# 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, EALAC Weatherhead East Asian Institute and Center for Chinese Literature and Culture (CCLS), and Arabic Studies Seminar  
Dartmouth College  
Brill Academic Publishers  
Dr. Aziz Shaibani/Arab-American Educational Foundation  
_In Memory of Barbara Harlow (1948-2017)_

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

8:45 - 9:20am  
**Refreshment**

9:20 - 9:50am  
**Welcome and 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

- “Worlding Arabic: Cultural Criticism, Philology and Weltliteratur”  
  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

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¹ Executive Vice President and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
11:45 – 11:55am Coffee/Tea Break

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 Ilṭīzām,”
  Qussay Al-Attabi, Kenyon College
- “The Future Can’t Breathe in a Refugee Camp: Reading Tadāmun and Ilṭīzām 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-Bayāṭī 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- Ḥāz (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**

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**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, *Al-Masry al-Youm*

- Abdo Wazen, *Al-Hayat* and *Independentarabia*

- Yassin Adnan, *Macharif*


- 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-Hudhali”
  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

- “Labîd and Lubad: Lexical Excavation and the Reclamation of Myth in al-Maʿarī’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


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”  
  Mónica 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 Firtat, 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)