



Call for Papers

International AGYA conference "Storytelling, Travel Writing, and Seafaring from Cross-Cultural Perspectives" 31 October 2018 – 3 November 2018 in Sharjah, UAE

In cooperation with the American University of Sharjah and the Sharjah Museums Authority

The Arabian Gulf is one of the crossroads of the modern world. It has been a meeting place of multiple cultures throughout different historical periods from antiquity to the 21st century. Therefore, it offers an excellent example to reflect upon storytelling, seafaring stories, and travel writing (including autobiography) from cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspectives. This international conference of the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA) in collaboration with the American University of Sharjah (AUS) and the Sharjah Museums Authority (SMA) aims to explore the tradition of storytelling, travel accounts, and seafaring stories in different cultures and communities, not only in the Arabian Gulf and other Arab regions, but also in the Indian, Persian and European cultures..

Papers submitted for this conference are expected to deal with one of the following themes:

- 1) A critical reflection on storytelling and its employment in different texts, whether religious or non-religious, from different cultures and communities. From antiquity, critical reflection on storytelling has been given scholarly attention. Criticism might be either directed at storytelling on ethical grounds, putting into question its contribution to morality and ethical thinking, or the criticism might focus on its contribution to or hindrance of proper theoretical reflection. Thus, the conference welcomes investigations of such critical reflections on storytelling in different historical sources. Such like investigations will also shed light on the value that is ascribed to storytelling in different historical periods as well as in diverse cultural and intellectual settings.
- 2) A critical reflection on storytelling and stories that migrate between different cultures – with a focus on how the meaning and aspects of a story can be modified and applied in different contexts.
- 3) The role of the author in the transmission of stories, and how his or her cultural background influences his or her description of the same region.

- 4) The long tradition of fictional stories that imitate travel writing: How does fictional travel writing deal with or reflect historical realities and how is fictional content amalgamated or contrasted with non-fictional content?
- 5) The dynamics between writer and addressed readership in travel stories: The consideration of the readership and its influence on the writer's technique and approach to the subject and the content of his/her text; what modes of persuasion are found and in which contexts are they employed?
- 6) Travel writing as a pseudo translation as well as actual translations of stories and the mediating function of translators and translations. How does the process of translation or the writing technique of pseudo translation lead to adaptations of and changes in stories, and how do these adaptations impact and shape culture itself?
- 7) The oral tradition of storytelling and travel writing as part of Islamic cultural heritage. What is the role of education in promoting this heritage? Should the role of this cultural heritage be rethought in a changing global world?

A selection of papers from the conference will be considered for publication in a peer-reviewed volume with an academic publisher.

Food and accommodation during the period of the conference are covered by AGYA for all participants. A limited budget is also available to cover air fare for some participants on the basis of need. If you require financial support, please indicate this in your submission because funds are limited. Funding is still subject to approval.

Participants of the conference will also have the opportunity to take part in two full days of activities organized by the Sharjah Museums Authority. These activities include: an exclusive tour of the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, a tour of Bait Al Naboodah Museum and a visit to the Sharjah Calligraphy Museum.

The conference is a project of the AGYA Working Group Common Heritage and Common Challenges and is realized by AGYA members (Dr. Nuha Alshaar, Dr. Christian Fron, and Dr. Beate Ulrike La Sala) in collaboration with the Arabic and Translation Department at the American University of Sharjah (Professor. David Wilmsen, Dr. Boutheina Khaldi, and Dr. Imed Nsiri) and the Sharjah Museums Authority (Ms. Alya Rashid Burhaima Alzaabi and Mrs. Hajar Ahmed Al Bloushi).

Submissions: Papers must be in English. To apply for this conference, please submit a title and an abstract of no more than 300 hundred words by emailing the abstract to:

storytelling_sharjah@agya.info

The body of the email should also include: author's name and institutional affiliation.

Submission deadline: 20 May, 2018.