

Marcin Lisiecki

**LANGUAGES AND UNDERSTANDING
OF DIFFERENT CULTURES.
REMARKS ON THE MARGINS
OF A PAPER BY STANISŁAW SCHAYER¹**

The main purpose of this paper is to describe the contemporary situation in the oriental studies in the context of the works of the Polish indologist Stanisław Schayer. There are two reasons behind the choice of the topic of this essay. First of all, the contemporary oriental studies still lack a consistent methodology. Secondly, we are constantly limiting our research to description, omitting explanation of complexities and dissimilarities of different cultures.

Keywords: Stanisław Schayer, languages, culture, translation, oriental studies, methodology.

¹ A note from the editors: the article is published as originally submitted by the author. It has not been copyedited.

vaiśaṃpāyana uvāca
gurave prāṇ namaskṛtya manobuddhisamādhibhiḥ /
sampūjya ca dvijān sarvāms tathānyān viduṣo janān // 1 //
maharṣeḥ sarvalokeṣu viśrutasyāsyā dhīmataḥ /
pravakṣyāmi mataṃ kṛtsnaṃ vyāsasyāmitatejasah // 2 //
śrotuṃ pātraṃ ca rājaṃs tvaṃ prāpyemāṃ bhāratīṃ kathāṃ
guror vaktuṃ parispando mudā protsāhatīva mām // 3 //

Mahābhārata 1.55. 1-3

Before I proceed to the gist of the present paper, I will make several remarks that — apart from the jubilee of professor Yaroslav V. Vasilkov — contributed to writing it. First of all, they stem from personal reflections pertaining to the attitudes of various people of European descent towards Asian cultures. These contentions are particularly sad because they refer to a commonly shared belief that broadly understood Asian cultures, as compared to the European ones, are not marked by exceptional and culturally or artistically significant works. It should be added and stressed that such Europocentric attitudes are disseminated by the persons exclusively dealing with investigating and popularizing the output of the European culture. Amongst them, there also are the attitudes expressed by the persons who professionally investigate Asian cultures and disseminate their material and spiritual traditions. For a researcher of the cultures of Asian countries, such a situation is both surprising and sad. And this very fact should incline us towards taking profound measures in popularizing the works that are characterized by both the appreciation of significance and beauty of the masterpieces created in non-European cultures, and high quality of research. The works of our honorable jubilarian whose research is much broader than the study of the culture of India are definitely characterized by the both aforementioned qualities.

The second reason why I embarked on this topic is that any discourse of methodology in investigating non-European cultures, including those of Asia, are of a very rare occurrence in the professional literature in the field of Oriental studies. It means that we cannot speak of a coherent methodology distinct from the ones applied in philological, anthropological, archeological, historical, philosophical, and political science research. And of the method which would not yield to the temptation of “orientalizing” Asian cultures, as understood by Edward Said (cf. Said 1979: 2-3). The evidence of the demand for

tidying the investigations and applying appropriate instruments is constituted by various loose remarks — appearing across multifarious works — pertaining to the reliability of research (cf. Zajączkowski 2013). However, these remarks do not reveal much regarding the methods that researchers should use, nor do they say anything concerning the attitude they should adopt. These things would be particularly important, given the subject-matter of their research, i.e., investigating foreign cultures, including values, sanctity, attitudes, meanings of life, etc., all of which are often quite distinct from those adhered to by the researchers. In the light of the above, a paper by Polish indologist and buddhologist Stanisław Schayer, *O rozumieniu obcych kultur* (*About the Understanding of Foreign Cultures*) written in 1939 seems to be of the utmost importance. It contains multiple notes on the ways of investigating Asian cultures and challenges that arise during such investigations. Schayer's notes, with a few exceptions, are still valid and worth popularizing. What is worth emphasizing is the fact that in the case of Schayer we deal with reflections not of a philologist or historian, but of a philosopher². And this is rather rare in the Oriental studies because in the majority of cases the research is conducted by the linguists, philologists, and literature scholars. It should be added that in his numerous texts we can also find references to sociology, anthropology, and cultural history, by dint of which he presents multi-dimensionality of the Oriental studies and the critical approach thereto.

The limitation that Schayer resorted to in his article relates to a philosophical and philological approach to language and its relations to culture. Thereby he was attempting to highlight the problems accompanying the process of investigating foreign cultures, the problems being related not only to the adequate description of such cultures, but also to their explanation. For this reason, the present article will be dedicated to the analysis of the significance of language in investigating extra-European cultures and problems that stem from the use of such a medium. And especially the ones related to familiarizing the reader with the methodology of the Oriental studies.

² It is worth mentioning in passing that Schayer was a thoroughly-educated logician. It may be evidenced by the fact that his mentor was Jan Łukasiewicz, the author of the three-volume logic, as well as by his publications on Buddhist logic. On the lifetime scholarly achievements by Schayer, see: (Kunst 2012; Glashoff 2004).

Bearing in mind the complexity of this problematics, I will confine my attention to the reflection on the two threads, which — in my opinion — aptly characterize the difficulties that emerge in the process of familiarizing the reader with the material and spiritual output of extra-European cultures. The first of them is related to the problem of whether, based on the language and its derivatives, the understanding of foreign cultures is possible. The second thread is dedicated to the goals and effects of investigating foreign cultures.

1. Language and understanding foreign cultures

Before I proceed to a more detailed analysis of Schayer's paper and to the delineation of the problems related to the methodology of the Oriental studies, I have to make one important comment, specifically, that answering 'if understanding foreign cultures is possible' requires an adoption of certain assumptions and a particular attitude thereto. They can be reduced to basically saying that understanding foreign cultures is either possible or not, and, whether a culture is a close-ended construct of a given form or else, it is an open-ended one of an indeterminate form³. Certainly, during investigations and due to the already possessed knowledge, these simple assumptions are getting more and more subtly distinguished and nuanced, which, in consequence, rarely gives rise to assuming any unequivocal contentions. In his paper, Schayer — although he adheres to a nuanced explanation enhanced by his own research — sticks to the latter assumption. Namely, he claimed, that "we do not understand any foreign culture and we will never understand it" (Schayer 1988a: 128). It may seem that such an assumption, being adopted by a researcher of the culture of India, is erroneous or even absurd. However, it should not raise any objections once we refer to philosophical debates over our abilities of cognition, and in particular once we refer to the approach by Kant towards a "thing-in-itself" ("*noumenon*" or "*Ding an sich*"). Because culture (just like reality for Kant) may only appear to us as a phenomenon, arising by virtue of "sensual intuition" [*der sinnlichen Anschauung*] (Kant 1998a: 27)⁴. In other words, we have a representation

³ After Yuri Lotman, by the concept of 'culture' I understand "a complex, heterogeneous and polyfunctional entirety" (Lotman 2017: 133).

⁴ In the English edition, the word *sinnlichen* is rendered as "sensible" (cf. Kant 1998b: 115).

of culture only through the medium of senses; and while senses are limited, so are the phenomena in question which they encompass, e.g., behaviors, material artifacts, and mainly the language. Therefore, any complete understanding of a culture is impossible, that is the understanding which would transcend the data appreciated by senses.

What smoothly tallies with the above-specified frameworks is a thought by Schayer who claims that:

“the experience of strangers is never appreciated by us directly. We never directly feel the despair or joy of our fellows; what we are rather given is their respective external representation, be it a verbal expression, mimics or a gesture. What we perceive are the phonemes of words and shapes of letters; yet, we cannot hear nor see thoughts expressed by the said words of letters” (Schayer 1988a: 313).

The question of opacity of human gestures, also of those referring to emotions, seems trivial and does not call for any special study. However, what proves to be more important to the Oriental studies is language. It is mainly because language itself constitutes a subject matter of study (not only of a philological one), and second, it is the language that preserves the cultural content. It must be underlined that, as understood in the above-mentioned manner, language in Schayer’s text was limited to a written form and its oral form was simply skipped. What is more, the author points out that the problem of language is not merely confined to the semantics of lexemes but also to their phonemic composition and to the ways of representing them in a written form. Whereas in case of European languages, being to a large extent confined to the Latin alphabet, the situation in this respect is rather clear, Asian languages resort to various ways of written representation. The latter scenario hampers getting not only the meaning but also the sound of a given word. To illustrate that, we can analyze the word *water* by demonstrating that not only the word sounds differently across languages but also it is represented by means of various scripts, which is incomprehensible without knowing a given language. Namely: Sumerian: 𒀭 (a) [Akkadian (*mû*)], Egyptian: 𓆎 (mw), Sanskrit उदन् (*udán*), Ancient Greek: ὑδῶρ (*húdōr*), Latin: *aqua*, Geez: ማይ (*may*), Glagolitic: Ѡѡѡѡ (*voda*), Polish: *woda*, Russian: вода, Persian: آب (*âb*), Armenian: ջուր (*ǰur*), Georgian: წყალი (*çqali*), Arabian: ماء (*mā*), Hebrew: מַיִם (*máyim*), Syriac: ܡܝܘܢ (*majja*),

Tibetan: ཇུ (chu), Tamil: நீர் (nīr), Thai: น้ำ (nám), Khmer: ទឹក (tuk), Burmese: ရေ (ray), Korean: 물 (mul), Japanese: 水 (mizu) and Chinese 水 (shuǐ).

Considering the cited example, we should realize how important mastering particular languages is in the Oriental studies⁵. This is directly related to the problem of intertranslatability of natural languages and of texts representing particular cultures. Such intertranslatability does not present a problem when dealing with the words or elementary concepts referring to experience that all human beings share, i.e., ‘human’, ‘water’, ‘mother’, ‘fire’, ‘up’ or ‘down’, etc. It is quite different when it comes to complex concepts, and we cannot be sure of their unambiguous meanings (cf. Schayer 1988a: 317). And this is precisely in case of words or sentences of complex meanings when we can prove the impossibility or exact and literal translation. For example, as explained by Schayer, the Sanskrit phrase अग्निर्निवृतः (*agnir nirvṛtaḥ*)⁶ is rendered as “ogień zgasł” [the fire went out], but the meanings of the phrase and translation do not coincide because of the differences in connotations, emotional emphases, and mainly — in the images of fire, its going out, and their cognition (Schayer 1988a: 317). It is because the said sentence invokes different images in a native speaker of Polish, Russian or English and in a person using some other language who additionally understands the cultural references of a given sentence; e.g., the ones typical of Hinduism or Buddhism⁷.

⁵ The instances of Polish researchers speaking a few dozens of foreign languages are: Andrzej Gawroński (1885-1927) who spoke about 80 of them and Eugeniusz Słuszkiewicz (1901-1981) who spoke about 30.

⁶ Schayer has an incorrect transliteration of this phrase: *agnih nirvrto*. I am grateful to Nataliya Yanchevskaya for this incisive note.

⁷ Schayer cites the concept of “nirvana” (nirvāṇa), but almost the same applies to the concept of “śūnyatā” rendered as “emptiness” or “void”. The concept, just like the concept of ‘nirvana’, appears in different countries where Buddhism is practiced, cf., Chinese kōngxīng, Japanese kū [or mu] and Tibetan stong-pa nyid. It is to be underlined that this concept to a much larger extent than ‘nirvana’ is susceptible to misinterpretations since it is compared with the concept of ‘nothingness’, being operative in Western philosophy, and understood as the opposite of ‘being’. The basis for this distinction is the dichotomy — originating from Greek philosophy — of the concept of μηδέν (midén) [or οὐδέν (oudén), “none”], that is ‘nothingness’, as opposed to the concept of ‘being’, that is τὸν (to on) (Mourelatos 1983: 59), standing in contradistinction to the former. This distinction dates back to the philosophy of Parmenides of Elea (Παρμενίδης ὁ Ἐλεάτης) and is directly evidenced by the sentence: ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι, μηδὲν δ’ οὐκ ἔστιν (ésti gár eínai, midén d’ ouk éstín) rendered as: “Nothing comes from nothing” [or “Non-being is not”].

It is worth noting that in a few papers Schayer points out two methods applied in the Oriental studies. He does not really specify the first method, but we can regard it as a descriptive method, which means it is reducible to description alone, and it thus lacks any explanatory power (Schayer 1988b: 80). The other method is a comparative method, which the author criticizes as being normally of no use in the research of Asian cultures (cf. Schayer 1988b; Schayer 1988c). It is mainly for this reason that separateness of cultures hampers (or sometimes precludes) working out such approach that would ensure the preservation of the said separateness. In other words, there is no real difficulty in the comparative method, but it contains a threat that a foreign culture will be explained by means of the concepts operative in our culture. And that, as we remember, not only does not lead to understanding a culture but also it involves, as Said dubbed it, "orientalism". Attracting the reader's attention to Schayer's criticism and to the fact that his considerations are devoted mainly to the language, what we deal with is a much more complex issue. That is because in the case of material output of a given culture, human behavior, or symbols and myths the issue is rather clear, whereas in the case of language it no longer is. It is mainly because — as demonstrated by Schayer and will be presented in the next section of the paper — culture is disseminated through language. Second, it is difficult (if not plainly impossible) because when describing and explaining a foreign culture we use our own language and concepts that are all representative of our culture. It entails that in the Oriental studies, we are to a large extent destined to a comparative method; and yet, we cannot be confined to that method alone. An additional problem is that even when it comes to elementary concepts, we cannot be utterly sure what meaning lies behind a certain word or behind a given sentence uttered (or written) by a person normally using a different language. According to Schayer:

"it is only the sentences describing the shapes of inscriptions that are unproblematic and not raising any doubts; anything else going beyond the description of the shapes of inscriptions is subject to interpretation — being more or less subjective or problematic" (Schayer 1988a: 316).

It means that when we encounter a foreign word, we touch upon somebody's interpretation of reality but cannot reach the understanding or emotions connected therewith, the understanding and emotions

accompanying the very act of interpreting the reality. What is telling is that Schayer focused mainly on the differences between words, skipping a much more important problem connected with distinct grammatical systems of particular languages. It boils down to the fact that while describing the differences in phonetics, he did not delineate the dissimilarities neither in the structure of sentences in particular languages nor in the personal pronouns and grammatical tenses. Namely, in some Asian languages we can notice stronger emphasis put on the social issues, which is missing in the European languages that mainly resort to abstract expressions⁸. A striking example is found in Chinese and Japanese, where there are much more precise expressions capturing family relations than in the European languages, e.g., 哥哥 (*gē gē*) — “older brother” [Japanese 兄 (*ani*)], 弟弟 (*dì dì*) — “younger brother” [Japanese 弟 (*otōto*)], 姐姐 (*jiě jie*) — “older sister” [Japanese, お姉ちゃん (*onēchan*) and more honorific お姉さん (*onēsan*)], 妹妹 (*mèi mei*) — “younger sister” [Japanese 妹 (*imoto*), 妹ちゃん (*imotochan*) and 妹さん (*imotosan*)], 祖母 (*zǔmǔ*) — “paternal grandmother” [Japanese 内祖母 (*naisobo*)], 奶奶 (*nǎinai*) — “maternal grandmother” [Japanese 外祖母 (*gaisobo*)], 祖父 (*zǔfù*) — “paternal grandfather” [Japanese 外祖父 (*gaisofu*)] and 爷爷 (*yéyé*) — “maternal grandfather” [Japanese 内祖父 (*naisofu*)]. On the other hand, in Japanese, not only we find the equivalents of these words but also their respective honorific extensions, e.g., the word „wife” functions as: an endearing 家内 (*kanai*), even more endearing and applicable to one’s own wife 妻 (*tsuma*), and more politely about somebody else’s wife 奥さん (*okusan*). The difference is also discernible as far as the use of personal pronouns is concerned. In the Japanese language personal pronouns have honorific meaning due to social relations, e.g.: pronoun ‘I’ in Chinese⁹ is generally 我 (*wǒ*), but in Japanese we can find: official 私 (*watashi*) familiar 僕 (*boku*), and more familiar 俺 (*ore*). Pronoun „you” in Chinese we can find 你 (*nǐ*) and also more official 您 (*nín*), in Japanese 君 (*kimi*), familiar あなた (*anata*) and more familiar おまえ (*omae*) (cf. Huszcza 1996: 42, 94-95, 168). Besides, Japanese has grammatical

⁸ The other case are languages possessing smaller or greater number of personal pronouns than English does. The smaller number of them is present in such languages as Chinese, Korean or Japanese. On the other hand, a greater number of them occurs in Arabic, Tibetan or Vietnamese, etc.

⁹ I confine the scope of my investigations to the modern Mandarin dialect, and not to the dialects of Chinese.

structures and phrases which highlight social relations and levels of familiarity, e.g., a verb ‘give’, depending on the vertical or horizontal relation, functions as 上げる (*ageru*) — “I give someone (e.g. my peer, friend or family)”, やる (*yaru*) — “I give someone or something (e.g. a younger person or an animal)” but also 差し上げる (*sashiageru*) — “I give someone (e.g. an older person, superiors). Japanese also has a prefix お (*o*) which highlights respect for things, e.g. お茶 (*ocha*), お金 (*okane*), お酒 (*asake*) instead of simple 茶, 金 and 酒. Failure to take it into consideration while explaining the cultural background of words causes a miscomprehension of their specificity. A verbatim translation, on the other hand, might turn out hilarious, e.g., one would not say “I will give you honourable money”, “I will make you honourable tea” and “We will drink honourable sake”. It happens due to the fact that European languages do not have honorific forms to express our relation to things and in these languages one cannot, e.g., prepare honourable tea or pay honourable money, etc.

Problems with understanding a foreign language and hence with using it and interpreting the reality through it also stem from the specific syntax. In the case of European languages, syntax is less rigid and one can change the word order in a sentence without losing its original meaning. In the case of Chinese, on the other hand, it looks different and one cannot change the structure of a sentence without influencing its meaning. It is due to the fact that the place of a word in a sentence determines the word’s function as a verb, noun, etc. For instance, if one changes the subject with the complement in a sentence “I drink water” — 我喝水 (*Wǒ hē shuǐ*), one creates a sentence with a completely different meaning, namely “Water drink me” — 水喝我 (*Shuǐ hē wǒ*). An interesting case not mentioned by Schayer is that of variance in occurrence and use of grammatical tenses which results in the texts in foreign languages not being correctly translated and not allowing for an insight into a specific way of describing reality. In the majority of cases it concerns the well-known issue of using the future tense in European languages when future events are described differently, such as in English, Polish, and Russian. However, in my opinion, much more interesting are cases in which there is no past tense or the past tense form is not particularly distinct. Such situations result in a miscomprehension of texts written in other languages and worldviews espoused and expressed by the representatives of other cultures. Chinese can serve as an example of this phenomenon because

in Chinese the past is not expressed by the proper conjugation but by adding grammatical particle 了 (*le*) or 过 (*guò*) after the verb. Yet still clearer example is Hebrew that does not have the past perfect. One can point to the wrong translation of *Torah* and then of the *Old Testament* into Latin and then into European languages. What I mean here is the first sentence in *Bereshit* which is usually translated as “In the beginning of God’s creation of the heavens and the earth” (Bereishit — Genesis — Chapter 1). *The Book of Genesis* in the Old Testament is translated into Latin in the same way, i.e. by using the past perfect: “*In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram*” (Liber Genesis); the same is the case in its translations into European languages¹⁰. In the Hebrew text, on the other hand, the sentence in question presents itself in a slightly different way because it does not have a form of the past tense (cf. Brandstatter 1994: 98; Pecaric 2001: 2). Namely, בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ. (‘*Bereszit bara Elohimet haszemaim wet harec*’), what should be translated as: „When God began to create heaven and earth” (Bereshit; cf. Pecaric 2001: 1-2).

2. The purpose and results of research on languages of other cultures

If we take into account Schayer’s remark about untranslatability of languages, it is worth considering whether translatability is still impossible when the expression *x* in a foreign language corresponds to the expression *y* in our language in such a way that $x = y$ (Schayer 1988: 316). In light of the contemporary research on translation, Schayer’s negative answer to this question can be deemed an expression of the quest for the unattainable ideal, a dream, using Paul Ricoeur’s words, that the original will be duplicated by another original (Ricoeur 2006: 5). It is worth underlining that this question has a considerable importance for familiarizing oneself with the methodology of the Oriental studies. For translations of both texts and behaviors turn out to be one of the most important works that introduce us to Asian cultures. However, is Schayer not right when he claims that it is impossible to have an unequivocal translation? In a sense he is right but when he introduces the goal that in his opinion is the cause of his negative answer, he is not right. What it means is that translation is an

¹⁰ It is worth highlighting that even translations of the Old Testament that are based on the original sources use this Latin cliché.

interpretation and translators are interpreters who try to describe, explain and thereby familiarise us with the content of the original. Therefore, we should give up the ideal of the perfect translation (Ricoeur 2006: 8). Translation is balancing between the specificities of two languages while attempting to preserve what is peculiar and unique about each of them. Such balancing also stems from the fact that there is no single, correct method which guarantees success. One should be clear about it that a lot depends on the translator himself, his intuition, sensitivity and knowledge of the language and cultural code included in the text he translates.

Another issue connected with reflections on methodology — limited to the question of language — is to specify what can be the outcome of the Oriental studies. In relation with the aforementioned problems and examples, one can ask a question whether it is possible to understand other cultures. And if the one is willing to accept a negative answer, then what are the possible consequences for the situation in the Oriental studies? Recalling Schayer's negative conclusion, one has to ask oneself again whether Schayer was right. It is highly probable that in a general sense he was right but as far as specific details are concerned he was wrong. Before I explain the reasons that support my claim, we should have a look at what it means to understand. First and foremost, understanding boils down to identifying causes, answering the question: Why? In other words, to understand means to rationally explain (Dybel 2012: 9). However, can understanding of other culture be reduced to the rational explanation thereof? In the majority of cases, such a need stems from a functionalist paradigm in social research and is based on the idea of culture as a closed construct. One can yet recall earlier conclusions that see culture as "a complex, heterogeneous and polyfunctional entirety" (Łotman 2017: 133) which resists any unambiguous explanations. What is more, an adaptation of the closed model of culture can lead to dogmatism and ideological approach towards culture, including an approach to which Said reserved the label "Orientalism". Second, understanding is connected with the question about the purpose, i.e., about what we look for, expect and what we can achieve. The answer to this question is not unambiguous since the purpose can be twofold, namely it can consist in collecting new data concerning another culture, as it is the case within the social research, or it can consist in finding or approaching the meaning of this culture, as it is the case within

hermeneutics and phenomenology. From the content of Schayer's paper we can infer that his purpose was to reach the meaning of other culture while employing methods that allow for collecting more data and more accurate description thereof. Such an approach could have contributed to accepting a thesis that it is impossible to know other cultures not because they are unknowable but because the deductive method is inadequate for this kind of research¹¹. It is the case because collecting data and increasing knowledge about our data, being based on the inductive method, does not lead to understanding (or approximation) of the meaning of another culture. It is worth underlining that the inductive method is not effective as far as the Oriental studies are concerned because in many attempts to describe the meaning of another culture there is a lack of knowledge about the details of the culture in question. As a result of these problems one should conclude that the correct method (or methods) should affiliate these two approaches, namely it should try to explain another culture on the basis of the knowledge about this culture and about its language (or languages). However, one should be aware that such attempts will not be perfect and will always be exposed to the risk of simplification.

Conclusions

Since the present paper proposes to reflect on the Oriental studies without giving any final answer, let me hypothesize that the meaning of a culture does not have to be rational, i.e., it does not require an unambiguous definition. In the philosophical traditions of Europe and Asia, one can find numerous examples indicating that the reality which surrounds us escapes our attempts to grasp and unambiguously explain it. As an example of this phenomenon one can quote, besides the aforementioned philosophy of Kant, a famous sentence from Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*: "Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen" ["Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent"] (Wittgenstein 1922: 90, 120) as well as the first sentence from Tao Te Ching (道德经[道德經]) of Laozi (老子): „道可道, 非常道”(Dào kě dào, fēicháng dào) ["Tao, which can be named, it is not eternal tao"] (Laozi 2016: 3). On the basis of these

¹¹ The causes of the employment of the deductive method should be looked for in Schayer's philosophical education and commitment to the research methods used by the Lviv-Warsaw school (cf. Woleński 1989).

examples one can ask a question: What can be expressed in a language? This question can be further extended in the context of Oriental studies to another question: What does a language reveal to us? Are we able to comprehend the essence of another culture? These questions stem from reflections proposed in the present paper and can be reduced to the distinction between, on the one hand, impossibilities (or just difficulties) connected with the impenetrability of another culture, and, on the other hand, the lack of proper research methods. In this case the answer seems relatively simple since one should recognize the two possibilities. For on the one hand, one has to deal with something that does not allow for the unambiguous description and explanation of its meaning¹². On the other hand, there is a lack of previous attempts and repetition of these deficiencies which in turn make it difficult to define the specificity of the Oriental studies and to develop proper research tools.

References

- Bereishit — Genesis - Chapter 1.
https://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/8165/jewish/Chapter-1.htm
 Bereshit: <https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis.1.1-5?lang=bi&aliyot=0>
 Brandstaetter, Roman. 1994. *Krag biblijny*. Warszawa: PAX.
 Dybel, Paweł. 2012. *Obrona hermeneutyki*. Kraków: Universitas.
 Genesis: <https://www.academic-bible.com/en/online-bibles/septuagint-lxx/read-the-bible-text/>
 Glashof, Klaus, 2004. On Stanisław Schayer's Research on Nyāya. *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 32(4): 295–319.
 Huszcza, Romuald. 1996. *Honoryfikatywność. Gramatyka-pragmatyka-typologia*. Warszawa: Dialog.
 Kant, Immanuel. 1998a. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag.
 ----- . 1998b. *Critique of pure reason*. Trans. Paul Guyer, Allen W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 Kunst, Arnold. 2012. Stanisław Schayer (8.05.1899-1.12.1941). In: Stanisław Schayer. *Contributions to the Problem of Time in Indian Philosophy*. Marek Mejer (ed.). Warszawa: Research Centre of Buddhist Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw: IX-XXIV.
 Laozi. 2016. *Dàodéjīng*. Běijīng: Gāogāo guójì.

¹² It is also connected with the question whether our own culture is understandable to us.

Liber Genesis:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/bible/nova_vulgata/documents/nova-vulgata_vt_genesis_lt.html

Łotman, Jurij. 2017. Pamięć kultury. In: Jurij Łotman. *Kultura, historia, literatura*. Transl. Bogusław Żyłko. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego: 133-143.

Mourelatos, Alexander P. 1983. "Nothing" as "Not-Being": Some Literary Contexts that Bear on Plato. In: John P. Anton, Anthony Preus. *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy. Volume Two*. Alabany: State University of New York Press: 59-69.

Pecaric, Sacha (ed.). 2001. *Tora Pardes Lauder. Księga pierwsza. Bereszit*. Kraków: Fundacja RONALDA S. LAUDERA.

Ricoeur, Paul. 2006. *On translation*. Transl. Eileen Brennan. London: Routledge.

Said, Edward, W. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Schayer, Stanisław. 1988a. O rozumieniu obcych kultur. In: Stanisław Schayer. *O filozofowaniu Hindusów. Artykuły wybrane*. Marek Mejor (ed.). Warszawa: PWN: 313-321.

----- . 1988b. Filozofja porównawcza. Uwagi na marginesie pracy P. Masson-Oursela. In: Stanisław Schayer. *O filozofowaniu Hindusów. Artykuły wybrane*. Marek Mejor (ed.). Warszawa: PWN: 80-91.

----- . 1988c. Jan Przyłuski. In: Stanisław Schayer. *O filozofowaniu Hindusów. Artykuły wybrane*. Marek Mejor (ed.). Warszawa: PWN: 222-229.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1922. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. London-New York: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner&Co., Harcourt, Brace&Company.

Woleński, Jan. 1989. *Logic and Philosophy in the Lvov-Warsaw School*. Dordrecht-Boston-London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Zajączkowski, Ananiasz. 2013. *Urzeczeni Orientem. Listy Ananiasza Zajączkowskiego do Tadeusza Kowalskiego*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Agade.