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The summary of doctoral thesis entitled *The faces of Orient. Anthropological reading of polish relations from ancient and modern journeys.*

The subject of the doctoral dissertation is an attempt to find a common denominator between two important sciences for me. As a graduate of cultural anthropology and Oriental studies with Middle Eastern specialty, I tried to explore a topic in which tools, categories, key orientations of the first science, will help in the study of the second. The term "Orient" used in the title of the work partly reveals my intentions. I link them with the idea of an American-Palestinian researcher who revolutionized and undermined Western certainty regarding the judgments and truths expressed about other cultures on the basis of own science and drew attention to ways of representing "Something else" in literature, art and popular culture. Edward Said, as it refers to him, in the 1970s provoked Orientalists (and he meant everybody who studies the Orient, writes about it or teaches it) to reflect on the place and significance of the researcher, and also the influence of European literature (mainly travel literature and belle-lettres) to shape this part of the world. He came to quite arbitrary conclusions – for the purposes of preliminary sketches of the topic (bearing in mind the reductionistic character of this statement), I refer to them as discursive practices in the production of the Orient, which led to the creation of a demarcation line between East and West. At the same time, this division was based on the assumption that the East is not only an image opposed to the West, but also a subordinate world. Using the terms eastern/oriental and west/European interchangeably, Said studied primarily the scientific and literary representations of the Muslim-Arab cultural circle, created by British, French and German (less frequently) authors - representatives of the European world. The Orientalist discourse described by the researcher (literature, science, languages, culture, art - although he devoted little space to this one) developed from the end of the eighteenth century, in close connection with colonial expansion, legitimizing activities in metropolises and strengthening cultural antagonisms (I write more about this in the second part of this thesis).

My main goal, however, is not the simple acquisition of Said's theses (the researcher himself in later years of his scientific work, softened to some extent the earlier judgments) or questioning them completely, **but an attempt to answer the question, which comes from the reading practice and was verified by it, what faces of the Orient are rising from Polish reports from ancient journeys (nineteenth century diaries) and modern ones**

(travel blogs)? Of course, such question requires a conscious selection of material - both spatial, temporal and objective. The subjects of my research are only those texts that describe the cultural and geographical space specified to as the Middle East. The base for this analysis are nineteenth-century travel journals (this genre has become popular in romanticism) and contemporary travel blogs. The first ones mentioned are treated as "classic" texts, constituting a pattern for e-diaries. **The purpose of my thesis** is not only to compare images that emerge from the reports of Polish travelers visiting Orient, but also their analysis and interpretation through anthropological categories that can reveal the multiple cultural meanings that stories about journeys are hiding. **It is equally important to me to follow how the journey itself has changed - its ontological, epistemological and axiological significance.** However, I would like to emphasize clearly that this work does not concern analysis of literary faithfulness to historical realities, but also insights, impressions, reflections, beliefs and stereotypes resulting from the ways of representing a culturally different space.

The proposed topic of the doctoral dissertation combines perspectives and research orientations from various areas of the humanities. Due to the subject of the research - literary text – providing "knowledge" about another geographically and ontologically remote space I will take the ideas and concepts developed on the basis of anthropology of literature, geopoetics, anthropology of tourism and travel and postcolonial theory. **The key triad in analyzing and interpreting "travels" are categories of: narrative, identity and place.** At the very beginning I accept the thesis that societies both formerly and now gave and give meaning to the world and their own existence through stories. They also bring other concepts that constituted for me a kind of instrumentation in reaching the senses and meanings that the travelers gave to the described worlds (center/border, their/foreign). I must admit that this dissertation is not based on one coherent methodology or theory – the instruments of research was developing during anthropological reading and were also verified by it. I tried to look at the analyzed travel stories taking into account their dimension:

- intertextual (correspondence with other texts),
- contextual (the practice of writing is always entangled in spatial-historical-social relations)
- textual (the actual content of the work).

The comparative idea of research required a certain intellectual nomadism, realizing itself in an interdisciplinary approach to the subject, crossing the boundaries and pluralism of methods.

The dissertation has been divided into three parts. In Part I – *Journey in cultural discourses and its anthropological dimensions* – I discuss voices that are polarizing in humanistic reflection on the sense and meaning of travel; I operationalize crucial for our further analysis notions of identity, narrative and place. I am making a brief discussion regarding journey in its historical and socio-literary dimension (*journey versus paradigm of the era*): from the moment of emerging certain canons of real art of traveling (*ars apodemica*) at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, through the journeys of scholars in the age of "enlightenment" focused on scientific cognition, then romantics seeking answers to existential questions in journeys, up to the "lost art of traveling" and mass tourism. In a diachronic way, it shows the most important transformations of cultural paradigms. In this part I also discuss canonical works concerning romantic journeys, as they were a matrix for these less-known descriptions, which are the subject of further analysis. Finally, I mention the main trends in research on travel and tourism. Part II – *Ex Oriente lux. Old journeys to the East* – I start by presenting the travel traditions of Poles to the Orient. Talking about the Polish fascinations of the Orient, it is impossible to overlook the curricular and educational nature of research on the culture and languages of the East. This is a good time to wonder on Said's orientalism and make some self-reflection. Ask a question about whether we are heirs of the same metaphors (although we have never been colonizers), or whether, as Zdzisław Żygulski saw it, "in fact our Orientalism has always been homely, romantic, and non-controlling; it enriched our culture without harming the peoples who are the source of artistic inspiration"¹. Later in the presentation of how Polish travelers imagined, experienced and described encounters with other cultures, I use the universal paradigm borrowed from Tom Selwyn as a link between historical and modern thought inspired by the journey. Thanks to this extensive research material and numerous exemplifications, it manages to organize according to the five elements of this paradigm. These are:

- *the material world* (occupying a central place in shaping cultural identity and dispositions);
- *social world* (principles and practices of hospitality, and so what is related to the social world and social organization);
- *symbolic world* (symbolic and metaphorical expression, ideas, values, beliefs), - *relationship between the Self and the Other* (identity aspects);

¹ Z. Żygulski jun., Wstęp do wydania polskiego, [w:] E. Said, *Orientalizm*, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1991, s. 9

- *knowledge about the world* (ways of acquiring, gathering and embodying knowledge about the world, focused on saving memory)².

However, I must emphasize that although this model has a high operational potential, it allows to organize an extremely vast and rich material, it, like every scheme, escapes simple division and classification. On the journey, what is material enters into a dialogue with the social and symbolic, creating the cognitive horizon of man, which in turn is based on the coexistence of the *Self/Other*. For the model proposed by researcher of the anthropology of trism, I add one more category: *the initial journey dimension*. The last two elements: *the knowledge* and *the initiative dimension of the journey*, which come into mutual relations with each other, I do not discuss in Part II, but sum it up in the conclusion. Part III - *I'm blogging therefore I am. Contemporary travels to the East* – it is a presentation, analysis and interpretation of the "online diaries". I begin with the main axiological, epistemological and ontological transformations that have taken place as a result of the industrial and technological revolution (railways, airplanes, Internet). Roughly and very generally discussed in the first part the topic of blogs, is deepen here – I make their historical and formal characteristics, and also wonder about the impact of the "virtual journey" on socio-cultural practices. Content on blogs is organized according to the same classification as in Part II (material, social, symbolic, Self/Other world). Also here, the last two categories, I leave to discuss in the *Conclusion*: conclusions and reflections on the initiatory meaning of ancient and modern travels; as well as acquiring and transmitting knowledge about the world. I am enriching the Anthropological reading at the end of this work with Appendix – *Orient in figures and photographs* – where according to the same classification key as in the case of text materials, I present engravings and photographs from the nineteenth-century dailies and travel blogs discussed by me. The thesis is ended up with *Bibliography* and *List of Illustrations*.

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² T. Selwyn, *Antropologia podróży turystyki i pielgrzymowania*, [w:] S. Owsianowska, R. Winiarski (red.), *Antropologia Turystyki. Wydawnictwo jubileuszowe z okazji 40-lecia Wydziału Turystyki i Rekreacji AWF w Krakowie*, Kraków 2017, s. 77-101.