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Trans/Formations of Arabic Literary Theory: Prospects and Limits

**Columbia University
December 14 - 17, 2021**

**Hosted by
Columbia University's Arabic Studies Seminar
Institute for Comparative Literature and Society
Sheikh Zayed Book Award
Brill Academic Publishers**

In Memory of Jaroslav Stetkevych

Organizers: Rebecca Johnson, Nizar F. Hermes, Chiara Fontana, Bilal Orfali and Sarah Monks

Hosted at Columbia University's Faculty House and available virtually for all.
Columbia University Affiliates wishing to attend in person should register here:

<https://forms.gle/sRUHCESoLofkLvUr6>

This link is only for Columbia University faculty, students, and staff.
All others see the virtual registration links.

Day 1: Tuesday, December 14

[\[Register for the virtual Opening Remarks and Keynotes here.\]](#)

9:00 - 9:15am **Opening Remarks**
Muhsin J. al-Musawi, Columbia University

9:15-10:10am **Keynote Talk**
Faisal Darraj
Modern Arabic Literary Criticism
النقد الأدبي العربي الحديث

10:10-10:45am شكري المبخوت
Chokri Mabkhout
متحف الادب
The Museum of Literature

[\[Register for the virtual Panel 1 here.\]](#)

10:45-12:15pm **Panel 1: Opening Panel in Honor of Jaroslav Stetkevych**
Chairperson: Muhsin J. al-Musawi, Columbia University

- Yaseen Noorani, University of Arizona
- Michael Sells, University of Chicago
- Roger Allen, University of Pennsylvania
- Moneera al-Ghadeer, Senior Advisor of International Cultural Relations, Ministry of Culture, Riyadh

[\[Register for the virtual Keynote here.\]](#)

12:30-1:30pm **Keynote Talk**
Tahera Qutbuddin, University of Chicago
Oration as Literature: Oral Aesthetics and Interdisciplinary Functions in the Sermons and Speeches of the 7th- and 8th-century Islamic World.

Day 2: Wednesday, December 15

[\[Register for the virtual Panel 2 here.\]](#)

9:00-10:45am

Panel 2: THE CHALLENGE OF THE CONTEMPORARY
Chairperson: Roger Allen, University of Pennsylvania

- “Cauldron of Conspiracy”: Modernity, Apocalypse, and Conspiracy Theory in Habiby’s *The Pessoptimist* and Saadawi’s *Frankenstein in Baghdad*.”
Aya Labanieh, Columbia University
- “Infrapolitical Digital Culture & the Reclaiming of Postcolonial Arab Identity.”
Ali Omar Abu-yasein, Universitat Ramon-LLull
- “*Adab al-manfā* vs *Adab al-luġū*’ ? ‘Refugeedom’ in Contemporary Arabic Fiction of Forced Migration.”
Annamaria Bianco, Aix-Marseille Université (IREMAM)
- “A Biography for a Poet?”
Jonathan Lawrence, University of Oxford

[\[Register for the virtual Panel 3 here.\]](#)

10:45-12:45pm

Panel 3: DECOLONIZATION AS THEORY
Chairperson: Bruce Robbins, Columbia University

- “Iltizām Under Duress, The Case of Ghassan Kanafani.”
Nouri Gana, University of California, Los Angeles
- “Kitab Sudan: Arabic Language and Islamic Epistemologies in the Black Arts Movement.”
Ellen McLarney, Duke University
- “Literature, Labor, Extraction.”
Shir Alon, University of Minnesota
- “Poetic Accumulation: Toward a Critique of Settler Form.”
Jeff Sacks, University of California, Riverside
- “Final Remarks on the Postcolonial.”
Hamid Dabashi, Columbia University

[\[Register for the virtual Keynote here.\]](#)

12:45-1:45pm

Keynote Talk
Bilal Orfali, American University in Beirut

Day 3: Thursday, December 16

[\[Register for the virtual Panel 4 here.\]](#)

9:00–10:30am

Panel 4: THEORIZING THE CLASSICAL

Chairperson: Tahera Qutbuddin, University of Chicago

- “Mannerism Revisited: al-Ma‘arri’s *Zajr al-Nābiḥ* and its Variations.”
Sarah R. bin Tyeer, Columbia University
- “A Case for Love Poetry in Literary History.”
Jennifer Tobkin, George Washington University

المقطّعات الشعريّة في مدوّنة المقلّين بين ثوابت نظريّة الأدب عند العرب ومتغيّراتها

- Ali Boujdidi, University of Gabes

[\[Register for the virtual Panel 5 here.\]](#)

10:45–12:30pm

Panel 5: LOCATIONS OF THEORY

Chairperson: Yaseen Noorani, University of Arizona

- “Amīn al-Rīḥānī as a Literary Theorist.”
Michael Battalia, Princeton University
- “Sociological Perspectives to Literature in the Modern Arab World(s):
‘Alī al-Wardī’s *Uṣṭūrāt al-adab al-rafi‘* (1957).”
Antonio Pacifico, Jean Moulin University of Lyon 3
- “False Dichotomies.”
Taoufik Ben Amor, Columbia University
- “The Missing Pictorial in Narrative.”
Joscelyn Shawn Ganjara Jurich, Columbia University

[\[Register for the virtual Keynote Talk here.\]](#)

12:30-1:30pm

Keynote Talk

Wen-Chin Ouyang, SOAS, London University, UK

Day 4: Friday, December 17

[\[Register for the virtual Panel 6 here.\]](#)

9:00-10:45am

Panel 6: THE CIRCULATIONS OF THEORY

Chairperson: Wen-Chin Ouyang, SOAS

- “A Balm for Sorrows? Permutations of Arabic Literary Theory in Hebrew Poetics.”
Daniel Behar, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- “‘High Treason Against Arabic Literature and Criticism’ Ghālib Hālasa’s Translation of Gaston Bachelard’s *La poétique de l’espace*.”
Fernanda Fischione, Sapienza University of Rome
- “Doing New Criticism in Baghdad.”
Emily Drumsta, University of Texas, Austin
- “The Absence of Mahfuz’s Economies in Criticism.”
Karim Malak, Columbia University

[\[Register for the virtual Keynote here.\]](#)

10:45-12:00pm

Closing Keynote talk

Suzanne Stetkevych, Georgetown University