

TRANSLATING ORIENTALISM

International and Interdisciplinary Symposium

Istanbul, June 28-29, 2012, Austrian Cultural Forum, Yeniköy

**Thursday
June 28, 2012**

10.30

Opening

Paul Jenewein (Austrian Consul General)
Doris Danler (Austrian Cultural Forum Istanbul, Director)
Michael Rössner (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Culture Studies and Theatre History)

11.00–12.00

New Interpretations of Orientalism

Chair: Federico Italiano

Johannes Feichtinger/ Johann Heiss (Vienna):
The Orient-Occident-Divide. An intellectual construct?
Matthew Head (London):
'After Said: Current Challenges in Interpreting Exoticism '

12.00–12.15

Coffee Break

12.15–13.15

Modes of Orientalism in Theatre Studies and Musicology

Chair: Matthew Head

Michael Hüttler (Vienna):
Theatre-Research: From Orientalism to Imperialism? Modes of dealing with otherness
Tatjana Marković (Graz/Belgrade):
Topoi of Orientalism in Sout East European Opera (Serbia and Croatia)

13.15–14.30

Lunch Break

14.30–15.30

Orientalism and Identity Constructions

Chair: Tatjana Marković

Bent Holm (Copenhagen):
Dream and Documentation - Oriental Points of Orientation in Occidental Identity Construction
Maximilian Hartmuth (Istanbul):
Translating the oriental(ist): contextualizing Habsburg Bosnia's architecture of appeasement

15.30–16.00 Coffee Break

16.00–17.45 *Orientalism and Translation*

Chair: Otto Pfersmann

Michael Rössner (Vienna):

Occidental Orientalisms: Columbus' Travel Guides

Federico Italiano (Vienna):

The East Above Us: Extraterrestrial (geo-) graphies in Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema

Hermann Blume (Vienna):

Divided by a Common Language: Authenticity and Translation as Categories of Historical-Critical Editions

**Friday
June 29, 2012**

10.00–11.00 *Orientalism and its Visual Representation*

Chair: Michael Hüttler

Antonio Baldassarre (Lucerne):

Musical Orientalism in 18th- and 19th-century European visual culture

Cesare Molinari (Florence):

Orientalism in Theatre and the Case of *Turandot*

11.00–11.15 Coffee Break

11.15–12.00 *Orientalism and Law*

Chair: Michael Rössner

Otto Pfersmann (Paris):

Orientalismus in Rechtstheorie und Rechtsvergleichung

12.00–12.15 Coffee Break

12.15–12.45 *Commentaries & Conclusions*

Commentator: Anil Bhatti (Tübingen / New Delhi)

12.45–13.30 Lunch Break

14.00–18.00 Topkapi Palace Museum (Guided Tour) & Sightseeing Istanbul

Organized by the **Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Culture Studies and Theatre History (IKT)** in cooperation with **Don Juan Archiv Wien** [Federico Italiano (IKT, OeAW), Johannes Feichtinger (IKT, OeAW), Johann Heiss (SozAnth, OeAW), Michael Hüttler (Don Juan Archiv Wien)]

Translating Orientalism, Istanbul, June 28-29, 2012

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Conference

Translating Orientalism. Towards new epistemological approaches to processes of identity building

Date: June 28-29, 2012

Location: Austrian Cultural Forum Istanbul, June 28th-29th, 2012.

Organiser: A co-operation of *Don Juan Archiv Wien* (www.donjuanarchiv.at) & *Institute of Culture Studies and Theatre History, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna* (http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ikt/index_e.html)

Concept: Johannes Feichtinger, Johann Heiss, Federico Italiano, Michael Hüttler

Orientalism is a means of the self to localize the Other in space and time in order to define, devaluate, and dominate it. „Imaginative geographies and history“, as Edward Said argues in *Orientalism* (1978), „help the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away.“ Given that this Orientalist point of view continues to shape the sense of the self, one might nonetheless ask what new theoretical approaches might lend more nuance to processes of collective identity building. The concept of translation understood as an unlimited processual negotiation of differences across identity constructions would enable us to de-essentialize „Orient“ and „Occident“ and to generate new „imaginative geographies“ without ascribing values to proximity and distance.

Translation perceived as a process of de-territorialisation extends the framework of interaction by disrupting boundaries between fixed spatial and temporal entities. Thereby boundaries are not neglected, but seriously questioned. From the translational perspective, power/knowledge are taken into account. The question is: Who sets the boundaries, when, and why?

1. How are Orientalist images and concepts translated across historical epochs, and how does this process illuminate the ideological, political and cultural purpose underlying the transmission?
2. Under what circumstances are stereotypes of Occident and Orient preserved, revived or discarded?
3. What images of Occident and Orient are transmitted and translated? In which discourses, contexts, and texts are they deployed, and for what reason? And which wait to be resuscitated by scholars?
4. Is it possible to use the dichotomy Orientalism vs. Occidentalism epistemologically without reification and at the same time to preserve the transnational/pluricultural dimension?
5. Could „translating Orientalism“ not also imply a new epistemological approach to alternative forms and modes of identity building? Can we understand ourselves better without a devaluation of the Other?
6. Orientalism in theatre and music: approaches and strategies from the 17th to the 21st century

Papers given by

Anil Bhatti (Tübingen–New Delhi), Antonio Baldassarre (Lucerne), Hermann Blume (Vienna), Johannes Feichtinger (Vienna), Maximilian Hartmuth (Istanbul), Matthew Head (London), Johann Heiss (Vienna), Bent Holm (Copenhagen), Michael Hüttler (Vienna), Federico Italiano (Vienna–Munich), Tatjana Marković (Graz–Belgrade), Cesare Molinari (Florence), Otto Pfersmann (Paris), Michael Roessner (Vienna–Munich)

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BALDASSARRE, ANTONIO (LUCERNE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND ARTS):
Musical Orientalism in 18th- and 19th-Century European Visual Culture

The interest in topics and motifs of the “Orient” has a long tradition in Western European culture originating from the diverse roots of its past. The relationship established thus far, however, is anything but a “one-way” liaison, rather it is shaped by permanently validatory and/or deprecatory translations of the meaning and the function of ideas, concepts and strategies in circulation. Disbanding the all too dull dichotomous, static and essentialist analysis of the relationship between the West and East therefore opens new perspectives on visual representations of the “Western Orient” and the corresponding processes of self-orientalisation within the West. Music seems to have played an important role within these processes and is evidenced by its strong presence in 18th- and 19th-century Western visual representations. Against this background, the paper will explore and discuss the function of representations of music in 18th- and 19th-century Western European visual representations of the “Orient” and investigate the narratives and visions transmitted through visual media.

BHATTI, ANIL (JNU/ NEW DELHI, UNIVERSITÄT TÜBINGEN):
Commentator

BLUME, HERMANN (IKT, OeAW, WIEN):
Divided by a Common Language: Authenticity and Translation as Categories of Historical-Critical Editions

Significant sources for historical cultural studies are literary texts. The “historical-critical edition” aims to present historic texts in a scholarly authenticated form. Detailed documentations and compilations of the genesis of the texts (‘Entstehung’) and its steps of transmission from the first handwritten drafts to the last printed version (‘Überlieferung’) facilitate a dependable and sustainable textual fundament for all proceeding text-based

research. Beside the *apparatus criticus*, an extended commentary explains the texts in its contemporary relationships and meanings which are usually hidden to the present reader. In respect of the immense political, economic, technical, and social changes that divide former epochs from today, historical writings may be more alien for the present reception in the common language than foreign language texts of contemporary writers. Thus, scholarly editions can be analysed as a methodical transfer of texts, not only from one culture system into the other, but also from one historical medium (original manuscript, historical print) into another (printed or digital Edition), and even from one intended purpose of reception (literary communication) into another (philological, historical or cultural research). As an attempt to apply the concept of cultural translation on scholarly editions as a heuristic category (which is not a topic in discussions on edition theory), this talk raises some main questions of historical-critical editions: Authenticity ranges as a primary principle of text presentation. How can authenticity as a material bounded quality be “saved” in translation? How do cultural terms affect the text constitution and commentary?

**FEICHTINGER, JOHANNES / JOHANN HEISS (IKT, OEAW, WIEN / SOZANTH, OEAW, WIEN):
The Orient-Occident Divide. An Intellectual Construct?**

Intellectuals mainly living in the West claimed to expose the wrong image the West had conceived on the Orient. In their attempt to de-essentialize the Orient, however, they got into the dilemma of essentializing the West, without being aware of it.

In our contribution, we ask in how far the literature on orientalism transports essentializing images (generalizations, reductions, and homogenizations) of Orient and Occident since the 1960s. If the Orient has been described in a differentiated way, is there a tendency to treat the Occident in a rather reductive and generalized mode?

The divide between Orient and Occident, upheld by the classical Orientalists and colonialists, is still prevalent in the writings of authors concerned with a critical view of orientalism. Which function has this divide in texts critically concerned with orientalism? Can a notion of the Orient be developed which is valid for future use, and which avoids both: East and West, transcending the binary vision?

**HARTMUTH, MAXIMILIAN (NETHERLANDS INSTITUUT IN TURKIJE, ISTANBUL):
Translating the Oriental(ist): Contextualizing Habsburg Bosnia’s Architecture of
Appeasement**

When Austria-Hungary occupied Ottoman Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1878, it also inherited a large Muslim population that was generally less than enthusiastic about the prospect of rule by infidels. The generation of sympathy for, or at least of the acceptance of, Habsburg rule was in turn identified as a key tactic for fostering a regional hegemony. Potential collaborators among the Muslim elites of Bosnia-Herzegovina were identified and rewarded with official posts that were often merely honorary. The first works of architecture distinguished by forms in a style that has been described as “[pseudo-]Moorish,” which was to signal to the local Muslims that they could be part of the modernization project that was underway, also appeared within a decade of the occupation; however, the lack of knowledge of the Muslim world’s artistic heritage outside its principal (medieval) centres resulted in a historicism based on misunderstandings and implicit value judgments. My paper seeks to offer a holistic analysis of this little-known phenomenon.

HEAD, MATTHEW (KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON):
'After Said: Current Challenges in Interpreting Exoticism'.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) has been largely ignored or rejected in German-language musicology. This paper recommends that now is not the time to start to work with his arguments as if they represented new challenges. Instead, lessons can be learned from the initial impact of the Saidian thesis in North American scholarship, and the subsequent realisation there, as well as in the UK, of the problems, even wrong-headedness of applying or 'translating' his theories to the music-theatrical practices of the later eighteenth century. Those problems involve not politicisation of the arts per se but the particular kinds of politicisation that feature in Said's critical practice: the theory of "Self and Other" as an essentially binary and fixed duality on which rests a hegemonic and quasi-imperial network of factually-unreliable, inter-textual representations that have no access to the original of which they speak. The 'politics' of late eighteenth-century exoticism is often different in kind, concerned with the legacy and current status of religious differences (as well as the reform of Catholic institutions at home); feudal patronage and the celebration of sovereignty (but also the critique of despotic rule, at home and abroad), and the ambiguous symbolism of images of female empowerment in relationships with men, and in practices of the arts. Paradoxically, I suggest that the current interpretive challenge lies not in translating Said, nor even in recovering these different social-political themes mentioned above, but in finding ways of addressing exoticism as a component of broader aesthetic-moral projects of the period (a seemingly pre-theoretical or at least pre-Saidian line of enquiry), particularly cultures of imagination and feeling in music and theatre.

HOLM, BENT (UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN):
Dream and Documentation -
Oriental Points of Orientation in Occidental Identity Construction.

National identity building has to do with collective images and memories. Such components are not necessarily unequivocal or stable, nor do ideas or motifs on different levels necessarily point in the same direction at the same time. The subconsciously surviving fundamental Danish self-image refers to the so-called Golden Age in the first part of the 19th century, a dynamic era of crisis, culmination and transition, politically, ideologically and culturally, between romanticism, nationalism and emergent democracy. A substantial part of the construction of a new national identity refers to Oriental areas – imagined, real or both. A cross-sectional analysis of a variety of source material reveals the complex interplay between dream and documentation, between artistic articulation and scientific exploration. The archaeologist P. O. Brøndsted's descriptions of his meetings with Ali Pasha on the one hand and the playwright Adam Oehlenschläger's romantic depictions of an exotic world on the other, both fascinating and frightening and which partly drew on Brøndsted. Others presented a radical criticism of Occidental contemporary culture and conversely an image of the noble Oriental on the stage. The actual knowledge about the foreign countries came to expression in pictorial arts, which drew on German and French Orientalism, but first of all were a reflection of a national dream. The national identity construction is imbued with not only the notion of a Golden Age, but also of a Golden Year, which implies a theological idea of the Danes as a chosen people in a universal eschatological drama in opposition to the infidel Orientals. The point is that these approaches exist simultaneously, on different levels, although they exclude each other; they do not fit into an unambiguous notion of "Orientalism" and they all contribute to a complex process of identity construction which is active even today.

HÜTTLER, MICHAEL (DJA WIEN):

Theatre Research: From Orientalism to Imperialism? Modes of Dealing with Otherness.

When Edward Said (1935–2003) coined the term “Orientalism” in 1978, he used a theatrical metaphor: “The idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role it is to represent the larger whole from which they emanate. The Orient then seems to be [...] a theatrical stage affixed to Europe.” The presentation of the oriental “Other” on the European theatre stage was common practice from the 17th century onwards. Although Said did not mention theatre studies explicitly in his works, theatre-practitioners always had to deal with the question of otherness, and from the age of Enlightenment onwards, theatre theoreticians especially addressed the question of oriental otherness.

In this paper, I will try to give an overview about historical and contemporary modes of dealing with the exotic other in theatre research. After starting with the comments of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* and a typical example of turn-of-the-century German historian approach by historian Wilhelm Gerstenberg, I will turn to Rustom Bharucha’s critique of the well-intentioned experiments by 20th-century practitioners/theoreticians Peter Brook and Jerzy Grotowski. Finally, I will comment on the latest discussion in performance studies which nowadays circles around the question as to whether or not the field is “Imperialist”.

ITALIANO, FEDERICO (IKT, OEAW, WIEN / LMU MÜNCHEN):

The East Above Us: Extraterrestrial (geo-)geographies in Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema

In order to create fictional, extraterrestrial worlds, science fiction movies must use terrestrial codes and features. By doing so, they fragment and recompose “imaginative geographies” into fictional planets and galaxies. As a first step, this paper will argue that these extraterrestrial (geo-)geographies are not just the result of a more or less functioning collage, but a complex process of cultural translation. In particular, this paper will analyze the translation of an imagined, “terrestrial” Orient into extraterrestrial dimensions (Star Wars, Dune, Stargate) and how an eco-critical, well-intentioned (but strongly derivative) movie such as Avatar reinforced almost every possible Orientalist stereotype and binary opposition.

MARKOVIĆ, TATJANA (KARL-FRANZENS-UNIVERSITÄT GRAZ, UNIVERZITET UMETNOSTI BEOGRAD):

Topoi of Orientalism in South-East European Opera (Serbia and Croatia)

Following the publication of Edward Said’s Orientalism in 1978, this theme spread to other disciplines, especially postcolonial studies. Among them was musicology, introducing a new attitude towards the world of “Other” in the opera. The paper discusses Orientalism as a discourse in musicology and the ways it functions in (re)considerations of all aspects of the medium of opera (textual, musical, iconographical) using nineteenth-century Serbian and Croatian operas as an example. Thus the case studies from South-East Europe will explicate the fact that in numerous operas the Other is embodied by Ottoman character(s); however, the Otherness in these cases is specific, since it assumes the geographically very close Other which exists “among us”. The world of the Other has been represented mainly through genre scenes, mostly dances. Defining and analyzing the topoi of Orientalism leads us to the

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systematization of these musical, textual, and iconographical semiotic signs situated between “orientalisation” and “self-orientalisation”.

**MOLINARI, CESARE (PROFESSORE EMERITO DELL’UNIVERSITÀ
DI FIRENZE):**

Orientalism in Theatre and the Case of *Turandot*

The case of Giacomo Puccini’s *Turandot* is especially interesting because of a number of reasons. Galileo Chini, the artist who prepared the décor for the première of 1926 (after Puccini’s death 1924) at La Scala, had been invited by the Siamese king to paint the frescoes of his palace 15 years earlier and therefore became a sort of ambassador of Italian art in the far east. To what extent did such an experience influence his work when called to make the sceneries for an opera of Chinese subject derived from a Persian tale? The more recent big production by Zan-Imu is another good example of an artistic synthesis.

This contribution will take into account the interest of theatre artists in different “oriental” countries following current fashion: subjects, formal suggestions, wisdom and recent theoretical starting points. What did theatre people look for in eastern culture and arts?

PFRSMANN, OTTO (UNIVERSITÉ DE PARIS I PANTHÉON SORBONNE)

Orientalismus in Rechtstheorie und Rechtsvergleichung

[Abstract]

RÖSSNER, MICHAEL (IKT, OEAW, WIEN / LMU MÜNCHEN):

Occidental Orientalisms: Columbus’ Travel Guides

We all know that Columbus’ voyage was based on serious calculation errors and that during his lifetime he was always sure that he had indeed arrived in Asia. What perhaps is not so well-known is the fact that Columbus travelled with some textual “guides”, the most important of them being Marco Polo’s *Il Milione*, a 13th-century text we may well define as a translatio/n at various levels. If Edward Said in his *Orientalism* speaks about “textual realities”, the reality Columbus perceives by comparing his direct impressions with the indications in his guide is surely a textual one; it is preserved in another kind of translatio/n, as the text of Columbus’ logbooks is only available in form of a partial transcription with commentaries by Padre Bartolomé de Las Casas, the “Apostle of the Indians”, who wanted to present native Americans as peaceful, innocent, childlike “sheep” victimized by the Spanish “wolves”. The lecture tries to analyze this palimpsestic text in the light of Marco Polo’s book, in order to give an insight to what we may qualify one of the first examples of “Orientalism” – but paradoxically applied to an “Occidental Orient”.