Thresholds to Arabic Literary Criticism
Columbia University Conference
New York, December 14-16, 2022

Sponsored by: Columbia University's Arabic Studies Seminar, Columbia Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, Brill Academic Publishers, and the Sheikh Zayed Book Award (Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Center, Department of Culture & Tourism):

Locations: Wednesday Dec.14: Italian Academy at Columbia University
Thursday and Friday, Dec. 15-16, Columbia University Faculty House

Day 1: Wednesday, Dec 14 – Italian Academy, Columbia University

8.30 - 9.00 am  Breakfast

9.00 – 9.30 am  Opening Remarks and Introduction
Sarah Cole (Dean of the Humanities Division, Columbia University)
Ali Bin Tamim (Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Center)

9.30 – 10.15 am  Keynote Speech
Muhsin J. al-Musawi (Columbia University)
Theoretical Thresholds: Dependency and Thievery in the Adab Marketplace

10.15 – 10.30 am  Coffee/Tea Break

10.30– 12.15 am  Panel 1: The Seeds of Arabic Literary Criticism: Re-allocating Seminal and Marginalized Perspectives
Chairperson: Nizar Hermes (University of Virginia)

• Ally Shuaib (McGill University)
  Irony as False Attribution of Beliefs: 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī’s Contribution to the Theoretical Development of Irony in Arabic Linguistics and Exegesis

• Hany Rashwan (United Arab Emirates University) [VIRTUAL]
  The Overlooked Balāghah Commentaries of Ḥadīth Literature: al-Sharīf al-Raḍī in Dialogue with Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAīny

• Suzanne Stetkevych (Georgetown University)
  Canonization and Repudiation: Neoclassical Arabic Poetry and the Decline 'Complex'
• **Chiara Fontana** (Ca’ Foscari University of Venice)
  The Name of the Key: Al-Sakkākī’s Literary Craftsmanship and Pragmatic Poetics in *Miftāḥ al-‘Ulūm*

12.15 – 1.00 pm  **Keynote Speech**
**Mahdi Arar** (University of Birzeit)
لغة الجسد في الأدب العربي – *Body Language in Arabic Literature*

1.00 – 2.00 pm  **Lunch**

2.00 – 3.20 pm  **Panel 2: Endogenous Approaches’ Translocation in Contemporary Arabic Criticism: from al-Maghrib to Bilād al-Shām**
**Chairperson:** **Emily Drumsta** (University of Texas at Austin)
• **Maria Elena Paniconi** (University of Macerata, Italy)
  *Tales of trans/formation: the intersection between Bildungsroman and the Arab Novel (Egypt as a case study)*
• **Simone Sibilio** (Ca’ Foscari University of Venice)
  *Theoretical ‘Transformations’ and Syncretism. Adaptation and Reshaping of Structuralist Approach in Muḥammad Bannīs’ Literary Studies*
• **Lovisa Berg** (Dalama University)
  *The Role of Critics in the Formation of the Syrian Novel*

3.20 – 3.35 pm  **Coffee/Tea Break**

4.00 – 5.20 pm  **Panel 3: The Poetics of Dis/figuration: Criticism as a Sensorial Exercise in the Pre-modern and Modern Periods**
**Chairperson:** **Stefan Sperl** (SOAS, London University)
• **Zalikha Samar** (Independent scholar - Syria) [VIRTUAL]
  السرد البصري والمكاني – Visual and Spatial Narrative
• **Nuha Alshaar** (American University of Sharjah)
  *From al-Jāḥiz to al-Tawḥīdī and the Brethren of Purity: Art of Writing, Aesthetics, and the Ethical Approach to Language*
• **Zainab Sayed Zahed** (Independent Scholar)
  *The Imaginary Context in Nahj al Balaghah: Towards a theory of Arabic Rhetoric*
• **Murtaza Shaker** (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah, Mumbai) [VIRTUAL]
  *From Longing to Belonging: Contemplating Optimism in the Verses of Takhallūs (Transition) in the Exilic Poetry of the Fatimid Dāʾī Al-Muʿayyad fī ‘l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 1078 CE).*

7.30 pm  **Dinner at Faculty House**
Day 2: Thursday, Dec 15 – Columbia Faculty House

8:30 - 9:00am Breakfast

9:00–10.45am Panel 4: Traveling Criticism: Reshaping Imaginary Centers and Peripheries of the Arab World
Chairperson: Monica Ruocco (L’Orientale University of Naples)

- Clarissa Burt (US Naval Academy)
  Ayyām al-ʿArab on Screen: Re-Imaging Turāth and Trans/Forming Pre-Islam and its Poetry for Contemporary Audiences

- Louise Gallorini (American University of Beirut) [VIRTUAL]
  The Internal Other: From the Desert to the City

- Letizia Lombezzi (University of Siena)
  Being Arab, Muslim, and Sudanese. Extra challenges in literary expressions and (trans)formations?

- Rym Chakraoui (Lusail University, Doha Qatar)
  Arabic Narrative in American Voices: John Barth and Edgar Alan Poe

10.45 – 11:00 am Coffee/Tea Break

11:00–12:45 am Panel 5: Paradigms Interrogated?
Chairperson: Suzanne P. Stetkeyvch (Georgetown University)

- Ali Hussein (University of Haifa)
  The Development of Rhetoric in Classical Arabic Poetry

- Amidu Sanni (Fountain University, Osogbo)
  The Arabic Literary Theory on the Ancients (Qudamā’) and the Moderns (Muḥdathūn): A New Perspective

- Yaseen Noorani (University of Arizona)
  The Struggle to Define World, Eastern, and National Literary Identity in Egypt during the 1930’s and 1940’s

- Boutheina Khaldi (American University of Sharjah)
  Bint al-Shāṭi’: A Revisionary Reading of the Arabic Literary Canon

12.45 – 1.45 pm Lunch

1.45– 3.30 pm Panel 6: Reading the Text and the Paratext: The Role of Translation in the Development of Arabic Literary Criticism
Chairperson: Shir Alon (University of Minnesota)

- Qussay al-Attabi (Harvard University)
  How Theory Travels, or Sartre in Baghdad

- Fatima Sai (University of Bari) VIRTUAL
  Muʿāraḍa, Metaphor of Modernism

- Arturo Monaco (Sapienza University of Rome)
Theory in Use: Samples of Literary Comparativism in the Footnotes of Sulaymān al-Bustānī’s Translation of the Iliad

3.30 – 3.45 pm Coffee/Tea Break

3.45 – 4.30 pm Keynote Speech
Monica Ruocco (L’Orientale University of Naples)
Is Rihlah Still a Genre in Contemporary Arabic Literature?

4.30 – 5.30 pm Roundtable 1: Cross-temporal Poetics and Criticism
Moderator: Bilal Orfali (American University of Beirut)
Hamid Dabashi (Columbia University)
Rebecca Johnson (Northwestern University)
Matthew Keegan (Columbia University)
Wen-Chin Ouyang (SOAS University of London)

Day 3: Friday - Dec 16 – Columbia Faculty House

8:30 – 9:00 am Breakfast

9:00 – 10.45 am Panel 7: Revisionist Critiques and Criticisms from the Nahda and Onwards
Chairperson: Rebecca Johnson (Northwestern University)
- Haifa Saud al-Faisal (King Saud University)
  From balāgha to ʾintiqād: Transformations in early modern Arabic literary thought
- C. Ceyhun Arslan (Koç University)
  Family Matters: Oedipus, Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar
- Refqa Abu-Remaileh (Freie Universität Berlin)
  The Parallel Geographies of Palestinian Literature
- Francesca Maria Corrao (Luiss University Rome)
  On "Humanism and Democracy" by Edward Said. Explorations beyond Eurocentric boundaries

10.45 – 11:00 am Coffee/Tea Break

12:30 – 1:15 pm Keynote Speech
Stefan Sperl (SOAS University of London)
Arabic Poetry and Neoplatonic Poetics

1.15 – 2.15 pm Lunch
2.15 – 4.00 pm  **Panel 9: Drifts or Caveats? Ethical and Political Discourse in Crosstemporal Arabic Literary Criticism**

**Chairperson: Yasmine Khayyat** (Rutgers University)

- **Pasquale Macaluso** (University of Cape Town)
  *Laughter Needs No Justification Even After June 5”: Literary Criticism and Humour in Ghassan Kanafani’s Book Reviews After the Six Day War*

- **Sonja Mejcher-Atassi** (American University of Beirut)
  *Between personal journal and art work: What Etel Adnan’s private papers tell us about life writing*

- **Jeff Sacks** (University of California Riverside)
  *Anontological Life: Poetry and Form in Mahmoud Darwish*

- **Ana González Navarro** (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid/Universidad de Barcelona)
  *Towards an Arab feminist literary criticism: the case of Morocco*

4.00 – 4.15 pm  **Coffee/Tea Break**

4.15 – 5.15 pm  **Roundtable 2: Past Archetypes and the Challenge of the Contemporary**

**Moderator: Bilal Orfali** (American University of Beirut)

- **Sarah Bin Tyeer** (Columbia University)
- **Taoufik Ben Amor** (Columbia University)
- **Moneera al-Ghadeer** (University of Riyadh) **VIRTUAL**
- **Yasmine al-Khayyat** (Rutgers University)
- **Ada Barbaro** (Sapienza University of Rome)

5.15 – 5.30 pm  **Closing Remarks**

**Muhsin J. al-Musawi** (Columbia University)