

## Call for Papers

### **Perspectives on Kurban Said's *Ali und Nino*: Literary, Cultural, and Linguistic Contributions**

The editors of this proposed volume seek papers that look at Kurban Said's novel *Ali und Nino* (1937) from a wide range of perspectives and approaches (e.g., literary and cultural studies, linguistics, Jewish studies, gender studies, philosophy and religion) and that reflect on the text's usefulness in the classroom from linguistic and content perspectives. Our aim is to provide a broad companion to Kurban Said's text that helps its readers to understand the many different possible scholarly approaches and the heterogeneous readings different frameworks make possible.

Since the publication of Tom Reiss's 1999 essay 'The Man from the East' (*The New Yorker*, October 4, 1999: 68-83) and his subsequent book *The Orientalist: Solving the Mystery of a Strange and Dangerous Life* (New York: Random House, 2005), much more has come to light about *Ali und Nino*'s author. 'Kurban Said,' an alias of Lev Nussimbaum (1905-1942), grew up in a Jewish household in Baku, Azerbaijan, converted to Islam and then fled to Berlin to work as a journalist and expert on the Orient under the name Essad Bey in the 1920s and 1930s. Interest in Lev Nussimbaum's life and texts sparked by Tom Reiss's journalistic work has led to the republication of *Ali und Nino* in German and English.

Set in Baku around 1917, *Ali und Nino* tells the love story between a young Arab, Muslim man Ali and a young Georgian, Christian woman Nino. Not only is the novel a rare example of early Germanophone literature written by a multilingual speaker from outside of the German-speaking world, but it also takes up cultural constructions of the Orient and Occident long before Edward Said's seminal *Orientalism* published in 1978. Yet, despite recent interest in the author and the book's ability to thematize modern debates and discussions of culture, virtually no scholarly literature on *Ali und Nino* exists.

The proposed volume seeks to change this by inviting scholars from all kinds of different backgrounds to shed their light on *Ali und Nino*. Themes and topics to explore may include, but are not limited to:

- East-West dialogues
- Cultural clash(es)
- Tradition and modernity
- Religion and identity
- Love and affect
- Youth and coming of age
- Authorship and attribution
- Multilingualism

The editors envision papers solicited not just as academic exercises, but also welcome approaches that emphasize the text's relevance for teaching literature in a culturally heterogeneous classroom. For the classroom, Said's engaging narrative style and the book's interesting thematic focus make the novel an accessible and relevant text for students of German to engage with linguistically and intellectually. The novel also promises teachers and students opportunities for rich dialogue about modern-day issues.

Please contact us *as soon as possible*, if you are interested in contributing to this volume so that we can have a preliminary discussion about the scope of your paper.

**Deadline for 400-word abstract: September 15, 2010**

**Deadline for final version of essay: August 15, 2011**

Please e-mail your materials to both editors:

Cori Crane, Asst. Professor ([ccrane@illinois.edu](mailto:ccrane@illinois.edu)) & Carl Niekerk, Assoc. Professor ([niekerk@illinois.edu](mailto:niekerk@illinois.edu))

Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
2090 Foreign Language Building, 707 S. Mathews Ave, Urbana, IL 61801