

## **STEREOTYPING IN THE WORKS OF INDIAN ENGLISH**

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**Abstract:** Based on stereotyping the Other, both Orientalism and Occidentalism focus on representations of the West and the East, the Self and the Other, and their binary oppositions. These stereotyped images are especially present in postcolonial literature, including the works by Indian English authors. The dichotomy between the Orient and the Occident can, naturally, be best expressed by writers who are of hybrid origin, such as Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Anita Desai and Kiran Desai. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the instances of Orientalist and Occidentalist discourse in some of their works, in which even the protagonists are hybrid people, belonging at the same time to both of these two worlds, to the East and to the West.

**Keywords:** Stereotyping, Orientalism, Occidentalism, Indian English Literature, Anita Desai, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Kiran Desai

### **1. Introduction**

Orientalism was shaped in the West as a hegemonic ideology based on binary oppositions between Europe and the colonised world, between the West and the East, between the Self and the Other. Its essence is best captured by the following words of the founder of postcolonial studies, Edward Said, in his canonical classic *Orientalism*: "On the one hand there are Westerners and on the other there are Arab-Orientalists: the former are (in no particular order) rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion; the latter are none of these things" (49). This statement obviously implies that even after the decolonisation process was over, the power relations between the coloniser and the colonised have remained the same, only now they are not the relations between the ruler and the ruled but between the dominating and the dominated. For the Westerner (i.e. 'the white man')

the Orient will always signify the object and the periphery, while the Oriental will always connote the Other, a subaltern person who is lesser and lower to the Western Self.

Another famous postcolonial theoretician, Homi K. Bhabha, defines these cultural differences as binary boundaries "between past and present, inside and outside, subject and object, signifier and signified." (251) For Bhabha, the blackness of the colonised (euphemistically called 'man of colour') is inevitably related to something tragic and belated, while whiteness always signifies something positive, rational, universal, progressive and supreme (237-38), which is proved by the fact that whiteness "is at once colour and no colour" (76). Drawing upon Fanon's book *Black Skin, White Masks*, Ziauddin Sardar enumerates qualities for which whiteness and blackness – as two diametrically opposite notions – are symbols: pure, just, true, virgin, "civilised, modern and human" versus: ugly, sinful, dark, immoral, "dirty, prohibited and funereal", respectively (xiii), and concludes: "a white lie is excusable; and black lie is all that is wicked and evil" (xiii). To go back to Said, we can conclude that the very source of Orientalism was this "coercive framework, by which a modern 'colored' man is chained irrevocably to the general truths formulated about his prototypical, anthropological, and doctrinal forebears by a white European scholar" (237). In another of his excellent books, *Culture and Imperialism*, Said criticises some European colonial writers' "assumption of native backwardness and general inadequacy to be independent, 'equal,' and fit." (80) By validating the Occidental world, these writers devalued *other worlds*, argues Said, while they depicted native peoples as *marginally visible* and *people without history*. However, David Jarvis points to the paradox that, although Orient is depicted by the Occidentals as unchanging, incapable to even describe itself, and uniform, it is still "something to be feared and controlled" (1). According to him, the coloured people are described in Orientalism as "backward, fanatical, and violent" (2), while the Westerners are described by Eastern authors as people "worshiping money, materialism, and individualism" (1).

This statement proves that, the same as most phenomena in nature have their antithesis or counterpoints, so does Orientalism – its opposite is Occidentalism, "a discourse built around a set of anti-Western thoughts" (Karkaba 153) and created as a reaction to the image of the non-Western world disseminated by the Eurocentrics. Ute Manecke points to the simple fact that "[W]hile Said's *Orientalism* focuses on widespread beliefs and assumptions about the Orient, *Occidentalism* scrutinises commonly held, negative associations with the West", and adds that the ideas perceived as Eastern or Western are actually 'deeply

intertwined' (1). Nevertheless, Occidentalism is not exactly the mirror image of Orientalism, but a much more complex point of view, despite the apparent meaning of the word as defined by Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit in their book *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*, who use it to denote the "dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies" (5). The proof can be found in the following two facts: firstly, much of the anti-Western criticism originated in the West itself and, secondly, many distinguished Occidentalists were also partly influenced by the Western tradition. Defining Occidentalism as contemporary criticism of the West, its lifestyle and mind, Jervis notes that "Occidentalism thinking has also increased in recent decades", and calls that development "the Occidentalism revival" (3). A similar view is expressed by Alastair Bonnett, who talks about "a growing dissatisfaction with Eurocentric visions" and claims that "[J]udging by the sudden eruption of new work on the topic, occidentalism is an idea whose time has come" (4). According to him, Occidentalism has emerged on the foundations of Said's theory of Orientalism, with the result that "a focus on the West's construction of the East is now being supplemented, or merely footnoted, by an interest in constructions of the West" (4).

Nevertheless, there is much common ground for these two fields of research, such as centrality of stereotyped images and the extremely negative portrayal of 'the other side'. Bhabha thus emphasises the importance of prejudices and stereotypes in Orientalism: "My anatomy of colonial discourse remains incomplete until I locate the stereotype, as an arrested, fetishistic mode of representation within its field of identification" (76). Logically, both in Orientalism and in Occidentalism, there are also many parallel elements of the image of the Other which are opposed to the image of the Self, since in Orientalism the West possesses European Supremacy according to which the colonised Other is inferior to the Self, while in Occidentalism the power shifts to Third World countries whereas the coloniser is othered and the Other is transformed into the Self. That is summarised by Bonnett in these words: "It has also become clear that occidentalism has not occurred in isolation from the construction of other 'other' ethno-geographical stereotypes" (32). In this role reversal, the object of study becomes the subject, and vice versa; the periphery becomes the centre, which is then marginalised; the Self and the Other exchange their roles, and so forth. Thus, according to Buruma and Margalit, in Occidentalism the West is perceived as "the 'poisonous materialist civilization' [...] shallow, rootless, and destructive of creative power [...] coldly mechanical" (3), as well as a "superficial, materialistic, [...] fashion-addicted civilization"

(8), and thought to represent, contrary to the spirituality of traditional Oriental communities, "a machinelike society without a human soul" (9).

## **2. Comparing Instances of Occidental Discourse in the Works of Kiran Desai, Ruth Praver Jhabvala and Anita Desai**

East and West as central concepts, as well as Orientals and Westerners as stereotyped images, are represented in many writings by Indian English authors. This dichotomy is, however, quite naturally best expressed in the works of writers who are themselves also hybrid, the likes of Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Anita and Kiran Desai. In this paper, the elements of Orientalist and Occidental discourse will be analysed by using some of their works, in which even the protagonists are hybrid people, belonging at the same time both to the East and to the West. Jhabvala was born in Germany, into a Jewish family, with a father coming from Poland and a mother from Germany, but they had to emigrate to London in front of the Nazi terror. She married an Indian and spent a quarter of a century in New Delhi, before moving to the United States. Because of her deep understanding of the Indian culture and people, despite the fact that she has no Indian blood at all, she is regarded as an Indian English writer (Naik 233). Furthermore, the famous British novelist and Yale University Professor Caryl Phillips thus evaluated her writing: "Ruth was postcolonial before the term had been invented" (quoted in: Jaggi). Anita Desai and her daughter Kiran are indisputably both Indian English writers with hybrid origin, since Anita's mother was German and her father was Indian. She was born and grew up in India, speaking German and Hindi since early childhood, but adopted English as the language she preferred to write in. Although Anita's daughter Kiran has an Indian father, she is even more hybrid than her mother because – same as Jhabvala – she has moved all her life between India, England and the United States. She spent her childhood in India, went with her family to England when she was fourteen, and then proceeded for America. Also like Jhabvala, Kiran has won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction (the former writer in 1975 and the latter in 2006), while her mother Anita has been nominated and shortlisted three times for this literary award.

Postcolonial criticism highlights some major prejudices and central stereotyped representations which are the focus of Orientalism, while the same can also be done in the opposite direction, regarding Occidentalism. According to Bhabha, a stereotype "is a complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation, as anxious as it is assertive" (70). This dichotomy is very important for the construction of otherness both in Orientalist and in Occidental discourse, where

clusters of stereotypes help to reveal and confirm that the Other is different, strange and weird. The most frequently found prejudices include those about the skin colour and the sex, that is, the racial and the gender stereotypes. The racial stereotypes, which are plentifully illustrated in the works of Indian English writers, are thus described by Bhabha:

[S]kin, as the key signifier of cultural and racial difference in the stereotype, is the most visible of fetishes, recognized as 'common knowledge' in a range of cultural, political and historical discourses, and plays a public part in the racial drama that is enacted every day in colonial societies (78).

Similarly, this is what Fanon says regarding the prejudices about the skin colour: "In Europe the Negro has one function: that of symbolizing the lower emotions, the baser inclinations, the dark side of the soul. In the collective unconscious of *homo occidentalis*, the Negro – or, if one prefers, the color black – symbolizes evil, sin, wretchedness, death, war, famine. All birds of prey are black" (147, italics in the original text). The last sentence is best reflected in the title of Anita Desai's novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, where this type of birds signifies the 'black' i.e. 'coloured' immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, who arrived to the United Kingdom with the idea of making their nests in the land of their former coloniser, but instead of turning their dreams into reality, they developed the love-hate relationship with that country. The same fate befalls the Indian immigrants to America, and the subtle differences will be highlighted here, with the help of quotes from Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss*.

The hatred is certainly reciprocal, which is demonstrated by the fact that the white indigenous population treats with undisguised loathing the newcomers, who do not dare react. For instance, the Indian protagonist of *Bye-Bye Blackbird* – Adit, laughs when he finds out that on the London docks there are "three kinds of lavatories – Ladies, Gents and Asiatics" (17). On another occasion, when a schoolboy calls him a *wog* on the bus, Adit just turns away and later on excuses himself to his friend Dev for this cowardly act by saying that "[I]t is best to ignore those who don't deserve one's notice" (16). Similarly, an elderly white lady who is taking her dog for a walk in the park mutters aloud, obviously wishing to be clearly heard and unambiguously understood: "*Littered with Asians!*" (16, italics added for emphasis). Litter and squalor, smell and stench, are anyway among the most recurrent demeaning stereotypes connected with Orientals, so the reader of *The Inheritance of Loss* finds out that the protagonist's American boss "had been kind

enough to hire Biju although he found him smelly" (23), an Italian boss's wife says: "He smells [...] I think I'm allergic to his hair oil" (48), while on the bus "girls held their noses and giggled, 'Phew, he stinks of curry!'" (39).

The Indian immigrants in *The Inheritance of Loss* still make a huge distinction between America, where people 'have some hypocrisy', and England, where in the street they shout openly at 'men of colour': "Go back to where you came from" (135). Such rude behaviour is rather surprising for those of us who are well acquainted with the typical English *understatement*, illustrated by the following quote from *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, though with a similar meaning, expressed by one of the white protagonists: "It seems to me the East India Company has come to take over England now" (61). The Orientals, however, have a ready answer to such attacks, proving that they are right in their aspiration to move from the margin and periphery to the centre, that is, the West, as it is shown by the words of one of the protagonists of *The Inheritance of Loss*: "Your father came to *my* country and took *my* bread and now I have come to *your* country to get *my* bread back" (135, italics in the original text). This is in conformity with the opinion voiced by Buruma and Margalit, when they discuss the postcolonial binary *opposition center versus margin, or city versus periphery*, in which the West is symbolised by "cities given to commerce and pleasure instead of religious worship" (16), while the symbol of the East is the country, or in other words: "an *uncivilized place* populated with *idiots*. And so, incidentally, were Asia and other parts of the non-Western world" (35, italics added for emphasis). According to Anita Desai, the usual stereotypes for these countries creating a demeaning picture of 'men of colour' are "poverty [...] bribery and corruption", but opposed to them also as their positive trait there is "the deep wisdom of the Oriental mind" (8). Although in *The Inheritance of Loss* the West is depicted as being much cleaner than the Oriental countries – a fact which is symbolised by "the sanitized corridor rinsed with germ killers" (185) in the American embassy, while travelling across England Jemubhai and his friend Bose, the Indian characters in the novel, still "agreed on the train home that Trafalgar Square was not quite up to British standards of hygiene – all those defecating pigeons, one of which had done a masala-colored doodle on Bose" (119). The cultural difference between the East and the West is also best manifested by the level of noise their inhabitants make: while he describes the white people as 'cold and reserved', the protagonist of *Bye-Bye Blackbird* Dev admits that "he could understand why a loud Oriental voice, uninhibited by any

consideration, could grate on the self-conscious and silent Englishman's ears" (50).

Stereotypes about women can frequently be found on both sides, too, and several illustrations will be quoted here: on the one hand, there is the Indian ideal of a woman who is supposed to be a good wife and mother, and not much else; and on the other hand, there is the emancipated Occidental woman. The former is often described judging solely by her physical qualities, for instance as "a good solid Panjabi female" in *Bye-Bye Blackbird* (15), and she has no profession but is dependent on her husband, even if they have emigrated to the West: "he's a doctor, she's sweet" (15). Those living in India are yet in a far worse situation, as they are still the object of gender oppression, living "an idle existence inside the women's quarters" in the seclusion of a strict purdah (Desai 2006: 90, 166). Contrary to that, as one of the peculiarities of the Occidental style of life, Buruma and Margalit emphasise "the shocking sensuality of daily life, and the immodest behaviour of American women" (32), which certainly includes wearing 'short skirts' (29). The Western women's sensual and scandalous clothes – especially the 'short skirt' mentioned by Buruma and Margalit – are frequently mentioned in the analysed novels, for which these are just a few illustrations: "the blonde girls in their short, tight skirts" (Desai 1985: 22), "[Bella] pulled down her tight little skirt" (Desai 1985: 26), "[W]omen in baby-doll dresses" (Desai 2006: 53), and finally the Englishwomen playing tennis "dressed only in their underwear" [i.e. shorts] (Desai 2006: 166). In many cases, racial and gender stereotypes are merged, and so in *Bye-Bye Blackbird* Adit's wife Sarah is described as 'ash-blonde' (7) and the very image of whiteness: "In contrast to her colourful husband, she was all in tones of colourlessness that went with the long, straight fall of her pale hair" (9). However attracted to the Western women the Oriental young men might be, underlines Kiran Desai, they are well aware that "the romances – the Indian-White combination, in particular, was a special problem" (148). Only the rare ones dare enter such a relationship, but they usually face the harsh judgment of the other people – not only of the white man as the Other, but also of their own compatriots:

The Indian student bringing back a bright blonde, pretending it was nothing, trying to be easy, but every molecule tense and self-conscious: 'Come on, yaar, love has no color....' [...] Behind him a pair of Indian girls made vomity faces. 'Must have got off the plane and run for an American dame so he could get his green card and didn't care if she looked like a horse or no. *Which she does!!!!*' 'Our ladies are the most beautiful in the world,' said one man earnestly

to the Indian girls, perhaps worried they would feel hurt, but it sounded as if he were trying to console himself (297, italics in the original text).

The cause for such judgment is the consciousness existing on both sides about "the need for clear racial divides between colonizer and colonized" (Eisenstein 91), that is, the necessity to preserve racial and cultural purity; as well as about the fact that "[I]nterracial unions challenge the neatly constructed racial boundaries of colonial rule" (Eisenstein 91). This colonial desire and interracial craving – or, as Robert Young calls it: "desire for the cultural other" (3) – is, however, often described in postcolonial theory as one of the major Orientalist stereotypes, e.g.: "in-between the black body and the white body, there is a tension of meaning and being, or some would say demand and desire" (Bhabha 62). In most of the cases when this desire arises, the young Indian protagonists try to extinguish its fire, and in order to achieve that goal thus comfort themselves: "White women, they look good when they're young, but wait, they fall apart fast, by forty they look so ugly, hair falling out, lines everywhere, and those spots and those veins, you know what I'm talking about ..." (Desai 2006: 101). As the white women grow older, the situation gets much worse, and they are depicted as "elderly ladies, even the hapless – blue-haired, spotted, faces like collapsing pumpkins" (Desai 2006: 39). Unlike them, the Oriental women are portrayed as extremely desirable: "shiny teeth, shiny eyes [...] suffused with Indian femininity in there, abundant amounts of sweet newly washed hair" (Desai 2006: 49). In spite of this, after a longer stay in the West, Jemubhai concludes that "[A]n Indian girl could never be as beautiful as an English one" (Desai 2006: 168). This statement openly reveals an Oriental's lust for a white woman, in accordance with Fanon's 'epidermal schema' or Bhabha's 'racial fetishism'. (73, 78)

Two more categories of the usual Oriental-Occidental dichotomous stereotypes regard the topics of food and animals. The latter are an additional negative association within the Occidental discourse – "another stereotype about the west, that of being fond of pets, particularly dogs, perhaps a western cultural feature that Orientals fail to understand" (Karkaba 158). Maybe the right reason for this lack of understanding one of the most prominent features of the lifestyle of Westerners is voiced by a protagonist in Kiran Desai's novel: "'The trouble with us Indians is that we have no love of animals.'" (290) Or maybe it is the other way round – maybe it is the Westerners who exaggerate with *their* love, as Jhabvala demonstrates in her short story



"The Man with the Dog", in which a Dutchman who lives in the house of his mistress, an elderly Indian widow, has a peculiar habit of behaving towards his small dog Susi as if she were his child: "he fondles this smelly Susi with her long hair, he bathes her with his own hands and brushes her and at night she sleeps on his bed. It is horrible" (192) – concludes the Indian lady, adding that "dogs have a nasty smell [...] and it always fills me with a moment's disgust [...] I feel like kicking her off the bed and out of the room and out of the house" (192). The love of the white man for pets – above all canines, as both the previous and the following quotes show – and the Oriental's scorn for this love are also manifested by Kiran Desai in this description of an American town "where the dogs played madly in hanky-sized squares, with their owners in the fracas picking up feces" (81). Of course, this ambiguous attitude refers to other animals, as well, and so in her mother's novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, when Dev is disgusted because he has discovered a cat beneath the tea cosy, "he recalled all the stories he had heard of the Englishman and his pets" (7). However, the cat's white owner does not allow the animal being insulted, but the Oriental does not give up, as their dialogue proves: "'He is not filthy. He is as clean as clean can be.' 'Don't give me any of that. Cats eat rats, don't they?'" (49).

Food is also an area of disagreement between Orientals and Occidentals. Enchanted with their hot and spicy cuisine: curry, chutney, tikka masala, tandoori grill, and the like, Indians reject the Westerner's bland and tasteless food: "'No British broths and stews for me'" (Desai 1985: 15). On the one hand, the Orientals scorn the white man's junk food: "Face fat from McDonald's, scant hair, he was like so many in this city" (Desai 2006: 266); and on the other, they ridicule love of healthy food characteristic for so many Westerners nowadays: "They pitied anyone who didn't eat their food brown, co-op organic, in bulk, and unprocessed. Saeed, who enjoyed his basics white – white rice, white bread, and white sugar – had to join their dog, who shared his disdain for the burdock burger, the nettle soup, the soy milk, and Tofutti" (Desai 2006: 122). Nevertheless, the Westerner's food is not only a stereotype but also a way of life, as well as a status and class symbol, and thus in an English pub on a Sunday Dev was surrounded by people "smiling to themselves at the thought of their Sunday roast" (Desai 1985: 12), while in *The Inheritance of Loss* the cook "was sure that since his son was cooking *English food*, he had a *higher position* than if he were cooking Indian" (17, italics added for emphasis).

By imitating the white man and thus adapting to the laws of Western civilisation, the Oriental initiates the process of mimicry, which is ambivalent because – as Bhabha claims – the Other becomes "almost

the same, *but not quite*" (86, italics in the original text). Bhabha further clarifies that the colonial subject can only be transformed into a 'partial' presence, because on the one hand it is still 'incomplete' and on the other it actually remains 'virtual'. Therefore, concludes Bhabha, "[T]he success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace" (86). The process of the Others mimicking the Self, and of their subsequent hybridisation, is especially well depicted in Jhabvala's novel *Three Continents*, where the roles of white and 'coloured' characters are frequently reversed. The result of this reversal is the assertion of the hybrid, which mirrors Bhabha's words, that "[T]he metonymic strategy produces the signifier of colonial *mimicry* as the affect of hybridity – at once a mode of appropriation and of resistance, from the disciplined to the desiring" (120, italics in the original text). An excellent illustration of colonial mimicry, and hybridisation as its result, can be found in the example of the main 'coloured' protagonist – the Rawul, who looks exactly 'like an English gentleman' because he has lived in the West for a long time and was educated in Harrow and Cambridge, just like his father and grandfather:

He had English manners and an English accent, but very much softened by his Oriental disposition. One only had to look at his eyes to realize how different he was from English people [...] they still had those very Anglo-Saxon eyes, cold and blue like the sea. The Rawul's eyes were not the usual kind of liquid brown that Indians have but were light gray – opalescent almost, in his dark face" (13).

The Rawul, however – although he is an evident illustration of Bhabha's 'ambivalent identification' as being in the true sense "the depersonalized, dislocated colonial subject" – still cannot be marked as "the white-masked black man" (62), because in the case of this character, his mimicry does not include wearing a mask, he does not become "whiter as he renounces his blackness" (Fanon 9), and it is not Fanon's *skin* colour that gives him away, but the colour of his eyes. Moreover, another feature contributing to the Other's hybridisation is the use of the coloniser's language, since, according to Fanon:

Every colonized people – in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality – finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status

in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards (9).

It is true that the Rawul adopted the language and cultural standards of the coloniser, but this act of mimicry is also ambivalent and partial, as he managed to reach only superficial resemblance with the white man as his Other: "[H]e spoke the way Englishmen themselves no longer speak – in a very upper-class drawly way that made him sound like a stage Englishman" (19).

An extremely interesting example, which will certainly help clarify the topic of this paper, is the instance of the *Westerners* mimicking their Others – that is, the Orientals – in the same novel: "The Devis were always dressed in white cotton saris with Jesus sandals on their bare feet, and they wore their hair Indian-style and that red mark on the forehead; but they looked and spoke and were as English as you could be" (262). This is the most striking of all cases of hybridisation in the opposite sense in *Three Continents*: white people imitating those 'of colour', though there are many other illustrations of such reverse mimicry in the novel. Those include the instance of the main two white protagonists who, having become aware of "a gap opening between material civilization and spiritual or moral values" (Young 34), embark on a spiritual quest because of being dissatisfied with materialism of the West, which is the reason why they seek the wisdom of the East in faraway places. Another remarkable example of reversed roles in what Bhabha names *the interpositions* between 'the master and slave' (63), is when a 'coloured' protagonist of *Three Continents* beckons a white character to approach him: "Then Crishi raised one slender finger at Michael, meaning one moment, very politely, but also meaning come here, now. And Michael went at once; without one glance at me or Barbara, he obeyed as he would a master's call" (40). In this pattern we witness what Judith Butler means when she claims that:

the relations by which we are defined are not dyadic, but always refer to a historical legacy and futural horizon that is not contained by the Other, but which constitutes something like *the Other of the Other*, then it seems to follow that who we are fundamentally is a subject in a temporal chain of desire that only occasionally and provisionally assumes the form of a dyad (151, italics added for emphasis).

An instance of 'historical legacy' can also be found in both the present and future of Biju's 'coloured' friend Saeed in *The Inheritance of Loss*, who "found employment at a Banana Republic, where he would

sell to urban sophisticates the *black* turtleneck of the season, in a shop whose name was synonymous with colonial exploitation and the rapacious ruin of the third world" (102, italics added for emphasis). Nonetheless, although colonial exploitation was finished a long time ago, in fact nothing has changed, because this is still a world in which the following dichotomy will always be present: "where one side travels to be a servant, and the other side travels to be treated like a king" (269). Even when they emigrate and live in the West, the Orientals still remain on the margins of society, however hard they try to reach the centre: "A taxi driver appeared on the screen: watching bootleg copies of American movies he had been inspired to come to America, but how to move into the mainstream?" (99). A strategy aimed to show at least the people back home that one has succeeded in moving upwards, and to show off as well, is to strive to mimic the Westerners, like a prosperous 'coloured man' Mr. Shah "who owned seven rooms, all empty except for TV, couch, and carpeting in white. Even the TV was a white TV for *white symbolized success* out of India for the community" (149, italics added for emphasis).

### 3. Conclusion

The importance of being white and the significance of whiteness in both Orientalist and Occidentalist discourse were discussed at the beginning of this paper, so let us just sum up with a witty remark of an Indian emigrant in *The Inheritance of Loss*: "White people looked clean because they were whiter; the darker you were, Biju thought, the dirtier you looked" (186). From this statement we can conclude that both Orientalism and Occidentalism are indeed nothing more than 'essentialising simplifications' because the Eastern societies, on the one hand, and the Western ones, on the other, are "seen in distorting mirror" (Carrier 3). The Orient and the Occident are equally inappropriately typified in a "rigid, simplistic, and often simply wrong way" (Carrier vii), squeezed into stereotypes, prejudices and clichés: "He had *just happened to stumble into the stereotype*; he was the genuine thing that *just happened to be the cliché....*" (Desai 2006: 297, italics in the original text).

Furthermore, these "twin and opposing characterizations of the modern West" (Carrier 3), as well as of the postcolonial East – in Occidentalism and in Orientalism, respectively – only exist 'in contrast to the other' in view of the fact that "although 'the Orient' may have appeared in Oriental Studies to be a term with a concrete referent, a real region of the world with real attributes, in practice it took on meaning only in the context of another term, 'the West'" (Carrier 3),

while exactly the same can be said for Occidentalism, as well. This context is, of course, as negative as it can be – in both directions, and the essence of that topic is thus expressed by the authors of *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies*: "[T]he view of the West in Occidentalism is like the worst aspects of its counterpart, Orientalism, which strips its human targets of their humanity. [...] its bigotry simply turns the Orientalist view upside down" (10). Therefore, since "the otherness of the colonized can be turned into subjectivity by othering the colonizer" (Drichel 598) and vice versa, if we paraphrase Judith Butler's words, we can conclude that in both Orientalism and Occidentalism – the Oriental and the Occidental are merely *the Other to each other*.

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#### СТЕРЕОТИПИ У ДЕЛИМА ИНДОЕНГЛЕСКИХ АУТОРКИ АНИТЕ ДЕСАИ, РУТ ПРАВЕР ЏАБВАЛЕ И КИРАН ДЕСАИ

Засновани на стереотипима о Другом, како оријентализам тако и окцидентализам усредсређени су на репрезентације Запада и Истока, Јаства и Другости, као и њихове бинарне опозиције. Ове стереотипне слике су посебно присутне у постколонијалној књижевности, укључујући и дела индоенглеских писаца. Дихотомију између Оријента и Окцидента свакако најбоље могу да осликају аутори хибридног порекла, као што су Рут Правер Џабвала, Анита и Киран Десаи. Сврха овог рада је да анализира примере оријенталистичког и окциденталистичког дискурса у неким њиховим делима, у којима су чак и протагонисти хибридне особе, које истовремено припадају и једном и другом свету, Истоку и Западу.

**Кључне речи:** стереотипи, оријентализам, окцидентализам, индоенглеска књижевност, Анита Десаи, Рут Правер Џабвала, Киран Десаи.