

OTTOMAN EMPIRE  
AND  
EUROPEAN THEATRE

I

THE AGE OF  
MOZART AND SELIM III  
(1756 – 1808)



edited by  
MICHAEL HÜTTLER · HANS ERNST WEIDINGER

HOLLITZER

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**DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN**

**OTTOMANIA**

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Series Editors

HANS ERNST WEIDINGER · MICHAEL HÜTTLER



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## DON JUAN, OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND EUROPEAN THEATRE: A PROEM

What reasons can an institution dedicated to research on Don Juan, a paradigmatic figure in Western culture, have to conceive symposia and a book series dealing with the interrelations between the Ottoman Empire and European theatre?

Can there be any reason, apart from odd he-male ('Don Juan') fantasies of a fe-male harem at fragrant disposal? Therefore, shouldn't we simply accept the decision, albeit splenetic or foolish, of some Juanic he-males and not ask further for any reason at all?

Be this as it may, surely the reason for such a decision would be a matter of little consequence if the research results are reliable and relevant; exactly at this junction of empire, hero and stage, is a triple link to the matters of Don Juan.

### DON JUAN AND THEATRE

Don Juan as a European literary figure existed, from his first breath in early seventeenth century Spain to the peak and summit of his career at the end of the eighteenth century, exclusively on stage; during this period, an impressive number of works was produced: they comprise a total of twenty-five completed plays (most of them printed contemporarily), at least ten scenarios (extant in manuscript or printed copies), a dozen operas and vaudevilles, and approximately fifty ballets. The dramatic genre of Don Juan plays could be called a hybrid, as it encompasses elements of tragedy, comedy, pastorelle, theological play, and machine theatre.

It was only at the end of the eighteenth century, however, following the 'opera of operas', generally called *Don Giovanni*, written by Lorenzo da Ponte and set to music by Wolfgang Amadé Mozart, that our hero extended his territories and, crossing all genre and gender borders, step by step conquered all forms of art in the Western hemisphere.

The definite turning point is given by George Gordon Lord Byron (1788–1824) who, in his unfinished Heroic Poem *Don Juan* (1819–1824), describes the hero's fate, from which a special part (Cantos IV–VII) relates to our question of why one should embark on an extensive study of Don Juan and his relationship with the Ottoman Empire: According to Byron's narrative, Don Juan, offered and purchased at the Constantinople slave market, was brought to the Sultan's harem,

which he entered under the reign of Süleyman I (r.1520–1566) and left, after one magic night, under the reign of Selim III (r.1789–1807). Back to freedom, Don Juan immediately became involved in the war between the three European empires of that time – the Russian, the Austrian, and the Ottoman.

### DON JUAN AND THE TURKS

Similarly, the literary figure of Don Juan has been connected to the Ottoman world or Turkey since its very origins: almost all of the many (more or less) known versions in prose, be it a full text play or a scenario, contain such links, and a series of scenarios makes Don Giovanni a (temporary) renegade for political reasons and for marrying a Muslim princess whom he had abducted from the seraglio of her brother, the Muslim king of Tunis. Here we are not pursuing this track, but only going to see what the three best known authors of Don Juan plays say about their hero's Turkish context.

The first author of a Don Juan play, traditionally identified as the Mercedarian friar Gabriel Téllez, known as Tirso de Molina (1579–1648) and one of the major playwrights in the Spanish “Siglo de oro” (‘Golden century’), in *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* (‘The trickster of Seville and guest of stone’; Spain, ca. 1615), emphasizes Don Juan the warrior with “Fuerça al Turco” (‘tame the Turk’).

Next is the great comedian of the ‘classic’ period in French literature, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, known as Molière (1622–1673), who identifies in his *Dom Juan ou Le Festin de Pierre* (‘Sir John or The stone feast’; Paris, February 15, 1665) our hero as being of Turkish nature or character: “Mon maistre [...] un Turc” (‘My Master [...] a Turk’).

Thirdly, one of the most outstanding poets in the history of opera and W. A. Mozart’s preferred poet, Emmanuele Conegliano, baptized as Lorenzo da Ponte (1749–1838), in *Il dissoluto punito. O sia Il D. Giovanni* (‘The libertine punished. Or: Sir John’; Prague, October 29, 1787) implies that the hero is a womanizer with the famous words “In Turchia novant’una” (‘In Turkey ninety-one’), to signify the number of ladies of all types Don Juan is said to have enjoyed.

In all three aforementioned cases, no author portrays Don Juan describing himself in such a manner, but instead by the only character close to him: by his servant, or rather, his companion in travel and adventures who, in the original play, is also the one who saves his master’s life following a shipwreck – in one word, by Don Juan’s inseparable ‘Other’.

DON JUAN AND HISTORY

On the other hand, the quest for a historical figure which could have served as a role model for the stage ‘hero’ or perhaps more appropriately ‘anti-hero’, has curiously been denied, rejected, and for some time wholly abandoned by Don Juan scholarship.

Contrary to what generally is assumed, research brought forward by the Don Juan Archiv Wien has concluded that behind the Don Juan subject is not only the old Seville legend of Don Juan Tenorio and his guest of stone, but also a role model that predates the nascency of the first known Don Juan play by about one generation – a gorgeous hero of the European sixteenth century.

And indeed, this historic figure to a large extent owes his glory to his crossing of the Ottoman world: the personality in question is the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V’s youngest son, the gallant and attractive Don Juan de Austria (1547–1578), who was victorious over the Ottoman fleet in the naval battle of Lepanto (1571) – this Don Juan’s highest desire was to reside one day as emperor in Constantinople and to reign over the Orient.

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Coming back to our initial question and trying to answer it with a counter-question, we might ask, what other matter would now seem more appropriate for an Austrian institution dedicated to Don Juan than research on the Ottoman Empire and European theatre?

And what historical period is more appropriate to start with than that of the enlightened artists Da Ponte and Mozart in the Western, and of the enlightened Ottoman Sultan Selim III in the Eastern part of Europe?

Therefore, dear reader, I hope that you will be pleasantly surprised by what discoveries the exploration of the world of *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre* holds in store.

H. E. Weidinger





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## ABBREVIATIONS

a.k.a.	also known as
annot.	annotated by
b.	born
bapt.	baptized
cent.	century
cf.	confer (compare, see)
d.	died
Diplomarb.	Diplomarbeit (unpublished Master thesis)
dir.	directed by
Diss.	Dissertation (unpublished PhD dissertation)
ed.	edited by, editor
eds.	editors, editions
et al.	et alii (and others)
Ibidem	in the same place
Idem	the same
KV	Köchelverzeichnis (Köchel catalogue of Mozart's works)
orig.	originally
perf.	performed
pub.	published
r.	reign(ed)
res.	residence
s.a.	sine anno (without year)
s.l.	sine loco (without location)
s.p.	sine pagina (without page)
s.n.	sine nomine (without name/author/editor)
s.typ.	sine typographus (without printer/publisher)
trans.	translated by, translator



## REMARKS

Translations, if not indicated otherwise, are by the authors of the contribution. Quotations are generally in the original language, followed by an English translation.

For the English version of quotations from W. A. Mozart's letters, Emily Anderson's edition *The Letters of Mozart & His Family* (London: Macmillan, 1938, 3 vols.) has been used. However, Anderson did not always translate the entire text, so the editors of *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre* had to complete missing parts. In such cases, the editors' contributions have been indicated.

Double quotation marks are used for quotations in the continuous text; single quotation marks indicate translated words or sentences, as well as otherwise highlighted words or phrases.

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# OUVERTURE



## EDITORIAL

MICHAEL HÜTTLER (VIENNA) AND HANS ERNST WEIDINGER (VIENNA/FLORENCE)

The symposium series *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre* began in 2008 in Vienna at the premises of the UNESCO International Theatre Institute (ITI) and focused in its inaugural year on the eighteenth century, particularly on the period between 1756 and 1808, the era of W. A. Mozart and Sultan Selim III. Why concentrate especially on this period?

Both of these historical personalities were towering figures of their time, Mozart as an extraordinary composer and Selim III as both a politician and a composer,<sup>1</sup> and their life-spans overlap: Mozart was born in 1756 and died in 1791, Selim III was born in 1761 and died in 1808. Moreover, 2008 was the 200th anniversary of Sultan Selim III's death: after having already been dethroned and imprisoned by the Janissaries in 1807, he was murdered on July 28, 1808. Theoretically, it would have been possible for the two of them to have met each other.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, we are directing our attention particularly to the second half of the eighteenth century: on the one hand, to the various cultural – to be exact: theatrical and musical – expressions of the exponents of the Ottoman Empire on the theatrical stages of Europe and, on the other hand, to the appearance of European theatre and opera in the Ottoman Empire, especially in its political and cultural centre, Constantinople, now Istanbul.

The topic of *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre* has met with great interest. In response to our call for papers, so many experts submitted abstracts that it was impossible for us to offer all of them an opportunity to speak at the symposia. To integrate as many participants as possible into this intercultural and interdisciplinary project, we decided to expand the published proceedings to include some contributions by scholars who could not attend and present their work in person.

Forty-four contributions will take the reader on a journey from the heart of Europe to the shores of the Bosphorus. Inspired by the structure of the operatic subject of this volume, the eight sections are arranged and entitled as Overture, Prologue, Acts I–V, and Epilogue. The Overture includes the opening speeches of diplomats, politicians, and scholars as well as a memorial text for the “Genius of Opera”, the Turkish primadonna Leyla Gencer (1928–2008). The Prologue, “The Stage of Politics”, features two texts by distinguished historians who give

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<sup>1</sup> See the articles by Mustafa Fatih Salgar and Aysın Candan in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> For this aspect see the article by Käthe Springer-Dissmann in this volume.

an historical overview about the Ottoman Empire and Europe in the eighteenth century from the Turkish and the Austrian point of view. Act I features texts concerning “Diplomacy and Theatre”, and Act II takes the reader to “Europe South, West and North”. Act III has contributions concerning theatre in “Central Europe”, and Act IV deals with “Mozart” and the world of the seraglio. Finally, Act V turns our attention to the Ottoman “Sultan Selim III” and, last but not least, the Epilogue considers literary and theatrical adventures of “The Hero in the Sultan’s Harem”.

Few publications on the topic of the cultural connections between the Ottoman Empire and Europe focus on theatre and opera, and fewer still have engaged the topic of the interaction and reciprocal influences of the Ottoman Empire and European theatre before 1800. This gap in research is addressed by this symposium series and the resulting publications of the *Don Juan Archiv Wien*.

Starting from the enlightened eighteenth century, we will gradually move backwards to approach the beginnings of the cultural and theatrical relationships between the Ottoman Empire and Europe – the earliest dramatic compositions in Western Europe dealing with the Turks date back to the fifteenth century. Topics to be explored in the following symposia and publications include, among others, seraglios and harems as well as ballet and dance, and personalities like Joseph Haydn, George Gordon Lord Byron, Christoph Willibald Gluck, Molière, and Miguel de Cervantes. Incidentally, the latter took part in the famous naval battle at Lepanto in 1571 where Don Juan de Austria was the leader of the Christian fleet that fought against the Ottoman fleet. Four years later, in 1575, Cervantes was taken into Turkish captivity in Algiers. These experiences were dealt with in his writings and dramas. A publication entitled *Don Juan Crossing the Ottoman World* by Hans Ernst Weidinger is in preparation and will be published within this “Ottomania” book series.

The editors would like to highlight a particular fact: the primary organizer of the symposium series, the *Don Juan Archiv Wien* is not a state institution, but a privately financed research institute that carries out scholarly projects in cultural studies and the history of theatre and music in cooperation with state and other public institutions, thus offering a new model for research in cultural history. Additionally, the international/trans-border structure of the symposia should be noted: the first part of each year’s symposium took place in Vienna, and the second part in Istanbul. Each of these annual symposia will produce a corresponding publication.

We would especially like to thank the cooperating partners in this symposium series, the International Theatre Institute of the UNESCO in Vienna and the

## EDITORIAL

Austrian Cultural Forum in Istanbul, as well as the supporters and sponsors: the Austrian Foreign Ministry, the Turkish Embassy in Vienna, and the Denizbank AG. These agencies contributed substantially to the realization of the events and this book.

A big thanks to the kind assistance of all our Turkish friends and colleagues, especially Ayşın Candan and Bereket Uluşahin (both in Istanbul), who, together with Cemal Öztaş, Vice General Secretary of the Turkish Parliament in Ankara, at that time active in his role as Director of National Palaces at the Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul, encouraged us, after many fruitful discussions, to adopt *Mozart and Selim III* as the historical starting point for a symposium series.

The editors would like to extend a very special thanks to all of the participants in the symposia, without whom the events could not have taken place, including the esteemed audience both in Vienna and Istanbul for its vigorous interest in the *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre*. Thanks are also due to our colleagues from the Don Juan Archiv Wien for their help in the administration of the events, especially to Suna Suner who is not only an expert on “Opera and Diplomacy”, the subject of her paper, but also contributed her expertise to organize the symposia in Vienna and Istanbul. Thanks also to Johannes Schweitzer and the many others who contributed to the realization of this project. Finally, the book would not exist without the rigorous English language proof-reading of Heather Evans in Kingston, Canada, and the profound editorial assistance of Caroline Herfert and Inge Praxl in Vienna, Austria.



# ORIENTALISM ON STAGE: HISTORICAL APPROACHES AND SCHOLARLY RECEPTION

MICHAEL HÜTTLER (VIENNA)

Osman, Selim, and Mahomed; Fatima, Zaide, and Roxelane; sultans, renegades, and slaves; seraglios and harems, abductions and escapes... In the eighteenth century, the period on which the present publication *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre: The Age of Mozart and Selim III* focuses, European theatre and opera included numerous ‘Turkish’ characters and subjects. Exotic settings attracted the audience, and the Turkish-oriental setting was among the most appealing topics. Still today, Wolfgang Amadé Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (‘The abduction from the seraglio’, KV 384, premiere Vienna, July 16, 1782) is part of the repertoire of every big opera house and among those operas with the highest number of performances.<sup>1</sup>

## EXOTICISM

The exotic in theatre and opera was not restricted to the Ottoman Empire, but included visions of any other people outside of one’s homeland, which for an average European citizen could include Irish or Scottish people, as well as Hungarian dances or Roma folk songs.

The term ‘exotic’ – which is one of the main starting points for discussions related to the subject of the Ottoman Empire and European theatre – stems from the Greek *exōtikós*, meaning “from the outside of one’s own sphere”, the foreign, ‘the Other’. Thus, exoticism usually denotes a certain subjective vision of the Other, especially in the arts and cultural production, designed to evoke the atmosphere of a foreign land or people. Thomas Betzwieser, in his 1995 entry to the German language standard reference work *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (MGG), defines ‘musical exoticism’ as follows:

Unter dem Terminus Exotismus [...] werden zumeist eine Vielzahl verschiedenartiger Phänomene und Strömungen zusammengefaßt, deren Hauptmerkmal in einer Beeinflussung der europäischen Kunst durch fremdländische, insbesondere außereuropäische Elemente besteht. Im

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in Germany in the 2005/2006 season it was the third most commonly represented opera. The most often played opera in Germany has been for many years Mozart’s *Zauberflöte* (‘Magic flute’), another piece with an ‘oriental’ setting. See Arnold Jacobshagen: *Musiktheater*, p. 10 (illustration 6); [http://www.miz.org/static\\_de/themenportale/einfuehrungstexte\\_pdf/03\\_KonzerteMusiktheater/jacobshagen.pdf](http://www.miz.org/static_de/themenportale/einfuehrungstexte_pdf/03_KonzerteMusiktheater/jacobshagen.pdf), 17.09.2011.



Zusammenhang mit Musik läßt sich Exotismus im Wesentlichen auf drei Ebenen beobachten: In der Stoffwahl und Ausstattung von Bühnenwerken sowie in der Verwendung “exotischen” Musikmaterials. Der Begriff Exotismus unterscheidet dabei wenig nach der Herkunft der verwendeten Fremdelemente oder deren Stimmigkeit untereinander. [...]²

(‘The term exoticism [...] usually combines a variety of different phenomena and trends, whose main principal characteristics lie in the influence of European art by foreign, especially extra-European elements. Concerning music, exoticism can be found on three levels: in the choice of subject, in scenography, and in the use of “exotic” music material. The concept of exoticism usually does not differentiate the origin or the coherence of the foreign elements used. [...]’)

Betzwieser dates the starting point of the theatrical exoticism to 1670 when the comédie-ballet *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* (‘The bourgeois gentleman’) by Molière (1622–1673) and Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687) for the first time combined scenographic influences, foreign linguistic patterns, and musical exoticisms. The intertwining of these factors denotes the significance of *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* for the appearance of the exotic-oriental on the European theatre stage. Furthermore, with regards to the authenticity of the subject, Betzwieser points to the fact that written sources (such as travelogues) were more influential than actual direct local encounters.<sup>3</sup> With this in mind, therefore, the exotic in music, or rather the idea of ‘musical exoticism’, according to Jonathan Bellmann (1999),

is almost self-explanatory: it may be defined as the borrowing or use of musical materials that evoke distant locales or alien frames of reference. [It is concerned with] Western repertoires that seek to remind us either of foreign lands (such as the Arab countries, Bali and Java, India, Spain) or various discrete groups within the home society who were regarded as exotic (Romani Gypsies, Native Americans, African Americans, even women). [...] Characteristic and easily recognized musical gestures from the alien culture are assimilated into a more familiar style, giving it an exotic color and suggestiveness.<sup>4</sup>

Leaving aside the word “musical”, this definition could be used in a broader sense for any theatre or other performative work of art.

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2 Thomas Betzwieser: “Exotismus”, in: *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Ludwig Finscher. Vol. 3: *Eng-Hamb.* Kassel-Basel-London-New York-Prague: Bärenreiter / Stuttgart-Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 1995, cols. 226–227.

3 Cf. Betzwieser: “Exotismus”, col. 230.

4 Jonathan Bellmann: “Introduction”, in: *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellmann. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998, p. ix.

Ralph P. Locke (2009) extended Bellmann's approach and developed a new, more detailed definition of musical exoticism, which again can be easily adapted for both music and theatre:

Musical exoticism is the process of evoking in or through music – whether that music is 'exotic-sounding' or not – a place, people, or social milieu that is not entirely imaginary and that differs profoundly from the home country or culture in attitudes, customs, and morals. [...] More precisely, it is the process of evoking a place (people, social milieu) that is *perceived* as different from home by the people who created the exoticist cultural product and by the people who receive it. Beneath the surface, the place (people, social milieu) that is being evoked may be perceived as resembling home in certain ways. The differences and resemblances between Here and There may carry a variety of emotional charges: they may register as consoling, may trouble a listener's complacency, and so on. Whereas the differences between Here and There were generally conscious on the part of the creator(s) of the exotic musical work and readily apparent to listeners of the day, the *resemblances* may have been relatively conscious *or quite unconscious* and readily apparent *or not readily apparent*. For example, they may not have been mentioned by critics at the time of the work's first appearance. In any case, if the work continues to be performed over many years, such broader cultural resonances – the perceived differences from *and* resemblances to the home culture – are likely to fade and be replaced by others, given that listeners may now be living in new and different cultural situations and may thus bring different values and expectations to the work.<sup>5</sup>

Additionally, Locke refers to five binarisms inherent in nearly any exotic music repertoire: the dichotomy between then and now, self and other, nearness and distance, the real and the fictive, musical and extramusical signs.<sup>6</sup> The above mentioned definitions, borrowed from musicology, can be applied to theatre as well, as we will see in various essays in this book.

Generally, theatrical exoticism of the eighteenth and nineteenth century has been relatively less discussed than has been musical exoticism. While most publications that deal with theatre and orientalism concentrate on questions related to post-colonial theory and cultural theory, and are usually focused on text-analysis, with only a few exceptions they tend to leave aside the theatricality or the theatrical representations of the object of research.

5 Ralph P. Locke: *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 47.

6 Locke: *Musical Exoticism*, pp. 65–70.

Christopher Balme (2001) defines theatrical exoticism in the broadest sense as “eine Praxis, fremde Zeichen, meist außereuropäischer Herkunft, als Seh- und/oder Hörvergnügen auszustellen”<sup>7</sup> (‘a practice of exhibiting foreign signs, usually of non-European origin, as seeing and/or listening pleasure’).

## ORIENTALISM

The term ‘orientalism’ was used in (mainly French) art to refer to works of European artists depicting oriental subjects and also to describe the academic field of Oriental studies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When Edward Said (1935–2003) coined the cultural-political concept of orientalism in 1978, the term was redefined and acquired a rather negative connotation. The essence of orientalism is, according to Said’s theory, “the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority”.<sup>8</sup> In other words, orientalism is seen as an imperialist form of culture, established by Europeans for Europeans by using imagined pictures and prejudiced visions of the Orient.

Said used among others a theatrical metaphor to describe his perception:

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.<sup>9</sup>

The concept of orientalism as developed by Said in the 1970s has become since then a point of reference for almost all authors writing on the Orient or exoticism in theatre or music. It provoked a worldwide academic debate on the subtexts of orientalism and occidentalism; over the last twenty-five years its limitations and distortions have been widely discussed<sup>10</sup> and sometimes even wildly attacked.<sup>11</sup> Said nonetheless became, together with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha, a founding figure of post-colonial theory.

While Said’s idea of orientalism is suitable for the British and French point of view and basically for any colonialist country, it seems to be only partially

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7 Christopher Balme: “Einleitung”, in: *Das Theater der Anderen: Alterität und Theater zwischen Antike und Gegenwart*, ed. Christopher Balme. Tübingen-Basel: Francke, 2001, p. 12.

8 Edward Said: *Orientalism*. London: Penguin, 2003 (orig. 1978), p. 42.

9 Cf. Said: *Orientalism*, p. 63.

10 Cf. as an example of many: Daniel Martin Varisco: *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007.

11 Cf. Ibn Warraq: *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said’s Orientalism*. Amherst/NY: Prometheus Books, 2007. Ibn Warraq’s book unfortunately is itself what it criticizes about Said’s *Orientalism*: cursorily researched, and especially in the chapters on literature and music, more than trivial.

applicable to matters concerning the Ottoman-European relationship in the culture and arts. On the one hand, the Ottoman Empire was for a long time also part of Europe, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the period focused on in the present publication. Today's Central and Southeast European countries of Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro had all been – at least to some extent – part of the Ottoman Empire or situated within the Ottoman sphere of influence.<sup>12</sup> If the Ottoman Empire is considered as oriental, the Orient started right at the gates of Vienna. Therefore, and also because the Habsburg Empire did not have colonies in the strict sense, Austrian orientalism had different points of departure than those of colonialist countries.<sup>13</sup>

Said himself wrote about an age of imperialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, whose main protagonists were Great Britain and France, but he explicitly excluded the Austro-Hungarian as well as the Ottoman Empire from this discussion: “Moreover, there are several empires that I do not discuss: the Austro-Hungarian, the Russian, the Ottoman, and the Spanish and Portuguese.”<sup>14</sup> Contrary to Said, Gayatri C. Spivak considers Germany as one of the main sources of careful nineteenth century orientalist scholarship seen from a cultural and intellectual point of view because of the wide range of authoritative orientalist accounts produced in Germany.<sup>15</sup>

Said was also one of the first scholars who pointed out that the Western knowledge about the Orient was mainly based on secondary sources:

In the system of knowledge about the Orient, the Orient is less a place than a *topos*, a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone's work on the Orient, or some bit of previous imaging, or an amalgam of all these.<sup>16</sup>

A majority of European authors, especially playwrights, tried to define what has to be considered as ‘Turkish’, without being or having been in direct contact with authentic Turkish culture. Particularly extreme was the prominence of

12 For the history of the relationship of the Habsburgs and the Ottoman Empire see the contribution by Bertrand Michael Buchmann in this volume.

13 For a more detailed overview about German and Austrian orientalism see: Todd Kontje: *German Orientalisms*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004 and Andrea Polaschegg: *Der andere Orientalismus: Regeln deutsch-morgenländischer Imagination im 19. Jahrhundert*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005.

14 Edward Said: *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf, 1993, p. xxii.

15 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge/MA: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 8.

16 Said: *Orientalism*, p. 177.

discussions about the harem, an almost mythical location that fascinated a great many male European authors, but none of them had ever had the opportunity to visit a harem, although quite a few claimed to have first-hand accounts of it. Moreover, in most of the cases, the harem or living quarters of the women was confused with the palace itself, the seraglio – hence the vast number of seraglio-plays that came on stage in the eighteenth century, Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* being the most popular of them.

Only rarely was the case different: for example, the diplomat and playwright Franz von Werner alias Murad Efendi (1836–1881)<sup>17</sup> wrote about the Ottoman Empire from his own experience.

Orientalism in theatre is closely connected with theatrical exoticism. The aforementioned comédie-ballet *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* was already dealing with an oriental, that is, with a Turkish subject through false Turks and fake Turkish language and ceremonies. The exotic other is here to be found in the Orient,<sup>18</sup> a region constructed and geographically located by German scholars in the relatively near arid areas of the Islamic North Africa and the Near East.<sup>19</sup> British-American scholars usually additionally include in the Orient the more distant areas of East Asia (China, Japan), Southeast Asia and South Asia (India, Pakistan).

In European theatre, alterity was always part of the theatrical representation. Already in antiquity, the story of a foreigner from the East (Asia) who came to the West (Greece) and destabilised that culture was a successful subject: since Euripides’ drama (431 BC), for instance, Medea’s faith has inspired the world of music, art and literature.

### THE TURKISH-ORIENTAL SETTING

Among the exotic theatre settings, the Turkish-oriental was the most popular and attractive for the recipients, especially in France, Germany, and the Habsburg lands. In France, already in the sixteenth century “there were twice as many books about the Turks, who seem to have a strong hold on the popular imagination, as about America”.<sup>20</sup> The reason for the popularity seems to be due to the proximity

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17 See the contribution by Caroline Herfert in this volume.

18 The term stems from the Latin *oriens* meaning ‘east’, and was already used in Roman times.

19 Cf. Anton Escher: “Die geographische Gestaltung des Begriffs Orient im 20. Jahrhundert”, in: *Orient – Orientalistik – Orientalismus: Geschichte und Aktualität einer Debatte*, ed. Burkhard Schnepel, Gunnar Brands, and Hanne Schönig. Bielefeld: transcript, 2011, pp. 123–149, esp. p. 131.

20 Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin: *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450–1800*. London: Verso, 2010 (orig. *L'apparition du livre*. Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1958) p. 282. Also, the second most frequently re-issued geographical work in French was Jacques de Villamont’s *Les voyages du Seigneur de Villamont* (‘The travels of Lord Villamont’, Paris 1595, 13 eds.) about his

– geographical and psychological – of the subject. As Mary Hunter stated, “of all the ‘exotic’ cultures that inhabited popular consciousness during the eighteenth century, that of the Ottoman Empire was one of the few of which a significant number of Western Europeans could have had some direct (albeit limited) experience.”<sup>21</sup> Actually the experience was not as limited as it might seem at first glance, especially not for inhabitants of the Habsburg Empire, as Bertrand Michael Buchmann and Alaaddin Yalçinkaya demonstrate.<sup>22</sup>

From the fifteenth century onwards the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire – commonly called Turks, as little distinction was made between various dwellers of the Ottoman Empire and Turks as an ethnic group – appear frequently in European theatre. A ‘Turkish’ subject did not necessarily mean that its content was only about the Ottoman Empire or Turkey (as that empire was commonly named), just as the term ‘Turk’ did not necessary mean an ethnic Turk. Up to the eighteenth century the general idea about who was a Turk was very vague and included all kinds of people from the Levant (the countries of the eastern Mediterranean littoral), the North African coast, and Central Asia. In a French dictionary printed 1690, twenty years after the first staging of *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, the term ‘Turc’ is explained as follows: “Sujet de l’Empereur d’Orient qui fait profession de la Secte de Mahomet. [...] On appelle generalement *Turcs*, tous les sujets du Grand Seigneur, que le peuple appelle le *Grand Turc*.”<sup>23</sup> (‘Subject of the Emperor of the Orient who is of Muslim religion. [...] Generally all the subjects of the Grand Seigneur, who is named by his people the *Great Turk*, are called *Turcs*.’) This paints a clear picture of how the average image of Turks was perceived: it was associated with everybody who is a subject of the Great Turk and of Islamic persuasion.

Another example for the simplifying tendency to recognize everybody in the Ottoman Empire in the same way is the so-called *Völkertafeln* (‘tables of peoples’), showing the characteristics of various European people. These were fabricated in the South German area in the early eighteenth century, and include the Spaniard, the French, the Welsch (Italian), the German, the English, the Swedish, the Polish, the Hungarian, the Russian, and finally the “Tirk oder Griech”<sup>24</sup> (‘Turk or Greek’). Here the Islamic Turk and the Orthodox Greek are together presented

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travels to Turkey, Syria and Egypt, *ibidem*, p. 281.

21 Mary Hunter: “The Alla Turca Style in the Late Eighteenth Century: Race and Gender in the Symphony and the Seraglio”, in: Bellman: *The Exotic in Western Music*, p. 43.

22 Cf. Bertrand Michael Buchmann’s and Alaaddin Yalçinkaya’s contributions in this volume.

23 Antoine Furetière: *Dictionnaire universel, contenant generalement tous les mots françois tant vieux que modernes, & les Termes des sciences et des arts [...] : Tome Troisieme*. La Haye: Arnoud et Reinier Leers, 1690, p. 759.

24 Cf. Zoran Konstantinović: “‘Tirk oder Griech’: Zur Kontamination ihrer Ephitheta”, in: *Europäischer Völkertafeln: Imagologisch-ethnographische Studien zu den Völkertafeln des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Franz K. Stanzel. Heidelberg: Winter, 1999, p. 308.