by postcolonial theorists raised a debate about the about the so-called Western approach to history, sociology, and Asian studies as well as about the permissibility of division of the world into binary opposites, "the Orient" and "the Occident". By the end of the 20th century, the term 'Orientalism' was adapted for the use by anthropologists, and its counterpart, 'Occidentalism' emerged, referring to the essentialized, dehumanized image of the West created by non-Western societies. Currently, most of the mentioned meanings have survived, each to some extent, and interfere in various fields of knowledge, creating complex sets of contradictory connotations.

Keywords: Orientalism, Occidentalism, Edward Said, ethnography, anthropology, postcolonial theory.

Today, the term 'Orientalism' is largely associated with E. Said's seminal work, *Orientalism* (1978),[1] and the subsequent controversy;[2] as the result, it has

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[1] Payne, Michael and Barbera, Jessica Rae (eds.). *A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory* (2nd edition). Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. See the entry "Orientalism," p. 520. See also McKenzie, John. *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995, p. xii.

[2] Macfie, Alexander Lyon. *Orientalism*. New York: Routledge, 2014, pp. 7–14; in detail about orientalism in crisis, pp. 102–147; McKenzie, pp. 1–19.

become "one of the most ideologically charged words in modern scholarship,"[3] denoting condescending attitude of the West towards some essentialized, stereotyped East as the object of research or colonization.[4] However, for the most part of its long history, 'Orientalism' has been a neutral academic term referring to the whole European tradition of Asian studies approximately until the mid-20th century, mainly in Germany, France, and United Kingdom.[5] The term was also used in various fields of knowledge referring to Oriental influences and works inspired by Oriental themes in literature,[6] art, architecture, design, music, and theatre.[7] Macfie points out that the term 'orientalism' has been used at least since the 18th century referring Eastern influences in language or art;[8] as McKenzie further explains, the term originally referred to "the study of languages, literature, religions, thought, arts, and social life of the East in order to make them available to the West, even in order to protect them from occidental cultural arrogance in the age of imperialism,"[9] with the undertones of "scholarly admiration for diverse and exotic cultures."[10] Al-Dabbagh argues that while the beginnings of Orientalism as a specific kind of "oriental studies" may be traced back as far as Antiquity, it "assumed its present form" in the beginning of the 19th century, which he calls "Golden Age of Orientalism,"[11] emphasizing that at least a part of orientalists of this period showed "genuinely disinterested desire for knowledge and a true respect for the peoples of the East amounting at times to veneration, in accordance with the ancient formula of *ex oriente lux*."[12] While it is not denied that the scholars and artists created an imaginary world inspired by Eastern motives, there are no indications that they intended to essentialize or objectify the East or that they had an especially patronizing attitude *beyond what was considered normal at that time*; besides, they were aware that the world they were creating was an imaginary one.[13] McKenzie mentions another, now obsolete, meaning of the term related to British colonial policy in India, where it meant "a conservative and romantic approach not only utilising the languages and laws of both Muslim and Hindu India, but

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[3]   McKenzie, p. 4.

[4]   McKenzie, pp. xii and 4; Macfie, p. 8.

[5]   Al-Dabbagh, Abdulla. *Literary Orientalism, Postcolonialism, and Universalism*. Berlin: Peter Lang, 2010, pp. 1–2 and McKenzie, p. xii. Further on the history of Orientalism as academic Asian studies in Europe see Macfie, Alexander Lyon. *Orientalism*, New York: Routledge, 2014, pp. 25–44.

[6]   Al-Dabbagh, pp. 1–18.

[7]   A detailed description in McKenzie: on the usage of the term 'Orientalism' in art, pp. 43–70; in architecture, pp. 71–104; in design, pp. 105–137; in music, pp. 138–175, and in theatre, pp. 176–207. See also Macfie, pp. 59–72.

[8]   Macfie, pp. 19–20.

[9]   McKenzie, p. xii.

[10]   Ibid.

[11]   Al-Dabbagh, p. 1.

[12]   Ibid.

[13]   Beaulieu Jill & Roberts, Mary. "Orientalism's Interlocutors." In: Beaulieu Jill, Roberts, Mary and Nicholas Thomas (eds.). *Orientalism's Interlocutors: Painting, Architecture, Photography*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002, pp. 1–17.

also desiring the preservation of allegedly traditional social relations."[14] Therefore, it may be concluded that the term 'Orientalism' in most part of what may be called *the pre-Said period*, at least to Western researchers and audiences, sounded as favouring the Orient, being enchanted, interested, and inspired by the Orient, as well as respecting the culture and traditions of the Orient, as much as it was possible in the informational environment of that time.

Macfie argues that the weakening of European imperialism and rise of nationalist movements in Asia and Africa, as well as subsequent rapid process of decolonization after the Second World War, "made possible an effective challenge to European hegemony, not only in the military and political, but also in the intellectual sphere."[15] On these grounds, the critics of Orientalism, many of which were Arabs working and studying in the West, such as Anouar Abdel-Malek, Abdul Latif Tibawi, and Edward Said,[16] were able to shift the meaning of the term from "abstruse, dry-as-dust"[17] field of academic studies to the ideology of imperialism and racism.[18] However, according to Young, "it was Edward Said's critique in *Orientalism* (1978) of the cultural politics of academic knowledge [..] that effectively founded postcolonial studies as an academic discipline,"[19] and it was mainly under the influence of Said's work that the term 'Orientalism' became to mean the process in which "the Orient is appropriated by the Occident by being turned into a structure of myth prefabricated for western use."[20] Moreover, it was Said's *Orientalism* that triggered the chain reaction of reconsideration and redefinition of the images, roles, and relationship of "the Orient" and "the Occident", which, in turn, led to questioning of the existing hierarchies, affiliations, rules of belonging to a group, and, finally, even the position of a researcher with respect to these imaginary entities.[21] The controversy spread from literary studies not only to the fields of knowledge mentioned by McKenzie, namely, "anthropology, women's studies, art history, theatre history, media and communications studies, the history of philology, historical geography, even the modish study of 'heritage' and tourism,"[22] but also further, which lead to questioning of the political theory,[23] history, and even the basic methodology of

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[14] McKenzie, p. xii.

[15] Macfie, p. 5.

[16] Macfie, p. 4.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Macfie, p. 5.

[19] Young, Robert J.C. *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction.* Malden: Wiley, 2016, p. 383.

[20] McKenzie, p. 4.

[21] See, for instance, McKenzie pp. xii–4.

[22] McKenzie, p. 4.

[23] On the controversy, see also Huntington, Samuel P. (1993). "If Not Civilizations, What? Paradigms of the Post- Cold War World." James F. Hoge and James Hoge Jr F. (eds.). *The Clash of Civilizations? The Debate.* New York: The Council of Foreign Affairs, 2010, p. 72.

Western science.[24] Gradually, Said's interpretation prevailed and affected the whole way how the relationship between the generic West and generic East is understood globally, in all scopes and contexts, permanently switching to the new, negative meaning of the term 'Orientalism' during the 1980s and 1990s; during this shift, the interference of the old and new definitions of the term 'Orientalism' caused considerable confusion, as they coexisted and were negotiated, which led to over-writing or juxtaposition of the meanings.[25] As the further examples show, the afore-mentioned process still continues, and the *post-Said meanings* of the term subtly replace the original ones in all niches where they still survive.

    Currently, 'Orientalism' is used as an academic term with neutral or positive connotations only in specialized literature, mainly, on art, design, and music, where it refers to Oriental themes or works based on Oriental motives.[26] The traditional usage of the term by art connoisseurs may be demonstrated by titles of some latest publications, many of which are expensive, "lavishly"[27] illustrated editions such as (to mention just a few) Kristian Davies's *Orientalists: Western Artists in Arabia, the Sahara, Persia and India*,[28] as well as *Masterpieces of Orientalist Art: The Shafik Gabr Collection*,[29] and *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting*.[30] In these splendidly illustrated works on the history of Orientalist paintings in Europe, in particular, the United Kingdom and France, mainly positive connotations of the term 'Orientalism' are found; the texts stress inspiration and boost of creativity resulting from the cross-pollination of cultures, frequently mentioning "the lure of the East" and emphasizing "the bright colours," "exotic and leisurely lifestyle," and "mystery."[31] In general, in this kind of works it is admitted that the Western painters created an imaginary world, influenced by Eastern reality, but in no case attempted to depict it objectively, and the emphasis is placed on the value of resulting works of art.[32] However, even in these publications *post-Said meanings* of the term are gradually introduced, which corresponds to critical reinterpretation of Orientalist

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[24] Kennedy, Dane. "Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory." In: *The Decolonization Reader.* James D. (ed.). Le Sueur. London: Routledge, 2003, p. 11. The article first published in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 24, 3, 1996.

[25] Mc. Kenzie, p. xii

[26] For instance, as in McKenzie, p. 3. It must be noted that some researchers still prefer to use the term in the *pre-Said meaning* in literary studies as well, for instance, Al-Dabbagh, discussing literary orientalism as on pp. 6–10.

[27] A word, usually found in summaries of these publications and, apparently, reflecting some stereotypes about the Orient.

[28] Davies, Kristian. *Orientalists: Western Artists in Arabia, the Sahara, Persia & India.* University of Michigan Press, 2005.

[29] Gabr, Shafik. *Masterpieces of Orientalist Art: The Shafik Gabr Collection.* Paris: ACR Editions, 2008

[30] Tromans, Nicholas (ed.). *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting.* Yale University Press, 2008.

[31] See, for instance, the summary of *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting.* Available at: https://www.amazon.in/Masterpieces-Orientalist-Art-Shafik-Collection/dp/1905377657 [accessed 01.12.2020].

[32] Ibid.

art by art historians, which, as McKenzie argues, "have narrowed and restricted the possible readings of paintings and other visual forms in extraordinarily limited ways."[33]

A vivid example of ongoing overwriting of the *pre-Said meanings* with the *post-Said meanings* of the term 'Orientalism' is presented by the introduction to *Orientalism: Visions of the East in Western Dress* (1994), published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art.[34] While displaying a splendid collection of costumes characterized as "exotic cache"[35] and representing Turquerie, Chinoiserie,and Japonisme in apparel, the book also contains a discussion of the meaning of the term 'Orientalism' as well as the causes of Western fascination by the East. Thus, 'Orientalism' is defined as "the historical term used to describe the West's fascination with and assimilation of the ideas and styles of the East."[36] The introduction tells the reader that "Orientalism is a fabrication of the West," and the image of the exotic, romantic, alluring, mysterious, "impenetrable," and "inscrutable" Orient was "confected from Western desire and imagination"[37] as "a secular haven-on-earth, a paradise undefiled by Western civilization."[38] Said's interpretation is introduced by stating that "The early discoverers and the traders sought a land never to inhabit, ever to see as different – a perfect "other", warranting Western supremacy and segregation,"[39] and that the West "uses" Orientalism "to see itself as whole" because it is "incomplete."[40] Yet, in a concluding statement that appears very apologetic, it is said that "Orientalism is not a picture of the East or the Easts. It represents longing, option, and faraway perfection. It is, like Utopia, a picture everywhere and nowhere, save in the imagination."[41] In short, the introduction leaves an impression that the authors needed to defend the whole existence of Orientalism as a trend in visual art, admitting the "incompleteness" of West, emphasizing that the construct of the Orient is the product of artists' imagination, and mentioning Western supremacy and conquests several times.

Apparently, the main argument underlying this change of meaning is based on Said's criticism of the traditional Western understanding of Eastern cultures ("the Orient"), starting with the idea that the world should not be deliberately "demarcated" into two essentially different imaginary entities with preset, fixed roles: the passive, inferior, backward Orient as an object of exploration, manipulation, and exploitation by the active, superior, progressive Occident.[42] As Said put it,

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[33] McKenzie, p. xiii.

[34] Martin, Richard Harrison & Koda, Harold. *Orientalism: Visions of the East in Western Dress*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994.

[35] Martin & Harold, p. 7.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Martin & Harold, p. 11.

[38] Martin & Harold, p. 9.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Martin & Harold, p. 13.

[42] Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979, pp. 3–4 and 54.

> ...this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is "ours" and an unfamiliar space beyond "ours" which is "theirs" is a way of making geographical distinctions that can be entirely arbitrary. I use the word "arbitrary" here because imaginative geography of the "our land-barbarian land" variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for "us" to set up these boundaries in our own minds; "they" become "they" accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from "ours."[43]

Hence, post-colonial criticism inherited Said's idea of "the Orient" studied by Western scholars as "an ideological representation with no corresponding reality;" correspondingly, Orientalism is defined as exploration of this construct existing only in the "western fantasy world" and any results of this research are labelled as "produced discursively."[44] For instance, in 1992, Dipesh Chakrabarty calls the 'the West' and 'the Orient' "hyperreal terms,"[45] and argues that these terms, as well as the associated images and connotations form a pseudo-natural and quasi-obvious system that, according to Antonio Gramsci, is the very basis of cultural hegemony.[46] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak develops the related concept of the "subaltern" or the silenced object of the process of knowledge construction, during which some image of this object is produced and forced on the object in an act of "epistemic violence."[47] Furthermore, Homi Bhabha claims that "theory is necessarily the elite language of the socially and culturally privileged" and that "the place of the academic critic is inevitably within the Eurocentric archives of an imperialist or neo-colonial West."[48] Thus, according to Bhabha, as soon as the culture of the Other is considered in any aspect inferior and explored focusing on deviations from the culture of the West (the standard), its status as the subjugated one is fixed and the opportunities to actually gain knowledge about it are lost:

> However impeccably the content of an 'other' culture be known, however anti-ethnocentrically it is represented, it is its location as the closure of grand theories, the demand that, in analytic terms, it be always the good object of knowledge, the docile body of difference, that reproduces a relation of domination and is the most serious indictment of the institutional powers of critical theory.[49]

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[43] *Orientalism*, p. 54.

[44] Young, p. 389.

[45] Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History." *The Decolonization Reader.* Le Sueur, James D. (ed.). London: Routledge, 2003, p. 428.

[46] Chakrabarty, p. 44 and p. 85.

[47] Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Ashkroft, Bill, Griiffiths, Gareth, and Tiffin, Helen (eds.). *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 24–28.

[48] Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*, p. 19.

[49] Bhabha, p. 31.

The criticism of Said's work and postcolonial theory ranges from rather mild, as, for instance, by the cultural theorist Stuart Hall,[50] to harsh and biting, as by the historian Dane Kennedy.[51] One of arguments is that the post-colonial theory, starting with its foundational text, E. Said's *Orientalism*, lacks a coherent theoretical framework, namely, consists of incompatible, taken out of context fragments of contradictory theories,[52] which Kennedy even calls a "theoretical promiscuity;"[53] for instance, the claim that the image of Orient as created by the West is not *true* implies that a "true" representation *is possible*, and thus contradicts the whole theoretical basis of post-structuralism.[54] It must be noted, however, that possibility of a "true" representation of anything within any theoretical framework was questioned by Said himself,[55] and that, at least currently, "the colonial discourse analyst analyses the representation as a representation" not seeking whether they are "true" or not.[56] Next, much debated are the attempts of post-colonial theorists to deconstruct the binary opposition "The West" vs. "the Orient,"[57] criticize Western methodology, and undermine Western positivism.[58] For instance, Hall argues that simplified models of cultures and their relationships are necessary, as they may be used as "short-hand generalizations" characterizing different cultures in differentiation and classification of cultural communities.[59] According to the anthropologist James Carrier,

> Essentialization appears to be inherent in the way Westerners, and probably most people, think and communicate. After all, to put a name to something is to identify its key characteristics and thereby essentialize it. Certainly, essentialization is common in sociology and history, which tend to essentialize key notions like class, empire, and the industrial revolution.[60]

Likewise, the political scientist Samuel Huntington states, "When people think seriously, they think abstractly; they conjure up simplified pictures of reality called concepts, theories, models, paradigms," without which there might be only

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[50] Hall, Stuart. "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power." Hall, Stuart and Bram Gieben (eds.). *Formations of Modernity.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, pp. 275–332.

[51] Kennedy, Dane. "Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory." In: *The Decolonization Reader*. James D. (ed.). Le Sueur. London: Routledge, 2003, p. 11. The article was first published in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 24, 3, 1996.

[52] Kennedy, pp. 12–13; also see McKenzie, p. 4, and Macfie, p. 124.

[53] Kennedy, p. 12.

[54] Kennedy, p. 16.

[55] *Orientalism*, p. 272.

[56] Young, pp. 390–391.

[57] Kennedy, p. 12.

[58] Kennedy, p. 16.

[59] Hall, Stuart. "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power." Hall, Stuart and Bram Gieben (eds.). *Formations of Modernity.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, p. 275.

[60] Carrier, James G. "Occidentalism: The World Turned Upside-down." *American Ethnologist,* Vol. 19, 2, 1992, p. 207.

confusion.[61] And, finally, another anthropologist, Lamont Lindstrom, comments that Edward Said "deconstructs Orientalism purposely to erase the boundary between Orient and Occident – a boundary which hides the diversity that exists among all those labelled Orientals and, at a different level, obscures our common humanity."[62] Moreover, Kennedy argues that the aim of post-colonial critics formulated as to "decolonize" the minds,[63] is, in fact, an attempt to fully deconstruct the Western history of the West as some "mythography concocted by the West to further its hegemonic ambitions," that is, the so-called "white mythologies," and to replace them with an "alternative mythography."[64] Kennedy claims, moreover, that the postcolonial theorists such as Bhabha and Spivak produce incomprehensible texts with an eclectic theoretical framework and "highly specialized, often obscure terms"[65] on purpose: their aim is to "to prevent 'closure' and thereby subvert the 'authoritative mode' of Western discourse."[66] As Kennedy puts it,

> The strategy adopted by post-colonial theorists is to subject the language of the colonizers to critical scrutiny, deconstructing representative texts and exposing the discursive designs that underlie their surface narratives. This is seen as an act of transgression, a politicized initiative that undermines the hegemonic influence of Western knowledge and brings about the cultural decentering of the [European] centered world system.[67]

Kennedy argues that some post-colonial critics aim merely at the decentralization and provincialization of Europe, including rewriting of the history NOT from the viewpoint of Europe,[68] while others, the "post-colonial purists," aim at the destruction and deconstruction of the very method and way of reasoning – "against an historical mode of understanding altogether,"[69] which leads to "wilful neglect of causation, context, and chronology."[70] Kennedy also points out that, in post-colonial criticism, this "West" to be deconstructed is also essentialized as "an undifferentiated, omnipotent entity, imposing its totalizing designs on the rest of the world without check or interruption."[71]

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[61] Huntington, Samuel P. "If Not Civilizations, What? Paradigms of the Post-Cold War World." (first ed. 1993). James F. Hoge and James Hoge Jr F. (eds.). *The Clash of Civilizations? The Debate*. New York: The Council of Foreign Affairs, 2010, pp. 72–85 [p. 72].

[62] Lindstrom, Lamont. "Cargoism and Occidentalism." In: Carrier, James C. (ed.). *Occidentalism: Images of the West*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003, p. 34.

[63] Kennedy, p. 14.

[64] Kennedy, p. 15.

[65] Kennedy, p. 13.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Kennedy, pp. 13–14.

[68] Kennedy, Dane. "Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory," p. 15.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Kennedy, p. 16.

Some compromise between the warring opinions was reached by anthro-pologists, as demonstrated in the proceedings of 1992 meeting of the American Anthropological Association in San Francisco,[72] reconsidering and redefining the existing meanings of the term 'Orientalism' as a neutral academic term, at least in their field of research. In particular, James Carrier thoroughly discusses the origins and meanings of both terms, starting with the article in *American Ethnologist* in 1992,[73] and further developing them in his introduction to *Occidentalism: Images of the West* (1995). Carrier acknowledges Said's *Orientalism* as a work "so influential that 'orientalism' has become a generic term for a particular, suspect type of anthropological thought."[74] Based on this, Carrier defines two distinct meanings of the term 'Orientalism': the more neutral 'orientalism' for the "the generic use of the term" meaning the set of "stylized images of the West," [75] reserving the capitalized version, 'Orientalism,' "for the specific manifestation Said describes." [76] Furthermore, Carrier defines the term '' as a set of "stylized images of the West,"[77] corresponding to its counterpart, 'orientalism,' and defined as some set of schematized, stylized images of the East. In addition, Carrier distinguishes between the concept of 'orientalism' as the set of images of the East created and perpetuated by Westerners, and 'ethno-orientalism' as the self-definition of the East, what he defined as "essentialist renderings of alien societies by the members of those societies themselves, and" which are subsequently presented to the West.[78] Directly related to this pair are 'occidentalism' as the self-definition of the West and 'ethno-occidentalism' denoting the definitions created by non-Westerners, and those include images and stereotypes about the West, in short, "essentialist renderings of the West by members of alien societies."[79] Similar definitions and differentiation of concepts have been proposed by Lamont Lindstrom who uses slightly different terminology, namely, 'auto-occidentalism' referring to stereotypic self-definition of the West, and 'auto-orientalism,' referring to the stereotypic self-definitions (or self-defining discourse) of non-Westerners.[80]

Apparently, both Carrier[81] and Lamont[82] explain and justify the process of essentialization and stereotypization from the anthropological point of view as a routine part of self-definition of any society or social group, which starts by

[72] Published as Carrier, James G. (ed.). *Occidentalism: Images of the West*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995.

[73] Carrier, James G. "Occidentalism: the world turned upside-down." *American Ethnologist,* Vol. 19, 2, 1992, pp. 195–212.

[74] Carrier, James G. "Introduction." In: Carrier, James G. (ed.). *Occidentalism: Images of the West*, 1.

[75] "Introduction," p. 1.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] "Occidentalism: the world turned upside-down," p. 198.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Lindstrom, p. 35.

[81] "Occidentalism: the world turned upside-down," p. 197.

[82] Lindstrom, p. 35.

defining the 'Us' and 'Them' according to some set of characteristics, drawing the borders, and constructing the binary oppositions which merge into the mental construct of the Self versus the Other as related to Self and expressed in terms of the Self. It must be pointed out that Said acknowledges the universality of this instinctive process of self-definition, characterizing it in *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) as "one of activities practiced by all cultures" with "a rhetoric, a set of occasions, and authorities,"[83] even if criticizing its manifestations. However, according to Carrier, the basic problem in building binary oppositions for definitions of the Self and the Other is drawing definite and stable borders between 'Us' and 'Them,' for instance, the question, which Westerners are Western enough to be included in the canon, and how much a community or a person should deviate from some norm to be still included in 'Us'?[84] The next question is related to the scale of self-definition, according to which the borders of 'Them' and 'Us' shift, starting from one family (or one person) as different from the rest of humanity, and ending with including the whole humanity in 'Us', as compared to non-humans.[85] As any self-definition necessitates more or less essentialization of the Self and the Other, the communities in question should be considered as "coherent and uniform" at least for the purpose of self-identification;[86] however, it must be noted that this coherence and uniformity, as well as the defining qualities that separate 'Us' from 'Them' should differ with every change of the scale. Therefore, Carrier shifts the blame away from the West by the explanation that both "the Westerners" and "the Easterners / Aliens / Orientals" essentialize themselves as well, both for self-definition and for representation to the Other, and that it is only natural that representatives of some social or ethnic group examine others from their own perspective, namely, as compared to Self, in terms comprehensible to Self, and in the position of Other to Self; even more so, as the other nations or civilizations do the same with regard to the West and Westerners. [87] According to Carrier,

> Seeing Orientalism as a dialectical process helps us recognize that it is not merely a Western imposition of reified identity on some alien set of people. It is also the imposition of an identity created in dialectical opposition to another identity, one likely to be equally reified, that of the West. Westerners, then, define the Other in terms of the West, but so Others define themselves in terms of the West, just as each defines the West in terms of the Other.[88]

Besides, Carrier proves that his views are thoroughly Western-centric by stating that the current situation "privileges the West as the standard against which all Others are defined, which is appropriate in view of both the historical political and

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[83] Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage Books, 1994, p. 42.

[84] "Occidentalism: the world turned upside-down," p. 197.

[85] Ibid.

[86] "Occidentalism: the world turned upside-down." p. 199.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

economic power of the West, and the fact that anthropology is overwhelmingly a Western discipline."[89] Carrier infers that due to the mentioned power disbalance, those described by the West are rarely in the position in which they are able to reject or criticize the descriptions made; similarly, "aliens", for the same reason, have less freedom in construction of images of the West.[90] This might be true in Carrier's own, apparently, rather Western-centric informational environment; however, even a quick search[91] provides the reader with a plenty of examples where other cultures routinely define themselves against the West, yet the superiority of West is not only questioned, but, in fact, has never been admitted.[92] An example of self-definition in contrast some Other not related to the West at all is the definition of Islamic culture in contrast to pre-Islamic culture of Arabs, the *Jahiliyya* – "days of ignorance"[93]. Likewise, the distinction between 'Arabs' and 'West: NOT Arabs' is used by Arabs,[94] while 'Muslims' and 'NOT Muslims' appears in the same way in Islamic publications, sometimes, overlapping the notions of 'Arabs' and 'Muslims'.[95] In these cases, as Carrier puts it, the "ethno-Orientalism of Aliens is produced in dialectical opposition to their ethno-Occidentalism,"[96] singling out the core values of a culture and assigning the 'positive' value or conforming with the 'norm' to 'Us', while denoting 'Them' in negative terms as 'NOT conforming' and describing the differences "with gleeful shock."[97] Therefore, the main difference, apparently, is that the ethno-Occidentalists have shifted the polarity of this binary division and marked the 'non-Western' as the origin of their coordinate system, or 'Self' which is 'main' and 'good', while the 'Western' becomes 'the evil Other'. It is needless to say that these attached connotations of each term are subjective and demonstrate the affiliations of their user.

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[89] "Occidentalism: The World Turned Upside-down." p. 199.

[90] Ibid. p. 197.

[91] The author of this study used Arab/Islamic publications as examples of this universal process because of own expertise in the field, fully understanding that similar instances might be easily found in many other cultures worldwide.

[92] To provide just one example in English: Essa, Ahmed & Othman, Ali. *Studies in Islamic Civilization: The Muslim Contribution to the Renaissance*. London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2012. Even more pronounced the tendency is in the more traditional kind of Arabic scholarly literature, for instance,

د. نعيم الظاهر: جغرافية الوطن العربي، دار اليازوري العلمية للنشر والتوزيع، عمان، 2019.
د. عطية محمد عطية: مقدمة في الحضارة العربية الإسلامية ونظمها، دار سافا العلمية للنشر والتوزيع، عمان، 2011.
أ. د. عبد الرحمن حسين العزاوي: تاريخ الحضارة العربية الإسلامية، عمان: دار الخليج، 2017.

[93] The contrasting of Islamic and pre-islamic cultures is obvious in, for instance, Gleave, Robert."Jahiliyya". In: Netton, Richard (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Islamic Civilization and Religion*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

[94] محمد أبو حسان: دور الحضارة العربية الإسلامية في تكوين الحضارة الغربية (دراسة مقارنة مع الحضارتين اليونانية والرومانية)، وزارة الثقافة، عمّان، ط 1، 2009م.

[95] Considering the binary opposition *dar-ul-islam / dar-ul-harb*, see, for instance,

محمد محمد حسين: الإسلام والحضارة الغربية، دار الفرقان للنشر والتوزيع، 1975.

[96] "Occidentalism: The World Turned Upside-down." p. 198.

[97] Ibid.

Occidentalism as "The dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies"[98] has been in-depth explored by Ian Buruma and Avishai Margelit, who describe and analyse several versions of anti-Western discourse, found in large areas of non-Western world, for instance, among the extreme nationalists in Japan during WW2,[99] in China,[100] and among radical Islamists who advocate "politicized Islamic ideology in which the United States features as the devil incarnate."[101] Each of the mentioned groups states different reasons for hating the West; yet, they are united in the "loathing of everything people associate with the Western world, exemplified by America,"[102] and some of them are ready to wage war against the West as the source of evil in the world.[103] The war against the West has been declared "in the name of the Russian soul, the German race, State Sinto, communism, and Islam," as "the holy war" against the "absolute evil,"[104] defending a race or nation, fighting for some religious or political ideals; therefore, it is possible to distinguish between the religious and the secular Occidentalism.[105] The main features of the essentialized image of the West, according to Buruma and Margelit, are "empty Western rationalism" and "materialism" which are contrasted to "the deep spirit of whatever race or creed the Occidentalists extol;"[106] an aggressive, "coldly mechanical,"[107] intellectual, but depraved, soulless, and inhumane society which advances the globalization of the world and thus destroys the traditional values of non-Western societies.[108] The West is characterized by "Western pop culture, global capitalism, U.S. foreign policy, big cities, or sexual license;"[109] it is called "Roman imperialism, Anglo-American capitalism, Americanism, Crusader-Zionism, American imperialism, or simply the West."[110] Finally, "the idea of America itself" is presented as "a rootless, cosmopolitan, superficial, trivial, materialistic, racially mixed, fashion-addicted civilization."[111] For instance, Islamist Occidentalism is characterized by the depiction of the West as a barbaric, savage civilization of atheists, heretics, or idolaters, characterized by nonexistence of family values and overall depravity,[112] the embodiment of which is the main symbol of

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[98] Buruma, Ian and Avishai, Margelit. *Occidentalism*: *The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2004, p. 3.

[99] Buruma & Margelit. pp. 2–3.

[100] Buruma & Margelit. p. 4.

[101] Buruma & Margelit. p. 5.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Buruma & Margelit. pp. 5 and 101.

[104] Buruma & Margelit. 102.

[105] Buruma & Margelit. p. 101.

[106] Buruma & Margelit. p. 102.

[107] Buruma & Margelit. p. 3.

[108] Buruma & Margelit. p. 75.

[109] Buruma & Margelit. p. 5.

[110] Buruma & Margelit. p. 32.

[111] Buruma & Margelit. p. 8.

[112] Buruma & Margelit. p. 102

Islamic Occidentalism, the Western woman with her sexual freedom and male-like behaviour.[113]

In fact, this kind of Occidentalism corresponds to the "demarcation" of the world into "our land-barbarian land"[114] as criticized by Said in *Orientalism*, with the roles of the Orient and Occident swapped. Correspondingly, Buruma and Margelit define the discussed kind of Occidentalism as the inverse image of Orientalism in the worst aspects of *post-Said sense*, with its approach, methods, and prejudices turned towards the West,[115] arguing that it developed mainly as the response to the interference of the West into the affairs of Eastern nations, starting with imperialism and colonialism, and ending with inconsiderate attempts to spread Western culture, technology, and materialistic civilization.[116] According to Buruma and Margelit, both Orientalism and Occidentalism may be labelled as "a form of intellectual destruction" with the aim to "diminish an entire society or a civilization to a mass of soulless, decadent, money-grubbing, rootless, faithless, unfeeling parasites."[117] However, as Said pointed out in *Culture and Imperialism*, this "instinctive" kind of self-definition against some 'evil Other' can "mobilize passions atavistically"[118] and is especially dangerous in the contemporary globalized, interconnected world, where cultures come in contact daily.[119] The mechanism of this process is explained, for instance, by Bhabha, namely, that during any culture contact, the negotiation between culture-defining narratives begins, as the representative speakers of each culture tend to "rewrite" the reality from own position, proving its validity by the axioms of own culture.[120] Therefore, if cultures that use each other as a foil for positive self-identification come in contact in some community, family, or mind, the process of identity negotiation might be qualified as self-perpetuating reciprocal epistemic violence[121] with attacks and retaliations, where both sides play simultaneously roles of the oppressors and the oppressed, each in their scope and sphere, to the maximal extent they may reach, curbed only by the resistance of the other side. In other words, the main problems in culture contact stem from the universal tendency to define Self against some Other, or non-Self, which, in this case, best would stay physically distant, speaking incomprehensible language, and acting in an inexplicable way, so that it might be comfortably used as the everlasting opponent.

An overview of the many meanings and connotations of the term 'Orientalism', the derived terms, and the related controversies and debates shows that descriptions of cultures, the methods that are used to explore the cultures, and

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[113] Buruma & Margelit. p. 128.

[114] *Orientalism*, p. 54.

[115] Buruma and Margelit, pp. 8–10.

[116] Buruma & Margelit. p. 142; cf., *Orientalism*, p. 324.

[117] Buruma & Margelit., p. 8.

[118] *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 42.

[119] *Culture and Imperialism*, pp. 42–43.

[120] Bhabha, pp. 9–15.

[121] On the use of the term, see Spivak, pp. 24–28.

the criticism of these methods and descriptions are part of the warring discourses and counter-discourses, and none of the mentioned may be qualified as neutral and objective, but rather as very subjective and depending on the position of the critic. The aforementioned discussion of scholars about the validity of terms might be also considered as a negotiation of meanings in a multicultural setting, where both sides offer some culture-specific definitions of terms with emotionally laden connotations in attempts to 'rewrite' the reality of the opponent according to own understanding, or at least to reach some compromise. In terms of post-colonial analysis, this corresponds to "the Empire writing back" in the colonizers' language and to breaking of the cultural hegemony from within the discourse,[122] with ensuing counter-arguments and responses to these counter-arguments. Therefore, Said's assertion that "the answer to Orientalism is not Occidentalism" because "no former 'Oriental' will be comforted by the thought that having been an Oriental himself he is likely – too likely – to study new 'Orientals' – or 'Occidentals' – of his own making,"[123] appears to be too idealistic. Practically speaking, most of the discussed terminology has become too emotionally charged, which is likely to affect allegedly impartial academic research. The proposed solution to this problem might be a change of the terminology and the theoretical framework altogether, finding a new, safe ground for cross-cultural studies.

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[122] See, for instance, Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth, & Tiffin, Helen, "Introduction." In: Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth, and Helen Tiffin (eds.). *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature*s, 2nd ed. London: Routledge, pp. 1–13.

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Kopsavilkums

Termins "orientālisms" sākotnēji tika lietots vairākās nozīmēs bez negatīvām konotācijām. Dažas no šīm nozīmēm ir saglabājušās, piemēram, mākslā, arhitektūrā, dizainā un mūzikā, kur termins joprojām apzīmē mākslas darbus, kuros attēlotas ar Austrumzemēm saistītas tēmas vai kuri radušies Austrumu kultūru ietekmē, un tam ir pievilcīga, romantiska pieskaņa. Kā akadēmisks termins "orientālisms" tika izmantots, lai apzīmētu Āzijas pētniecības tradīciju Eiropā, kurai bija raksturīga rūpīga Austrumu kultūras mantojuma, it īpaši valodu, literatūras un senlietu, izpēte. Pēc Edvarda Saida darba "Orientālisms" publicēšanas 1978. gadā šis termins ieguva jaunas, negatīvas nozīmes, pārnestas uz postkoloniālo teoriju, kurā tas galvenokārt apzīmē Rietumu neobjektīvo, augstprātīgo attieksmi pret stereotipizētiem Austrumiem un Rietumu koloniālā diskursa izpausmes literatūrā, zinātnē un politikā, kā,

piemēram, imperiālisma un koloniālisma attaisnošana, rasu diskriminācija un kultūras kolonizācija. Termina nozīmes maiņa izraisīja plašas debates par tā dēvēto Rietumu pieeju vēsturei, socioloģijai un Āzijas pētījumiem, kā arī par to, vai vispār pieļaujama pasaules iedalīšana pretstatu pārī – Austrumzemēs un Rietumu valstīs. 20. gadsimta beigās šis termins tika pielāgots lietojumam antropoloģiskos pētījumos; radās tā pretstats – "okcidentālisms", kurš apzīmē stereotipizēta, dehumanizēta Rietumu tēla veidošanu no nerietumniecisku sabiedrību perspektīvas. Mūsdienās visas minētās nozīmes ir dažādā mērā saglabājušās un cita citu ietekmē dažādās zināšanu jomās, veidojot sarežģītus pretrunīgu konotāciju kopumus.

Atslēgvārdi: *orientālisms, okcidentālisms, Edvards Saīds, etnogrāfija, antropoloģija, postkoloniālā teorija.*