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CONGRESS

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Studies

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Panel 32

Cultural circulations between the Maghreb and the Mashreq, from the 1950s to the present day

After decolonization, the questions of national identities and national culture arose in a polarized world. In the Maghreb, Arabization policies sought to reappropriate their own identities in a language common to the «Arab Nation» as a whole, while adapting this language to society's present needs. Meanwhile, under Nasserism, Egypt's provided a powerful cultural model that spread across the entire Arab world, alongside other poles such as Lebanon or Iraq took shape following the upheavals of 1967. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Gulf financing saw the rise of a competing cultural model and productions in the region.

This workshop aims to write a global history of cultural circulations between Maghreb and Mashreq after decolonization. It is located at the crossroads of national issues and transnational ambitions. It interrogates South-South connections and its continued ties with the North – from the Maghreb's colonial heritage, its relations with the two superpowers during the Cold War, and the impact of globalization. This workshop will initiate a reflection on the role of the Arab language as the connecting thread of shared culture between the Maghreb and the Mashreq. It will question the revisions of national identities that followed Maghribi decolonization through the lenses of current-day debates in Arab societies and in their relations with the rest of the world.

People in charge and disussant : Courreye Charlotte (Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3, Institut d'études transtextuelles et transculturelles))

Program

Deweerdt Charlotte (Institut de recherches et d'études sur le monde arabe et musulman)

The imagination of the Arab world in contemporary Algerian cinema. Comparative cases of Nahla (Beloufa, 1979) and Zendj Revolution (Téguia, 2013)

Rather than taking part in the exaltation of nationalism that dominated Algerian cinema in the 1970s, Farouk Beloufa explores, through his film *Nahla*, the uncertainties and failure of unitary Arab identity. In 1975, in Beirut, Algerian journalist Larbi witnessed the division of Lebanese society around the Palestinian question and how it slid toward the Civil War. Beloufa is also the dumbfounded witness of the fate of *Nahla*, the new rising icon of Arab song, and her wavering voice. This political fiction, although without a future, opens the way for the next generation of moviemakers. At the beginning of 2010, Tariq Tegua's film «*Zendj Revolution*» questioned Arab regional unity and Arab identity. The Algerian journalist Ibn Battuta led an investigation within a broader geographical and historical context alongside *Nahla*, a militant committed to the Palestinian struggle.

This paper proposes to analyze two outstanding works by their staging of the imagination of the Arab world. Separated by 35 years, these two films dialogue and share a common filming space. They both use

the figure of the journalist, the theme of the displacement of the Maghreb towards the Mashreq, from Algiers to Beirut. How do these filmmakers imagine their understanding of the Arab world, in the two distinct eras? What narrative forms and spaces are mobilized in the service of this mutual understanding? And, finally, to what extent do the conditions of production and distribution of these two feature films contribute to feeding a common culture?

France Pierre (University Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, CESSP-CRPS)

A crossover dream? The Arab market, its representations, circulations and borders

Based on cross-examination of the international circulations of some Arab artists from the 1980s to 2020, but above all on an original material on the contours of the «Arab» market (collected by interviews with industry executives and through an analysis of a professional and business-related music press Billboard, Arabian Business, MEED), this communication will show some of the outlines of an « Arab music market », unfolding how this market is thought and how it has evolved from the cassette era to the era of streaming and the recent return of a « crossover » dream (the long-awaited hit that would cross the Arab world and even touch the whole world). This paper articulates on the one hand a reflection on the circulation of certain artists from one country to another (including non-circulations, difficulties and failed attempts, which attest to the reality of certain borders); on the other hand, it highlights some representations of borders to be crossed, or ensembles to be conquered, in the music industry. In particular, it will show how the Maghreb-Mashrek division is part of a series of other circulations (Machrek-Gulf, Machrek-Europe, Maghreb-Europe, Arab World-Africa) but is perhaps still one of the greatest frontiers of all.

Jebari Idriss (Trinity College)

The Maghribi Intellectual in Beirut: Rethinking the circulation and unity of analysis of contemporary Arab thought post-1967

In contemporary Arab thought, historians often use the written intervention as their unit of analysis, be it a critical essay or an article in a cultural journal. This methodological choice impacts the temporality of this history: from the rhythm of publications, responses and the formation of ideological trends, as well as its character, literary and static. This approach has consolidated the image of a Mashreq that is more central, in terms of the volume of its literary productions and thought, compared to other Arab regions, which are considered secondary and peripheral by these standards. This relationship between a «center» and its «peripheries» dominates how the circulation of ideas.

This intervention proposes a shift in unity from written intervention to physical interaction between different thinkers. I consider the notion of «meaningful encounter», which is part of the new parameters of global intellectual history to ask: how can this history be rewritten, and what is the impact on relations between the Maghreb and the Mashreq? How can these encounters be theorized? How should we read existing sources, both written and oral? In this talk, I compare two key moments in post-1967 Arab thought: the post-socialist transition through the exchange between the Moroccan Abdallah Laroui and the Syrian Yasin al-Hafiz, and the consolidation of a left-wing Islamic current, or the Turathiyun, between the Moroccan Mohamed Abed al-Jabri and the Egyptian Hassan Hanafi, during the 1980s.

Temlali Yassine (Doctorant, Aix Marseille Université, CNRS, TELEMME)

Between pan-Arabism and nationalism: some elements on Algeria's relations with Egypt between 1962 and 1965

Beyond the pan-Arabist discourse of Ahmed Ben Bella, was Algeria, between 1962 and 1965, subservient to Nasserian Egypt, as fashionable historical accounts claim? This paper will confront this claim with the available sources on Algerian-Egyptian relations during Ben Bella's presidency. It will assess the political issues of Egypt's attitude in conflicts between the regime and the opposition, Algeria's attitude towards Nasserian policy in the Middle East, economic matters such as trade, Egyptian aid to launch Algerian industrialization, and culturally, such as sending Egyptian teachers to Algeria.