

Workshop:

The Aesthetic in Medieval and Early Modern Arabic Rhetorical Theory and Practice

Date: 22-25 February 2010

Venue: Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften,
Jägerstr. 22/23, 10117 Berlin, Raum 228

Convenors: **Nader Hammami** (Fellow of EUME 2009/10) & **Islam Dayeh** (FU Berlin)

The workshop will explore some aspects of the transformation of rhetorical knowledge and literary practice in medieval and early modern Arabic literature. The workshop envisages covering four main topics:

1. The Place of Arabic between Qur'anic philology and the Science of Language
2. The Arabic Translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*
3. Cognitive Approaches to Arabic Metaphor
4. Literary and Rhetorical Transformations in the Nineteenth-Century Levant

Renowned scholars of Arabic linguistics, rhetoric and aesthetics are invited to reflect through their own research on various aspects of the Arabic rhetorical tradition. They include: Abdessalem Mseddi (Tunisia), Abdelkebir Cherkaoui (Morocco), Abdelmajid Jahfa (Morocco) and Charbel Dagher (Lebanon).

On Monday, 22 February, Prof. Mseddi will lecture on the significance of Arabic as an object of inquiry. Drawing on a wide variety of early and medieval Arabic texts, in the disciplines of theology, philosophy, grammar and rhetoric, Prof. Mseddi will examine the embeddedness of Arabic linguistic thought in these traditional disciplines, how its rootedness in these disciplines shaped the study of Arabic, and the importance of revisiting this linguistic heritage today. Furthermore, Prof. Mseddi will explore ways in which this linguistic heritage can engage in a fruitful dialogue with modern linguistics.

On Tuesday, 23 February, Prof. Cherkaoui will treat the Arabic translation of one of the primary canons of rhetorical theory, namely, Aristotle's *Rhetorica*. While the transmission and transformation of Greek thought into Arabic cultural spheres has received considerable philological attention, Prof. Cherkaoui will approach the topic from the angle of contemporary translation studies. He will explore the question of whether we can speak of a theory of translation among medieval Arab translators and philologists. Drawing on examples of Arabic translations of the *Rhetorica* and a key passage from the fourteenth-century Arab philologist al-Safadi, Prof. Cherkaoui will look at the translation techniques of the tenth century 'Abbasid translators and reflect on how their translational practices have shaped the Arabic-Aristotelian rhetorical tradition.



On Wednesday, 24 February, Prof. Jahfa will introduce new approaches in the study of Arabic semantics and pragmatics. On the basis of contemporary theories in cognitive psychology and linguistics (e.g. G. Lakoff, M. Johnson and R. Jackendoff), Prof. Jahfa will evaluate classical Arabic theories on the structure and function of metaphor and suggest new ways of examining Arabic metaphoric discourse. Examples will be drawn from high forms of Arabic discourse as well as colloquial. Prof. Jahfa's contribution is also a demonstration of the appropriation by contemporary Arab linguists of Western linguistic theories and the consequent universalization of the latter.

On Thursday, 25 February, Prof. Charbel Dagher will shed light on the transformation of rhetorical criticism and literary practice in the late Ottoman period, most particularly in the Arab provinces. Prof. Dagher will explore how the advent of print, the establishment of modern schools, missionary activity, Ottoman reforms, and technological change, among other factors, brought about novel forms of prose and poetry, conveying new aesthetic concerns and leisurely pastimes. To illustrate these transformations Prof. Dagher will draw on discussions about the nature of poetry in Jabr Dumat's *Falsafat al-balāgha* (The Philosophy of Rhetoric, Beirut 1898) and Muhammad Mandūr's *Fil-mīzān al-jadīd* (On the New Scale, Cairo 1944). Prof. Dagher will conclude by presenting and discussing some of his own poetry from his new work *al-Qasīda li man yashtahīhā* (The Poem for Those Who Desire It, Beirut 2010).

Speakers:

Abdessalem Mssedi [عبد السلام المسدي] (Tunisia). He is Professor of Arabic linguistics at the University of Manouba, Tunisia, and author of several important works including *al-Taḥkīr al-lisāni fil-hadāra al-'arabiyya* [Linguistic Thinking in Arab Culture] and *al-Uslūb wal-uslūbiyya* [Style and Stylistics]. Prof. Mssedi will be lecturing on the place of Arabic in the disciplines of Qur'anic philology and Arabic linguistics.

Abdelkebir Cherkaoui [عبد الكبير الشرفاوي] (Morocco). He is Professor of Arabic at several Moroccan universities, where he has taught Arabic literary criticism and translation studies. His publications include Arabic translations of French literary criticism as well as two studies on the Arabic translational politics of the Greek and Persian epics. In his contribution Prof. Cherkaoui will deal with the Arabic translation of Aristotle's *Rhetorica*, giving particular emphasis on translational techniques and the problem of lexical and syntactic difference.

Abdelmajid Jahfa [عبد المجيد جحفة] (Morocco). He is Professor of Arabic at the University of Hassan II, Casablanca, writer and director of the research group on the Moroccan short story "majmū'at al-baḥth fil-qissa al-qasīra al-maghribiyya". He is the translator of George Lakoff's *Metaphors We Live By* and the author of several important works in literary criticism, including *Madkhal ilā 'ilm al-dalāla al-hadīth* [An Introduction to Modern Semantics] and *Sahwa al-nahar wa sihr al-layl* [The Might of the Daytime and the Magic of the Night: Linguistic Studies in Masculinity]. In the workshop Prof. Jahfa will propose novel ways to examine Arabic metaphor on the basis of contemporary research in cognitive science and linguistics.

Charbel Dagher [شربل داغر] (Lebanon). He is Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Balamand, Lebanon. He has published extensively in literary criticism, history of art and Arab and orientalist concepts of aesthetics. He is also a poet and writer. His most recent publication, *al-'arabiyya wal-tamaddun* [Arabic and Civilization], is a study of the transformations of literary production and rhetorical notions in the nineteenth century Levant. During the workshop Prof. Dagher will explore some aspects of these transformations.

**Format:**

The duration of the workshop is four days. Each speaker will give one theoretical lecture followed by two longer practical sessions in which texts will be analyzed and discussed. Participants will be provided with a reader, prior to the event, containing reading material and texts that will be examined in the course of the workshop. Furthermore, since Arabic is the main research language of our speakers, the working language of the workshop will be Arabic, although questions may be raised in English, French or German from participants, in which case translation will be provided, if needed. It is also the hope of the organizers that the use of Arabic will introduce the participants to modern Arabic academic jargon, which is a particular technical *koine* that has developed through creative modern appropriations of classical terminology and through translations of modern Western linguistic scholarship. Evidently, part of the problematic nature of the transmission of linguistic and rhetorical knowledge will be experienced in the format of the workshop itself.

Schedule:Monday 22 FebruaryProfessor **Abdessalem Mseddi:**

“The Place of Arabic between Qur’anic philology and the Science of Language [العربية بين [علوم القرآن وعلوم اللغة

10:00 am	Welcoming word – Prof. Angelika Neuwirth
10:15 am	Introduction to workshop – Nader Hammami & Islam Dayeh
10:30 am – 12 noon	Lecture by Prof. Abdessalem Mseddi. Chair: Islam Dayeh
12 noon	Coffee break
12:30 – 2 pm	Practical session I
2 – 3 pm	Lunch break
3 – 4:30 pm	Practical session II

Tuesday 23 FebruaryProfessor **Abdelkebir Cherkaoui:**

“The Arabic Translation of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* [الترجمة العربية القديمة لكتاب أرسطو]”

10:00 am – 11:30 am	Lecture by Prof. Abdelkebir Cherkaoui Chair: Prof. Angelika Neuwirth
11:30 am – 12 noon	Coffee break
12:00 – 1:30 pm	Practical session I
1:30 – 2:30 pm	Lunch break
2:30 – 4:00 pm	Practical session II

Wednesday 24 February**Professor Abdelmajid Jahfa:**

“A Cognitive Approach to Arabic Metaphor [الاستعارة: مقاربات معرفية]”.

10:00 am – 11:30 am	Lecture by Prof. Abdelmajid Jahfa Chair: Islam Dayeh
11:30 am – 12 noon	Coffee break
12:00 – 1.30 pm	Practical session I
1:30 – 2:30 pm	Lunch break
2:30 - 4:00 pm	Practical session II

Thursday 25 February**Professor Charbel Dagher:**

“From *mujālasat al-ahbāb* to *mujālasat al-kitāb*: Rhetorical Transformations in the Nineteenth Century Levant [من "مجالسة الأحاباب" إلى "مجالسة الكتاب"]”.

9:00 am – 10:30 am	Lecture by Prof. Charbel Dagher Chair: Nader Hammami
10:30 am – 11 noon	Coffee break
11:00 – 12:30 pm	Practical session I
12:30 – 1:30 pm	Lunch break
1:30 – 3:00 pm	Practical session II

The workshop is conceived within 'Europe in the Middle East – The Middle East in Europe', a research program of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, and organized in cooperation with the Institut für Arabistik und Semitistik of Freie Universität Berlin in relation to a planned project within the SFB 'Episteme und Transfer' at Freie Universität Berlin.

Contact:

Georges Khalil
Europa im Nahen Osten – Der Nahe Osten in Europa
c/o Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin
Wallotstr. 19, 14193 Berlin
phone +49 (0)30 / 89001-258
fax +49 (0)30 / 89001-200
khalil@wiko-berlin.de
www.eume-berlin.de