



Summer Academy

Traveling Traditions: Comparative Perspectives on Near Eastern Literatures

in cooperation with the

**ANIS MAKDISI PROGRAM IN LITERATURE OF THE AUB,
the Orient Institute in Beirut and the Heinrich Boell Foundation Middle East Office**

at the AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN BEIRUT, 2 to 13 October, 2006

1. Content and Objectives

1.1 General Remarks

The Summer Academy 'Travelling Traditions: Comparative Perspectives on Near Eastern Literatures' is held in cooperation with the Anis Makdisi Program in Literature of the AUB. It is scheduled to take place from 2 to 13 October, 2006 at the at the American University in Beirut, Lebanon and will be chaired by Professor Friederike Pannewick (Oslo University) and Dr Samah Selim (Marsseilles, currently a Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin). It will be organized in cooperation the Orient Institute in Beirut and the Heinrich Boell Foundation Middle East Office and is mainly funded through a grant by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation. The Heinrich Boell

t fppbkp`e^cqphl i i bd=wr=_boifk=t ^i i l qpqo^ppb=NV=NQNP=_boifk=qbi bcl k-HQVEMFPM=UV=MM=NJORU=
qbi bc^u=HQVEMFPM=UV=MM=NJOMM=he^i fi] t fhl J_boifk Kab=t t K fhl J_boifk Kab=
obhql o=mol cbppl o=aok=afbqbo=do fj j =pbhobqûo=aokgl ^^efj =kbqqbi_b`h=

=

=

Foundation will provide for complementary funding which primarily supports Summer Academy participants from the Middle East and the involvement of local Scholars and Intellectuals in the Academy.

1.2. 'Travelling Traditions: Comparative Perspectives on Near Eastern Literatures' within the program 'Europe in the Middle East; the Middle East in Europe'

'Travelling Traditions: Comparative Perspectives on Near Eastern Literatures' is a research field directed by Friederike Pannewick (Oslo University) and Samah Selim (Marseilles, currently a Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin) which reassesses literary entanglements and processes of canonization between Europe and the Middle East.

This research field is an integral part of the multi-disciplinary research-program 'Europe in the Middle East; the Middle East in Europe' of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Academy of Sciences, the Fritz Thyssen Foundation and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. This research program emerged from the Working Group Modernity and Islam (1996-2006) of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. It seeks to rethink key concepts and premises that divide Europe from the Middle East. Within the framework of several research fields in the disciplines of Literature, Political Philosophy, Urban History, Philology-cum-Late Antiquity, and Islamic Studies, the program will attempt to recollect the legacies of Europe in the Middle East and of the Middle East in Europe in an inclusive way that aims to do justice to their entanglements. 'Travelling Traditions' offers a comparativist approach to the study of literature in and across the Middle East and Europe, from early modernity on.

2. Rationale of the research field 'Travelling Traditions: Comparative Perspectives on Near Eastern Literatures'

'Travelling Traditions: Comparative Perspectives on Near Eastern Literatures' emerged from the Working Group Modernity and Islam's project on 'Cultural Mobility in Near Eastern Literatures'. The goal of 'Travelling Traditions: Comparative Perspectives on Near Eastern Literatures' is a critical re-evaluation of the texts, methods, and concepts that have dominated and maintained the discursive and disciplinary divides between 'Occident' and 'Orient' on the one hand, and narrowly defined national philologies on the other. The project thus focuses on canon formation and, in a

=

=

=

parallel gesture, the basic permeability of literary traditions within and across national and regional borders. It attempts to discover and foreground the historical and structural dialogue between texts and movements as a way out of the impasse created by essentialist concepts of culture and civilization. It also aims to interrogate the disciplinary structures that shape the study of literature, of Self and Other, in both the centers and peripheries of institutional power.

New perspectives on historical legacies, literary histories, and critical methodologies will be fostered by a group of scholars working in their specialized fields as well as related fields of literary theory and cultural studies. The first part of the project is constructed around a basic revision of the foundational orientalist and Europe-centered paradigms that have structured the field of literary studies in the past. Thus, one starting point will be the interrogation of the quasi-biological paradigms of “the rise and fall of civilizations” that color the practices through which literary genealogies – and particularly those emerging in modern times – are erected and maintained. Canon formation, historical memory, and the problem of ‘beginnings’ thus mark one major field of inquiry that scholars will be invited to address, with the concrete aim in mind of uncovering new epistemological and textual constellations through which to consider and refashion alternative perspectives on both Middle Eastern and European literary modernity. The centrality of key cultural and literary concepts and critical tools like ‘renaissance’ or ‘genre’ will be addressed, as will the variety of heretofore unconsidered relationships between discrete literary movements and cultural genres. Most importantly, the project hopes to emphasize the porousness and mobility of literary texts and movements across cultural and national borders. A connected major concern will thus be historical practices of translation in relation to both popular and elite narrative traditions, literary criticism, and theory. Moreover, in a move away from a certain strain of postmodernist identity politics, the project will also focus on the ‘rootless’ postcolonial text – not as a singular instance of a monolithic globalization, but in a relationship of direct filiation to the concrete languages, canons, and polities from which they emerge.

The second part of the project interrogates the institutional hierarchies and the academic divisions of labor that inform disciplinary categories like Area Studies, Comparative Literature, and World Literature between European and Middle Eastern universities and research institutes. The aim here is to explore and critique institutional situations that produce centers and peripheries of knowledge production and consumption in relation to literary canon formation and cultural discourses about Self and Other. Taken together, the two parts of the project intend to create a forum in which a critique of the vertical and strictly demarcated discursive relationship between Europe and the Middle East of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be fruitfully replaced by a rigorous

=

=

=

exploration of the horizontal and constantly mobile entanglements and legacies that have historically shaped this profoundly ambivalent encounter.

.

3. The Summer Academy 'Travelling Traditions: Comparative Perspectives on Near Eastern Literatures'

The Summer Academy is designed primarily as a forum that gives doctoral and postdoctoral scholars the opportunity to present their current research. Since the participants will come from a variety of fields and countries, it cannot be presumed that their research interests will in all cases be contiguous. To facilitate cross-disciplinary discussions, the Summer Academy will therefore consist not only of project presentations, but also of topically defined discussion groups that take a more general view. The thematic focus of the latter is intentionally unspecific, in order to leave room for a wide variety of relevant cases against which general comparative notions ought to be measured. Pending further suggestions from the participants and the tutors, we propose that the discussion groups deal with the following three main issues:

A) Canon formations

The first section will explore modern canon formations in the larger regional literary traditions of the Middle East, and its relation to a hegemonic European system of national philology. Scholars are encouraged to explore the internal power of tradition building and its relation to the politics of historical memory and nation-building. As such, this section will emphasize the diversity of textual and critical traditions across Europe and the Middle East, and their anarchic potential in a modern field of national literatures intersected by strict notions of autonomous cultural identities. These questions aim to foster comparative perspectives on Arab, Persian and Turkish conceptualizations of literary 'renaissance' in and beyond Arab, Persian or Turkish traditions, while broadening and problematizing the term itself as part of a wider comparative inquiry into Anglo-European intellectual history and cultural studies.

B) Translation and popular traditions

The second section will examine the formative role of translation and popular traditions in national literary histories. Here, scholars are encouraged to investigate the links between literary canons, translation and popular genres and to re-think established binaries – such as originality and imitation; 'high' and 'low' cultural forms - that shape the study of literature at large. This section also takes account of the fact that genres are themselves intrinsically porous. Scholars will

=

=

=

be encouraged to explore and question the formal boundaries between what are usually considered distinct genres, like fiction, drama and prose poetry, as well the mobility of literary genres across related cultural media, such as film and theatrical performance.

C) Transformations in literary criticism and theory

The third section focuses on the links between canon-formation and historical transformations in literary criticism and theory. Comparative histories of literary criticism would be of particular interest. How does literary theory travel across cultural, linguistic and discursive borders? Such movements into new locations are often distorted and impeded because they necessarily involve processes of representation and institutionalization different from those at the place of origin. The complex north/south itineraries of postmodernism and postcolonialism, as well as Marxist and feminist theory are of particular interest in this context.

4. Organization

The Summer Academy will be held in cooperation with the Anis Makdisi Programme in Literature from 2 October (day of arrival) to 13 October, 2006 (day of departure) at the American University in Beirut. It will be organized within the research program 'Europe in the Middle East; the Middle East in Europe' of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, the Fritz Thyssen Foundation and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, and will be directed by Professor Friederike Pannewick and Dr Samah Selim. The executive responsibility will rest with the program director Georges Khalil.

The Summer Academies are designed to promote scholarly networks, to contribute to network formation and closer ties among research activities in and outside Europe and the Middle East, and to foster emerging interdisciplinary research fields that will especially profit from intercultural cooperation. Since 1996, the Working Group Modernity and Islam has successfully organized 10 annual summer academies under the titles "Modernity and Islam", "Processes and Counter-Processes of Modernization", "Crisis and Memory", "Notions of Law and Order in Muslim Societies", "History and Historiography", "The Local Production of Islamic Knowledge", "Ties that Bind and Kin that Matter. Conceptualizing Social Order in the Middle East and North Africa", and "The Hermeneutics of Borders: Canon and Community in Judaism, Christianity and Islam", 'Literature and Borders'. They have been held in Alexandria, Berlin, Beirut, Casablanca, and Istanbul. The upcoming Summer Academy 'Travelling Traditions: Comparative Perspectives on Near Eastern Literatures' will continue this tradition and will be the first Summer Academy within the new research program 'Europe in the Middle East – the Middle East in Europe'.

=

=

=

Twenty-four junior and six senior researchers (including the directors) will participate in the Summer School. Participants will be recruited via an international announcement.

Participants will be selected by an academic committee on the basis of excellence, the relevance of the applicant's research to the general theme of the Summer School, and his or her potential to actively contribute to the discussions in both working groups and panel discussions.

Candidates should at least possess an M.A. degree and be on the doctoral and postdoctoral level. PhD holders should have received their doctorate within the last five years. Applicants are expected to submit a curriculum vitae, a 4- to 10-page description of their current research project, and one letter of recommendation. Proficiency in English as the working language of the academy is required.

Apart from the directors of the Summer School, four leading international scholars in the field of the Academy will be invited to take part in the Summer Academy as tutors. Tutors are expected to participate in the Summer School for the whole duration and are asked to give one lecture related to its general theme.

Tutors (and later also participants) are asked to provide suggestions for one or two texts which treat questions relevant to the themes of the Summer Academy and in which they themselves would like to use as a basis for discussion during the thematically orientated working group sessions. A selection of these texts will be collected in the Academy-reader.

5. Program

To promote intensive debate and to encourage new perspectives, the proposed format will include four main elements: presentations of individual research projects, lectures given by tutors and guest lecturers, plenary discussions, and working group sessions. A special session will be devoted to defining an agenda for future research and networking.

Most of the time (see the provisional schedule in Appendix I) will be devoted to discussions within working groups of six to nine participants plus one or two tutors, where the participants' projects and the general themes of the academy will be discussed. Presentations of individual projects will be one central element. Here, discussions will be based on the project proposals submitted by the participants in the application process describing their ongoing research (4-10 pp.) and assembled in a reader to be circulated prior to the meeting. The reader will also contain seminal texts relevant to the topic of the academy.

In the project sessions, participants should present their research in a way that not only relates to the overall topic of the Summer School, but also enables others to critically assess it. Presentations

=

=

=

should be no longer than 20-30 minutes and should focus on methodological questions and unresolved issues. Individual presentations will be followed by 5-10 minutes of commentary by one or two participants. Discussants should review the main points of the presentation, suggest ways of making the argument more effective, and introduce the discussion. Tutors should basically act as resource persons. They are also responsible for directing the working group discussions.

Thematic and methodological issues relevant to the overall theme of the Summer Academy will also be debated in working groups of five to seven participants plus one or two tutors (see above). While experience has shown that discussions in smaller groups are more effective, plenary sessions are needed to present, compare, tie together, and possibly reframe the results of working group debates. Their thematic foci will thus sometimes be scheduled and in other instances emerge out of the debates in the working groups and are intentionally left unspecified. We are gathering texts for the reader that deal with terms, methods and issues relevant to the Summer Academy's three foci and the overall theme. These texts should provide for a common ground for discussion during the Academy in general and in the thematically orientated working groups in particular.

In order to benefit from the host country's scholarly and intellectual resources, local scholars and/or writers and intellectuals will be invited to deliver guest lectures and to participate in panel discussions.

The lectures of the tutors and the guest lectures and some of the panel discussions will be open to the public so that some of the discussions and themes of the Summer Academy may gain a wider audience.

6. Tutors

The following persons will act as tutors during the Summer Academy:

ROGER ALLEN currently is Professor of Arabic Language and Literature in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. He chairs the Language Advisory Committee of the School of Arts and Sciences, and is a guest-editor of many journals and a member of the editorial boards of *al-'Arabiyya* (Journal of the American Association of Teachers of Arabic), *World Literature Today* and *Journal of Arabic Literature*. He received his PhD from Oxford University with a translation and dissertation on Muhammad al-Muwaylihi's renowned narrative, *Hadith 'Isa Ibn Hisham* (published as *A Period Of Time* (1st edition, 1974; 2nd edition 1992). Besides a major study on the Arabic novel (Syracuse University Press 1982) and an anthology of critical writings (*Modern Arabic Literature*, New York, Ungar Publishing Company 1985) he further published a monography on the cultural tradition of literary texts in Arabic, from their unknown beginnings in the fifth century to the present day (*The Arabic Literary*

=

Heritage. The Development of its Genres and Criticism. Cambridge University Press 1998). He also prepared an edition of the complete works of Muhammad al-Muwaylihi (2002), and more recently of the complete works of Ibrahim al-Muwaylihi, for publication in a series of “complete works” published by Al-Maglis al-A`la li-al-Thaqafah (Supreme Council for Culture) in Cairo.

DAVID DAMROSCH is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. He received his Ph.D. from Yale (1980). He is specialist in modern literature, and also interested in narrative theory, hermeneutics, ancient literature, and the Bible. He is the author of *The Narrative Covenant: Transformations of Genre in the Growth of Biblical Literature* (Harper and Row, 1987; Cornell, 1991); *We Scholars: Changing the Culture of the University* (Harvard UP, 1995); a study of academic culture, *Meetings of the Mind; What Is World Literature?* (Princeton UP, 2003); and articles on Freud, Kenneth Burke, Kleist, Wordsworth, Norse sagas, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Aztec poetry. He is general editor of *The Longman Anthology of British Literature* and of *The Longman Anthology of World Literature* (2004). For 2001-2003 he was President of the American Comparative Literature Association.

ANGELIKA NEUWIRTH teaches Arabic literature, classical and Modern at Free University Berlin. Her research focus is on Qur'anic Studies on the one hand and the aesthetic dimensions of Near Eastern social practices reflected in literature, on the other. She has been the director of the Orient Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft in Beirut and Istanbul (1994-99), and has since taken particular interest in the de-limitation of arts, genres and styles that is typical of Levantine culture. Among her recent publications are 'Myths, historical archetypes and symbolic figures in Arabic Literature - Towards a new hermeneutic approach' (with Birgit Embalo, Sebastian Günther & Maher Jarrar, eds.) Beirut/Wiesbaden 1999, 'Ghazal as World Literature I: Transformations of a literary genre', (with Thomas Bauer, eds.) Beirut/Würzburg 2005, 'Ghazal as World Literature II: From a literary genre to a Great Tradition'. 'Ottoman gazel in context' (with Börte Sagaster, Judith Pfeiffer & Michael Hess, eds.) Beirut/Würzburg 2006. 'Arabische Literatur, postmodern' (with Andreas Pflitsch & Barbara Winckler, eds.) München 2004.

FRIEDERIKE PANNEWICK since 2005 is Associate Professor of Arabic Language and Literature, University of Oslo. She received her PhD (Dr. phil.) in Arabic and Theater Studies from Free University Berlin in 1999 with a thesis on the notions of theatricality and performance in Arab theater, her M.A. in 1993 from FU Berlin in Arabic and Turkish Studies. From 2001-2005

=

=

she has been the director of the project Cultural Mobility in Near Eastern Literatures within the Working Group 'Modernity and Islam' and since 2006 is co-director of the project Traveling Traditions. Comparative Perspectives on Middle Eastern Literatures within the Working Group 'Europe in the Middle East – the Middle East in Europe', both at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. Among her publications are 'Das Wagnis Tradition. Arabische Wege der Theatralität.' Wiesbaden (2000); 'Bio-bibliographischer Survey der modernen palästinensischen Dichtung.' Neuwirth, Embaló, Pannewick. Beirut, Würzburg.(2001); Martyrdom in Literature. Visions of Death and Meaningful Suffering in Europe and the Middle East from Antiquity to Modernity. Ed. F. Pannewick. Wiesbaden.(2004).

SAMAH SELIM is an independent scholar and translator of modern Arabic literature. She received her Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1997, and has taught Arabic and Comparative Literature at Columbia and Princeton Universities. Her book, *The Novel and the Rural Imaginary in Egypt 1880-1985*, was published by Routledge Press in 2004. She was a fellow of the Working Group Modernity and Islam in 2004/5 and is currently a Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Institute for Advanced Study), and Associate Researcher at the Institut de Recherches et d'Etudes sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman in Aix-en-Provence. She is currently co-director of the project Traveling Traditions: Comparative Perspectives on Middle Eastern Literatures within the Working Group 'Europe in the Middle East – the Middle East in Europe', both at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. Her ongoing work focuses on translation and popular fiction in turn-of-the-century Egypt.

SUNIL SHARMA is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Modern Foreign Languages & Literatures at Boston University. He received his PhD from the University of Chicago in the field of Persian language and literature. In 2003-04 he was a Fellow of the Working Group Modernity and Islam at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. His research focuses on Persian as a cosmopolitan language and the manifestations of Persianate culture in South Asian literature and film. He has published two studies on classical Persian poetry. 'Amir Khusraw: Poet of Sultans and Sufis' (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005) and 'The City of Beauties in the Indo-Persian Poetic Landscape.' In *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*. XXIV, no. 2 (2004): 73-81.

4/18/2006

=

V=

Appendix I

Provisional schematic schedule (first week)

This schedule only serves to illustrate the general frame and can be altered regarding the working- and off-days according to the custom of the host institution and also regarding the arrangement of further lectures or panel-discussions

TIME	MON , October 2	TUE, October 3	WED, October 4	THU, October 5	FRI, October 6	SAT October 7
9.00- 10.30 a.m.	A R R I V A L	LECTURE 1	LECTURE 2	LECTURE 3	LECTURE 4	F R E E
10.30- 11.00 a.m.		Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	
11.00 a.m.- 12.30 p.m.		WORKING GROUPS Thematic Discussions 1: Discussion of Agenda	WORKING GROUPS Presentatio n of Projects 2	WORKING GROUPS Presentatio n of Projects 4	WORKING GROUPS Presentatio n of Projects 5	
12.30- 2.30 p.m.		LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	
2.30- 4.00 p.m.		WORKING GROUPS Presentation of Projects 1	WORKING GROUPS Presentatio n of Projects 3	WORKING GROUPS Thematic Discussions 2	WORKING GROUPS Thematic Discussions 3	
4.00- 4.30 p.m.		Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	
4.30- 6.00 p.m.	6.00- 7.00 p.m.	PLENARY SESSION 1	PLENARY SESSION 2	GUEST LECTURE 1	PLENARY SESSION 3	
after 6.00 p.m.	Welc ome Rece ption					

=

=

Provisional schematic schedule continued. (second week)

TIME	SUN, October 8	MON October 9	TUE, October 10	WED, October 11	THU October 12	FRI
9.00- 10.30 a.m.	Free	LECTURE 5	LECTURE 6	WORKIN G GROUPS Presentatio n of Projects	WORKIN G GROUPS: Discussion of further research agenda	D E P A R T U R E
10.30- 11.00 a.m.		Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break		
11.00 a.m.- 12.30 p.m.		WORKIN G GROUPS Presentatio n of Projects 6	WORKIN G GROUPS Presentatio n of Projects 7	WORKIN G GROUPS Presentatio n of Projects 8	PLENARY SESSION Final Debate	
12.30- 2.30 p.m.		LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH		
2.30- 4.00 p.m.		WORKIN G GROUPS Thematic Discussion s 4	WORKIN G GROUPS Thematic Discussion s 5	WORKIN G GROUPS Thematic Discussion s 5		
4.00- 4.30 p.m.		Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break		
4.30- 5.30 p.m.		PLENARY SESSION	GUEST LECTURE 2	PLENARY SESSION		

=

NN=