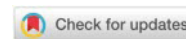


POSTCOLONIAL "OTHERNESS"

Anita Dimitrijovska-Jankulovska¹, Milica Denkovska¹

¹PhD Candidate, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, "Blazhe Koneski" Faculty of Philology – Skopje, R.N.Macedonia
E-mail: adimitrijovska@gmail.com, milica.denkovska@gmail.com



Abstract: In this paper the category of Otherness has been concerned for those who occupy the subordinate position in society, which have been presented as inferior in terms of knowledge and abilities, which implies that they need the leadership of those who are, by definition, more capable, more educated, more advanced, more civilized, more merciful, etc. On this way, the hierarchy of representations is established, thus justifying the existing ones power relations in society as well as the unequal treatment of those who are represented as inferior. The concept of Otherness within the framework of postcolonial criticism is used to describe the rest of the world, i.e., everything that does not fall within the scope of Europeans, as one homogeneous mass characterized by ugly features. Otherness in postcolonial criticism refers to colonized peoples who are marginalized by the imperial and identified by their difference from the center. Any area that is not part of European soil is considered inferior, dangerous and less valuable. However, in the understanding of the Other, a duality is also noticeable, since he is sometimes considered wild, harmful and mysterious, and sometimes harmless. Hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence are terms which are used in postcolonial analysis. The colonizers tried to categorize the colonized population, and the formation of hybrid patterns prevented that process, since new cultural forms were emerging that no longer corresponded to the descriptions of the colonizers. Colonizers have been the part of Occident and the colonized nations are the Orient or the Others or the category of Otherness. Sharing the same space, Orient and Occident influenced each other, which resulted in the transfer of elements from one culture to another. The fruit of this is the emergence of an intermediate space and a hybrid identity, which is characterized as a simultaneous affection for two or more different and opposing identity patterns, but does not fully belong to any of them.

Key words: Otherness, hybrid, Orient, Occident.

1. INTRODUCTION

Edward Said In his capital work, *Orientalism*, carefully studied the postcolonial concept of Otherness. In general, the goal of his study was to show what kind of ideas Europe and America constructed about Orientals. By observing and making a contrast between itself and the East, Europe managed to define and define itself against the Other. Describing the "Orient" as a Western cultural construct, Said claimed that it is a projection of those aspects of the West, which Westerners do not want to admit in themselves, such as cruelty, sensuality, etc.

Said believed that all non-European countries were portrayed as exotic, mysterious and chaotic. They were seen as less developed and not so important, which led to the emergence of the concept of Otherness within the framework of postcolonial criticism. This term is used to describe the rest of the world, i.e., everything that does not fall within the scope of Europeans, as one homogeneous mass characterized by ugly features. Otherness in postcolonial criticism refers to colonized peoples who are marginalized by the imperial and identified by their difference from the center. Any area that is not part of European soil is considered inferior, dangerous and less valuable. However, in the understanding of the Other, a duality is also noticeable, since he is sometimes considered wild, harmful and mysterious, and sometimes harmless.

The image that the West forms of the Other is precisely what creates the deep gap between these two binary oppositions. Said believes that *Orientalism* captured the Orient, since it did not give it the opportunity to act and reason freely. The East was seen as an undefined and wild mass that needed to be regulated. It is precisely this thought that the West takes as a guide and justification for its colonialist aspirations, explaining that the violent appropriation of the Orient is necessary in order for that land to pass from uncivilized to civilized. What it all starts from is, we would say, the power relationship between the Orient and the Occident. Michel Foucault believed that one of the most important institutions of power is knowledge, and one can freely argue that it is the strongest weapon with which the West achieved hegemony over the East. Therefore, by building knowledge about the Orient, its management becomes easier for the West, and in this way, it attributes to the Oriental the description of inferior and subject to

^{*}Corresponding author: adimitrijovska@gmail.com



management. In order to strengthen its own identity, the West had to construct the Orient as the Other.

An important feature of the Orientalist discourse is the objectification of the Orient and the Oriental. By this it is understood that the status of an object that can be examined and understood is assigned to the Oriental, and the reason of such claims lies in the assumption that the Orient is essentially monolithic, with an unchanging history, while the West is dynamic, with an active history. Jacques Lacan also dealt with the concept of Otherness within psychoanalysis. According to his opinion, there are two stages in man's self-knowledge. The first is what he calls the mirror stage of psychosexual development (6-18 months), when the subject first understands that he is "different" from his mother, from whom he was not properly differentiated before this stage. In that case, the otherness is recorded with a lowercase letter. Only in the next phase, when the subject fully enters language and what Lacan calls the symbolic order, does he establish a relationship between himself and the great Other (he notes it with a capital letter, and it implies the entire system of language and conventions in which we were born). On the other hand, Sartre introduces two terms: being-in-itself and being-for-itself. Being-in-itself does not posit itself as different from another being and does not maintain any relationship with the other, while being-for-itself contains duality because it represents the subject's relationship with itself. According to Sartre, man needs another one in order to fully understand all the structures of his being, that is, the other is a necessary mediator between me and myself.

2. LIMINALITY AND HYBRIDITY

Cultural diversity has always been characteristic of Europe, but the increase in migration and communication has led to different kinds of cultural and social experiences and formations. As a result, the changed national identity of the former colony becomes one of the central themes in the modern discourse. H. Bhabha singles out liminality and splitting as the two basic characteristics of postcolonial identity, and describes how the colonizer's treatment of the colonial subject created a desire within the subject to be different from what it is. However, he soon moves on from the concept of liminality, and introduces hybridity, which he believes was a kind of resistance of the colonial subject at the time when the colonizer tried to exercise his power over him, which did not always result in the obedience of the colonial subject. In those moments, the colonized foreigners appropriated certain aspects from the culture of the colonizers and transformed them. The colonizers tried to categorize the colonized population, and the formation of hybrid patterns prevented that process, since new cultural forms were emerging that no longer corresponded to the descriptions of the colonizers. Bhabha's concept of hybridity is developed from the theory of literature and culture by which he identifies that governing bodies (the colonizer) translate the identity of the colonized (the Other) in tandem with essentialist beliefs. However, this action of 'translation' does not produce something that is familiar to the colonizer or the colonized, but is fundamentally new.

3. ORIENTAL VS OCCIDENTAL

Colonized countries therefore lose their national identity, they begin to receive elements from the dominant culture, which leads to the formation of transcultural forms on the border between these two binary oppositions. Colonized nations develop a sense of inferiority, since their culture, which is not advanced enough, is placed on the sidelines. Others come face to face with the language, customs, way of life, culture and religion of the colonizers, and taking into account the position of the West as superior, the Orientals eventually begin to absorb elements of the Occidental. However, one of the most significant of the positions in postcolonial criticism is that the characteristics of the Other are set as unchangeable, which means that the complete assimilation of the Oriental into the Occidental society is never possible. Related to this is ambivalence, a term that appeared for the first time in psychoanalysis to explain the state of simultaneously feeling affection for two mutually contradictory phenomena. From the perspective of postcolonial discourse, Homi K. Bhabha links this term to the simultaneous feelings of attraction and repulsion that reign between the colonizer and the colonized. Therefore, we can say that the concept of ambivalence complicates the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, because it moves away from the assumption that it is uniform, given the fact that the colonial subject is never completely resistant to the colonizer, but simultaneously becomes his accomplice. Homi K. Bhabha explains that the colonial discourse is forced to be ambivalent, since it never really wants the colonial subjects to be exact replicas of the colonizer, because that way the colonial subject would gain the power needed to resist the colonizer.

In relation to ambivalence, Homi K. Bhabha also introduces the term mimicry, which he defines

as the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite. That is to say that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around ambivalence; to be effective, mimicry must constantly produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. Since it can represent a parody of what it imitates, he also sees a threat in mimicry, and points out that it stems from its double vision, which by revealing the ambivalence of the colonial discourse undermines its authority. Bhabha claims that all cultural utterances and systems are constructed in a space he calls the Third Space of Enunciation. Cultural identity always appears in this contradictory and ambivalent space, which makes demands for hierarchical purity of cultures unsustainable for Bhabha. In the Third Space, resistance occurs, colonial subjects want to change reality and influence it, but such attempts end in failure, since the insurmountable differences between Orient and Occident are deeply rooted in Western societies. Despite the claims of the colonizers that pure and unmixed cultures are superior to those created by crossing elements from different cultures, Bhabha sees hybridity as a positive feature of the postcolonial discourse.

According to Jacques Derrida, it is meaningless to consider that identity is something that is given and defined in advance. Therefore, an individual is not born with a hybrid identity, but rather he is educated on the basis of the difference with the other. Ferdinand de Saussure, who is considered the originator of structural linguistics, introduced a system of binary oppositions in the study of signs. In other words, the entire linguistic system is based on oppositions, which means that one sign exists only when it comes into opposition with another. What differentiates one sign from others actually makes it. This concept of defining phenomena can also be observed in the framework of postcolonial criticism. Early postcolonial critics like Aimé Césaire studied the construction of binary oppositions such as on this principle of determining one's own colonizer/colonized in colonial texts. Frantz Fanon also spoke about identity in the work *Black Skin, White Masks*, emphasizing the claim that the image of a white person is constructed based on the negation of the characteristics of black people. However, what is problematic about observing phenomena in the world as a series of binary oppositions is that it leaves out the intermediate spaces that occur between opposing categories. This is exactly what Homi K. Bhabha criticized Edward Said in his interpretation of *Orientalism*, since the basis of his theory was the binary relations Us/Other, East/West, colonizer/colonized, and he suppressed the areas in which these overlaps can occur. Hall points out that the image of identity is constructed through the relationship with the Other - in the relationship with what it is not, with what it lacks. Jacques Lacan also dealt with the issue of otherness, and claimed that the first encounter with the other occurs in childhood, when the child sees himself in the mirror for the first time. If we look at this kind of claim within the East-West opposition, the West is positioned as the side that is rational, strong, mature, "normal", and the East is everything the West is not - irrational, perverted, childish, "different". Therefore, these two sides do not exist without each other, they support and help each other. As much as the West introduced the Orient to previously unknown phenomena, the West also needs the Orient in order to create an image of itself. According to Foucault, knowledge is one of the most powerful institutions of power. Fanon believes that colonization cannot be carried out on all peoples, but some peoples are more susceptible than others: "Almost everywhere where Europeans established colonies [...] it can be said that they were expected, even desired, in the subconscious of their subjects." Legends announced them everywhere as foreigners who come from the sea and bring prosperity with them". Orientals are used to being managed, they are the same everywhere. Because Europe was culturally stronger, it could rule over the undefined and mysterious East. Therefore, by conquering the Orient, the West introduced it to modern technology, which historian Boachen believes was the most crucial factor that enabled colonization.

Others are members of the Third World, which Fanon describes with the words: It is known that it is not homogeneous and that it is made up of peoples who are still enslaved, then those who have gained false independence, those who are struggling to gain sovereignty, and finally those who have achieved full freedom, but who live under the constant threat of imperialist aggression. (Franz Fanon, *The Wretched Of the World*, 1963) As a result of constant contact between different peoples in colonized areas, characters appear who are imprisoned in the space between, that is, they cannot be identified with any world. Due to the insurmountable differences that exist between these two worlds, they are condemned to eternal conflict, and therefore the individuals who are in the intermediate space come into a conflict with themselves. From the perspective of the Occidental, the Orient forms a monolithic mass characterized by backwardness, barbarism, uncivilized, and therefore complete openness to invaders who will "ennoble" their spaces with the characteristics of a negative charge. In the Third Space, there is a conflict between opposing parties who are constantly striving to show their supremacy in relation to the other party.

The West, taking into account its superiority over the Orient, claimed the right to control its territory, but, much more, to manage its life. Occident, therefore, represents a natural given that has the status of

a norm, and everything that goes out of that framework is considered a deviation from what is usual and desirable. In such a setting of the world, the freedom of the colonized is very limited, that is, we can say that it represents the sum of the conventions adopted by the West.

4. CONCLUSION

Colonialism, which arose as a consequence of the European aspiration for expansion and management of non-European territories, left many consequences for the modern world. One of the important questions within postcolonial criticism is the question of the formation of the colonial subject, and the research of the methods by which they were kept on the periphery of society. Despite the fact that the Orientals outnumbered the colonizers, the Orient-Occident relationship always ended in favor of the Occidental. The reason for this is Foucault's discourse of power, according to which knowledge is the best means by which the colonizer consolidates the subordination of the colonial subject. Taking into account that there was a meeting of completely opposite parties, they contrast and compare each other, which leads to defining one's own identity in such a way as to emphasize those characteristics that are absent in the Other. Thus, the East served the West as Otherness through which it defines itself, but the same process happened in the opposite direction, since the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized was never uniform, but very complex. Nevertheless, the contact of two opposing civilizations and cultures did not only serve to determine what we are and what others are, but also led to their compression and overlap. Therefore, Homi K. Bhabha moves away from Said's view of Orientalism, rejecting the claims of becoming binary oppositions, and focuses on transcultural forms that arise as a result of the fusion of several cultural paradigms. Sharing the same space, Orient and Occident influenced each other, which resulted in the transfer of elements from one culture to another. The fruit of this is the emergence of an intermediate space and a hybrid identity, which is characterized as a simultaneous affection for two or more different and opposing identity patterns, but does not fully belong to any of them.

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