The Specter of Orientalism in Europe: From Exotic Other to Stigmatized Brother

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"Everyone has had one's own Orient, pertaining to space and time, most often of both" (Todorova 1997: 12).

Orientalism Revisited

"Orientalism" as a critical category was instituted by Edward Said in 1978. For him orientalism is, first of all, a set of discursive practices through which the West structured the imagined East politically, socially, military, ideologically, scientifically and artistically. Orientalism is also "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and…'the Occident'" (Said 1978: 2) The *Orient* as such exists and real people live in the region concerned, but the European representation of these people is a typical cultural creation that enables those powerful to legitimize their domination over those subjugated and conquered. The oriental Other constitutes the *alter ego* of the West and a perpetuation of this dichotomy proves that a powerful cultural hegemony is still at work. Discursive hardening permits politically stronger groups to define weaker groups.

Orientalism has been received both approvingly and critically. The most important critiques refer to the fact that "Said's work frequently relapses into

the essentializing modes it attacks and is ambivalently enmeshed in the total-izing habits of western humanism" (Clifford 1988: 271). Critique notwithstand-ing, the book inspired a sequel of works, some of them directly addressing Eastern Europe (Wolff 1994) and the Balkans (Todorova 1997; Bakić-Hayden 1995; Bakić-Hayden and Hayden 1992; Hayden 2000). Wolff wrote about the invention of Eastern Europe in the period of Enlightenment by Western intel-lectuals, travelers and writers in a style similar to Said's. Todorova is more spe-cific. She focuses on the Balkans and asserts that in Western eyes this region appears, so to speak, as "neither fish, nor fowl," semi-oriental, not fully European, semi-developed, and semi-civilized. "Unlike orientalism, which is a discourse about imputed opposition, balkanism is a discourse about an imputed ambiguity" (Todorova 1997: 17). An ambiguity that raises anxiety. The Balkans emerge as the product of attempted Europeanization (western-ization, democratization), a region that permanently has to shed "the last residue of imperial [i.e. Ottoman] legacy" (p. 13) by implementing rational-ism, secularism, commercial activities and industry. The work in *imagology*, the term she borrows from Milan Kundera, despite being narrowed and rede-fined, also focuses on the way the West has created its "quasi-colony" which has to be dominated and subordinated both politically and intellectually.

While discussing orientalism, Said, Wolff and Todorova touch upon several issues vital for today's anthropology that I will partly, although at times only indirectly, address later. All of these revolve around the issue of *alterity* and the epistemological validity of the concept of *the Other*. Thus, one can recog-nize that they are concerned with (1) the modes by which the Other is creat-ed. In anthropology, as well as in the works cited, the Other often assumes the status of (2) a universal cognitive category in the factory of social and individ-ual identity that divides the universe into "us" and "them." However, it also figures as (3) an analytical concept that enables authors to construct narration and at the same time, somehow paradoxically, and in the most subtle approaches, to (4) deconstruct the category itself.

In social life, the process of making the Other assumes various forms. Shifts in collective identities and the meaning of "the Other" have become a part of the transformations in Europe after 1989. There are several factors influencing these alterations, but one among them seems especially salient: *a restructuring of the perception of social inequalities by the hegemonic liberal ideology*. The degree to which various countries, authorities, social groups and individuals have embraced the free market and democracy—always evaluated by those powerful who set rules of the game—has become a yardstick for classifying dif-

ferent regions, countries and groups as fitting more or less into the category of "us," i.e. "(post)modern-Western-liberals," to paraphrase Rorty (1991: 198-199). In the Cold War period, from a Western perspective, the Iron Curtain set a clear-cut division into "us" and "them" which was reduced, in fact, to geography. The two systems' border was inscribed in the mental map in which continuous *space* was transformed into discontinuous *places* inhabited by two distinctive tribes: the civilized "us" and the exotic, often "uncivilized" Others.

Elaborated by Said, Wolff and Todorova, the notion of orientalism and the perception of the process of creation of the Other, were contiguous with the modernist condition of the world where the Berlin Wall signified emblematic completion. The Other was confined in space, or, to use Arjun Appadurai's (1988) apt expression, "spatially incarcerated." In this political reality of the world and the way of conceptualizing it, orientalism is bound to the East that can be "far," "middle," "near," and last but not least, "European." But it always stands for a certain place, the people living there and their cultures, all, no doubt, essentialized. The revolutions of 1989 created, at least in the European context, confusion, uncertainty, cognitive dissonance, symbolic disorder, a liminal stage in the rite of passage (cf. Bauman 1992; 1993; Borneman 1993; Buchowski 2001; Wydra 2000: 40-48) that needed to be worked out. Within the old paradigm the simplest solution that adjusted to the expansion of "the free market and liberal democracy" has been employed without shattering the entrenched orientalizing mindset. The Occident's *limes* have simply been moved eastward. Samuel Huntington's idea of a "clash of civilizations" (1993) epitomizes this way of reasoning in academic circles. The "Visegrad Group" countries' political initiative was aimed at pushing the European Orient out onto the Balkans and the former Soviet Union, of 'nesting orientalism' further east and south-east of the countries involved, "coincidentally" drawing boundaries similar to Huntington's.[1] Both attempts typify the "naturalized association of culture with place" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 35).

The "new order" that emerged in the 1990s has allowed orientalism, understood as a way of thinking about and the practices of making the Other, to escape the confines of space and time. As Gupta and Ferguson put it: "The presumption that spaces are autonomous has enabled the power of topography successfully to conceal the topography of power" (1997a: 35). Orientalism is also a specter that haunts people's minds and serves as a tool for concocting social distinctions across state borders as well as within them.[2] In that sense, the new European orientalism is a refraction, a derivative or correlate of a phenomenon covered by such concepts as globalization, the expansion of

multinational capital, flexible capitalism, transgressions, migrations, transnationalism or the media-covered global village. With these changes the meaning of orientalism acquires entirely new dimensions. Therefore, I would like to develop the argument further, beyond the limits drawn by Said and Todorova,[3] and show that opinions which in the past applied merely to people in their places should now be interpreted in a new perspective. I contend that for those still thinking in "orientalizng" terms *a mental map has morphed into social space*, or, that they have found "otherness" in their sisters and brothers. Similarities, analogies and connections can be traced between discourses concerned respectively with spatial and social issues. There is a genealogical (in an Foucauldian sense) and epiphenomenal link between notions that in Cold War Europe presented orientalism *à l'Europe Occidentale* (sharp East-West distinction[4]), and in post-Cold-War-Europe—on top of this first one—orientalism *à l'Europe Centrale*[5] and orientalism *à la polonaise*.

Postmodern, postindustrial and postsocialist meaning of orientalism,[6] understood as—let me repeat—"a way of thinking about and practices of making the other" as well as a "set of mind" that creates "social distinctions,'"stretches beyond Said's and his followers definition of it. In what follows, I use it in a sense that covers not only Saidian distinction into orient and occident, but also into capitalism and socialism, civility and primitivism, and class distinction into elites and plebs. Perhaps some other concept recounting these various forms of making the Other would also do the job, but I find this category plausible enough to put forward my argument about specific processes presented below that may also be dubbed a transformation of orientalism, in a strict sense, into a neoorientalism in a new multiple "post-" social context and cultural condition. My task is not only to describe these changes, but also find some underlying common features of phenomena perceived usually as unrelated, distinct and even contradictory.

Orientalism *à la Polonaise*

I will now analyze the new practice of "nesting orientalism" in Poland, but one can easily confirm the wider relevance of this phenomenon (see Kideckel 2001 and 2002 on workers in Romania). At least three relatively parallel idioms of internal societal orientalization are easily identifiable: urban vs. rural, educated vs. uneducated, and winners vs. losers of transformation. In a sense, prompted by the global expansion of capitalism, classical orientalism articulated in mental geography translates onto, pops up on and, in

some ways, is scaled down to the national level. Such a domestic orientalism cannot be confined in an isolated space, even if localized, since the Other can now live side by side with "us," occupy the same place, speak the same language and believe in the same god. Moreover, in most places in Central Europe this is not yet the question of immigrants settling down in localities, but assumed others living among "us." This makes them discrete and pervasive at the same time.

For the troubles brought about by Poland's economic reform, various groups are accused: crooked politicians, corrupted bureaucrats, selfish entrepreneurs and international agencies, including the EU. However, in elite dominant discourses in the mass media and scholarly analyses it is the "subaltern's' nature" that blames workers, agricultural workers and peasants for their own degraded circumstances and for society's difficulties which generally "trumps this critique" (Kideckel 2001: 98). Real workers and peasants have largely disappeared from public discourses. Many stories tell about unemployment, black market and economic problems that, while addressing macro-level issues, miss the grass-roots perspective. Underprivileged groups are depicted during situations of conflict like strikes or road blockades. In the absence of ethnographic descriptions rooted in everyday practices and confronted with details of social life studies, ideological and essentialized images are concocted. Media images emphasize new kinds of employment and material culture. Advertisements portray middle-class professionals and high-tech products that have little relation to "ordinary people."

The voice of the powerless and the poor rarely makes it through the accepted democratic procedures. Subalterns have to resort to radical methods if they want to articulate their interests and are afterward accused of demagoguery. Then, however, they are described as uncivilized and ignorant of the "new deal." Recently, they have been created as "new others" of transitions. In support of this argument, let me cite an opinion of Jan Winiecki, one of the leading Polish economists who said this in an interview with *Wprost*, one of the largest Polish weekly magazines:

Q: And, indeed nobody lost in the recent transformations?
A: The former workers of liquidated state farms are the only group that lost in absolute terms (not only in relation to the other groups). They are really doing badly because *they haven't learned how to* work and after the dissolution of these deficient creations they have no place now from where they *can steal.*

Q: Who has benefited the most?

A: People who want and can work to succeed. Now it is entrepreneurship and knowledge that counts—those who have understood this first have become the biggest beneficiaries of the system.

Q: Who has proved to benefit the least?

A: *The problem of Poland is the Poles* themselves who *wait for a manna* from heaven and think that they deserve everything *without work* and commitment. It is the passive part of society that is at fault. These people are demoralized by the previous system and by those they vote for (Cielemęcki and Trębski 1999: 46; my emphasis)[7]

For this economist, hundreds of thousands of former agricultural workers confined to areas in which unemployment is often well over thirty percent,[8] it is obvious that they are culpable for their own fate. Why? Because they are lazy and the only thing they have ever done properly is steal. The recipe to cure Poland is simple: Getting rid of "them" will solve the predicaments in which Poland finds itself. For those who share these liberal economic views, the people caught in the structural framework, which they cannot really influence, are not people with problems but are themselves the problem. One can easily recognize a strategy of blaming the victims and accusing them for strategic economic failures. But agricultural workers are not the only ones being held responsible for their own suffering.

"In capitalist industrialization workers coming form the countryside *had to accept* existing standards of good work, *discipline* and ordinary fairness. It was easy, by the way, since *capitalism as a rule strengthened* such *positive features* by rewarding the hard working and innovative. In the case of socialist industrialization it was the other way round. *Cohorts of 'socialist nomads,'* according to the brilliant phrase of Professor Suraz̧ska, *went out of* community's *control* and landed in a moral vacuum. Communism did not have any moral philosophy and created a system of stimuli which rewarded the cheating of superiors, spying and stealing."

"This big industry *lumpenproletariat* during post-communism has become *a stronghold of opposition against market capitalism*. When it turned out that the price for good work is *a submission to the capitalist standards* of work, its representatives turned against change..."

"*Demoralization* was not distributed equally under communism in the countryside either. Although demoralizing processes had taken place in all social environments, they had been most prevalent among state farm workers and their families. For several decades they made a living from two sources: *state salaries and what they managed to steal from the farm. This has enormously devastated their ethic.* Members of this group, maybe even more than the big industry *lumpenproletariat*, have also become '*orphans*' after PPR [Polish Peoples Republic] who are ready to follow any *demagogue* luring them in with the empty promise of easy money without any solid effort on their part."

"It is not Polish capitalism that has been slowed down in its development, but rather the people who grew up in the *lumpenproletariat* milieu whose lack of standards stopped *the process of evolution in the direction of capitalist normality!* The demanding attitude makes these people similar to urban and rural *lumpenproletariat*" (Winiecki 2001; my emphasis).[9]

Emphasized phrases speak for themselves. Workers, agricultural workers and peasants are classified as not normal and are described in derogatory terms of populist lumpenproletariat lacking morality. Members of these groups have to be disciplined and remade as persons in order to fit "capitalist normality," an obvious and unmarked category.

Social Critique

This approach shares all the vices in theorizing "transition." First, it divides societies into *winners and losers*, ultimately translated into those wise and able to adapt and those half-witted and unable to adapt, apt and inept. Of course, the first group defines the modes of adaptation and criteria for evaluation. If individuals or groups cannot follow suit, they simply deserve their poor fate. They have proven to be "civilizationally incompetent" (Sztompka 1993), show a "general lack of discipline and diligence" (Sztompka 1996: 119) and obstruct the efforts of those who are accomplished and the progress of whole societies in the region on its way to becoming "normal." The incapacity to reject old mental habits forms a complex of the legendary *homo sovieticus* (Sztompka 2000: 55; cf. also Sztompka 2004) which is characterized by such phenomena as egalitarian and demanding attitudes, "disinterested envy," anti-intellectualism and

aversion towards the elite, double standards for public and private life and the acceptance of meager performance. These people do not know how to make sense of the new symbolic order and cannot fit into the new institutional design in which "civilizational competence" is king! Some are civilized, while the others are uncivilized, *ergo* primitive. This division into a civilized "us" and primitive "them" reaches back to the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment scientific division of the world. Today we do not have to go to the Andaman Islands in search of primitives. This separation also harks back to the entrenched notion of "gentlemen and the mob"[10] It also promptly associates attributes deemed by the dominant culture as positive with the West, capitalism and progress, and those qualities regarded as negative with the East, communism and backwardness. The *Occident* is contrasted with the *Orient*, but, as I said, the border between the East and the West now runs mostly across societies whereas, still by the end of the 1980s, it was charted, first and foremost, only on the geographic map. One can ask, how did it happen that after decades of a common historical experience with real socialism in Eastern Europe that some people have been able to curtail "bad habits" within them, and others have not? Is not it a paradox that the members of the Communist *nomenclature* who should have been imbued most with elements of the old system's *habitus*, proved to be one of the quickest in switching to the new symbolic system, in mastering "civilizational competence"?

Second, the world depicted in this way is configured according to a dichotomized, *black and white* logic. Communism promoted cynicism, nepotism, collectivism, egalitarianism and a diffused individual responsibility; a feeling of impotence towards destiny and even a kind of mysticism prevailed. In capitalism, individualism, realism, efficiency, freedom of creativity, human subjectivity and responsibility are supreme; it is future oriented and along with democracy it demands involvement in public affairs (Sztompka 2000: 55-60). But it is only among those unfit, uneducated, and unable to adapt that progressive traits cannot prevail. Alternatively, learned and clever people, those "modern nobles" who are "civilizationally competent," have immediately deciphered the free market's *modus operandi*. They do not cause problems and, according to the distorted idea of the survival of the fittest, they are *winners*. However, this dichotomous picture twists the reality of various continuities in social practices before and after 1989 that do not result from the fact that *homo sovieticus* still prevails in people and that the socialist *habitus* reigns in societies, but from the logic of structural similarities in modernist projects and historical connections between an artificially divided East and West.

Third, a view of social practice advocated by Sztompka and Winiecki is, in fact, *anti-sociological*. Social life is treated as the result of political and economic standards imposed upon people. Strategies often cited for dealing with the "trauma of change," such as innovative adaptation, the accumulation of capital, the escape into apathy or resignation, ceremonial retreats into outmoded "socialist" reactions misplaced in the new context, and criminal adaptation (Sztompka 2000: 86-95), cannot do justice to the role of actors in shaping forms of social life. Actors appear as passive recipients of the reality that comes, somehow, like bolts from heaven. Perhaps one could read Winiecki's statement that "the problem of Poland is the Poles themselves" as recognizing the active role of the people in social life, but the context of his standpoint clearly shows that it is passive obstruction of the modernization attempts from outside that he has in mind. Poor folks are not subjects of change, but its objects.

I am inclined to see social life in terms of Bourdieu's (1990) theory of practice in which people living in a given historical context co-produce it. The structural framework in which individuals and groups act is constantly reinterpreted and in this way the setting acquires new shapes. Social forms emerge at the interface of the hardware of systemic circumstances and the software of human beings acting within them and upon them, by which they constantly restructure these imminent forms. The actor's images and deeds constantly modify the reproduction of social practice that should not be evaluated in terms of its correspondence with the assumed ideals of democracy and the free market. It takes on a myriad of forms one cannot simply define as wrong and repeating past wrongdoings. No one has a right to assess social practices in pejorative words that measure the value of millions of people in accordance with prejudged images about what is correct and what is wrong according to dominant cultural standards.

Fourth, it is *teleological*. For Sztompka the current transformation is a period of "cultural ambivalence" between communism and the democratic and free market culture. "Only after the influence of the *Homo Sovieticus* mentality is reduced and disappears will we be sure that the Polish nation would cure itself forever from its post-communist trauma" (Sztompka 2000: 106). Fifth, it is also *idealistic*. There is a universal hope for the generational exchange. Young people "have not become victims of all these issues of 'learned helplessness' of 'civilizational incompetence,' of 'cultures of cynicism' and 'lack of trust' that threatened the generation of their parents... Their world is relatively still and stable, secure and predictable" (ibid. 107). One may wonder, how

is it possible that this generation spoiled by communism created such a tranquil and prospective future for their offspring? Sixth, it is *ideological*. This praise for the new system and the prosperous future shining on the horizon recalls the promised land often described by communist propaganda that interestingly enough also mentioned the necessity of getting rid of bad bourgeois habits and 'post-capitalist modes of thought.'

All in all, the salience accorded to the power of tradition and mental habits, a freezing notion of the *homo sovieticus* who is unable to change his or her mind and behavior, makes this approach *culture-deterministic*. Essentialized culture and custom, perceived as a burden (contrary to the Western positive pattern), condition people's reactions and society's destiny. People caught in their modes of thought cannot modify their reactions, are unable to catch up and obliterate progress towards liberal ideals.

Sztompka's and Winiecki's arguments can be presented in the form of a dyad below.

Socialism vs. Capitalism and Post-Socialist vs. Capitalist Mentalities (Piotr Sztompka 2000 and Jan Winiecki 2001)

Socialism	*Capitalism*
Cynicism	Realism
Nepotism	Efficiency
Collectivism	Individualism
Egalitarianism	Subjectivism/Elitism
Diffused individual responsibility	Individual responsibility
Impotence towards destiny	Future oriented
Mysticism and escape from social affairs	Involvement in society via democracy
Learned helplessness	Learned resoluteness
Lack of trust	Trust
Apathy	Innovative adaptation
Waste of capital	Accumulation of capital
Criminal adaptation	Respect for the law
Lack of work ethic	High standards of work ethic
Low productivity	High productivity
Dishonesty	Honesty
Passivity (waiting for manna)	Activity
Homo Sovieticus (PS):	*Homo Westernicus* (MB, by analogy)
• anti-intellectualism • aversion to elites • double standards for public and private life • acceptance of meager performance	• intellectualism • respect for elites • unified standards fore any sphere of life • contempt for meager performance

Is the intellectual and national level the ultimate one for "nesting orientalism"? Definitely not and let me cite what I heard during my fieldwork. Here is what a relatively successful entrepreneur living in the suburbs of Poznań had to say about his fellow countrymen living in the Polish countryside:

> In the Polish nation, *homo sovieticus* is deeply rooted...Look at the last election result [the presidential elections in 1995] that are the effect of this. There is still a disco-polo Poland [a contemporary popular music style regarded as plebeian and typical of rural taste]. This is still a Poland of people lost, confined to state farms, in small-town state enterprises, of people who don't see any future and rapidly lost their means of subsistence. They feel forlorn and don't have a 'gene' for creating, for looking for something different, for seeking a new road (An entrepreneur in Swarzędz; cf. Buchowski 2001a: 295).

One might ask if he has read or if he is a student of Sztompka and Winiecki?

But this is not the bottom of this ladder. In everyday discourses in Poland, rural communities are usually the bottom rung of "nesting orientalism." However, in the rural community of Dziekanowice in Wielkopolska I observed intermittently that there are still other internal Others. My case shows that "'Community' is never simply the recognition of cultural similarity or social contiguity but a categorical identity that is premised in various forms of exclusion and construction of otherness" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 13). At least four, however arbitrarily established, social groups can be distinguished: white-collars, agricultural proletarians, village proletarians (blue-collars living in the countryside and working in non-agricultural enterprises) and farmers (see Buchowski 1997). Local white-collars consider proletarians to be a deprived, unenlightened "gray mass." Village proletarians that work in the nonagricultural sector perceive local former state farm workers as an alcohol-abusing lower class. For farmers, the latter are "lazy jerks" or "chards." Are these former state farm workers the bottom rung of nesting orientalism in Poland or even Europe? Maybe, but there is a false bottom to this pecking order. Agricultural proletarians call farmers *bambry* or *babole*, metaphorically "red-necks," i.e. their own internal "others." So, who is "primitive" after all? Here seems to be a turning point at which images are reversed, or, in order to be closer to my view of social representations, a reverse side of a network of mutual social perceptions in a huge and intricate hall of mirrors. A beginning that goes further on: deprived and

seemingly powerless rural communities that glorify the pristine values of the Polish countryside life; "populist politicians" that scorn the ruling establishment; nationalists that reject Europe and defend a glorious tradition against the dark powers of global evil; impoverished people in Eastern Europe that present the West as a hell on earth.

This microcosm in which some feel better vis-à-vis others who, in turn, feel better vis-à-vis some other others, exemplifies several important issues for anthropological studies. Resistance to dominating images and practices becomes a significant factor in the reconstruction of identity of those who are constructed by those in control. In our case, various orientalized groups oppose the system that is perceived by them, and indeed presented to them, as alien, as a proper of "them." They employ the same language in their description used by the others for the description of the others. Pilfered words, symbols and images are considered authentic and used in self-defense. The power of the powerful becomes a power of the powerless against those in power. Subalterns openly claim that elites are responsible for the troubles of transformation and their poor standard of living. The consolidation of the deprived is further crystallized and then exposes them to even more fierce attacks launched by those powerful and their mouthpieces. Winiecki, for example, accuses the *lumpenproletarians* for blindly following populist politicians. "This leads us to suspect that struggle and resistance are themselves implicated in the reproduction of culturally based class differences that are the necessary condition of inequality" (Kearney 2001: 249). The social mobilization of "the masses" demands symbols that function as positive marks of distinction and solidarity within them. Contestation, defiance and the reproduction of cultural habits are reproachfully described by Sztompka as a socialist yoke. Signs of solidarity epitomize a harmful capital of those backward and play a part in the process of their segregation, in crafting the image of their social and cultural inferiority. Road blockades, support for movements/parties contesting the "new deal"—such as "Samobrona" (Self-defense) or "Solidarity 80"—and daily resistance to the free market economy have been presented as "primitivism" or populism.[12] Social inequality is thus reproduced not only by the uneven distribution of power and wealth—which is as well a derivative of social relations—but also by the daily routine and opposition to such difference. The situation is thus dialogic: orientalized subalterns mobilized in their movements "promoting a culturally based solidarity… actively participate in the reproduction of difference that is sine qua non of their subjugation" (Kearney 2001: 262).

Cultural Critique, or De-orientalizing Distinctions

In the above maneuvers stigmatizing compatriots by converts to economic liberalism and advocates of crude modernization theories, several characteristics typical for orientalizing processes are implicit. Let me interpret them in the anthropological terms invoked at the beginning. The statements by Winiecki and Sztompka have at least one intriguing upshot that in a conventional critique passes unnoticed: that stating such views ensues from the context in which both scholars happen to operate, i.e. not only the post-communist, but also the postmodern condition of the world.

Above all, crusaders of the "new deal" uncritically accept orientalizing rhetoric, or politics of marginality (Herzfeld 2005: 143), in describing social relations. Dichotomous logic renders them blind to the fact that their stigmatized subjects, like themselves, are products of a historical process in which all actively participate. People are not hibernated as *homo sovieticus* or *homo orientalis*, but while reproducing their daily practices reinterpret them perpetually and contribute to change. The unemployed are not victims of their mental habits, but a correlation of transformation that was brought to them as a consequence of globalizing processes.

What is striking is the mentor attitude of the missionaries of *laissez-faire*. They embark on the typical Enlightened project of educating "the masses." The mob (*lumpenproletariat*, *homo sovieticus*) has to be transformed into "the people." As in the past, "the dictatorship of *professoriat*" (Bauman 1999: xxxiii) or "enlightened despotism" once established will bring prosperity. Individuals have to be disciplined and educated, internalize a certain, in this case capitalist, set of values in order to become "normal." In the socialist past they dropped out of any reasonable control and "landed in a moral vacuum." Demoralized, corrupted and orphaned victims not of current practices but of the past, have to learn new standards, change their mentality in order to join the progressive part of the humanity. If they cannot do it, they remain "Easterners" and should indict themselves for being alienated. Any failure is ascribed to their "oriental nature."[13]

One may wonder why the losers of transition, the poor, the unemployed, peasants and workers are isolated, labeled, in short, essentialized and constructed as Others. Eastern and Central European transformation, by definition, is perceived as ambiguous and inherently unstable. Ambiguous social relations demand intellectual containment. Intellectuals objectify various subjects not because they find irresistible the creation of order and neat classifications, but instead to objectify the subjects their categories are meant to represent.

Creation of the inferior categories of people, an intellectual process that shares its logic with orientalizing modes of thought, legitimizes political practices, sanctions discrimination and possibly exploitation. However, such containment does not have to be viewed as ideological or false. "Containment is effective when it is able to constitute types it essentializes" (Kearney 1996: 64). It fills the void that otherwise would have had been occupied by other images. Hegemonic discourses dominate the field and rationally subjugate 'new oriental others.' These images are neither true nor false. Their constitutive strength lies in the fact that they have the power to construct social difference. My writing, despite its unveiling attempts, contributes at any rate to the construction of these subjugated subjects, along the lines of their resistance and display of cultural distinction. Invented identities become social identities at the very moment they are inscribed in peoples minds and deeds, a process whereby our thoughts become a part of the social reality (cf. Godelier 1985). As it happens, in the case of the virtually monoethnic Polish society, class and cultural diacritics fulfill a primary role in making social distinctions.

Finally, let me return to the issue of orientalism in its Central European milieu. Both Polish scholars have unconsciously represented the stance that cultural difference needs not be far away from home but *hic et nunc*. Otherness is dissected from an exotic context and brought home, thus displaced primitives can be found on our doorstep. On the one hand, they implicitly counter the traditional view that the tribal other is locked up in underprivileged regions. On the other hand, they then place them in local pockets of poverty and rural areas. In any case, *the spatially exotic other has been resurrected as the socially stigmatized brother*. In that sense, Sztompka and Winiecki undermine the view that hegemonic configurations of power are constituted by spatial meanings. Regretfully, it is not a result of their theoretical insights but spontaneous occidental orientalism and naïve social Darwinism. They also impulsively express hegemonic discourses that indicate that academic institutions often function to reproduce relations of inequality.

In the attitude criticized, postsocialist peasants and workers are only seemingly a product of history. They live today but their formative period ended in 1989 (*pace* Fukuyama). They are fabricated in the minds of dogmatic scholars, essentialized and presented as vestiges of the past. They do not take part in the historical process and are destined to die out. This is a pure case of orientalizing practices mixed with a belief in the triumphal march of scholastic economic liberalism; anti-historicism from top to toe. Cultural differences are seen in discontinuous time and space. Meanwhile, I think, a much more

promising perspective, especially in a postmodern and post-socialist condition, opens when we perceive differences as the product of continuous space, time and social relations "traversed by economic and political relations of inequality" and "part and parcel of a global system of domination" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997a: 45, 47). Both the "colonized" periphery and colonizing center have been upset by these processes. Jean Baudrillard sensed it when he wrote that "[t]he 'victory' of the West is not unlike depressurizing of the West in the void of communism, in the void of history" (1994: 49). Blurred genres of the Orient and the Occident stimulate attempts to redraw them, if not on the map, then in social space. Orientalism as a mindset can be surpassed when difference will be rethought as a cluster of interaction and connection. That means that our understanding of identity and difference should conform to the world in which cultural, social and economic spaces have been *re*territorialized. Maria Todorova's words used here as a motto can therefore be rephrased and expanded: "Everyone has had one's own Orient, pertaining to space, social space and time, most often all of them."

All this raises several questions: Is a post-orientalizing anthropology possible, an "anthropology after peoples and culture'"? (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 25). An anthropology that does not fall "into the familiar traps of exoticization, primitivism, and orientalism?" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 24). My answer is a conditional "yes." Parallel to the construction of identity, a process in which we actively participate, such a possibility of post-cultural anthropology can be reached if we remain aware that our writings do not merely describe people and the places they live in, but co-construct them. Therefore not only "them" but also "us" should be problematized. This is a lesson we can learn from our local Central European history, our voice in a heteroglossia of the transnational world.

ENDNOTES

[1]Perhaps this kind of politically motivated orientalism should be seen as a case of what Michael Herzfeld calls "practical orientalism" (2005: 134).

[2]Here I skip the considerations about the time factor in orientalizing practices. Johannes Fabian (1983) elaborated this point with respect to making the "primitive Other" and Maria Todorova also paid attention to the issue of backwardness of Eastern Europe. The book edited by Daniel Chirot (1985) speaks for itself: *The Origins of Backwardness in Central Europe. Economics and Politics from the Middle Ages until the Early Twentieth Century.*

[3]Said at some point suggests "that the notion that there are geographical spaces with indigenous, radically "different" inhabitants who can be defined on the basis of some religion,

culture or racial essence proper to geographical space is equally a highly debatable idea" (1978: 332). However, this suggestion is not fully developed, what is understandable considering the state of affairs in a world still divided into competing camps in the late 1970s when Said wrote his book. Maria Todorova limits her analysis to time and space, and anthropologist Laszlo Kürti (1997) does the same in his effort to unveil discourses of otherness in post-1989 Europe.

[4]There is a whole pile of books and articles that trace back the causes of the "major bifurcation" (Gellner 1993: x) of the continent, starting from antiquity and the influence of the Roman Empire on the economy of the second serfdom, to late industrialization and the Cold War notion of the backwardness of communist Eastern Europe. There are many historical books that strongly emphasize the 'otherness' of Central and Eastern Europe (among the classic publications see: Topolski 1968; Wallerstein 1974; Szücs 1988; Longworth 1992; and more recently Brzechczyn 1998; Sosnowska 2004). One can raise the question, to what extent myriads of historical "facts" are arranged according to the preconceived image of "the centuries old divide." It seems that put in a homogenizing orientalizing frame, historical facts are structured according to this pre-given, hegemonic scheme. If so, it is also striking how far political divisions can easily overshadow discourses and shape the image of history. Perhaps this propensity of historians is analogous to the anthropological concept of the 'Big Ditch' (Gellner's [1974] coinage) according to which the ways of thinking of "primitive societies" are radically different from "modern European." Jean Baudrillard's words, addressing the post-1989 state of affairs, illustrate this Western representation of internal European disruption of civilization very dramatically: "The West is discovering the Eastern bloc countries, weak and drained, as once it discovered the survivors of the concentration camps. The danger is to feed them too quickly since this kills them. (...) they live in another space—shattered by catastrophe" (1994: 49).

[5]Gerard Delanty's remarks that "what used to be known as 'Eastern Europe' is breaking up into two regions of which Central Europe is one. The other, Mitteleuropa's new Other, is south-east Europe" (1996: 102). It "is seen as a regressive manifestation of Byzantine decadence with which Orthodox Christianity, Islam and Communism are all identified" (ibid. 103). This seems to be a peculiar transformation of the 19th century German idea of *Mitteleuropa* that was revived as a cultural independence project of anti-communist intellectuals in the 1980s (M. Kundera, J. Szüsc, Cz. Miłosz). Apparently, in the 1990s "Central Europe" started to function as a political project aimed at isolating the westernised "Višegrad Group' from "oriental Others," former "brothers in barbaric Russo-Asiatic enslavement." This tripatriate division finds reflection in the popular consciousness. At the beginning of the 1990s, an empirical study was conducted among Polish and German students on their perception of 'Europeaness' of particular countries. Results strikingly convergent in both national groups allow us to divide these countries into three categories, qualified as "belonging to Europe": 1) by 80-100 per cent of respondents (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Ireland, Island, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom); 2) by 60-80 per cent of respondents (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Turkey); and, finally, 3) by only 40-60 per cent of respondents (Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia) (Rożnowski and Turbiłowicz 1995: 203).

[6]After writing this article I have learned that I am not the first who uses a phrase "the spectre of orientalism." Chris Hann (1993) applied it in his critical view of anthropological accounts of Turkey. However, my usage of the term '(neo-)orientalism' goes further than its original meaning and I try to develop this concept in such direction that can have much wider application.

It is also interesting that the notion of 'occidentalism' viewed as a reversal of "orientalism," that refers to the imagined reality of the West in the East, particularly in many Islamic com-

munities and in a 'post-September 11' world, is more and more often used. See for example Margalit and Buruma 2002.

[7]By the way, it was Montagu Norman, chief of the Bank of England in the interwar period, who said: "it is the misfortune of Poland that she is populated by Poles" (Pease 1986: 12, quoted after Burgess 1997: 53). Winiecki seems to have the same opinion.

[8]In April 2006 unemployment rate is, according to official statistics, above 17%.

[9]This kind of view is not, of course, limited to scholarly circles. Adam Michnik, the former oppositionist and now an influential chief editor one of the most successful daily *Gazeta Wyborcza,* also admits that "Economic rationality may have a painful impact on working people" (1999: 15). Workers have a right to feel wronged, but the main reason for this is that they are, metaphorically speaking, accustomed to producing "busts of Lenin" (ibid.; see also Kalb 2001: 319)

[10]To trace this issue will demand more elaborated studies. It is conspicuous that peasants (and sometimes workers) were often treated as "potato sacks," in folklore's European Other, both romanticised and humiliated (for Central Europe see, for example, Conte and Giordano 1999). Alexander Etkind, writes about 19th century Russian populism that it "represented the Russian *narod* as an alien exotic body" and "Russian ethnography was an imperialistic study of one's own people as the Other" (2003: 566). The same author also reflects on the creation of an 'internal Other' by Russian gentry and intelligentsia. For example, the Russian writer and diplomat, Alexandr Griboedov, wrote in 1826 in his essay "A trip to the Countryside": "the folk of our own blood—are separated form us, and forever" (see: Etkind 2003a:17) Griboedov's peers were educated, polyglots and often cosmopolitans, while peasants "seem to the Russian gentlemen to belong to another race" (ibid. 18). A similar view was held by Polish nobles until the birth of romantic nationalism, who even had a myth of coming form another "warrior tribe," the Sarmatians, who had conquered a local population that became future peasants. No doubt, all of them needed to be enlightened in a similar way when compared to contemporary "Grey masses" across Central Europe.

[11]In the same spirit Carole Nagengast writes: "I query the tendency of social scientists to define and objectify *problem* groups (farmers and former workers as well as others) as the sum of identified characteristics (implicitly assumed to be mutable and therefore the fault of the poor themselves), which then need to be addressed in some way by policy makers" (2001: 184).

[12]Paradoxes of history (or rather political history) have surprised many: several parties, including 'Samoobrona,' which are considered by the elite as populist parties, have recently formed a ruling coalition. Culturally ridiculed (cf. Bourdieu's concept of 'distinction') commoners' leaders entered the highest political halls in the country.

[13]One may argue that the elite, including many academics, are closer to the ideals of *homo sovieticus* created by them. Intellectuals colonized the state and depend on it much more than millions of people described by them as helpless postsocialists who, after all, manage the situation quite ingeniously. I will not follow this matter here.

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