



كلية العلوم الاجتماعية والإنسانية
School of Social Sciences and Humanities

Critical Concepts in the Humanities and Social Sciences

إشكاليات المفاهيم والاصطلاح بين العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية

Critical Concepts in the Humanities and Social Sciences إشكاليات المفاهيم والاصطلاح بين العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية

Doha, 18-20 February 2018

As scholars in the humanities and social sciences today we are faced by global realities that present veritable and immediate challenges to the foundations of our work and our sense of emplacement. We work in disciplinary frames that were shaped in particular cultural, political and colonial moments and whose claim to universality has long since been contested. Since early in the 20th century most of our disciplines have had to go through a series of radical *turns*, occasionally leading to the emergence of new multidisciplinary modes of inquiry, such as cultural studies, postcolonial studies and global history, which have not only questioned disciplinary formations but also the concepts that determine the reach and legitimacy of our work. As Mieke Bal has argued already back in the 1990s, "interdisciplinarity in the humanities, necessary, exciting, serious, must seek its heuristic and methodological basis in *concepts* rather than *methods*" (*Travelling Concepts in the Humanities* 2002, 5). However, we might do well to remember that the circulation of critical and theoretical concepts comes with power differentials that have to do with what constitutes knowledge in disciplinary practices, and not just with the institution and projections of geopolitics in travelling theories.

The aim of this interdisciplinary workshop is twofold: first, we propose to explore concepts, to discuss their significance in multidisciplinary frames and how they operate in our work. Each participant will present a concept of their own choice, discuss its significance and development within a disciplinary and interdisciplinary frame of inquiry, and then reflect on the *use* of this concept in their own research. How do we move from concept to method? How are concepts translated across disciplinary, linguistic and cultural forms? What semantic and syntactic changes occur in order to produce the grammar of meaning that constitute our critical positionalities? The workshop is therefore a critical reflection on the conceptual and ethical dimensions of our scholarly pursuits.

The second aim of the workshop is community building. The workshop brings together scholars from both institutions to learn about each other's research projects and to facilitate further collaboration. Scholars from a broad range of disciplines, including literary and cultural studies, history, philosophy, anthropology and political science.

Coordinators:

Islam Dayeh (Freie Universität Berlin)

Ayman El-Desouky (Doha Institute for Graduate Studies)

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Doha, 18-20 February 2018

Sunday, 18 February 2018

13:30-14:00

Reception

14:00-15:00

Welcome Address:

The Doha Institute: A Vision for the Humanities and Social Sciences

Yasir Suleiman Malley,

Acting President and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

15:00-16:00

Opening Session: Concepts in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Chair: Abdelwahab El-Affendi,

Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities

Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

Travelling Concepts: The Ethical Dimensions of Scholarly Pursuits

Islam Dayeh (Freie Universität Berlin)

The Afterlife of Concepts: Untranslatables or Philosophemes?

Ayman El-Desouky (Doha Institute for Graduate Studies)

Monday, 19 February 2018

Welcome Note

Abdelwahab El-Affendi, Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities
Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

9:00-11:00

Roundtable One

Gunther Gebauer	<i>Fairness</i>
Ahmed Badawi	<i>Democracy</i>

Chair and Discussant: Abdelwahab El-Affendi

11:00-11:30

Coffee Break

11:30-13:30

Roundtable Two

Sophie Richter-Devroe	<i>Gesture in the Field</i>
Shourideh Molavi	<i>Forensic Architecture</i>

Chair and Discussant: **Sebastian Conrad**

13:30-15:00

Lunch Break

15:00-17:00

Roundtable Three

Konrad Hirschler	<i>Archive</i>
Christoph Wulf	<i>Anthropology</i>

Chair and Discussant: **Esmail Nashif**

17:00-17:30

Roundtable & Concluding Remarks

Ayman El-Desouky & Islam Dayeh

19:00

Dinner

Tuesday, 20 February 2018

9:00-11:00

Roundtable Four

Atef Botros

State of Exception

Abdelwahab El-Affendi

Terrorism vs. Democracy

Chair and Discussant: **Susanne Klengel**

11:00-11:30

Coffee Break

11:30-13:30

Roundtable Five

Susanne Klengel

Sur/South

Sebastian Conrad

Asia

Chair and Discussant: **Ayman El-Desouky**

13:30-15:00

Lunch Break

15:00-17:00

Roundtable Six

Dana Olwan

Migrating Genders

Esmail Nashif

The Tragic

Chair and Discussant: **Konrad Hirschler**

17:00-17:30

Roundtable & Concluding Remarks

Ayman El-Desouky & Islam Dayeh

19:00

Dinner

Workshop Participants:

Atef Botros Al-Attar is Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at the Doha Institute. His current research interests include the poetic legacy of dissent and the new aesthetics of resistance in Egypt, emergent genres of prison literature and Arab reception of the work and thought of Walter Benjamin. Some of his relevant publications are: *Kafka - Ein Jüdischer Schriftsteller aus arabischer Sicht* (Wiesbaden 2009), ed., *Der Nahe Osten – Ein Teil Europas?* (Wuerzburg 2006), “Macht, Raum und Ikonen”, in: Werner, Gabriele und Ruch, Philipp, eds. (Berlin 2013).

Ahmed Badawi is a Senior Researcher in Political Science at the *Center for Middle Eastern and North African Politics* at Freie Universität Berlin. His main fields of research are political economy of development and comparative politics, with a focus on the Middle East as well as conflict and peace studies, with a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. His most recent publication is *Institutional Failure: The Quest for Egyptian Stability*, Expert Comment (Dialogue of Civilisation Research Institute, 2018).

Sebastian Conrad is Professor of History at Freie Universität Berlin, and one of the directors of the Forum Transregionale Studien. He has a background in German and Japanese history. His main fields of research are colonial/postcolonial and global history. His most recent publication is *What is Global History?* (Princeton University Press, 2016).

Islam Dayeh is Assistant Professor of Arabic Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. He directs the research group *Arabic Philology and Textual Practices in the Early Modern Period*, the international research program *Zukunftsphilologie: Revisiting the Canons of Textual Scholarship* and is founder and editor-in-chief of the journal *Philological Encounters* (Brill).

Rossella De Luca (Freie Universität Berlin) is a research assistant within the research group *Arabic Philology and Textual Practices in the Early Modern Period* (led by Islam Dayeh). She investigates the Maronite archbishop of Aleppo Jirmānūs Farḥāt's (d.1732) works on Arabic grammar.

Abdelwahab El-Affendi is Professor of Politics and International Relations and Dean of the School of social Sciences and Humanities at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. El-Affendi is currently overseeing several collaborative and international research project with focus on “Rethinking Political Science”, “Theories of Democratic Transition” and “Identity and Political Conflict in Sudan”. His latest monograph is *Genocidal Nightmares: Narratives of Insecurity and the Structure of Mass Atrocities* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

Ayman El-Desouky is Associate Professor of Modern Arabic and Comparative Literature at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. His main fields of research are Arabic and comparative literature, postcolonial theory, comparative hermeneutics, literary theory and modern philosophy. His latest monograph is *The Intellectual and the People in Egyptian Literature and Culture: Amāra and the 2011 Revolution* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Building on recent work and publications, he is currently preparing a monograph-length study on conceptual untranslatabilities and comparative critical thought.

Gunter Gebauer is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Freie Universität Berlin. He is a former member of the research groups *Performative Cultures* and *Languages of Emotion*. His research interests include historical anthropology, language theory and the philosophy of sport. His most recent publication is *Wittgenstein's Anthropological Philosophy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

Beatrice Gruendler is Professor of Arabic at Freie Universität Berlin. Her areas of research include the development of the Arabic script, classical Arabic poetry and its social context, the integration of modern literary theory into the study of Near Eastern literatures, Arabic book history, and the role of Arabic in global literature. She is the author of *The Development of the Arabic Scripts: From the Nabatean Era to the First Islamic Century* (1993, Arabic trans. 2004) and *The Life and Times of Abū Tammām (Akhbār Abī Tammām)* by Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Ṣūlī (2015).

Konrad Hirschler is Professor of Islamic Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. His main research interests lie in the social and cultural history of Egypt and Syria in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods (c. 1200-1500). His most recent publication is *Medieval Damascus: Plurality and Diversity in an Arabic Library* (Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

Susanne Klengel is Professor of Literary Studies at the Institute of Latin American Studies, Freie Universität Berlin. Her research interests focus on contemporary Latin American literatures, intellectual history and cultural relations in the Global South. Recent publication: Ed. with Alexandra Ortiz Wallner: *Sur/South. Poetics and Politics of Thinking Latin America/India* (2016).

Colinda Lindermann (Freie Universität Berlin) is a research assistant within the Research Group *Arabic Philology and Textual Practices in the Early Modern Period* (led by Islam Dayeh). Her research focuses on Arabic lexicography in the Ottoman period.

Yasir Suleiman Malley is Professor of Modern Arabic Studies and Acting President and Vice President for Academic Affairs of the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. Suleiman is Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. His research covers the cultural politics of the Middle East with special focus on identity, conflict, diaspora studies and modernization in so far as these issues relate to language, modern Arabic literature, translation and memory. He also conducts research in Arabic grammatical theory and the Arabic intellectual tradition in the pre-modern period. Suleiman has published numerous books and articles and serves as Trustee on the Boards of many international bodies and organizations.

Shourideh C. Molavi is Assistant Professor in Political Science and International Relations at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. For the past fourteen years she has worked with numerous Palestinian educational and legal civil society organizations in Gaza City, Nablus, Jerusalem, Haifa, Ramallah and Bethlehem. Shourideh's ongoing work is on the multifaceted exclusions that make up liberal-democratic citizenship regimes. Currently she is also working with *Forensic Architecture* on documenting the crime of ecocide as it applies to the Gaza Strip, and the forced transition in agricultural cultivation in southern Palestine resulting from Israeli settler-colonial policies.

Esmail Nashif is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Head of the Sociology and Anthropology Program at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. His main research fields are materiality, language, ideology, plasticity, and aesthetics. He addresses the theoretical discourses on these fields and their history. In order to examine the manners of operation of these fields, he looks at colonial contexts, especially the Arab-Islamic and the Palestinian ones. His latest monographs are *The Position of Arabic in the Zionist Regime* (Hebrew, Van Leer Institute, 2017; Arabic and English editions in preparation) and *June Childhood: Dar Al-Fata Al-Arabi and the Literature of Tragedy* (Arabic, Tamer Institute for Community Education, 2016).

Dana Olwan is Assistant Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. Olwan's research interests include gendered and sexual violence, comparative settler colonialism, solidarity movements, feminist pedagogies, critical race and Arab and Muslim feminist theories and diasporic literatures and cultures. Her recent publications include: "Introduction: Shifting Geographies of Knowledge and Power: Palestine and American Studies." (with Rabab Abdulhadi), *American Quarterly* 67.4 (2015): 993-1006 and "On Assumptive Solidarities in Comparative Settler Colonialisms", *Feral Feminisms* 4 (Summer 2015): 89-102. She is currently working on a book manuscript: *Traveling Discourses: Gendered Violence and the Transnational Politics of the 'Honor Crime'*.

Sophie Richter-Devroe is Associate Professor of Politics and International Relations at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. Richter-Devroe's research is based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork in Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan and Greece, and extends to gender and politics in the Middle East, settler colonialism and indigeneity (particularly in the context of the Naqab Bedouin) and refugees and migration (particularly Palestinian and Syrian refugees). Her latest monograph is *Palestinian Women's Political Activism: Peacebuilding, Resistance and Survival* (University of Illinois Press, forthcoming 2018).

Christoph Wulf is Professor of Anthropology and Education and member of the *Interdisciplinary Centre for Historical Anthropology* at Freie Universität Berlin. His books have been translated into more than 15 languages. He has held visiting professorships and research stays in many parts of the world, and he is currently vice-president of the German Commission for the UNESCO.