

LATIN AMERICA, *AL-ANDALUS* AND THE ARAB WORLD

An International Conference at the
American University of Beirut

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Lebanon.

April 15, 17 and 18, 2018

Cover Image: 15th-Century Mudéjar Painting in Casa Árabe in
Cordoba, Spain

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**With the Ph.D. Program in Theatre and Performance at the
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of Fine Arts and Art History, and Notre Dame University—Louaize,
Lebanon**

Sunday, April 15 – Hammana, Lebanon

Blood Wedding, by Federico García Lorca, directed and translated by Sahar Assaf, Co-Director of AUB's Theater Initiative and Assistant Professor of Theater, AUB. Produced by Robert Myers and the Theater Initiative at AUB.

(Transportation will be provided for conference participants)

Tuesday, April 17 – College Hall, Auditorium B1, AUB

Coffee – 8:30 am

Welcome – 9:00 am Nadia al Cheikh, Dean of FAS, American University of Beirut

Intro to Conference and Keynote Speaker by Robert Myers (AUB)

Keynote

“The Secret Literature of the Last Muslims of Spain”
Luce López-Baralt (University of Puerto Rico)

Coffee Break – 10:30 am

Panel 1 – 10:45 am AL-ANDALUS AND ARAB AND WESTERN LITERATURE

“Cervantes’s *“Morisco aljamiado”* as Cultural Emblem: *Don Quixote* as *aljamiado texte*”
George Abdelnour (Notre Dame University–Louaize, Lebanon)

"*Tarhāl*: The Episodic as a Realm for Cultural Exchange in *al-Andalus*"
Enass Khansa (AUB)

“When We Were Arabs in Spain: Andalusian Enlightenment”
Emilio González-Ferrín (University of Seville)

Lunch – 12:30 pm

Panel 2 – 2:00 pm AL-ANDALUS AND WORLD LITERATURE

“Toward an Ethics of Similitudes: *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* in the Hispanic World”
Ken Seigneurie (Simon Fraser University; Edward Said Chair, AUB)
Marianne Marroum (LAU, Beirut)

“Publishing Arabic Literature as (Latin-American) World Literature”
Paulo Lemos Horta (NYU Abu Dhabi)

“Drawing Alternative Histories of Iraq: Ali Bader’s *Haris al-tabag* (*The Tobacco Keeper*, 2006)”
Sonja Mejcher-Atassi (AUB)

Coffee Break – 3:30 pm

Panel 3 – 3:45 pm SPAIN AND AL-ANDALUS: DRAMATIC CONTINUITIES

“Coloniality and Coyote-Scholarship: Studying Latin American and Spanish Theatre Transatlantically”
Jean Graham-Jones (CUNY)

“Universalizing Christianity Through Performance: Moors and Christians in Early Modern New Spain”
Fabián Escalona (CUNY)

“From Palestine to Portugal: Tracing Palestinian Performance Traditions from the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America”
Ashley Marinaccio (CUNY)

Wednesday, April 18

Coffee – 8:30 am

Keynote – 9:00 am

“An *Andalusi* Philosopher Abroad: Averroes, Translatability, and Tolerance”

Christina Civantos (University of Miami)

Coffee Break – 10:15 am

Panel 4 – 10:45 am NEW ARAB WORLDS AFTER AL-ANDALUS

“Lope and Andalusia: the Old World and the New”

Marvin Carlson (CUNY)

“Islamic Themes in Jorge Luis Borges”

Luce López-Barralt (University of Puerto Rico)

“Arabic Literary Genres in Iberia during the Arab-Islamic Epoch and Beyond”

Maher Jarrar (AUB)

Lunch – 12:30 pm

Panel 5 – 2:00 pm OTHER ARABICS AND OTHER ARAB WORLDS

“Arabic in São Paulo: A Case Study of Brazilians of Lebanese Heritage”

Lina Choueiri (AUB)

“An Eastern Brazil: Another Kind of Brazilianness”

Michel Sleiman (University of São Paulo)

“Arabic and Portuguese: Language Attrition and Diglossia”

Marcello Modesto (University of São Paulo)

Coffee Break – 3:30 pm

Poetry and Song – 4:00 pm

CLOSING OBSERVATIONS – 4:30 pm

Marvin Carlson

Cristina Civantos

Emilio González Ferrín

Jean Graham-Jones

Luce López-Baralt

Dinner: Transportation will depart from the Crowne Plaza Hotel at 8:00 pm.

ABSTRACTS

George Abdelnour – Cervantes’s “Morisco aljamiado” as Cultural Emblem: *Don Quixote* as aljamiado texte

Immediately following the battle between the Basque and Don Quixote in the first part of Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* (1605), the narrator expresses frustration that the “author” of the chronicle has brought the narrative to a halt, finding “nothing else written about the feats of Don Quixote other than what he has already recounted.” In the crucial episode that follows and seemingly by coincidence, the narrator recounts how a young seller of used notebooks saunters into Toledo’s marketplace carrying with him the lost volumes of Don Quixote’s unlikely adventures, written by the Arabic historian Cide Hamete Benengeli. Unable to decipher the “Arabic” in which they are written, by stroke of luck a “Morisco aljamiado” joins the narrator and begins to translate extemporaneously from the Arabic into Spanish, allowing the narrative to resume. The irony of staging the story against the backdrop of Toledo, medieval home to Christians, Muslims, and Jews, would not have been lost on Cervantes’s early 17th century readers.

It is this figure of the “*Morisco aljamiado*” that concerns us, particularly the use of the term *aljamiado* to describe the novel’s new-found interpreter, an odd use of the term almost exclusively reserved for *texts*. As is well-known by now, aljamiado literature, and *aljamía* in general (from the Arabic *’ajamī* denoting “foreign” or “non-Arab,” in some instances Persian), referred to a significant body of texts and practices of writing Iberian Romance vernaculars—Castilian, Portuguese, Valencian, Catalan and perhaps others—using the Arabic script, the fusion of two seemingly irreconcilable linguistic families. The paper argues that close attention to Cervantes’ language in this episode—and the careful contextualization of the novel within the history of *aljamía*—upends the traditional understanding of the novel’s Arabic origin of which the tale is a latter-day translation, a common trope in medieval and chivalric narratives. By carefully avoiding saying that the volumes were *in* Arabic but instead “in *characters* I knew to be Arabic,” (emphasis added) and by staging a Morisco who transliterates or “extemporizes” from “Arabic” to Spanish, Cervantes arguably renders *Don*

Quixote an *aljamiado* text, in keeping with the novel’s rumination on the nature of writing, language, and their relationship to cultural identity.

In so doing, Cervantes codes into the text a memory of cultural *convivencia*—the culture of Al-Andalus—which by 1605, a mere four years before Spain’s final expulsion of the Moriscos, was gradually replaced by “purer” notions of identity. Within the larger dialogue between *Don Quixote* and Islam, Cervantes pays homage to this lost memory of coexistence—later to reemerge in New World theories of creolization—rendering the “*Morisco aljamiado*” and *aljamiado* in general cultural emblems of particular historical resonance, linchpins of Arabic and Spanish wedded traditions.

Marvin Carlson – Lope and Andalusia: the Old World and the New

One of the first significant dramas to tell the story of Columbus’ discovery of the New World was written by the leading Spanish dramatist in 1592, just a century after Columbus’ first voyage. Unlike almost all of the dozens of later Columbus plays, Lope set much of his opening act in Andalucía, recognizing that the Spanish incursion into the new world was in large measure made possible by the expulsion of the Moors from Andalucía and the consolidation of the Spanish nation state that this expulsion made possible. Lope’s play thus provides an unusual but significant triangulation of three cultures, east, west, and south, which opens up an unusual perspective on the conquest, normally seen in strictly binary terms. This perspective is especially well suited to provide insight into the triangulation proposed by the theme of this conference: “Latin America, *al-Andalus* and the Arab World.”

Lina Choueiri – Arabic in São Paulo: A Case Study of Three Brazilians of Lebanese Heritage

In this talk I present preliminary findings from a study I am conducting on Arabic as a heritage language in São Paulo. The talk will be divided into three major parts.

Arabic language and identity

My starting point is the ‘language question’ in the Arab World. That is, the coexistence of Classical/Modern Standard Arabic with national vernaculars, such as Lebanese, Syrian, Jordanian, Egyptian, etc. This situation, referred to as *diglossia*, has been at the center of many debates, including those related to ‘Arab’ identity. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Classical/Modern Standard Arabic emerges as a marker of identity in the

Arabic speaking world (Haeri, 2000; Suleiman, 2013). While the literature reveals the centrality of Arabic to ideas about the nation state, social structure and change, it remains silent when it comes to the relation between Arabic and identity in contexts where Arabic, as a minority or heritage language, is not dominant.

Arabic as a marker of identity in Brazil?

In my study, I document the linguistic experience of three Brazilians of Lebanese heritage: Khaled, Omar, and Mo. Khaled, a retired professor of architecture, came to Brazil at a young age with his mother and father; Omar, a radio show host and retired teacher, is a first generation Brazilian; while Mo, a college student, is a second generation Brazilian. Using in-depth interviews with each of them, I unpack what it means for them to be Brazilian of Lebanese heritage, to what extent their identities are related to language, be it Arabic or Brazilian Portuguese, and the role of stereotypes in the construction of these identities.

Arabic as a heritage language: a new perspective on language change

Much of the work done on Arabic as a heritage language was for the purpose of developing materials for teaching heritage students Classical/Modern Standard Arabic. Those studies are generally concerned with levels of ‘proficiency’ or ‘language attrition and loss.’ In this study, I follow a descriptive approach to characterize the heritage varieties of Arabic spoken by my participants to provide an insight into language change and development outside the shadow of Classical/Modern Standard Arabic.

Christina Civantos – An Andalusí Philosopher Abroad: Averroes, Translatability, and Tolerance (Keynote Address)

The 12th century Cordoban philosopher Averroes/Ibn Rushd, in imagined and actual textual travels across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, offers insight into the underpinnings of (un)translatability and tolerance. A comparative analysis of Jorge Luis Borges’ short story “*La busca de Averroes*” (“Averroes’s Search,” 1947) and two short stories from the Arab world that invoke and rewrite the Borges story, reveals the relationship between *al-Andalus*, attitudes toward cultural translatability, and conceptions of intercultural harmony. Whereas in Borges’ story underlying Orientalist attitudes are a barrier to translatability or intercultural understanding, Moroccan Abdelfattah Kilito’s “*Du balcon d’Averroès*” (“Concerning Averroes’s Balcony,” 2007) and Iraqi Jabbar Yassin Hussin’s “*Yawm Bwinus Ayris*” (“The Buenos Aires Day,” 2000), rework elements of Borges’ text in

order to offer critiques of postcolonial language and identity politics and rigid, rational epistemologies. Moreover, the dialogue between the three works points to the potential for intercultural communication and the ways in which *al-Andalus*, often cited as a model of tolerance, can help us dismantle ideological narratives of identity and create more equitable, lasting tolerance.

Fabián Escalona – Universalizing Christianity through Performance: Moors and Christians in Early Modern New Spain

By 1523, when the Spaniards began the spiritual conquest of indigenous people in the *new world*, forced conversion of Muslims between 1499 and 1521 had already taken place in Granada and Valencia. However, in “New Spain” and later, in the rest of the continent, Spaniards developed an unprecedented evangelical strategy: the use of massive theatrical performances as a means to convert gentile people to Catholicism. Two traditional performances that stood out in that early stage of colonial rule were the Corpus Christi festivities and the performance of mock battles between Moors and Christians.

The tradition of performing Moorish and Christian mock battles was by the 16th century a genre with a long tradition in Spain, and it is argued that an original danced form of *moros y cristianos* was performed in the Iberian Peninsula as early as the 12th century as part of civic celebrations. By analyzing an early example of *moros y cristianos*, specifically the 1539 Tlaxcalan *Conquest of Jerusalem* as described by Franciscan chronicler Toribio de Benavente Motolinia, I will examine three aspects of the mock-battle tradition in the new colonial context: the universalization of the Christian war as a trope that identifies conquest with conversion; the identification of the indigenous with the Moors as an *other* that potentially can be converted to Christianity; and, finally, the transformation of the practice of mass conversions previously used in Valencia and Granada into an original mixture of coercion and theatrical spectacle.

Emilio González Ferrín – When We Were Arabs in Spain: Andalusian Enlightenment

In the year 1277 the Bishop of Paris, Etienne Tempier, included so-called *Averroism* among the theses that he condemned when he decided to accuse some masters of arts from the French University. That “heresy,” Averroism, referred back to the Andalusian thinker, Ibn Rushd, from then on considered

to be the father of European free-thinking because of his separation between ways of knowledge: the rational mind to understand this world and sensitive inspiration to deal with the other.

I would like to emphasize the connection between these two facts: the leakage of Averroist free-thinking (i.e., Andalusian Enlightenment) to northern Europe and the later Islamic rejection of modernity because it seems to me that the very concept of culture involves adaptability, fruitful use and progressive change—something that took place in al-Andalus but was later disregarded in other Islamic lands.

The same notions of adaptability, fruitful use and progressive change were certainly the basis of the European Renaissance, a historical process labeled “the bazaar of the Renaissance” by British scholar Jerry Brottonas, by virtue of the huge waves of Orientalization, such as the Andalusian one, that made it possible.

Jean Graham-Jones – Coloniality and Coyote-Scholarship: Studying Latin American and Spanish Theatre Transatlantically

In teaching Latin American and Iberian theatre and performance, I have employed the various strategies and potential I attribute to Delia Poey’s concept of the coyote-scholar. Noting that we scholars, much like the controversial “coyote” figure leading others across the US-Mexico border, participate in transporting marginalized texts into academic discourse, Poey urges us to engage with the perturbing, disrupting, and recontextualizing potential of coyote-scholarship.

A case in point is last semester’s seminar on “Transatlantic Theatre and Performance,” in which we employed Latin American theories of coloniality to consider together the theatre and performance practices of early modern Spain and pre-conquest and colonial Latin America. In describing the initial and final class meetings of the seminar, as well as illustrative individual research projects, I trace my students’ growing engagements as coyote-scholars and artists.

Paulo Lemos Horta – Publishing Arabic literature as (Latin-American) World Literature

Though the triumph of magic realist fictions in global markets from García Márquez through Rushdie to Elias Khoury is often cited as evidence of a metropolitan appetite for the vernaculars of the global south, my research

suggests otherwise. I will argue that the perceived parallels with the appeal of the magic realism of Rushdie or other Anglophone authors in the global market do not hold; Latin American and Arab vernacular have less currency in the uneven playing field of the global book trade, and I am interested in excavating the agency of those who overcame metropolitan resistance to these literatures. I am particularly intrigued by the marketing of Middle Eastern fiction under the Latin American rubric of magic realism. While some major Arab authors such as Elias Khoury readily acknowledge an affinity for the writings of Borges, Cortázar and García Márquez, I am interested in strategies of editing, publishing and translation that go beyond teasing out a possible Latin American influence on works such as *The Journey of the Little Gandhi*.

Maher Jarrar – Arabic Literary Genres in the Iberian Peninsula During the Arab-Islamic Epoch

My paper is meant as a survey of Arabic literary genres in the Iberian Peninsula during the Arab-Islamic epoch. Seen as a borderland state at the geographical frontier of the Arab-Islamic world, *al-Andalus* kept its sentimental and cultural ties to the Arabic culture of the East. With the association between travel mobility and knowledge a cultural symbiosis was facilitated by the exchange network of trading routes in the Mediterranean. Arabic literary conventions exercised a major influence due to the force of long established tradition and poetic models. The literati of *al-Andalus* subscribed to the aesthetic views of Arab critics and they knew well their contemporaries in the East. The lands of the East remained their spiritual horizon, and poets and writers were informed by considerable nostalgia for the mother culture. Moreover, the sophisticated cultural milieu in *al-Andalus* is a result of a complex process of acculturation. Within the framework of a fusion between Arab heritage and the multilingual cultural milieu in *al-Andalus*, literature there boasted of unique literary and poetry genres that represented cross-cultural and hybrid germination.

Much of the Arabic poetry in *al-Andalus* is laden with nostalgic motives; it hinges on feelings of displacement and a sense of loss, and it grieves about time’s constant fluctuation and longs for a paradise lost.

The Syrian and Lebanese immigrants in Brazil established Arabic newspapers and founded a literary society under the name of *The Andalusian League* (al-‘uṣba al-Andalusiyya), which fostered the publication of Arabic literature. In a familiar romantic trope, the poets of *The League* resorted to

expressive responses to the poetic expressions and stylistic genres that flourished in *al-Andalus*. Driven by a strong feeling of longing, they recognized *al-Andalus* as a mythic place of desire and the embodiment and repository of innocence, natural beauty, warmth and heritage.

Enass Khansa – *Tarhāl*: The Episodic as a Realm for Cultural Exchange in *al-Andalus*

When asked to classify scholars, poets and *adībs* (littérateurs) who travel to and from *al-Andalus*, 11th-century Cordoban scholar, Ibn Ḥazm, suggested, “[It] has been established that . . . we have the right to claim a scholar who migrates to us from any other land and he becomes one of us [i.e., should be considered Andalusī], (*man hājara ilaynā min sāliri al-bilādi, fa-naḥnu aḥaqqu bihi wa-huwa minnā*). However, we lose from among us those who move to other lands and the place they choose will be fortunate to have them (*wa-man hājara minnā ilā ḡhayrinā fa-lā ḥazza lanā fihi, wa-al-makān al-ladhī ikhtārahu as’adu bihi*).

Ibn Ḥazm’s perspective on intellectual “identity”—as potentially earned and acquired through choice of where to travel and where to “publish”—reverberates with the cultural sensibilities of the Andalusī society, whose worldview at once favored “new arrivals” and accepted, with equal ease, “departure” and loss. Engaging with recent scholarship on *al-Andalus*, this paper examines this intertwined notion in *Faḍā’il al-buldān* literature (the hagiographic “merits of places” genre), and recreates how the Andalusīs themselves approached the question of change.

Finally, the paper asks whether there is an obligation in reimagining *al-Andalus* to inhabit the particular conception of change alluded to above, especially considering the virtually inescapable political perspective that preservation as practice, approach and theme of research assumes today. Moreover, as this perception of change promotes inquiries into the nuanced attitudes medieval Andalusī culture cultivated related to instances of borrowing, exchange and re-use, does this perception of change, perhaps, lend itself to an examination of the influence *al-Andalus* in the neighboring parts of the world and beyond?

Luce López-Baralt – The Secret Literature of the Last Muslims of Spain (Keynote Address)

The 16th-century *moriscos* or Moors, in the midst of their collective misfortune as a strangled minority—or perhaps because of it—wrote what we call today *aljamiado* (*ayamiyya*) literature. The underground authors’ manuscripts, written in Spanish but transliterated with the Arabic script as a last sign of loyalty to the sacred language of the Kor’an, provide a first-hand testimony of what it was like to experience the decline of Islamic culture.

Aljamiado literature deals with the most varied subjects: magical and astrological treatises, dream interpretation, books on medicine, prophesies, Arabic legends, Spanish novels, poems, itineraries that explained how to flee secretly from Spain, personal testimonies regarding the fall of Granada and the experience of exile in Tunisia, and even a curious “Spanish Kama Sutra” that teaches that nuptial bliss can lead us to God.

The clandestine codex bears the burden of the collective experience of the last Muslims of Spain, which has been largely unknown until now. It is time that we hear directly what they have to say to posterity and learn from their historical experience.

Luce López-Baralt – Islamic Themes in Jorge Luis Borges: The Sufi Symbol of the “Zahir.”

Borges made Arabic literature the epicenter of many of his finest literary texts, and we are still in the process of understanding the real implications of his artistic experiment. His passion for the Eastern world was such that he even ventured to study the rudiments of the Arabic language.

It must be said that Borges’ symbolic Orient, prior to Edward Said’s theories, is not related to political thought and is not limited to aesthetic evocations or local color: it is immensely erudite and thus usually difficult to follow for the reader who is not conversant with Islam. Borges employs traditional Islamic motifs and mystical symbols to forge masterpieces like “The Zahir,” “In Search of Averroës,” and “Ibn Hakam al-Bokhari, Murdered in His Labyrinth.”

Most critics seem baffled by Borges’ Islamic symbols and literary motifs, especially the “Zahir.” Erika Spivakosky asserts that “contrary to other [Arab inspired stories], the “Zahir” is invented throughout [, . . .] even the sources” (1968: 237). Floyd Merrell (1991: 6) is equally disappointed with the enigmatic coin: “the Zahir is ultimately a helpless symbol.” In this study,

however, I intend to decipher Borges' symbol, which is inspired in Islamic mysticism.

Ashley Marinaccio – From Palestine to Portugal: Tracing Palestinian Performance Traditions from the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America

In 2016, the Jenin-based Freedom Theatre toured *Return to Palestine* in Portugal. This show, an ensemble-devised production created by the young alumni of the Freedom Theatre's education program and based on interviews with Palestinians collected through playback theatre and testimonials, utilized performance and storytelling techniques to bridge the theatre and culture of the Arab world, particularly Palestinian culture, with the Iberian Peninsula. This is one of several projects across both the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America that have brought Palestinian politics and cultural and performance traditions to the forefront of theatre, beginning with the 1998 adaptation of Lope de Vega's *Fuenteovejuna* with an all-Palestinian female cast in Spain and, subsequently, the 2016 production of *Foot*, written by Ismail Khalidi, at Teatro Amal in Chile.

This presentation will discuss audience reception of Palestinian theatre in the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America by asking who the audience is that attends these performances. How are they affected by the performance? Do they remain engaged in Palestinian politics post-performance? What do these performances *do*? This presentation will look at the unique relationship of theatre between Palestine, the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America by drawing from these specific performance examples and discussing the overlapping performance traditions, including testimonial theatre, and by addressing socio-political conflict and acting methodologies.

Sonja Mejcher-Atassi – Drawing Alternative Histories of Iraq: Ali Bader's *Haris al-tabagh* (*The Tobacco Keeper*, 2006)

Spanning Iraq's modern history from the 1920s to the time of narration in the early 2000s, Ali Bader's novel *Haris al-tabagh* (*The Tobacco Keeper*, 2006) partakes in the revival of Arabic historical fiction and in what is referred to as the archival or documentary turn in cultural production. The novel draws on different fiction and non-fiction genres and is interspersed with intertextual references, in particular to *Tabacaria* (*The Tobacco Shop*, written in 1928 and first published in 1987) by the Portuguese modernist writer Fernando Pessoa, who was known for his use of heteronyms i.e., different

literary personae. This paper argues that it is this literary device, intertextuality—and the reference to Pessoa in particular—that allows the novel to draw alternative histories of Iraq, stories in which Baghdad is not reduced to one stereotypical image but in which the city comes to life in a multitude of faces—and masks—as the novel's protagonist takes on different identities, changing his name from Youssef Sami Saleh to Haidar Salman to Kemal Medhat in the course of Iraq's troubled modern history.

Marcello Modesto – Arabic and Portuguese: Language Attrition and Diglossia

At least two historical facts relate Arabic and Portuguese: the Arabic-speaking presence in Portugal from roughly the 8th to the 12th centuries, and the massive immigration from the Levantine area to Portuguese-speaking Brazil in the 19th and early 20th centuries. During the 20th century, the flux of immigration might have reversed several times—with children of immigrants returning to the Levantine area to stay or to marry, and their children returning to Brazil—thus creating strong bonds between many Brazilian, Lebanese, and Syrian families. These two historical facts have produced two linguistically relevant products: hundreds of Arabic words introduced into Portuguese and an Arabic-speaking population inside Brazil (especially in the cities of São Paulo and Belém), and possibly a Portuguese-speaking community in Lebanon. All of these aspects offer a perfect scenario to study language attrition and examine how the Arabic spoken in Brazil is affected by the dominant language and how the Portuguese spoken in Lebanon is affected by Arabic. Guedri (2008), for instance, has explored phonological interactions of Arabic-speaking Brazilians who may identify a word as having Arabic origin and maintain its Arabic pronunciation (blocking Brazilian Portuguese phonological rules). One of our research questions in this study is whether syntactic effects can also be identified in the process of attrition in the Arabic spoken in Brazil and the Portuguese spoken in Lebanon.

A second parallel may be seen in the similarities between the linguistic situation in both countries. Although Portuguese is the official language of Brazil, the linguistic reality in Brazil includes different uses that rarely coincide with those of the official language. Similarly, though Arabic is spoken in Lebanon, the actual usage of Lebanese speakers may vary according to sociolinguistic variables (familiarity between the speakers, formality, social hierarchy, etc.).

Such variation is generally described as diglossia, the ability of speakers to utilize two ‘dialects’ – a term that raises many questions. This second research path explores the similarities and differences between Brazilian and Lebanese speakers to answer a few philosophical questions about the definition of language, usage and variation, in addition to theoretical and empirical questions about diglossia and language contact.

Ken Seigneurie and Marianne Marroum – Toward an Ethics of Similitudes: *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān* in the Hispanic World

While an “ethics of otherness,” most clearly expounded by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, demands that we bear in mind the particularity of otherness in literatures, it is clear that tropes and thematic interests recur under various forms and in various constellations of meaning throughout history and from one culture to another. Within a world literature methodological paradigm, we study transmission in terms of how texts and even shreds of discourse travel and are transformed from one period, place or language to others. Studies in comparative literature often concentrate on merely analogous features of texts from different traditions. Within either paradigm, the focus on similitudes among different texts means that the question of the assimilation to a dominant norm always lurks in the background and risks erasing the ethics of otherness.

At the same time, the imperative to study similitudes across cultures is strong. Numerous medieval Arabic texts beg for cross-cultural comparison such as *Barlaam and Josaphat* (*Kitāb Bilawhar wa-Yūdāsaf*), Ibn al-Muqaffā’'s *Kalīla and Dimna*, Ibn Qutayba’s *Majnūn Laylā*, Abū al-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī’s *The Epistle of Forgiveness* (*Risālat al-Ghufrān*), and, of course, the *One Thousand and One Nights* (*‘Alf layla wa-layla*). This paper will focus on the 12th-century Arabic tale *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*, by Ibn Ṭufayl. *Ḥayy* has often been compared to Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and René Descartes’ *Discourse on Method*, but its reception in the Hispanic world remains nebulous. This paper will explore *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān* in the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America. At the same time that it offers a sketch of *Ḥayy*’s reception, this paper will also examine the potential for a methodological “ethics of similitudes.”

Michel Sleiman – An Eastern Brazil: Another Kind of Brazilianness

The Brazilian literary scene of the last hundred years has been populated by authors who have manifested an idea of a Brazil as having a culture extrapolated from the country’s traditional triple origin – Amerindian, African and Iberian – and extending to the Far and Middle East. However, the very European culture of the Portuguese conqueror was itself created on a base of Orientalizing elements (Sephardic and Andalusian Romanic-Arab-Berber).

During the era of maritime expansion in the 14th and 15th centuries, these elements were added to the African and Indian elements, which is verifiable today in the various products of Lusitanian culture, notably the Portuguese language. This characteristic of a culture that incorporates external elements was later continued in Brazil when the Brazilian white elite brought Africans to Brazil in the Transatlantic slave trade and when European settlers were encouraged to immigrate to boost agricultural production. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Asian immigration such as Arabic, Japanese, and, more recently, Chinese and Korean occurred. Although this immigration took place without the patronage of the elite, it was nevertheless tolerated. One could argue that the national imaginary assimilated on Brazilian soil the same meadows, steppes and deserts from overseas and occupied them materially and immaterially.

This talk will focus on the re-orientalization observed in the works of certain Brazilian authors who are descendants of Syrian and Lebanese immigrants of the 20th century. I will argue that they constitute a continuum of Arabness and keep alive the idea, albeit remote, of *al-Andalus* and a moment when East and West formed a single unit.

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

George Abdelnour is Chairperson of the Department of English and Translation and former director of the Center for Applied Research in Education at Notre Dame University–Louaize, Lebanon, where he teaches Spanish, World Literature and Latin American literature in translation. His research interests include the literature of the Moriscos, cultural continuities between the Spanish Golden Age and the New World and contemporary world, and Anglophone fiction. He is a former U.S. Fulbright Scholar to Lebanon (2008-10).

Marvin Carlson is the Sidney E. Cohn Professor of Theatre and Comparative Literature at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He has received an honorary doctorate from the University of Athens, the ATHE Career Achievement Award, the ASTR Distinguished Scholarship Award, the George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism, and the Calloway Prize for writing in theatre. He is the founding editor of the journal *Western European Stages*, and the author of over two hundred scholarly articles in the areas of theatre history, theatre theory and dramatic literature. Among his books are *The Theatre of the French Revolution* (1966), *Goethe and the Weimar Theatre* (1978), *Theories of the Theatre* (1984), *Places of Performance* (1989), *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (1996), *The Haunted Stage* (2001), *Speaking in Tongues* (2006), *The Theatres of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia* (with Khalid Amine, 2010) and *10,000 Nights* (2017). His work has been translated into fourteen languages.

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