STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES ABOUT THE 'OTHER' AS AN UNAVOIDABLE PART OF BRITISH LITERATURE AND CULTURE

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Abstract: The concept of the 'other' is an inherent part of understanding one's identity, since people define their roles through their relations toward 'others'. Generally speaking, the 'other' is everyone who is detached and different from one's self or one's true nature. 'Otherness' became the subject of research in postmodern British literature in terms of its diversity and variety, divergence and disagreement with standard, conventional and established. To demonstrate how prejudices are widespread and what their role in literature is, the selection of British novels of the 20th century has been made with the emphasis on the second part of the century and postmodern British novel. The analysis has proved that stereotypes are indeed unavoidable part of British culture and literature and exposed their particular role in works of literature. The second half of the twentieth century brings seismic shift of literary and national identity: The English novel was replaced by novel written in English language due to importance and to strength. This is the main reason for selection of the British novels of the late 20th century that are representative both for their artistic quality and influence. The analysis of selected works from modern and postmodern periods with the regard to stereotypes and prejudices about 'other' undoubtedly pointed out that mentioned concepts are unavoidable part of British literature and culture, and their numerous variations and roles in literature were clearly demonstrated.

1. INTRODUCTION: THE CONCEPT OF 'OTHER'

The concept of the 'other' is one of the most important in the postcolonial theory. The authors of 'Post-Colonial Studies, The Key Concepts' state that, in general terms, the 'other' is anyone who is separate from one's self. The existence of others is crucial in defining what is 'normal' and in locating one's own place in the world. The colonized subject is characterized as 'other' through discourses such as primitivism and cannibalism, as a means of establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view. (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2000)

The term 'other' is largely used in existential philosophy and in defining the relationship between ourselves and others in the creation of self-awareness and the idea of identity. In the Introduction of her most famous work The Second Sex (1949) French writer and the representative of the French philosophy of the twentieth century Simone de Beauvoir writes about women and the concept of 'other' and, in a special way, she reflects on the concept of the other. The category of the Other is as primordial as consciousness itself. In the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies, one finds the expression of a duality – that of the Self and the Other. This duality was not originally attached to the division of the sexes; it was not dependent upon any empirical facts. The feminine element was at first no more involved in such pairs as Uranus-Zeus, Sun-Moon, and Day-Night than it was in the contrast between Good and Evil, lucky and unlucky auspices, right and left, God and Lucifer. Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought. (Beauvoir, 1949, transl. and ed. H.M. Parshley, 1953)

In general, awareness of one's identity is always built on the basis of awareness of what we are not, or, in other words, on the basis of awareness of others.

In this paper, 'other' will be viewed in terms of its diversity and variety, differences and disagreements with the norm, normal and accepted. The term 'other' is taken from philosophy to mark a change in the Western understanding of the relationship between consciousness and the world that surrounds us. However, this term has changed the focus of the analysis and walked away from this philosophical understanding of the 'other'. The concept of 'other' is now being used in the political, cultural, linguistic and religious context. Whether viewed from the standpoint of ideology, psychoanalysis or discourse it is impossible to create the subject without observing its 'other'. The possibility of dialogue between the various racial and cultural groups also became one of the important uses and meanings of this term.

2. STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICE ABOUT 'OTHER'

Although it is quite common in everyday use and in the scientific circles, the word 'stereotype' has an interesting origin. This word is used to denote a typographic element that was used during the printing instead of the original. The American journalist Walter Lippmann merged the metaphor and called the stereotype the image in our hands. Both 'cliché' and 'stereotype' originate from the world of press. So 'cliché' is the French word for the printing

surface of the stereotype. In the English language the word 'stereotype' first appears in its modern sense in 1850. as a noun and it has the meaning of a picture or a notion eternized without a single change. (Brown, 1995)

Thus, in the original meaning the stereotype is the imprint of a fixed style in the printing technique. By analogy, in the social sciences the term is used for schematic, simplistic and hardly changeable attitude towards someone or something. The term originated in the period of emerging and development of racial, ethnic, religious and social intolerance. In essence, stereotyping is wrong and unjustified broad generalization. Therefore, each group stereotype containing emotionally negative assessment of an ethnic, racial, religious or a social group is interpreted as a prejudice.

Along with personal stereotypes, cultural norms and social stereotypes are precisely defined in the middle of the last century (Bender & Hastorf, 1950) as one of the most serious prejudice in the perception of a person. This prejudice means that those who make judgments have generalized expectations about how others are motivated, how they behave, think and so on, and applied these norms or stereotypes, without exception, in assessing the others. Various examples and studies have shown that social stereotypes as the embodiment of social norms are among the most powerful determinants in the perception of a person. Going back to the problem of setting the boundaries between personal and social stereotypes, it is easily noticeable that a false strong link between 'self' and 'other' can appear if these entities are assessed and placed into stereotypes based on cultural norms - that is, systematic variations in assessment of 'self' arising from the same source, or norms, as well as systematic variations in the assessment of 'other'. In this case it would be wrong to say that 'being' is projected onto the 'other', but, in fact, the same cultural stereotypes are projected on both the 'being' and the 'other'.

In the recent decades, this concept begins to occupy a central place in the humanities, and one of the results is that the concept of 'other' is being on the right track to replace the older, somehow worn out, concept of stereotype. Its further use, without connecting to the 'other', does not bring more of the same critical success and the same modern touch. Newer and more modern concept is compatible with the stereotype and can be used to revive and expand its critical applications. Michael Pickering in the chapter on the concept of 'other' is trying to bring the two concepts in the analytical relationship, claiming that they complement each other and help each other as the conceptual terms in the critical vocabulary. 'The stereotype and the Other is used to control the ambivalent and to create boundaries. Stereotypes are a way of dealing with the instabilities arising from the division between self and non-self by preserving an illusion of control and order. (Pickering, 2001)

3. POSTCOLONIAL CONCEPT OF 'OTHER' IN THE FIRST PART OF THE 20TH CENTURY

One of the most important concepts in the entire postcolonial theory, the concept of the 'other', and its reflections in literature, are presented in three novels that represent England of the

first half of the twentieth century in the best way. Heart of Darkness (1902) by **Joseph Conrad**, A Passage to India (1924) by **E.M. Forster** and The Heart of the Matter (1948) by **Graham Greene** serve as a nearly inexhaustible source of examples to show imperialism, colonial relations, the dying empire, Britain's diversity and culture of the enslaved nations, creating inevitable the 'other' and the stereotypes and prejudices that simply thrive in such historical and social circumstances.

Heart of Darkness is interpreted and explained from the standpoint of imperialism and racial prejudices, as well as from Conrad's representation of Africa and Africans through the narrator Marlowe as a demonic 'other'. Complex social relations between Englishmen and Indians in A Passage to India have been discussed through the topic of friendship, innumerable differences of the two cultures and the creation of the 'other' which was dealt by a large number of post-colonial critics. Also, Green's Africa as 'a place you've dreamed of', 'the blank unexplored continent the shape of the human heart' will not remain untainted by stereotypes and prejudices of both the colonizers and the colonized.

What connect these three selected pieces are not only postcolonial themes and 'otherness', but also the affection of their authors to the idea of adventure stories. None of the three authors may not be, strictly speaking, considered a writer of travelogue and adventure novels, but the political and social conditions of the time imposed the issues related to the rule of Empire and the 'size of the nation'. The size of the nation involved the occupied territories, and in the minds of the then politicians and citizens, the British colonies were equated with the British power and wealth. The Empire meant open opportunities, even for writers. They felt that all these distant lands invite the English to come with the promise that they would be rewarded for their English courage and strength. But what is, perhaps, the most important thing, the Empire offered the penmen broadening of horizons both at the moral and geographical level. The Empire meant more personal power, more heroism, greatness available in these remote areas more than at home, but, at the same time, it meant more cruelty, corruption and monstrosity, extraordinarily shown in Conrad's Heart of Darkness. The cults of adventure and implicit imperialism have long been an important part of English life and the centre of cultural habits. There was, for example, the cult of geography, geographical maps and images of distant places, the cult of travel and research, studies of primitive tribes, the cult of the ocean and the British Navy, British sailors, all forms of swimming and sailing, rock climbing, amateur geology and botany, and all those activities that are meant to be British, healthy and heroic, which are thought to contribute to the cult of adventure and reinforce the myth of the great British Empire.

Joseph Conrad was, on the one hand, a hero and a favorite to the readers who were thrilled by adventure novels, and, on the other hand, he was a hero of the opposite side. In his early novels we can notice dreams of treasure, gold and diamonds, as well as the abundant use of the motif of adventure reverie. He admitted that his favorite novels of childhood were adventurous, then the biographies of the great explorers, as well as all kinds of geographical texts. This youthful enthusiasm turned into a big disappointment, especially caused by his journey to the Congo in 1890 where he was faced with the Belgian imperialism and this

experience compelled him to write Heart of Darkness. The sharp decline of Conrad interest in adventure ideas, from the boyish enthusiasm to the disappointment in mature age, Martin Green explains with the political history of the empire in decline and with Conrad's temperament since he was inclined to such disappointments on the other grounds as well. Basically, he is often represented and identified with the European conscience of the time. (Green, 1984)

While he created a true cult of the English adventurous heroism thanks to his willing choice of England as a country, he even became the English sailor, he could not hide the disappointment after the First World War. There was nothing that looked like an honorable and courageous view of the war, and that, along with the Allies' condemnation of colonialism at its end, has created the need for the anti-imperialist literature.

However, Conrad had never become anti-imperialist writer. Heart of Darkness has clear motifs of adventure stories and imperialist themes. It is necessary to emphasize that Conrad was far from attacking the English imperialism in this novel. It is quite confidently praised in the opening pages of the novel:

'The river Thames, we are told, had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud – from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled – the knights – errant of the sea. It had borne all the ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time (..) Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they all had gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth! The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empire.' (Conrad, 1994)

This is, doubtlessly, one of the most direct and overt glorification of the English history. When Conrad's hero Marlow says 'this was also one of the dark places of the Earth' meaning is clearly contrastive - even England used to be uncivilized - and undoubtedly he influences the reader to think of the size which England meanwhile reached.

For the setting of his best novel A Passage to India (1924) E. M. Forster chose a country where he was not born, where he did not spend a lot of time, and he had already been a famous novelist who dealt with purely English issues before wrote anything about India. The general topic of the novel is the inability of the Empire to understand and defeat India. At a basic level, it is the story of the British Empire in which Forster ridicules the administrative class. He presents them as people who are totally unable to understand or cooperate with their Indian colleagues and subordinates. They are also, from Forster's point of view, incapable to create any kind of normal life for themselves in India - except a pale copy of the petty-bourgeois life in England.

Martin Green believes that Forster, on the next level, tries to include in the Empire the remnants and traces of the failed Muslim empire and Muslim culture in India. This doubling of the material even more highlights and reinforces the anti-imperialist thesis. (Green, 1984)

One of the Englishmen that Forster describes in his novel is Mr. Turton. During the party which aims to bring the Indians and the English together, he was really trying to make this mission successful. He made pleasant comments, made some occasional joke, but he knew something that would undermine the reputation of each guest and that is why he was very superficial. Miss Derek represents a much more inferior kind of Anglo-Indians since she viewed the whole peninsula as a comic opera. Turton is undoubtedly a more dignified and generous - until the moment when an Indian is accused of the harassment an Englishwoman. Then behind the ostensible heroism we can see him becoming blind and deaf.

'I have had twenty five years experience of this country'- he paused, and 'twenty five years' seemed to fill the waiting room with their staleness and ungenerosity - 'and during those twenty five years I have never known anything but disaster result when English people and Indians attempt to be socially intimate. Intercourse, yes. Courtesy, by all means. Intimacy - never, never.' (Forster, 1979)

It is obvious that Forster is pointing here to the weakness and starch which cast a shadow on the reliable qualities of Anglo-Indians.

We come to the so-called Catholic novelist Graham Greene and his famous novel The Heart of the Matter (1948). A number of elements typical of the works of Kipling, Conrad's motifs of adventure story, post-imperialist environment, as well as similarities with Agatha Christie and her typical characters may be found in this work. The frequent use of the imperialist criteria related to social status is quite surprising. Greene constantly ridicules Wilson and Harris for the lack of strength and bravery, the failure typical of the ruling class. This is rather uncommon since it is in direct opposition to the officially proclaimed 'Catholic' sensitivity.

Apart from the obvious (anti) imperialist themes and elements of adventure stories, these three novels have another connecting feature – the same postcolonial feeling of insecurity in the main characters. Thus, for example, Greene's hero Scobie gets into a lot of suspicious activities and decisions that lead him to a terrible dilemma, a moral crisis and the suicide at the end. Readers cannot get rid of the feeling that the environment in the colony certainly contributes to it - in the blend of the unspoiled natural beauty and the extreme lack of basic living conditions, where, in Greene's words, 'human nature hasn't had time to disguise itself' and where 'you could love human beings nearly as God loved them, knowing the worst.' (Greene, 1971)

4. POSTCOLONIAL WRITING: POSTMODERN BRITISH NOVEL

The second half of the twentieth century brings a monumental change of both literary and national identity: English novel has been replaced by a novel written in English language due to importance and to strength. Brian Shaffer (2006) in his study of the novels in English written between 1950 and 2000 notes that what used to be situated on the margins of the canonical

literature is now clearly in its very heart: the novel in the English language is now truly international product with all Anglophone postcolonial writing, as well as with the works of immigrants from former colonies and from all over the world that are read and critically assessed as British. Equally important as English novelists of this period, non-English writers, with no doubt, dictate literary parameters and attract huge attention.

In the post-colonial era the questions of identity and nationality have become complex and difficult to determine. This is so apparent in the post-war Britain which copes with the collapse of the Empire followed by the process of national redefinition, both in terms of the international status and in terms of the population structure. Novel, and literature in general, proved to be an excellent source for research of hybrid cultural forms that have emerged in England which is constantly changing and becoming a truly multicultural. However, this is not so simple story that celebrates Britain's diversity in cultural terms. The identities of immigrants described in the post-war novels are often vulnerable, and their experiences in the new society are painful. Dominic Head (2002) explains it by the transitional nature of the postcolonial expression in the twentieth century. Postcolonial identity should be properly understood as a process not as the arrival, while vulnerability may be explained by the hostile nature of the British and especially English society, which is usually described as insensitive and often ruthless to the goals of active multiculturalism. In such social and cultural circumstances, stereotypes and prejudices about the other nations and cultures have become inevitable, and the postcolonial concept of the 'other' has reflected itself in all known forms of the racial, class, political and sexual diversities.

One of the first writers of the recent generation who openly called for a change of monocultural definitions of the British national identity was **Hanif Kureishi**. With partly Asian origin (Pakistani father, English mother), he could personally experience numerous prejudices against Asians in the British society. His, nowadays iconic, call for the inevitable introduction of 'a new way to be British', became the main subject of many of his works, and among others the main subject of his most famous novel, The Buddha of Suburbia (1990). It seems that no novel of social conditions in England created so realistic, vivid and poignant picture of the changes that took place on the island in the seventies and the eighties of the twentieth century. It clearly presented the changes of the term 'Englishness' in the multicultural British society.

Two writers of East-Asian origin often associated with 'colored British' writing are **Timothy Mo**, born in Hong Kong (under the English rule from 1841 to 1997) of Chinese father and English mother and **Kazuo Ishiguro**, whose both parents are Japanese who emigrated to England. Mo is certainly best known for his humorous novel Sour-sweet (1982) which deals with the Chinese immigrants in London. The food is used as a metaphor for dislocation and rootlessness as the inseparable parts of the emigrant experience, as well as for a shortcut to cultural integration. Mo's voice is one of the strongest among the writers who explore the impact of colonial rule on the formation of the cultural identity of immigrants in the imperial megalopolis. He shares the same interest with writers of his generation for the problems of migration, dislocation and biculturalism. Mo skillfully depicts the portraits of immigrants who

crossed the path from the colonial periphery to the center of the Empire, but also experienced all the trauma of exile, culture shock and distress that accompany the adaptation to the new environment. Through the story of adapting to a new culture in the novel Sour-sweet he shows what it looks like when England is the 'other' in the eyes of Chinese immigrants. He also presents the inevitable stereotypes and prejudices that undoubtedly color immigrants' view of England and its inhabitants.

Despite a strong commitment to traditionalism and insisting on cultural authenticity that Mo illustrated by numerous examples of the rejection of change and cultural novelties typical for Chinese immigrants in London, it is clear that assimilation is inevitable and that the only way of survival for an individual, for a family, and the entire nation, is the acceptance of changes and the adaptation.

The name of Kazuo Ishiguro is often mentioned in the same context of the 'new internationalism' with Timothy Moo and writers of their generation. He is probably best known for his third novel, Remains of the Day (1989). This work was awarded the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 1989. However, his recent novel When we were orphans (2000) is closer to the international writing. The novel deals with the psychological trauma of the main characters who moved to England from the war-affected Shanghai.

Ishiguro's position of someone who was born in Japan but raised and educated in Britain, gives him the possibility of having 'intriguing impartial or double perspective.' (Head, 2002) Even in his early novels that have Japanese characters, he uses the material with the conventions of Japanese courtesy. This preoccupation is developed in the novel Remains of the Day through the style of his narrator - an aging butler Stevens, and there we can make a comparison between the two types of restraint and diffidence. It is not irrelevant to note that the action of the novel takes place in July 1956, during the Suez crisis, a catastrophic episode of British history that marked the end of its imperial power. Although there is no clear connection between these events and the story in the novel, the feeling of this important historical event hovers all the time.

The British writer of South African origin **Christopher Hope** fits into this group of authors due to the subjects and to the freshness of the new landscapes brought to the contemporary British fiction. Thanks to his South African origin, and to the topics and the views he brought with him, Hope provides a new, different perspective and the critical and artistic judgment about the major religious, political and cultural issues. In the literary circles he is known as highly skilled creator of insightful satire and, therefore, often compared to Jonathan Swift. Using sarcastic humorous observations Hope gives readers a true but disturbing picture of the world that surrounds them.

In the novel Darkest England (1996) Christopher Hope applies a typical postmodern technique when the readers' expectations are completely betrayed because of the inversion and degradation of the usual colonial discourse. The achieved aim is the abolition of the myths of so-called grand narratives and complete reversal of the known concepts and relationships, usually with the help of parody. Using satire and irony, almost inevitable in his works, Hope completely undermines the famous colonial image by sending an African researcher in the 'noble' mission to

England. There is hardly any well-known stereotype of the 'other' that Hope does not use in this work and shows how astute he is in observing and recording all the peculiarities, eccentricities and the 'follies' of a nation.

In this funny inversion of the colonial discourse Englishmen become 'others' and all the stereotypes about themselves and 'others' created by the representatives of the dominant discourse are reviewed. Bushman David Mungo Booi explores the often narcissistic nation which, although it lost the Empire, it has not lost the imperial arrogance and self-confidence.

5. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the selected works from the era of modernism and postmodernism with the regard to the stereotypes and prejudices about the 'other' pointed out that the mentioned concepts are unavoidable part of British literature and culture, and their numerous variations and roles in literature were clearly demonstrated. In the wealth of literary material, especially in post-modern British novel since it occurs in a multicultural environment which provides an excellent basis for stereotypes, particularly negative ones, we can recognize and unveil stereotypes and prejudices about the 'other' that, even unconsciously and to a certain extent, every person in every culture carries within him/herself. The results of this research will be useful for more comprehensive overview of some of the most significant British novels of the twentieth century, especially with the cultural context of their inception and later influence, but also for perception and comprehension of the contemporary British society and culture as a whole.

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