

Workshop

“Orienting Wonder”

Friday, July 22nd, 9.30-12.00

Prominentenzimmer, University of Vienna, Universitätsring 1, 1010 Wien

with Marina Warner

We invite all AKA-members and ICLA-participants to attend a special workshop that will take place a day after Marina Warner’s Key-Note lecture on “Magical Writing: Oracles, Curses, & Further Preventive Measures” at the ICLA congress. Together with Mrs. Warner, we will take a historical approach to comparative themes and look at the interweaving of eastern and western stories and storytelling modes; including looking again at arguments about orientalism, world literature, and translation. The workshop will give us the opportunity to discuss a unique selection of literary and theoretical, ancient and contemporary, eastern and western texts, among them excerpts from Aeschylus’ *The Oresteia*, Virgil’s *The Aeneid*, and stories from the *Arabian Nights*. The texts will be made available to all participants beforehand. The language of the workshop is English.

Marina Warner: Dame Marina Warner is a writer of fiction and cultural history. Her books include *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (1976), and *Monuments & Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (1988). In 1994 she gave the BBC Reith Lectures on the theme of *Six Myths of Our Time*. *Stranger Magic: Charmed States and The Arabian Nights* (2011) was awarded a Sheykh Zayed Prize, the Truman Capote Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award for Literary Criticism. Her novels include *The Lost Father* (1988, shortlisted for the Booker prize). She has curated exhibitions, including *The Inner Eye* (1996), *Metamorphing* (2002-3), and *Only Make-Believe: Ways of Playing* (2005). She is currently working on the theme of Sanctuary and culture in times of dislocation and diaspora. She was elected to the British Academy in 2005; is a Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, a Commendatore of the Ordine della Stella di Solidarietà, and was made DBE in 2015; she served as President of the BCLA from 2010-2016. She is Professor of English and Creative Writing at Birkbeck College, and a Professorial Research Fellow, SOAS. She was awarded the Holberg Prize in the Arts and Humanities in 2015.

“Magical Writing: Oracles, Curses, & Further Preventive Measures”: Prophecies or curses often open a myth or fairy tale, and the story subsequently unfolds in accordance to what they have announced. Classical tragic myth, for example about Oedipus or Dido, takes place in this form of predestined time and includes such speech acts; the plots of fairy tales, especially the stories of the *Arabian Nights*, also frequently turn on spells and oracles. This fatalism, as it has been called, has been generally criticized and often associated with passivity and superstition, both perceived as ‘oriental’. Can these narrative devices be looked at in a different light? And do the stories themselves act as magical writing, with purposes of preventing harm and averting danger?

Interested in participating? In order to register for the workshop, please write an email to gianna.zocco@univie.ac.at (for AKA-members) or register via <http://icla2016.univie.ac.at/social-events/> (for registered ICLA-participants). Places will be assigned in order of request.