

Nikolay Aretov

University in Sofia, Bulgaria

Balkan variations of Orientalism and Occidentalism

Abstract: Summarizing, the aim of this paper was to provoke scrutinizing in a Balkan context the notions of Orientalism and Occidentalism – two forms of demonizing the Other, coined in the age of Enlightenment, two phenomena that are ambivalent and imported from other cultures. They interact in a curious manner and took critical place in the mythologies of all the nations in the region although in different ways.

Keywords: orientalism, occidentalism, Balkan, Other, demonizing the Other, mental map

The idea of the Other is crucial part of the own identity. People imagine the Other in different ways, very often he/she is presented as a dangerous Enemy, like a screen on which we project our own fears and other emotions on it. Mythical thinking, which is alive even nowadays, uses different tools to name and imagine the Other and to master it.

The well-known book of Edward Said introduced in international humanity studies the term Orientalism, with which he designated „a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's place in European Western experience”, one specific “style of

thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) “the Occident”. Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts, concerning the Orient, its people, customs, “mind”, destiny, and so on. *This* Orientalism can accommodate Aeschylus, say, and Victor Hugo, Dante and Karl Marx.” (Said, 1978, 1, 2-3)

This was written at the beginning of the work, which finished with a warring:

Above all, I hope to have shown my reader that the answer to Orientalism is not Occidentalism. No former "Oriental" will be conformed by the thought that having been an Oriental himself he is likely – too likely – to study new "Orientals" – or "Occidentals" – on his own making. If the knowledge of Orientalism has any meaning, it is in being a reminder of the seductive degradation of knowledge, of any knowledge, anywhere, at any time. Now perhaps more than before. (Said, 1978, 328)

Said knew that this was not just a potential threat. Occidentalism not only exists, its effects are extremely pernicious. Ancient mental constructs and psychological trends, realized in different texts – secular and religious, literary, philosophical, journalistic and what ever, lay beneath the terrorists acts.

The "Orient" reacts in a similar way and tries to deal with the problems in its relations with the West by building an (analogical?) mental and linguistic constructions. In some cases Occidentalism may turn to positive strategy, as in the book of Hassan Hanafi *Introduction to the science of Occidentalism* (1992). (See also: (Tønnesson, 14 October 1993))

The phenomenon of Occidentalism finds its annals among politicians, journalists¹ and scholars. The earliest theorizing of the term has been at a session at the 1992 meeting of the American Anthropological Society.² Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit are the

most famous among authors dealing with this term recently. Their book *Occidentalism: the West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* provoked serious debates and became bestseller. (Buruma and Margalit, 2004) (Not in Bulgaria, unfortunately.) Although the two terms (titles of popular books) were constructed in obviously the same manner, the two phenomena are not entirely analogical, and Buruma and Margalit do not refer to Said. It could be disputed if Orientalism is more early (according to Buruma Islamism on which he focused his attention – is modern phenomenon that have its western roots) but for a long period of time it was more powerful and was backed by and realized through in western colonialist institution and western academic researches of the "East", that are more elaborated than eastern researches of the "West". Its roots and reasons could be traced in very different mental and spiritual spheres, there common ground is the believe of the own uniqueness and the hostility of the Other. Scholars find some strongholds of the Occidentalism in the reactions against the universalism of the Enlightenment and French revolution, in some variations of Japanese Shintoism, connected with imperial ideology, in pan-ideologies (Pan-Slavism among them), in different variations of fascism, in Stalinism, etc.

Avishai Margalit and Ian Buruma highlight several [four] „features of Occidentalism“:

- hatred of the City and urban civilization, symbolized by the fabled tower of Babylon; of the state and modern civilization with its attributes (literature, films, pop-music, advertisement), denial of the separation between the private and the public

¹ Some journalists totally disagree with the concept of Occidentalism. See for example HANSON, V. D. *Occidentalism. The false west* [Online]. Available: <http://www.nationalreview.com/hanson/hanson051002.asp>.

² See CARRIER, J. G. (ed.) 1995. *Occidentalism. Images of the West*, Oxford: Clarendon Press., 269. See also Review by Christopher Alan Perrius (University of Chicago) – Jupert.

A Journal of Postcolonial Studies, Published by the College of the Humanities and Social Sciences North Carolina State University, 1997, V. 1, # 1. <http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v1i1/perrius.htm>.

- domain, commercialism;
- critic of the bourgeois civilization and its commercialism and addiction to safety and comfort and lack of heroism and revolutionary gestures;
- rejection of Bourgeois Reason, rationality and science, opposed to irrational notions such as spirit, race, blood and soil, etc.;
- denial of feminism, seen as giving too much freedom to women.

As a whole this is rejection of modernity which was associated with the West. The result is one absolutely negative image of the West, containing "a set of attributes, such as arrogance, feebleness, greed, depravity, and decadence, which are invoked as typically Western, or even American, characteristics".

The conclusion of Avishai Margalit and Ian Buruma was:

There is no clash of civilizations. Most religions, especially monotheistic ones, have the capacity to harbor the anti-Western poison. And varieties of secular fascism can occur in all cultures. (Buruma and Margalit, 2004)

Although at first glance, the term „Occidentalism“ describes a phenomenon similar to Orientalism, there is at least one difference that should be mentioned. It is linked to attitudes towards others. In Orientalism, this attitude is more arrogant and underestimating, while in Occidentalism it seems to be more radically negative. The orientalist wants to 'civilize' and to exploit the Orient; the occidentalist is more inclined to condemn the West, and, in its most radical manifestations, to destroy rather than to exploit it.

This is linked to another problem. Occidentalism can be viewed in two ways. In one case, it can be thought of primarily as a response to Western economic, political and cultural expansion, in other - as a specific manifestation of universal form of attitude

towards the other. Buruma and Margalit traced the links that connect anti-Western sentiments with western ideological and mental phenomenon. These links can be result of indirectly influence, but may be also typological, effects of similar causes and motives.

* * *

Anti-modern trends in the Balkans has long been observed, they often take the form of opposition to Catholicism (and later against Protestantism), the researchers found their roots in the Byzantine Empire and even during the Great Schism of 1054.³ This line is continued by the conservative circles around Ecumenical Patriarchate in which Orthodox fundamentalism was forged⁴. Later, this trend is secularized and passed to a comprehensive anti-Europeanism and anti-modernism⁵.

Among Bulgarians, and to some extent among other Balkan Christians, anti-Western sentiment could also be traced back to the Middle Ages, to the time of Tsar Kaloyan of Bulgaria (1197–1207) and the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204). Later it will turn out that Orthodox and Muslims images of the Crusaders in the Balkans have common features⁶. In the following

³ Cf. Makrides, Vasilios. Le rôle de l'orthodoxie dans la formation de l'antieuropéanisme et antioccidentalisme grecs, in G. Vincent ; J.-P. Williame (eds). Religion et transformations de l'Europe. Strasbourg, 1993.

⁴ See MAKRIDES, V. N. 1991. Aspects of Greek Orthodox Fundamentalism. *Orthodoxes Forum*, 5, 49-72.

⁵ If. DASKALOV, R. 1997. Ideas About, and Reactions to Modernization in the Balkans. *East European Quarterly*, 31, 141-180.

⁶ See LAIOU, A. E. & MOTTAHEDEH, R. P. 2001. *The Crusades from the perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim world*, Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.

centuries these attitudes were maintained by the Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. But the modern version of this phenomenon emerged in the late 18th and nineteenth century, when the main direct sources of foreign occidentalist sentiments were at least two. To the Greek conservative circles joined Russian Pan-Slavism with its institutions, primarily various Slavic committees that have instruments for a serious impact on the Orthodox Church and education of Slavs. One could also presuppose some kind of direct impact of Western criticism on Western civilization. Relationship between these two or three sources are not identical in different Balkan countries, they are complex and full of internal conflicts.

To develop a trend; there have to exist not only some source but also a favorable environment. As a rule, the most fertile ground for similar sentiments is associated with some kind of dynamic development of something new that confuses and raises fears. This may be a new industrial revolution, the modernization of society, the emergence of radically new technologies, etc. Essential element of the response to such drastic changes is the rejection, which may take the form of a demolition of the material bearer of the new in a Luddite's style, a religious fundamentalism and abundance of proposals for retro-utopian refuges. At late 18th and early 19th century throughout the Balkans there were both favorable environment, and sources of anti-Western sentiment and anti-modernism. *Mutatis mutandis* this was also trough in subsequent periods, but in the late 18th and early 19th century (the era of so called 'national revival' and the construction of the Balkan nationalisms) when current anti-Western sentiments get their modern shape. Unlike similar trends in the Islamic world, anti-European attitudes in the Balkans are not so directly provoked by any action of the West.

The problem of the image of the Other is widely discussed in the Balkans and in Bulgaria in recent decades.⁷ This debate came to the question of Orientalism and led part of the scholars to the topic of the Occidentalism⁸. The issue of the Orientalism and the Occidentalism can be viewed from different perspectives; one possibility is through the prism of so called „mental mapping” by which communities organize the world according their own ideas, myths, fears, expectations, etc.

⁷ On this topic see: Данова, Н. Образът на гърците, сърбите, албанците и румънците в българската книжнина. – В: Връзки на несъвместимост между християни и мюсюлмани в България, С.: Фондация Международен център по проблемите на малцинствата и културните взаимодействия, б. д., 57-136; Данова, Н. Представата за “Другия” на Балканите: Образът на гърка в българската книжнина през XV- средата на XIX век. – Исторически преглед, 1993, № 6, 6-7; Образът на “другия” в учебниците по история на балканските страни. С.: Фондация Балкански колежи, 1998; Представата за “другия” на Балканите, ред. Н. Данова, В. Димова, М. Калицин. С., Акад. Изд. “проф. М. Дринов”, 1995; Pride and Prejudice. National Stereotypes in 19th and 20th Century Europe East to West. Budapest, 1995; Да мислим “другото”. Образи, стереотипи, кризи (18-20 в.), съст. Н. Аретов, С.: Кралица Маб, 2001; The Image of the “Other”/ Neighbour in the School Textbooks of the Balkan Countries, ed. P. D. Xochellis, F. L. Toloudi. Athens, G. Dardanos, 2001; Свой и туђ. Слика другог у балканским и средноевропским књижевностима, Институт за књижевност и уметност, Београд, 2006; Въпреки различията: интеркултурни диалози на Балканите, съст. Н. Аретов. С.: Акад. изд. Проф. М. Дринов, 2008; Заимова, Р. Пътят към “другата” Европа. Из френско-османските културни общувания. С.: Кралица Маб, 2004.

⁸ The introduction of the term ‘Occidentalism’ is associated with the International Interdisciplinary Conference “Occidentalism or the “images” that the East projects of the West” (2005) - [http://www.bulgc18.com/index.php?pageid=12&lang=bg](http://www.bulgc18.com/index.php?pageid=12&lang/bg)

Mental mapping⁹ of Europe is extremely important issue. Its essence is in drawing lines of separation and defining where the center is and where – the periphery, pinpointing landmarks that determine the co-ordinate system, etc. “Border” regions like Eastern Europe and Balkans present one crucial element of the process of mapping. Concepts like *Mittleuropa* (Central Europe)¹⁰ coined in opposition to Eastern Europe and Balkans also deserves the attention of the scholars. What to say about the similarity of different types of periphery, such as Balkans and Scandinavia, or Balkans and Iberian Peninsula that are imagined in a quite distinct manner.

Larry Wolff's important book (Wolff, 1994) traced the origin of the concept of Eastern Europe back to the age of Enlightenment. The study of Maria Todorova (Todorova, 1997) scrutinized the genesis and growth of the similar concept of Balkans. Paradoxically enough this peninsula is at the same time more peripheral and, concerning Hellenic civilization, situated at the very heart of Europe. The place of the Balkans on mental maps of Europe was fervently discussed some decades ago, it was painfully actual during the wars in ex-Yugoslavia, than, recently slightly went in the background of the attention, if not of the scholars,

at least of journalists and general public.

Referring to and using such type of mental structures and elaborating attitudes towards them, among other things, is a question of terminology. One phenomenon may be named differently. Researchers use to talk about Counter-Enlightenment (Friedrich Nietzsche, Isaiah Berlin) or anti-Enlightenment (Z. Sternhell) and associate it with philosophers such as Giambattista Vico, Johann Gottfried Herder, and Edmund Burke¹¹. Mediated connection with these authors, and with Herder in first place, may be traced at the heart of counter-modern sentiment among the Slavs. In the Balkans such a line can be connected also to the ‘anti-Voltairianism’ of certain circles associated with the Orthodox Church, with Slavophilism, and with general resistance to modernization. Counter-Enlightenment has its analogies in Bulgarian culture, which may be interpreted as taken from outside, or can be regarded as „native”.

Another approach to the same issues applies different terminology framework and prefers to talk about anti-modernism (counter-modernism) and / or anti-Westernism¹² and anti-Euopeanism.

One curious methodological problem is associ-

⁹ Cf. for example Шенк, Фр. Б. Ментальные карты. – Новое литературное обозрение, 2001, 6, № 52, 42-61.

¹⁰ See Pelinka, Anton. *Mythos Mitteleuropa*. In Peter Gerlich. u.a. (Hg.) *Neuland Mitteleuropa. Ideologien und Identitätskrisen*. Wien, Torun, 1995; S. R. Graubard (Hg.) *Eastern Europe... Central Europe... Europe*. Boulder, 1991; Миллер, А. И. Тема Центральной Европы: История, современные дискурсы и место в них России. – Новое литературное обозрение, 2001, 6, № 52, 42-61. One particular Bulgarian approach see at: Григоров, Добромир. „Средна Европа: Защо сме такива”, *Littera et Lingua* (e-journal), Spring 2003, www.slav.uni-sofia.bg

¹¹ Вж. Sternhell, Zeev. *Les anti-Lumières. Du XVIIIe siècle à la guerre froide*. Fayard, 2006. За българските аспекти на проблема вж. Danova, Nadia. *Les anti-Lumières dans l'espace bulgare*. (под печат); Надя Данова, Отново за “Оксидентализма” като образ на Другия. – В: Голямото вписване или какво сравнява сравнителното литературознание. Съст. Р. Станчева. С.: Унив. изд. Св. Климент Охридски, Изд. център Боян Пенев, 2009, с. 34-43.

¹² Cf. Leften S. Stavrianos, ‘The Influence of the West on the Balkans’, in: Charles and Barbara Jelavich (eds.), *The Balkans in Transition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1963), pp. 184-226, here: p. 184-187; Vasilios N. Makrides and Dirk Uffelmann. *Studying Eastern Orthodox Anti-Westernism: the Need for a Comparative Research Agenda*. -

ated with the preferred terminological framework. Whether terms as Occidentalism, anti-modernism, Anti-Westernism are synonyms, i.e. whether they refer to the same phenomena? In this case, it is interesting to understand what determines their choice, what are the reasons which led some authors to call one thing 'Occidentalism', others – 'anti-Westernism', third – 'anti-modernism'. Whether this is only a question of specialization, or offering a new term is the result of a desire to highlight the own heuristic thinking? Whether the adoption of a terminological system is not a matter of scientific fashion? It is possible to seek some nuances in the use of one or another term, to seek typology and hierarchy of similar phenomena, to ask questions about their genesis and evolution (from each other, or parallel).

The question about the usability of terms like Orientalism and Occidentalism in the context of Bulgarian, Balkan or East European culture is one big challenge for the scholars. Todorova argues that it is not correct to apply Said's notion and methodology to the Balkans and many authors (including Bulgarian) agree with her. On the other hand, scholars like Milica Bakić-Hayden offered different approach based on the idea about 'nested orientalism'.

While it is important to recognize the specific rhetoric of balkanism, however, it would be difficult to understand it outside the overall orientalist context, since it shares an underlying logic and rhetoric with orientalism. Balkanism can indeed be viewed as a „variation on the orientalist theme” that distinguishes Balkans as a part of Europe that used to be under Ottoman, hence oriental, rule and, as such, different from Europe „proper.”¹³

¹³ Bakić-Hayden, Milica. 'Nesting Orientalisms: the Case of Former Yugoslavia', *Slavic Review*, No.4, (Winter) 1995, p. 2. For

Occidentalism offers a convenient opportunity to a community or person to think of themselves as a victim of malicious external forces. On the other hand, despite the critical attitude towards Orientalism, the unveiling of orientalist's features in the own culture (Balkan, Bulgarian) do not pose any serious problem to the observer (unlike the situation in Western Europe). Similar traits actually exist and when referring to them in your own culture you practically claim that it is part of (Western) Europe, seen as prestigious. To find forms of Orientalism, means to distinguish yourself from the Oriental. This distinction is particularly typical for the Balkans, where, in the time of grow up of nationalism and forging its mythology the Orient was imagined first and foremost in the figure of the Ottoman "oppressors". Of course, any such distinction is suspicious, it (may) be a manifestation of uncertainty, uncertainty about own value, inverted insecurity, inferiority complex, etc. In any case, it indicates kinship that is unwonted. So to say, Scandinavian culture hardly needs to deny its Ottoman heritage, while the Balkans' have to and they are very active in doing this, or at least passionately argue about it.¹⁴

more recent approach see Blažević, Zrinka. "Rethinking Balkanism: Interpretative Challenge of the Early Modern Illyrism", *Etudes Balkaniques* (Sofia), No. 1, 2007, pp. 87-106.

¹⁴ About these discussions see: B. Lory, *Le sort de l'héritage ottoman en Bulgarie. L'exemple des villes bulgares 1878-1880*, Paris/ Istanbul, 1985. (Лори, Бернар. Съдбата на османското наследство. Amicita, 2002). See als Todorova, Maria. *The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans, Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint in the Balkans and the Middle East*, ed. L. Carl Brown, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, 45-77. Abridged version in: - Güney Özdoğru, Kemâli Saibağlı, eds., *The Balkans. A Mirror of the New International Order*, Istanbul: EREN, 1995, 55-74 and in: - *Etudes balkaniques*, 1994, No. 4, 66-81. Вж. и *Die Staaten Südosteuropas und die Osmanen*. Hrsg. H. G. Majer. München, Selbstverlag der Südosteuropa-Gesell-

Turk and Muslim are the main enemies in the mythology of Balkan nationalisms. Balkan Christians see them as fierce barbarians that came from Asia with their alien religion, who seized, killed and abduct our treasures - the land, cities, women, faith - this is one key element of Bulgarian national mythology¹⁵. This is a well-known throughout Europe image that underlies Orientalism, but western imagination works with plenty of other 'oriental' representations. Along with blood-thirsty barbarian stands the fabulously rich oriental ruler and his harem, the wonders of the unknown eastern lands with their rare spices, exotic foods and drinks, unseen beasts and birds, mysterious islands in the remote warm seas, etc. The exoticism and femininity of the East are also presented in the imagination of the Balkan Christians, but takes more modest place in it, does not give rise to significant mythic structures; the same is true about India, China and

schaft, 1989, специално Roth, K. Osmanische Spuren in der Alltagskultur Südosteuropas. Вж. също много сериозната поредица „Съдбата на мюсюлманските общности на Балканите“ (1997-), издавана от Международен център по проблемите на малцинствата и културните взаимодействия в София и специално „Мюсюлманската култура по българските земи“ (Съст. Р. Градева, Св. Иванова, 1998) и „История на мюсюлманската култура по българските земи“ (Съст. Р. Градева, 2001); Кил, Михел. Изкуство и общество в България през турския период. София: Любимъдрие-Хроника, 2002; Вж. Аретов, Н. Балканските народи и Османската империя: Едно отхвърлено наследство. - Литературна мисъл, 2008, № 1, с. 55-66. Aretov, N. The Rejected Legacy. - In: Detrez, R. & B. Segaert (eds.) *Europe and the Historical Legacies in the Balkans*. Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2008, p. 69-79.

¹⁵ Cf. Аретов, Н. Национална митология и национална литература. Сюжети, изграждащи българската национална идентичност в словесността от XVIII и XIX век. С.: Кралица Маб, 2006.

Japan and their exotic religions and custom. That is, I think, one of the most characteristic distinctions of the Balkan Orientalism.

There is one specific peculiarity in the mythology of Greek nationalism. For it the second most important enemy are Slavs, Bulgarians in the first place, they were also seen as barbarians, really from the North, but somehow close to Orientals¹⁶. On this basis aroused some seemingly paradoxical coalitions and oppositions. For specific purposes circles around the Ecumenical Patriarchate can be united with the Ottomans against the West¹⁷, in other cases against the Bulgarians; the latter generated one quite widespread among Bulgarians myth. Anti-Ottoman trends undoubtedly brought together the Greeks with Russia, which did not interfere with their hostile attitude towards Pan-Slavism. At the same time (nineteenth century) Orthodox Slavs in the Balkans were naturally more inclined to accept Pan-Slavism, either sincerely, or as a tactical device.

Manifestations of Orientalism can easily be traced in literary and historiographical texts, in journalism and mass consciousness. Another paradox is that despite the negative valuation of and deliberate distinction from the Oriental, some manifestations of the own Oriental features are relatively readily pointed in certain spheres. This line started earlier and is still current, but its most emblematic embodiment may be sought in probably the most popular not only in Bulgaria Bulgarian literary works „Bay Ganyo“ (1895), but also in the whole work of its author Aleko Konstantinov. On the one hand, the Oriental is the dark, imperfect part of the own, its shadow (in the Jungian

¹⁶ Cf. Велкова, С. „Славянският съсед“ и гръцкият национален „образ Аз“. С., Херон прес, 2002.

¹⁷ Cf. Vasilios N. Makrides and Dirk Uffelmann, Op. cit.

sense). On the other hand, it is admitted in certain areas perceived as lower, such as the cuisine, some customs, etc.

Things are slightly different, when we deal with Occidentalism. Discovering in the own culture some forms of Occidentalism means to admit that this culture is not "Western", which despite all elucidations in one particular context means "less of civilization" (Wolff, 1994, 43)¹⁸. Therefore, general public and even scholars reluctantly comment any manifestations of Occidentalism in their own culture and it is difficult to seek the roots of these manifestations. This became obvious in the debates during the conference on Occidentalism, organized by the Bulgarian Society for 18th Century Studies in 2005.¹⁹

Assuming that the hallmarks of Occidentalism are hatred of the City and urban civilization, critic of the bourgeois civilization and its commercialism, rejection of rationality and science, opposed to irrational notions such as 'spirit', 'race', 'blood' and 'soil', and denial of feminism, there is no doubt that such attitudes are present in the Balkan cultures. They can be associated with such important elements in national mythology as the figure of the alien rapist or seducer, the plot about the unfortunate consequences of marriage to a foreigner, the nostalgic mood in Bulgarian poetry of the nineteenth century, written abroad (in Russia), the retro-Utopian vision of a ancient patriarchal rural paradise (even the revolutionary Hristo Botev is not immunized for it), anti-Catholic and anti-Protestant propaganda, etc²⁰.

¹⁸ Wolff is quoting a phrase of marquis de Salaberry "le plus ou moins de civilization".

¹⁹ Cf. <http://bulgc18.com/index.php?pageid=12&lang=bg>

²⁰ More details in: Аретов, Н. Що е оксидентализъм и има ли той почва у нас? Предварителни тезиси в търсене на литературните аспекти на проблема. – Литературна мисъл,

And a clarification to these features without entering into details. Rhetoric of Orientalism and Occidentalism is sometimes used instrumentally. In order to gain some advantage for themselves and to hurt the opponent, he is described intentionally as a barbarian or as refined villain²¹.

Although Orientalism and Occidentalism have opposite orientation, they do not come into serious conflict in the Balkans. (Russian distinction between *pochveniui* (почвенници) and Westernizers (западници) is not identical to the opposition Orientalism - Occidentalism.) Rather, the two trends overlap, sharing particular spheres of influence. Thus, in some plots Orientals (Turks, etc.) are casted for the roles of brutal barbarians, and the western villains (actually Greeks) – for the role of the treacherous seducer. Very often they are even presented as allies, as in some versions of the folk-lore plot about Stoyan Voivode (chieftain).

Particularly interesting are the cases in which those two structures overlap, the instances of internal contradictions, the exceptions. One such curious case presents the well-known and very popular poem "Izvorat na Belonogata" („The Spring of the White-Legged") (1873) written by the great Bulgarian poet and political activist Petko R. Slaveykov. It still generates different interpretations; created in the manner of folk songs it was published anonymously and yet fully represents the ideas of its author. In it, something quite rare for Bulgarian culture and in conflict with

2005, № 1, с. 123-130.

²¹ One typical manifestation was the indirect argument between Vasil Popovich and the Czech scholar Konstantin Jireček, Minister of education in Bulgaria (1881-1882). More details in: Аретов, Н. Проблематичност и напрежения в славянската идентичност. Константин Иречек и българите. – В: Славянска филология. Т. 23. С.: 2003, с. 208-220.

Occidentalists' concepts, the Oriental is assigned to the role of a representative of urban civilization, in a sense, even of the modernity. Moreover, unlike its traditional mode of conduct here he neither acts violently, nor seduces Bulgarian beauty by fraud; instead of that he tries to convince her to accept his gifts and to go with him; after the refusal he withdraws quietly.

The plot depicts the encounter of two typical characters: Gergana, young Bulgarian girl, and the rich Turkish vizier, charmed by her beauty. In their conversation two different worldviews, two different value systems come into collision. They meet, enter into dialogue, and do not understand one another and part, each of them remains confident in its own right and values.

But what both characters stand for? Gergana passionately defended her world as it is. Through her words the poet constructs an attractive idyll, filled with beauty and harmony; it was dominated by the calm and humanized nature of the garden. Obviously this was not the real world of the Bulgarians from the

era, and not the world that the poet himself depicted in his other works, such as his satires, so we can define it as a utopia. We could call it Bulgarian, traditional and patriarchal, even rural, and to oppose it to the sophisticated urban civilization of the Oriental (Turkish) Vizier and his world, which undoubtedly was also utopian. Although the poet clearly prefers Gergana's utopia, he did not see the world of Vizier in a negative light.

The poem „The Spring of the White-Legged” bears one very distinctive version of the conflict between „own” and „alien.” On the one hand, „alien” generates fear, it is presented as hostile and threatening, on the other hand, it has its charm, its attractive force. Gergana not hesitate and immediately selects the „own”. For better or worse, today Bulgarians largely think of themselves with the categories underlying the „Spring of White-Legged” and other works from that time, that bear similar ideas. Perhaps there are other options, other solutions to the conflict; in fact they are present both in life and in literature.

Literature:

- BURUMA, I. & MARGALIT, A. 2004. *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*, London, The Penguin Press.
- CARRIER, J. G. (ed.) 1995. *Occidentalism. Images of the West*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- DASKALOV, R. 1997. Ideas About, and Reactions to Modernization in the Balkans. *East European Quarterly*, 31, 141-180.
- HANSON, V. D. *Occidentalism. The false west* [Online]. Available: <http://www.nationalreview.com/hanson/hanson051002.asp>.
- LAIYOU, A. E. & MOTTAHEDEH, R. P. 2001. *The Crusades from the perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim world*, Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.
- MAKRIDES, V. N. 1991. Aspects of Greek Orthodox Fundamentalism. *Orthodoxes Forum*, 5, 49-72.
- SAID, E. 1978. *Orientalism*, London, Routledge & Kegan Rayl.
- TODOROVA, M. F. E. A. F. E. N. 1997. *Imagining the Balkans*, New York ; Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- TØNNESSON, S. 14 October 1993. Orientalism, Occidentalism and Knowing about Others. Copenhagen: Lecture given at the NEWAS workshop.
- WOLFF, L. 1994. *Inventing Eastern Europe : the map of civilization on the mind of the enlightenment*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Николај Аретов

Балканските варијанти на ориентализмот и оксидентализмот

Резиме: Целта на трудот е се даде преглед на претставите за ориентализмот и оксидентализмот во балкански контекст. Станува збор за две форми на демонизирање на Другиот, настанати во ерата на Просветителството, два феномена што се амбивалентни и увезена од други култури. Тие комуницираат на интересен начин и се критични места во митологиите на сите земји во регионот, иако на различни начини.

Клучни зборови: ориентализам, оксидентализам, Балкан, Друг, демонизирање на Другиот, ментални мапи

