Bilkent University, Program in Cultures, Civilizations and Ideas

Annual Symposium, 20th and 21st March 2009

Beyond Assimilation and Integration

<u>**Abstracts**</u>

Keynote Speaker: Gerald Maclean (University of Exeter)

"Ottomania: How early modern English culture was transformed by encounters with the Ottoman world"

This paper is part of a broader research project into the nature and range of the early-modern Anglo-Ottoman encounter in which, among other things, I aim to show that the so-called 'Clash of Civilizations' described by Samuel Huntington is a dangerous fiction—if not a self-fulfilling prophecy—that is simply not supported by a wide body of historical evidence. Rather, I would argue, ample evidence can be drawn upon to show that since the 16th century at least, English culture—and subsequently British imperial culture more generally—were deeply indebted to Ottoman civilisation. There are several answers to the question of how early modern England was influenced by encounters with the Ottoman Empire. We might think of coffee and coffee houses, horses, baths, flowers and trees, notions of religious toleration, not to mention a widespread fascination that gave rise to numerous stage plays in which the encounter itself was imaginatively projected in different forms. In various publications I have attempted to describe the dominant English attitude towards Ottoman culture during the early modern period as one of 'imperial envy:' a formation that seeks to describe this widespread fascination and these numerous cultural borrowings while at the same time taking account of the persistent religious hostility.

   In this paper I shall concentrate on the various and multiple impact of Ottoman textiles, especially silk, carpets and clothing styles, and suggest how they helped transform the English from an unimportant, insular people into a nation with imperial ambitions.

<u>**Panel One – 11th – 14th centuries, Turkey and Europe in the medieval period**</u>

Andrew Peacock (British Institute at Ankara)

"The Seljuq Turks and the West: assimilation and identity in the Middle Ages"

Cultural exchange between the Turks and Europe is often thought to have started in the Ottoman period. Apart from this, the main encounter between Turls and Europe had been the Crusaders who passed

through Anatolia on their way to the Holy Land in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and Crusader accounts tend to regard the Seljuk and Danishmendid Turks with an uncomprehending hostility. However, in reality relations were rather closer. Anatolia became closely linked to Italy through trade, and Italian merchants were established permanently at cities like Sivas and Konya by the thirteenth century. From the first arrival of the Turks in Anatolia in the eleventh century, they had forged alliances with the Normans who were in Byzantine service, and Frankish mercenaries continued being employed by the Seljuqs into the thirteenth century. Furthermore, on occasion Europeans switched identities and "turned Turk" – a phenomenon only usually thought to date from the Ottoman period. On the other hand, the Turks played an important role in Europe, both by serving in the Byzantine military, and by their role introducing Islam and the Turkish language to parts of Eastern Europe. For example, it is claimed that the Gagauz, a Turkish-speaking Christian people of Romania, is connected with the Seljuq sultan Kayka'us who first settled Turks in the region. In this paper I investigate these links, suggesting that they point to much more flexible mediaeval concepts of identity than is often recognised.

Evangelos Katafylis, (University of Cambridge)
"Orhan's court through the epistle of Gregory Palamas"

Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), the Archbishop of Thessaloniki, was captured by the Ottomans at the beginning of 1354, according to Philotheos Kokkinos in the *Vita of Saint Gregory*, while on a trip to Constantinople from Thessaloniki to reconcile the controversy between Ioannis V Palaeologos and Ioannis VI Kantakouzenos. He spent a year in captivity and during that time wrote an epistle to his flock in Thessaloniki describing his experiences. The contents of this epistle shed light on various aspects of early Ottoman history and on the life of Orhan and his court.

Palamas's epistle indicates that Orhan had an interest in the Christian religion, for it was he who took the initiative and arranged the first two theological dialogues between his representatives and Gregory Palamas. The epistle also sheds light upon Orhan's religious practices, such as his systematic alms-giving every Friday. A dignitary of Orhan's court was in charge of carrying out the giving of alms. Palamas's account also gives the interesting information that towards the end of Orhan's life, the Ottoman ruler suffered from a liver complaint and was treated by a Greek doctor named Taronites. The latter worked as a physician at the Ottoman court. He was native to Iznik and was from an old well-known family from Asia Minor. Palamas also gives a detailed description of Orhan's resort outside Bursa, where the latter used to spend his summers.

Apart from Orhan's private life, Palamas's account also provides several interesting details concerning his court. First, we learn that Orhan had a grandson named İsmail, who used to stay at his court.

İsmail was the first to engage in a theological discussion with Gregory Palamas. According to the epistle, Orhan's grandson was apparently well-educated and acquainted with theological matters. Palamas describes him as one of the most ardent persecutors of Christians. Further, Palamas gives information about a group of theologians present at Orhan's court whom he calls the "atheist Chiones" and whom he states were former Jews who had converted to Islam. According to Palamas they were a team of well-educated men, who were considered deeply wise and eminent by the Ottoman ruler. The later were used by Orhan to engage in the second theological discussion with Palamas. Finally, another important figure with a significant role at Orhan's court was Palapanis (Balaban). Palamas notes that Palapanis presided over the second discussion which was held between the Chiones and Gregory Palamas. He was considered one of the most prominent associates of Orhan whom he had helped him to besiege and occupy Bursa.

A study of Gregory Palamas's epistle offers the possibility of contributing to a better historical understanding of Ottoman history in the mid-14th century, a period for which not a great deal is known and for which there is a paucity of Turkish sources. Palamas's epistle is also valuable as a source for the study of Byzantine anti-Islamic policy and perhaps allows us to understand better how a Byzantine scholar and theologian of the period viewed the Ottomans and their ruler in a period in which the Byzantine empire was losing more and more to the Turks in Anatolia.

Panel Two – 16th Century

Kornelia Kaschke-Kısaarslan (Freie Universität, Berlin)
"Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq: Mediating between Occident and Orient"

If one were to try to think of *the* national symbol of the Netherlands today one would probably come up with the tulip. However, the tulip is not originally Dutch, but was brought to Europe by the Emperor's ambassador Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq who was sent to the Ottoman Court in the 16th century.

In my talk I would like to introduce Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq (1521-1592) as a historical figure that he was not just responsible for the export of material goods such as the tulip that he discovered in the Ottoman Empire, but in addition to that he also played an active role in the production of knowledge *about* the Ottomans, and through his writings helped to transfer it to a broad European audience. The aim of this presentation is to trace back some of the ways by which he proceeded to do this.

After his studies at numerous humanistic European universities Busbecq entered the service of Ferdinand I. of Austria in 1552. Two years later Busbecq was sent as 'ordinarius orator' to the top kapı in Istanbul where he spent the following eight years. In regards to this Turkish legation he published the famous "Turkish Letters" (1589) which were printed in numerous editions throughout Europe.

While staying in Turkey, Busbecq not only practised his profession as a diplomat but at the same time followed his wide range of interests as a humanist: He collected ancient coins, Greek script and inscriptions. Not only did he collect and transfer ancient and Greek artefacts to Europe he was also widely interested in the *flora* and *fauna*. Thus he sent the first seeds and seedlings of the narcissus, hyacinth, the lilac and most famously the tulip to the royal court in Vienna and acquainted botanists.

While up to now Busbecq has often been described as a solitary hero ahead of his time, his manifold interests and activities gain another sense if contextualized within humanist thought as it developed at the time. In my presentation I will therefore have a closer look at Busbecq's position within the network of the *res publica literaria* and particularly focus on his acquaintance with the methodologies of the so-called *ars apodemica* that included detailed instructions concerning the way by which a traveller should proceed when describing his experiences within a foreign culture. The perspective Busbecq had on the Ottoman Empire and its people – as we can reconstruct by carefully analysing his writings – was, as I would like to claim, clearly influenced by these traditions. However, Busbecq did not simply follow a ready-made methodology, rather his discourse about the 'Turks' added a new vision to the existing stereotypes in Europe and at times questioned them in a groundbreaking manner. Thus, besides adding to a canon of knowledge on fields as manifold as ancient literature, archaeology, history, numismatics and botany, Busbecq's diplomatically ambitious travel also transformed contemporary ideas about the Ottoman Empire to a considerable extent.

Nur Sobers Khan (University of Cambridge)
"Assimilation of Slaves in 16th–century Istanbul according to the *Şeriyye Sicilleri*"

This paper will consist of an examination of the use of *mukatiba* and manumission contracts in the mid-16th century as an institutional tool for the economic and social integration of slaves into Ottoman Istanbul. The *mukatiba* contract was a legal device by which a slave was given a fixed period of time in which he was required to work, or alternately was assigned an amount of money (presumably to be earned through performing a job) that he had to produce before he was granted his freedom. Recorded in the Galata *şeriyye sicilleri* (court registers) dating from roughly 1560–1570, numerous examples of *mukatiba* and other types of contracts for slaves from the Black Sea area, such as Ukraine, and the northern Mediterranean coast, primarily Italy and Spain, provide us with a wealth of detail as to how these slaves—who basically represent a wave of forced migration at a time when the growing imperial capital required new labor—lived, worked, converted, and were manumitted in early modern Istanbul. In addition, the slaves' level of technical skill and the nature of their employment in Galata can also be ascertained from the *sicills*.

Many other systems of slavery, such as the better-known and more widely studied plantation-style slavery of the Caribbean and American South, maintained slaves in separate communities, and discouraged both manumission and intermarriage between the free and unfree. In contrast, Ottoman slavery was typically Islamic in that it encouraged both manumission of slaves and intermarriage (of free males with enslaved females). Islamic law, for that matter, recognized the children of such unions as free Muslims and full inheritors of their father's wealth. This type of slavery system is referred to as an 'open' system, because it allows for the eventual assimilation of many members of the slave population into mainstream society as free individuals. Thus, it is possible to identify slavery as practiced in early modern Istanbul as a primarily open system aimed at the assimilation of slaves, especially those in possession of artisanal skills (male slaves) or reproductive capacity (female slaves) into society.

The numerous *mukatiba* contracts, in combination with other types of entries in the *sicills*, such as manumission of slaves charitable reasons, suggest that the slave-owners of Galata considered it the norm to manumit their domestic and technically skilled slaves who had converted to Islam, and post-manumission possibly also integrated them into the greater household. While conversion to Islam and manumission from slavery do not necessarily signify complete 'assimilation' into society, this phenomenon does illuminate the slaves' ability to negotiate their situation through the manipulation of Ottoman cultural and religious constructs which they have very clearly grasped and made their own. Thus, through analyzing the data provided by the *şeriyye sicilleri* it is possible to come to meaningful conclusions about the nature of slaves' assimilation into early modern Istanbul and the significance of their contribution to the social and economic fabric of this urban center.

Steve Tamari (Southern Illinois University/Fulbright Scholar in Lebanon)

"From Syria to Bilad al-Sham and Back: the Circuitous Journey of a Territorial Concept during Ottoman Times"

The term "Syria" derives from the Greek for "Ahsur", the ancient religious center of what became the Assyrian Empire. Assyria controlled much of what is now known as the Middle East during the first millennium BCE. Under the Roman Emperor Trajan (r. 98-117 CE), the Province of Syria was established as an administrative unit with Antioch as its capital. In Arabic usage, the term for geographical Syria is "Bilad al-Sham". Medieval Muslim geographers and modern scholars define Bilad al-Sham/geographical Syria as extending from the foothills of the Taurus Mountains in Anatolia to the Arabian Peninsula in the south and, west to east, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River. Though it has rarely been politically united, Bilad al-Sham/Syria has been recognized as a geographic region for more than two-and-a-half millennia.

This paper focuses on the use of the term "Bilad al-Sham" from the earliest years of the Ottoman conquest of the territory in the sixteenth century through the middle decades of the nineteenth. By the 1850s, a group of Lebanese scholars influenced by 18th- and early 19th – century American and European Orientalists revived the use of the term "Syria". Ottoman administrators adopted the term in 1865 when they created the *vilayet* of Syria. They were followed in the 20th century by the founders of the modern Syrian republic.

Two genres of writing are the sources for this paper. The first are travelogues including those by the Turkish writer Evliya Chelebi (d. 1684); the Arab Syrian *'alim* Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi (d. 1731) who crisscrossed Bilad al-Sham during the late 17th century; and the French Orientalist Constantin Volney (d. 1820) who lived in Syria during the 1780s. The second are works by the 19th-century Lebanese scholar Emile Bustani (d.1883) who did the most to revive the term "Syria" among intellectuals and activists from the territory itself.

This paper addresses the following question: what were the most important determinants of the use of the terms "Bilad al-Sham" and "Syria"? The main variables include the realities of physical geography; the legacies of empires which wielded the means of administrative control; the influence of religion and the notion of Bilad al-Sham/Syria as a sacred territory for both Muslims and Christians; and the impact of ideas from outside the region itself, such as those of 18th- and 19th-century American and European Orientalists.

The implications of my findings have relevance for the question of the continuity (or the lack thereof) from the pre-modern to the modern and periods of Ottoman—and, by extension, Middle Eastern—history and for the relative influence of Western ideas on the character of Ottoman and Middle Eastern modernity, particularly as concerns understandings of national identity.

Panel Three – 18th century

Will Smiley (University of Cambridge)

"Cultural and Intellectual Exchange through Warfare: the Role of Russia in Ottoman Reforms"

In scholarship on early Ottoman reforms under Selim III, emphasis has often been placed on the "Europeanizing" aspects of these reforms, with recent work still largely accepting the modernization paradigm found in works such as Stanford Shaw's classic, and influential, *Between Old and New* (1971). Under this paradigm, "reform" is seen as a single entity, entailing a set of linked changes which inevitably had to be made in order to make the Ottoman Empire "modern," and "European." In this context, Europe is all too often seen as a single, homogenous entity, whose victories over the Ottomans made clear that reforms were necessary. In particular, the Ottomans' arch-nemesis throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—Russia—is subsumed into this monolithic "Europe." Keeping in mind the Russians' own

doubts over their place in Europe throughout this period, and the reforms undertaken by the Romanovs, my paper (based on my PhD research) outlines my study of Ottoman conceptions of Russia, and how these motivated reforms.

I argue that the Romanovs and their subjects were deeply involved in the reforms of Selim III—as a motivation, a model, as subjects, and even as participants. The role of Russia as a motivation for reforms is often mentioned by historians, but rarely discussed in depth, except in Virginia Aksan's recent *Ottoman Wars* (2007), which argues that "military realities" of finance, organization, and logistics propelled reforms. Nevertheless, important questions remain about the cultural and intellectual aspects of reform—why and how were particular military events interpreted to require certain political measures, which were then bundled together into the package of "reform"?

In answering this question, I suggest that it is important to consider Russia as a model. The role of warfare as a means of cultural and intellectual exchange is often overlooked—perhaps because many historians assume, in Caroline Finkel's words, that "unlike warfare, diplomacy encourages an interest in and knowledge of one's fellows" (*Osman's Dream,* 2005). In fact, I argue, warfare and especially defeat made the Ottomans quite interested in Russia, and especially in Peter the Great—who may have provided a model for Ottoman reforms. This question has never been studied in depth, but I will argue that it is necessary to understand changing Ottoman views of Russia, in order to understand the intellectual background of reforms.

Finally, I will deal with the involvement of Russians in Ottoman reforms as subjects—through changing Ottoman practices of captivity, an overlooked aspect of the "Europeanization" of Ottoman warfare. Contrary to general belief, I argue, there is evidence from Ottoman chronicles that as early as the 1787-1792 war, Russian captives were being held as prisoners, rather than slaves, with the expectation of return upon peace. What does this say about Ottoman reforms, and views of Russia?

Furthermore, Russian prisoners were not only subjects but also actors; I will trace the involvement of captives and renegades in predecessors of Selim's *Nizam-i Cedid,* and raise questions about the extent, nature, and intellectual background of such involvement.

This paper is a preliminary exploration of the questions I aim to answer in my PhD dissertation, based primarily on Ottoman chronicles, and as such, I hope it will spark debate and raise questions from other panelists and audience members, especially with an eye to the available archival evidence.

Daren Hodson (Bilkent University)

Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme: Fantasies on a Turkish Theme

During the eighteenth century, the Ottomans exercised a considered influence on the European imagination. One of the primary catalysts for this development was Janissary music. However, the development of "orientalist" productions in eighteenth-century Europe was a complex phenomenon growing out of a multifaceted and mutually influential encounters with Ottoman power and culture. In this paper, I analyze some of these encounters as they relate to one of the great collaborative works of the French Baroque: Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme (1670), a comédie-ballet by Jean-Baptiste Molière, Jean-Baptiste Lully, and Pierre Beauchamp.

Panel Four – 19th and 20th century diplomacy and architecture

Steven Richmond (Istanbul Technical University)

"Managers of Mixing: The British Dragomans and the Practice of Diplomatic Communication in Istanbul from the Napoleonic Wars to the Crimean War."

Throughout the centuries of Istanbul's life as the diplomatic city par excellence, dragomans served as managers of mixing in a highly complex linguistic, cultural and political setting. These interpreters of the western embassies to the Ottoman Empire in many ways transcended the traditional boundaries between East and West that Ottoman and Western ministers could not bridge on their own. As products of prominent Levantine families, the dragomans were native and fluent in both Ottoman as well as western languages and cultures. Functioning simultaneously in two worlds, they were in some ways forerunners of the contemporary international citizen.

The practice of diplomatic communication at Istanbul involved various delicate cross-cultural and -political relationships between western ministers, dragomans and the Ottoman government. All western ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire clearly understood that they were only as good as their dragomans, that they were lost without their dragomans. Ambassadors were the official or bureaucratic master, but the dragomans were the linguistic or cultural master. Ambassadors had to respect but also – to a lesser degree, in the more fortunate cases – suspect the dragomans' authority. Western officials were often uncomfortable having dragomans (who were Ottoman subjects and open to local pressures) privy to their state secrets due to their central involvement with negotiations and documents. Furthermore, very often dragomans serving different western powers were of the same family – sometimes even brothers served rival powers (due to the limited available number of Levantine individuals who wielded the requisite skills for the highly demanding position). Suspicion necessarily ran high among western ministers that dragomans shared information in order to increase their influence and that they could not be fully trusted. "A Pera ci sono tre malanni: peste, fuoco e dragomanni", "At

Pera there are three curses: plague, fire and dragomans", ran the famous saying, despite evidence that dragomans were highly loyal and proficient. Dragomans also had to manage delicately their relations with their legal master, the Ottoman government, to which they always remained subject.

This paper will present original material concerning the practice of diplomatic communication in the operations of the dragomans serving the British Embassy at Istanbul over the first half of the nineteenth century. Consideration will be given to the precise methods of daily communication and interpretation between the Ottoman government and western representatives.

Burcu Özgüven, (Abant İzzet Baysal University, Bolu)
"'Mösyö Prost visited our city': Building activities in Istanbul in the Early Republican Period, as observed from the press"

İstanbul's urban planning in the 1930's forms an important issue among her modern history. Ismet Inönü, the prime minister, said that Istanbul was more than a city. She represented the capacity and importance of an independent state. However it took almost ten years that the Republican administration realized the emergency of the reorganization issue of Istanbul.

Istanbul's Municipality however insisted that the urban plan should be prepared and put into the practice before the debut of large building projects. Expropriations, to them, constitute a grave problem and a financial bulk for the Municipality; moreover the city was assumed to raise her funds for the reorganization of the urban settlement and functions. Urban plan of Istanbul became an important problem regarding all these issues.

In this paper early planning phases of Istanbul will be presented in the light of the press news and columnists' views. The problem for the ex-capital was the decision of the main strategy of raising funds for the infrastructure and new municipal projects. To some experts and columnists, Istanbul might be reorganized as the center of tourism, of import-export trade or of the higher education. Ahmet Hamdi an influential economist of the period, underlined that Istanbul must be re-established according to the qualities of a financial capital where industry and trade played the primary role. However each strategy needed its own built environment. Tourism and trade necessitate large ports and roads; higher education requires large campus area and the fine arts education was also to be reorganized by building the conservatory. But the Municipality did not possess available financial resources and there appeared urgent contribution of the state departments.

Before the main decisions were made, there occurred a strong wave of apartment blocks construction in the early thirties. This was due to the economic crisis after the 1929 in the USA where the world's economy affected also Turkey's capital investment. Investors in Turkey turned to the real estate, profitable and without risk. The apartments were built thereafter in the newly outcoming neighborhoods of Istanbul. Ankara soon realized that the rapid construction in Istanbul ran without efficient control. Muhittin Üstündağ, the mayor of Istanbul, was frequently invited to the capital to explain the urbanization problems and uncontrolled building facilities. Thereafter Ankara decided that Istanbul's urbanization problem must be resolved through an efficient urban plan.

It was 1930 when the first ideas on the urban plan appeared on the press. There were various views on the urbanization of Istanbul. For example Ernst Egli, as the architect of various official projects and as the professor at the Academy of Fine Arts, prepared a sketch for the urban plan. In the 1933-34 three European urban planners presented their designs in a competition. One of the projects accepted by the jury established by the Municipality; however it was rejected by the present Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Thereafter Henry Prost from the Municipality of Paris and the former designer of the urban plan of Yalova, was invited as the new planner of Istanbul. Prost was not only an urban planner. He also involved in the architectural decisions of important official projects. For example he pointed out the building area of the Palace of Justice which was not realized until the mid-1940 or he took position at the jury of Galata Hall of Passengers where Turkish architects faced a scandalous situation in 1936-37.

However Istanbul obviously needed efficient planning in the thirties. Prost commenced the urban plan in the city. Areas of old buildings and out-of-date infrastructure often caused fire damages. Neighborhoods, both in the Istanbul and Beyoğlu districts suffered under the lack of unhealthy sanitary conditions. Beginning with the trash storage, recreational areas, vast cemeteries, squares, old monuments, new traffic routes etc. needed serious reorganization and reparation. Istanbul's urban strategies, for example the reorganization of the trade formed another issue of debates. Newspapers often requested when the new harbor of Istanbul was to be put into the planning procedure. All the urgent problems were brought on the table by the columnists of the newspapers.

To conclude, Istanbul's planning in the early Republican period, appears as an important issue in the press, where foreign experts,

columnists, journalists and educated, as well as inhabitants found a common floor to share their views on the reorganization of the city.

Panel Five – Literary Exchange

Günil Ayaydın Cebe (Bilkent University)

"Literary Display of Ottoman Turkish in the 19th Century: Interaction, Exchange, and Diversity"

So far, the histories of 19th century Ottoman "literatures" have been written separately. In order to reevaluate 19th century Ottoman literary production appropriately it is essential to multiply the angles of examination by comparative analyses. Reading the literature of non-Muslim Ottoman authors together with the works of the Muslims would enlighten the dark spots which hitherto have been ignored or overlooked. Such an analysis would contribute to our understanding of the histories, life styles and mutual relationships of the communities living under Ottoman rule.

Any attempt to realize this kind of a research requires using comprehensive literary histories free of personal impressions, established on solid numbers and facts. Therefore, I set out to prepare a database to meet particular needs of my research. I focus on the works written in Greek, Armenian and Arabic script. The main source of my database is the bibliography of National Library of Turkey: *Milli Kütüphane Eski Eserler Bibliyografyası*. In my presentation I plan to discuss the following immediate outcomes of this database with the help of graphics and charts:

First, there is a rich common repertoire of folk stories printed. Here, the term "folk story" is used as the traditional stories performed by singing *âşık*s in front of and in interaction with an audience. The audiences were diverse. Consequently, these folk stories can be considered as the representatives of public taste. The existence of a common repertoire among different communities points to a shared cultural taste born out of living together. A comparative reading of the narratives would reveal the alterations, the adaptations within the plots or the characters, which would present us with the opportunity to interpret how each community perceived the literary convention, politics, life, and love.

In literary translation, the *millet*s of the Empire affected each other's choice and taste. The translated works (mainly from European literature) and their distribution within the communities exhibit an interaction. Moreover, the circulation of translated literary works may give us an idea of the structure of the literature market and canon of the era.

Besides works from Western languages, there are translations or transcriptions made among the languages or scripts of the communities. Examining the whys and why nots of the direction of this literary translation is promising. For instance, some literary works including novels, *meddah* stories and *divan*s written originally in Arabic script are transcribed into or rewritten in Greek and Armenian script.

As a last but not the least remark, it is worth to compare the religious production of the communities which designates the context of literary works to a considerable extend. In this respect, it can be observed that the productions imported into the Empire as well as the missionary activities within the borders affect the direction of literary tendencies of the Ottoman communities.

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Petr Kučera (Charles University, Prague)

"Imitation, Assimilation, or Originality? An Attempt to Resituate the Tanzimat Novel"

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The paper seeks to reconsider some prevalent concepts in the perception of the Tanzimat novel (cca 1870–1900). The Tanzimat novel has been understood as an unperfect, even naive imitation of European Romantic novels, not very original and flawed in its alleged social realism. At same time it has been considered a clumsy and incoherent assimilation of European modes of writing into the fading tradition of *meddah*s, *destan*s and Ottoman lyric poetry. Thus, the Tanzimat novel has been, in the best case, seen as a "transitory phenonemon" to be later overcome by narratively more refined (i.e. "Europeanized") works of the *Edebiyat-i cedide* and *Milli edebiyat* movements.

The paper argues that exactly the criticized creolization and assimilation of European texts, ideas and modes, combined with the at times surprisingly original contribution of Ottoman-Turkish authors, reveals that the early Ottoman novel fulfilled an extremely important function in the "aesthetization" of notions about "us" and "the others" (East and West) and that it has to be grasped as a key instrument in the interpretation of the Ottoman-Turkish experience with the cultural transformation of the late 19th century, as a creative attempt to reconcile two opposite cultural discourses. Instead of placing the Tanzimat novel into the periphery of Ottoman modernity, as its defect "side-effect", I would like to look at it as a central and undisputable part of the dialogue between Turkey and Europe.

The paper, based on the results of my PhD on the images of East and West in modern Turkish prose (defended in April 2008), will reconsider the usage of certain tropes, symbols, characters and plots in Tanzimat

novels in regard to the Ottoman cultural exchange with Europe, ranging from Şemsettin Sami's *Taaşuk-i Tal'at ve Fıtnat* to Ahmed Mithat's *Müşahedat*, analyze the strategic usage of *alafranga* and *alaturka* in these texts as very specific interpretations of the Western as well as "Ottoman/Oriental" culture and show the Tanzimat novel's ambivalent, yet crucial position on the borders of two epistemologic and semiotic systems.

Neslihan Demirkol (Bilkent University)

"A "True Representation" of Turkish people: Clown and His Daughter"

In this article, I will focus on the novel and its translated text into Turkish of a leading Turkish woman writer in republican period, Halide Edip Adıvar. *The Clown and His Daughter* was first published in 1935 in English in London. Among the reviews of *The Clown and His Daughter* was there that in the novel "the real Turkish people are introduced to the west world". One year later, the Turkish rewritten version was published, entitled *Sinekli Bakkal*. When it is about identity formation, translation is an indispensable mean. As for the case of Halide Edip Adıvar, we can assume that *The Clown and His Daughter* was an identity formation project to have a proper image of Turkish people and in particular Turkish woman in western world. However this case pose a contradictory situation against our expectations from a translational activity. In a translation activity, the expected is that the work would first be written down in source language, and then would be translated into target language. However, first of all Halide Edip Adıvar did not write the novel in her "mother tongue". The version in Turkish is named rewritten, but not translation, which probably would be the case if it had been vice versa. The questions of why Halide Edip Adıvar preferred to write the original text in English, rather than Turkish; if the novel was to introduce "real Turkish people" to western world, what identity was formed for Turkish people; why Halide Edip was in need of re-writing the same novel in Turkish are to be answered in this article.

Panel Six – Cultural Identity in the context of Turkish-German migration

Özkan Ezli (University of Konstanz)

From Cultural Models towards Individuation: The Film "Head-On" by Fatih Akın as a
Critique of Cultural Identity Ascriptions

In the German press, the Berlinale-awarded film „Gegen die Wand" (Head-On) by Fatih Akın was interpreted as representing a radical break with the Turkish family tradition. Opposing this view, I argue that the film performs a paradigm shift in the "Turkish-German" cinema's representations of the "Turkish" community in Germany, a paradigm shift which has already been prepared in the nineties. A homogenized representation of German or Turkish Culture, as it was typical for the German-Turkish cinema of the seventies and eighties (ex. Tevfik Başer), is transformed into an individuated one, which however cannot – without caveat – be described es enlighted and emancipated. The perfect concordance between an individual and a super-ordinate system of culture is undermined in Akın's film. The protagonists in "Head on" do not represent homogeneous "Turkish" or "German" culture, and they do not, in line with an emancipation narrative, cross from one culture to the other. In fact, the characters themselves become crossroads of diverse and not commensurable cultural codes, which do not only bring to the fore the heterogeneity of the "othered" Turkish culture, but also reveal the complexity of the "dominant" cultural system.

Theresa Specht (University of Leipzig)

Transcultural Humour in Contemporary Turkish-German Literature

Current literature of third-generation Turkish-German writers is characterized by its playful and creative use of humour. The culture shock that characterizes literary works of first-generation writers forced to reconcile a clash of cultural identity, and second-generation writers who felt torn between two cultures, has given way to a lighter, more humorous mood. Third-generation Turkish-German texts play with cultural stereotypes of 'typical German-ness' or 'typical Turkish-ness' presented in a German-speaking context. These stereotypes are satirized, for example by "overdoing culture" (Kotthoff 2004) – as in the figure of the *Kanake*, that since its literary introduction by Feridun Zaimoglu in 1995 has been adapted in many different forms, as by the stand-up Comedian Kaya Yanar – or ironically fragmented, for example when a figure representing 'the German' displays typical Turkish characteristics. The aim of this humour is not to deconstruct these stereotypes, but to question the mechanism by which individuals are reduced to a stereotypical identity. This simplification, characteristic of stereotypical thinking, is abandoned in favour of a pluralization, into which contradictory qualities can be integrated. This in turn manifests identity in general as a constructed phenomenon.

When dealing with cultural identity it is important to look at the concept of culture upon which these texts are based: The humorous texts of third-generation writers support an open and dynamic concept of transculturality (Welsch 1997) in which culture is no longer static

and separate (as in first and second generation texts). In third-generation texts the concept of culture has become fluid, consisting of a diversity of possible identities, as apparent in the cabarett texts by Serdar Somuncu or the short commentaries by Dilek Güngör.

Transcultural humor is characteristic of contemporary migrant literature in Western European societies (see similar developments in France and the Netherlands). Questions of cultural identity are still current and explosive in the present socio-political situation in Germany. Today individuals are discriminated against because of patterns of identity attributed to them by others. Transcultural humour permanently undermines and therefore queries these mechanisms (Koch 2008).

Transcultural humor can be found in different media and is also present in mainstream mass media, for example in the "Culture-Clash" comedy films. The spectrum ranges from superficial comedy, which alienates stereotypes to force a comic effect, to political satire, which criticizes concrete socio-political conditions. By choosing to laugh or not to laugh the receiver discovers his own thought patterns and can reflect critically. So these texts create a potential for the revision of stagnant concepts of identity.

In my presentation I will share some findings of my thesis (in progress) on transcultural humour in contemporary Turkish-German literature. I will cite literary texts, published in Germany since the mid 1990s written by German authors with a Turkish migrant background. On the basis of concrete examples I will show how on the one hand these texts enhance the concept of transculturality. On the other hand I will describe how they deconstruct patterns of identity and support a pluralization that goes beyond cultural determination, thus making an important contribution to the general question of the construction of identity.

Panel Seven - Political and artistic expressions of exchange

Tabish Shah (School of African and Oriental Studies, London)

"Western Perceptions of Modern Turkey and its Place in Europe"

There is no such thing as a monolithic 'East' or a monolithic 'West', yet both these regions have been consistently subject to generalisations, stereotypes and assumptions that have resulted in their being referred to in this way. This paper argues that the reason why can be found by looking at the relationship between the two, and recognising the dichotomy of a superior 'West' and an inferior 'East' that buttresses the discourse between them. The fundamental concept in this discourse is the idea that certain things are 'western' and others belong to the 'East'. Within this, the 'West' has aligned

itself with positives such as modernity, technology, progression, and democracy, whereas the 'East' has been assigned the role of simply embracing its own culture, which in any case, is seen as diametrically opposed to these 'western' things. Essentially, as a result of this dichotomy, the 'West' can enjoy 'eastern' things without being undermined by the idea of emulating it or being deemed 'Easternised Westerners', whereas the 'East' engaging in 'western' things is labelled as attempting to copy the west or as being 'Westernised Easterners'. Consequently, this discourse does not allow the 'East' to exist on its own terms, but instead only as part of a relationship with the 'West', and in doing so has resulted in its homogenisation of both. These same dynamics form the core of the debate concerning Turkey's 'Europeanness', and thus, by exploring western views of Turkey and its place within Europe, I will find out why this dichotomy exists, and ultimately, will both examine and challenge the use of the blanket terms 'East' and 'West'.

I analyse travel texts by British and American authors written from 1989 onwards to achieve this, as following the collapse of communism both nations were forced to re- evaluate their relationship with Turkey since it could no longer be defined as a geostrategic alliance to contain the Soviet Union. Forming the backbone of this study is consideration of how these writers define 'Turkishness', 'Westernness', and 'Europeanness', the criteria used for each, and ultimately, whether these definitions are considered both fundamentally different *and* fundamentally incompatible. Within this, I unpack the idea of Western travel writers defining 'Europeanness' and 'Westernness' not in terms of what it *is* but rather what it is *not,* and more specifically, the role of religious, cultural and ethnic differences in forming divisions between Turkey and the rest of Europe. Their view of Turkey's exclusion from the European Union is then discussed, and I will highlight whether it is due to these differences, or if rather it is the result of legitimate political reasons. Particular attention is paid throughout the paper to the role of historical continuities as a contributing factor to Turkey's modern day alienation from the rest of Europe, and effectively, whether images from Turkey's past are, for these western travel writers, influencing its present and future. Ultimately, by discussing Turkey's relationship with the 'West' in these terms, this paper attempts to deconstruct what turns theoretical boundaries into real and sometimes harmful divisions.

Kurt Ozment (Bilkent University)

Examples in Orientalist Discourse: Orientalism and the Discourse of Modernism in the Work of Morton Feldman

Morton Feldman's work is punctuated by numerous references to the material culture of the Near, Middle, and Far East. Feldman alludes to textiles from southwest and central Asia in the titles of several musical works composed between 1977 and 1985: *Spring of Chosroes* (1977), *Why Patterns?* (1978), *The Turfan Fragments* (1980), *Crippled Symmetry* (1983), and *Coptic Light* (1985). The title of still another work, *Palais de Mari* (1986), refers to an especially large third century B.C.E. palace in present-day Syria. Fragments of paintings and other objects excavated from the palace between 1933 and 1939 are displayed at the Louvre. The references in these titles tend to be either obscure, because of the thing named in the title, or ambiguous, because the concepts involved--patterns, symmetry--can be applied to something in particular, such as the work in question, or to things in general, such as music, rugs, and still other things, including linguistic structures and images, while also pointing to the question of form in general. Feldman's comments on "Oriental" rugs in texts from the 1980s function in similar ways, even if they are much more expansive. These comments draw on a large body of Orientalist knowledge that aestheticizes its object: the connoisseurship of rugs and other textiles. Feldman repeatedly sets up a relation between rugs and his music, but tends not to work through the analogy itself. Because the relation between rugs and music is sketched largely in terms of generalizations, parallels, and metaphorical exchanges, rather than specific examples, Feldman's presentation is often somewhat enigmatic.

Feldman borrows terms from the discourse on textiles from southwest Asia in order to comment on music, and also borrows terms from the discourse on music in order to comment on textiles from southwest Asia. Textiles are exemplary both as things in themselves and as examples that can be used, repeated. Feldman makes the rugs "for him," but he also uses them as examples to say something about music by creating analogies between rugs and music. The difficulty (or, for some, impossibility) of commenting on music is made no less problematic by commenting on textiles. Commenting on Near and Middle Eastern textiles only complicates matters further.

Feldman's position as a composer provides him with the authority to comment on music. His knowledge of rugs provides him with still greater authority, the authority to compare rugs and music. Here, Orientalism is concerned less with the material culture of another culture than it is with the production of a discourse on one's own cultural production. Feldman's formal interest in rugs belies modernism's lack of autonomy. Why does modernism need a supplement? How does one say anything about either rugs or music?