

Orientalism, Balkanism, Occidentalism: Thinking through Discourses of “Othering” and Conflict

Dr. Jelena Tomic

Course Description

The discourses of Orientalism and Balkanism – originally grounded in travelogues and art, but also social science and politics – figure as hegemonic perception and cognitive patterns of the “other” up to the present. Moreover, as explored in the seminal work of Edward Said (1995 [1978]) and Maria Todorova (2009), the self-image of the “West”/the “Occident” is crucially based on the construction of the „Orient“, respectively the „Balkans“. The analysis of occidental discourses (e.g. Carrier 2003) of imagining “the West” also reveals crucial patterns of “othering”. All three discursive modes of imagining “the Other” potentially figure as groundwork for processes of conflict and marginalisation.

Particularly after the break-out of violent conflicts in the Balkans, the attacks of 9/11, as well as in the course of EU-Enlargement (Turkey, Eastern Enlargement) and the aggravation of the migration policies (xenophobia, debates of “honour killings”, Islamophobia etc.), the pronounced strength of orientalist, balkanist, and occidentalist patterns of thought and the necessity of their critical assessment by social sciences has become more than apparent.

Through close readings of key-texts from a transdisciplinary perspective the course offers the framework for a systematic reassessment of crucial notions such as: the construction of the „other“, forms of identity grammars, boundary-making, “integration”, postcolonialism, essentialisation, exoticisation, “fundamentalism”, terrorism etc.

Course Methodology

Lectures, close reading/student presentations and discussion.

- Course Participants & Tasks
- List of (group) Presentations and Discussants

Didactic Method

The course alternately combines lectures, discussion/close reading sessions, and presentations (see course outline!).

Group Presentations

Each participant will choose **one of the 8 THEMES** and let me know his/her decision **by May 31st!** Apart from focusing on selected readings, the presentations offer the opportunity to deal with ongoing research projects (e.g. MA- or PhD-Thesis) or explore new ideas and fields of interest. The presentations (**60 to max. 75 min incl. minimum 15 min discussion time!**). The presentation groups will be formed via email communication **one month prior to the summer school**. You will receive the email-address of your group colleagues, so that **you can communicate and plan the presentation**.

Compulsory Readings

- ✓ SAID, Edward (1995 [1978]). *Orientalism*. Penguin Books. (Introduction)
- ✓ TODOROVA, Maria (2009): *Imagining the Balkans* (updated edition). Oxford University Press. (Introduction)
- ✓ CARRIER, James (ed.) (2003): *Occidentalism. Images of the West*. Oxford University Press. (Introduction, 1-33)

DAY 1

Orientalization – The “Complete Other”

Readings:

- ✓ ABDEL-MALEK, Anouar (2000 [1963]): *Orientalism in Crisis*, in: Macfie, Alexander L. (ed.) *Orientalism. A Reader*. New York University Press: 47-57.
- ✓ MACFIE, Alexander L. (2000) *Orientalism. A Reader*. New York University Press (Part VI: An Elaborate Account, 89-117; Part XIII *Orientalism Reconsidered*, 345-365)
- ✓ VARISCO, Daniel Martin (2007): *Reading Orientalism. Said and the Unsaid*. University of Washington Press. (Introduction, 3-29)

Morning class: 10-12h30

- **Introduction to the course**
- **Input:** Orientalism

Afternoon Class: 14-16h

- **Film & Discussion:** “Edward Said: On Orientalism” (1998, Sut Jhally, 40min)

DAY 2

Presentations on Orientalism

Morning class: 10-12h30

- **Presentation 1:** Orientalising “the Other” – Transdisciplinary Perspectives
- **Presentation 2:** Orientalism and Conflict/Resistance

Afternoon Class: 14-16h

- **Presentation 3:** Gendering Orientalism
- **Discussion**

DAY 3

Balkanization – The “Incomplete Self”

Readings:

- ✓ TODOROVA, Marija N. (1994): *The Balkans. From Discovery to Invention*, *Slavic Review* 53/2: 453-482

- ✓ BAKIC-HAYDEN, Milica (1995): Nesting Orientalisms. The Case of Former Yugoslavia, *Slavic Review* 54/4: 917-931.
- ✓ GOLDSWORTHY, Vesna (2002): Invention and In(ter)vention. The Rhetoric of Balkanization, in: Bjelic, Dušan I. and Obrad Savic, *Balkan as Metaphor. Between Globalization and Fragmentation*. MIT-Press: 25-39.

Morning class: 10-12h30

- **Input:** Balkanism

Afternoon Class: 14-16h

- **Film & Discussion:** "Whose is this Song?" (2003, Adela Peeva, 70min)

DAY 4

Presentations on Balkanism

Morning class: 10-12h30

- **Presentation 4:** "Balkanizing" the "Other" – Transdisciplinary Perspectives
- **Presentation 5:** Balkanism and Conflict/Resistance

Afternoon Class: 14-16h

- **Presentation 6:** Gendering Balkanism
- **Discussion**

DAY 5

Occidentalism – Imagining and Deconstructing the "West"

Readings

- ✓ CHAKRABARTY, Dipesh (2000): *Provincialising Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton University Press. (Introduction: The Idea of Provincialising Europe, 327)
- ✓ CARRIER, James (ed.) (2003): *Occidentalism. Images of the West*. Oxford University Press. (Introduction, 1-33)
- ✓ WALLERSTEIN, Immanuel (2006): *European Universalism. The Rhetoric of Power*. New Press. (Chapter 1: Whose Right to Intervene. Universal Values against Barbarism, 1-31 & Chapter 2: Can one be a Non-Orientalist? Essentialist Particularism, 31-51)

Morning class: 10-12h30

- **Input:** Occidentalism – Imagining and Deconstructing the "West"

Afternoon Class: 14-16h

- **Film & Discussion:** "A Road to Mekka: The Journey of Mohammad Assad" (2008, Georg Misch, 92min)

DAY 6

Presentations: Occidentalism & Closing Discussion

Morning class: 10-12h30

- **Presentation 7:** Perspectives of Postcolonial Thought (e.g. History/Temporality, Gender, Development etc.)
- **Presentation 8:** Islam in Europe or European Islam: Orientalist/Occidentalist Intersections
- **Closing Discussion**

Afternoon: Summer School Closing Ceremony