

*Version dated November 16, 2021*

# **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

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

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

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
- “A Journey through the Heart of Arabic Poetry: Jaroslav Stetkevych’s Life, Loves, and Scholarship.” Ellen McLarney, Duke University

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

12:30-1:30pm      **Keynote Talk**  
Tahera Qutbuddin, University of Chicago

## 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
- المقطعات الشعريّة في مدوّنة المقلّين: بين ثوابت نظرية 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