

THE CULTURAL TURN IN ARABIC LITERARY PRODUCTION

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

APRIL 19–21, 2019

Sponsored by:

Columbia University's MESAAS Department, Middle East Institute, SoF/Heyman Center, EVPAS,¹
Division of Humanities/ Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and Arabic Studies Seminar, Weatherhead East Asian Institute, the
Program in Chinese Literature and Culture, EALAC, and ICLS

Dartmouth College

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Dr. Aziz Shaibani/Arab-American Educational Foundation

In Memory of Barbara Harlow (1948-2017)

Day 1: Friday, April 19 - Faculty House/Garden Room 2, 1st Floor

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| 8:45 - 9:20am | Refreshment |
| 9:20-9: 25 | Mamadou Diouf/ Chair MESAAS : Welcome |
| 9:25- 9:50am | Opening Remarks
Mushin J. al-Musawi, Columbia University |
| 9:50 - 11:45am | Panel 1: Mapping Arabic Literature as World Literature
Chairperson: Elizabeth M. Holt, Bard College <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ “Worlding Arabic: Cultural Criticism, Philology and <i>Weltliteratur</i>”
Waïl S. Hassan, University of Illinois▪ “Is there a Canon in this Corpus? Or What ‘belongs’ in the Library of Arabic Literature?”
Shawkat M. Toorawa, Yale University▪ “Comparativism and the Foundations of World Literature”
Yaseen A. Noorani, University of Arizona▪ “Between the Twilight of Empire and the Dawn of Decolonization: Arabic Literature, World Literature, Comparative Literature”
Shaden M. Tageldin, University of Minnesota |

¹ Executive Vice President and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Respondent: David Damrosch

11:45 – 11:55am **Coffee/Tea Break**

11:55 – 13:15pm **Panel 2: Arabic and Chinese Literary and Artistic Production in Cross-Cultural Encounter/Translation**

Chairperson: Lydia Liu, Columbia University

- “Mapping the Evolution of Nahdawi Literary Production about China”
Peiyu Yang, McGill University
- “Taha Husayn and The Days in China Across the 1949 Divide”
Michael Gibbs, College of William & Mary
- “Artistic Encounters between Baghdad and Beijing after the 1958 Iraq Revolution”
Sonja Mejcher-Atassi, American University of Beirut

13:15 - 2:30pm **Lunch Break at Faculty House**

2:30 – 4:15pm **Panel 3: Exile, Identity, and Engagement in Arabic Literature**

Chairperson: Shaden M. Tageldin, University of Minnesota

- “Impossible Exiles: Palestinians in Arab Culture”
Ahmad Diab, UC Berkeley
- “Twists, Turns and Trajectories of Palestinian Literary Production”
Refqa Abu-Remaileh, Freie Universität
- “*Al-Ādāb* and its *Ilitizām*,”
Qussay Al-Attabi, Kenyon College
- “The Future Can’t Breathe in a Refugee Camp: Reading *Taḍāmun* and *Ilitizām* in Women’s Novels of War”
Michelle Hartman, McGill University

4:15 – 4:25pm **Coffee/Tea Break**

4:25 – 6:15pm **Panel 4: The Islamic and the Secular Turn in Arabic Literary Production**

Chairperson: Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, Georgetown University

- “The Secularization of Islamic Symbols and Figures in the Poetry of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī and Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb”
Ruwa Alhayek, Columbia University
- “The Cultural Translatability of *Taqwā* in the Early Sources”
Erin Atwell, University of Chicago
- “Exploring the Conceptual Relation Between *al-Ījāz* (Brachylogy) and *Balāghah* (Eloquence)”
Hany Rashwan, Birmingham University
- “Pre-Modern Arabic Literary Anthologies and the Social Imaginary: The

Construction of Social, Cultural, and Political Paradigms,”

Nuha Alshaar, American University of Sharjah

- “Telling Time: using clocks and poetry to periodize Islamic history c. 1200–1700, “ Adam Talib, University of Durham

6:15 – 7:00pm

Keynote Address: Nadia al-Bagdadi, Central European University

7:00 – 9:00pm

Dinner – Faculty House

Day 2: Saturday, April 20 – Knox Hall Room 509

9:30 - 11:15am

Panel 5: The Comparative/Transnational Poetics and Politics of Literature I

Chairperson: Wail S. Hassan, University of Illinois

- “The Perception of Chekhov in the Arabic World and His Impact on Its Modern Literary Tradition”
Maria Swanson, United States Naval Academy
- “Magical Realism and the Specters of Postcolonial Present: Alejo Carpentier’s *The Kingdom of This World* and Hoda Barakat’s *The Kingdom of this Earth*”
Philip Raad, American University of Beirut
- “From Istanbul to Baghdad: Engagements with Arabic Literature in the Ottoman World, 1500-1700”
Murat Umut Inan, Social Sciences University of Ankara
- “Arabic Poetry in the 21st Century: A Poetics of Translation and Exophony”
Huda Fakhreddine, University of Pennsylvania

11:15 - 11:25am

Coffee/Tea Break

11:25 – 13:20pm

Panel 6 Managing/Publishing Arabic Literature (*in Arabic*)

Chairperson: Anna Ziajka-Stanton, Penn State University

- Belal Fadl, *Asir al-kutub*
- Abdo Wazen, *Al-Hayat and Independent Arabia*
- Yassin Adnan, *Macharif*
- Nouri al-Jarrah, *Al-Markaz al-Arabi lil-Adab al-Jughraphi*
- Samuel Shimon, *Banipal*
- Mbarek Sryfi, University of Pennsylvania

13:20 - 2:30pm

Lunch Break

2:30 – 4:20pm

Panel 7: The Multi-thematic Configuration of Classical Poetry and Poetics

Chairperson: Shawkat M. Toorawa, Yale University

- “The Achievement of Classical Arabic Allegorical Form: The ‘Ayniyyah of Abū Dhu’ayb al-Hudhālī”
Jaroslav Stetkevych, University of Chicago

- “*Harb al-Basus* as Mythic Matrix in Arabic Culture: Towards A Theory of Cultural (re)Production”
Clarissa Burt, United States Naval Academy
- “Labīd and Lubad: Lexical Excavation and the Reclamation of Myth in al-Ma’arrī’s *Luzūmiyyāt*”
Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, Georgetown University
- “Mourning over Algerian Palatial Ruins: Ibn Ḥammād al-Ṣanhājī (d. 1230) on Qal‘at Banī Ḥammād”
Nizar F. Hermes, University of Virginia

4:20 – 4:30pm

Coffee/Tea Break

4:30 – 6:5pm

Panel 8: The Comparative/Transnational Poetics and Politics of Arabic Literature II

Chairperson: Yaseen Noorani, University of Arizona

- “The *Maqāmah* Turn in West African Literary Tradition”
Sulaiman Adewale Alagunfon, Freie Universität
- “Between Cultural Appropriation and Literary Crossing: The Arabic Literature of ‘Europeans’ in Protectorate Tunisia”
Benjamin Koerber, Rutgers University
- “Towards an Arab Transnational Poetics of the New World”
Ahmed Idrissi Alami, Purdue University.
- “Words across genres and histories: Zaynab Fawwaz’s feminist locutions”
Marilyn Booth, University of Oxford
- “In medio stat virtus’: On Hybridity, or the Rebellion Against Labels: Reconsidering Some Aspects of Modern and Contemporary Arabic Literature”
Ada Barbaro, University of Naples “L’Orientale”

6:5 - 6:15pm

Coffee/Tea Break

6:15 – 7:45pm

Panel 9: On Writing: Experience, Process, Perception (*in Arabic*)

Chairperson: Tarek El-Ariss, Dartmouth College

- “War and Displacement”
Hoda Barakat, Visiting Professor at Dartmouth College
- “Khitab al-Takfir”
Chokri Mabkhout, University of Manouba, Tunis
- “Writing the Political”
Ezzedine C. Fishere, Dartmouth College
- “Literature and Perception”
Aziz Shaibani, Baylor College of Medicine/Arab-American Educational Foundation

Day 3: Sunday, April 21 – Knox Hall Room 509

- 9:30 - 11:30am **Panel 10: Revisiting the Modern(ist) and the Post-Colonial in Arabic Literature**
Chairperson: Joelle Abi Rachid, SoF-Heyman Center, Columbia Univ.
- “Passionate Confessions: Sex, Sin, and Autobiography in Nineteenth-Century Aleppo”
Peter Hill, Oxford University
 - “Medicine in Literature”
Mònica Rius Piniés, University of Barcelona
 - “Invisible Hands: Crime, Fiction, and the Arabic Typewriter, 1890-1920”
Hannah Scott Deuchar, New York University
 - “Housewife Novels, Everyday Life, and the Postcolonial State in Egypt”
Shir Alon, University of Oklahoma
 - “All that Remains: Ruins as Sites of Becoming”
Alexa Firat, Temple University
- 11:30 – 11:40am **Coffee/Tea Break**
- 11:40 - 1:40pm **Panel 11: The Contemporary and Techno-Digital Turn in Arabic Literary Production**
Chairperson: Michelle Hartman, McGill University
- “Zakariyya Tamir and Khalid Khalifa: Political Dissent as Affiliation and Marginality in Syria after 2011”
Alessandro Columbu, Manchester University
 - “Transmission and Transit in Contemporary Arabic Literature: *Naql* and Its Limits”
Drew Paul, University of Tennessee
 - “Glossing the Glossary: Digital Approaches to Paratexts and Power in Arabic Literature”
Dima Ayoub, Middlebury College
 - “Cultural Disbelief & New Narratives: Contemporary Arabic Fiction (Re)Writing the Old Tale”
Hanan Jasim Khammas, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
- 1:40 – 2:25pm **Keynote Address: Mahdi Arar, Birzeit University (*in Arabic*)**
- 2:25pm **Closing Remarks**
Muhsin J. al-Musawi, Columbia University

Organizers: Muhsin al-Musawi (Columbia University), Elizabeth Holt (Bard College), Tarek El-Ariss (Dartmouth College), Nizar F. Hermes (University of Virginia), and Anna Ziajka-Stanton (Penn State University)