

## *Muslim Writing, Writing Muslimness in Europe: Transcultural Literary Approaches*

Call for papers for a collection of essays

Almost twenty years ago the so-called “Muslim question” took centre stage in media and political discourses as a direct consequence of not only the 9/11 attacks in the United States but also of the Western military and political responses to these events and the subsequent spread of what has been defined as global terrorism. George W. Bush’s declaration of “war against evil” in 2001 and Tony Blair’s defence of “our values and our way of life” against violent Islamist extremism following the London bombings on July 7, 2005 signalled what has been referred to as a “paradigm shift” in international relations which is predominantly driven by anti-Muslim prejudice. The Islamophobia that has pervaded different aspects of the public sphere in the West since 9/11 is arguably more accentuated in the European context, where the numerically significant presence of Muslims in the EU is often regarded as “pos[ing] a serious cultural and political threat” (Parekh 2008: 5). In terms of culture within the European context over the last two decades, there is also a substantial body of literature that has engaged with the Western anxieties projected onto the Muslim ‘other’, and in particular, the Muslim migrant ‘other’. Literary criticism of Muslim writing and writing about Muslims by Muslim or non-Muslim writers in Europe has often highlighted the need to offer a more nuanced articulation of Muslim identity. Critical studies produced over the last two decades have predominantly focused on contemporary literature, and the novel in particular, as well as on the study of Muslim writing and writing about Muslims and Islam produced within a specific linguistic and national framework. The proposed collection of essays aims at expanding and adding complexity to existing analyses of contemporary Muslim writing and writing about Muslims and Islam in the European context by incorporating both a historical and a comparative perspective. As Maleiha Malik has persuasively argued, “it is impossible to analyse Muslims in the West today without a better understanding of how they were treated in the past” (2009: 207). Also, within the field of literary criticism, a response that engages critically with a transnational, Western-centred, anti-Muslim prejudice fostered by the “global threat” of Islamist terrorism calls for a complex, multiperspectival analysis. In this sense the collection will focus on “comparing the literatures” of Europe (Damrosch 2020: 1) through different contributions that either focus on literary text(s) produced within a specific national literary tradition or that have a comparatist orientation. This will be combined with a transcultural theoretical stance that emphasises how cultures, societies and identities are “less internally homogeneous, less coherent or self-contained and less territorially fixed than it was assumed” in the national(ist) paradigm (Dagnino 2012: 1).

Proposals of contributions on literary texts of all epochs that engage with articulations and definitions of Muslim writing and writing about Muslim identity in Europe are welcome on any of the following themes, though not excluding other topics:

- Muslims as the “new” Europeans
- Aesthetics and the “anthropological frame”

- Intertextuality, Muslim influences and rewriting literatures in Europe
- The gaze of the Muslim ‘other’
- The postsecular turn in Europe and in Muslim writing
- “Authenticity” in Muslim narratives
- Empathy and aesthetics
- Affects and effects of fear and hate
- Representational violence
- Translingualism and identity
- European anxiety and the Muslim question
- Muslim masculinities
- Muslim women and feminism(s)
- Body, politics and Islam
- Muslim identity/ies and crisis
- Diversity and difference in Muslim culture(s)
- Muslim identity/ies, space and place
- Tradition vs. modernity in first- and second-generation Muslim migrants
- Sufism and transculturality
- Cultural anamorphosis of Muslims and Islam
- The liminal space or *barzakh* in literature
- The market of Muslim writing in Europe
- Colonial past and present in contemporary Muslim writing

Submissions in English, including an abstract (max. 500 words, including five keywords), a short biographical note (max. 150 words) and a statement that this work has not been published and is not currently under review elsewhere, should be sent by 15 February 2021 to the editors Carmen Zamorano Llena ([cza@du.se](mailto:cza@du.se)), Mattias Aronsson ([mar@du.se](mailto:mar@du.se)), Billy Gray ([bgr@du.se](mailto:bgr@du.se)), Carolina León Vegas ([clv@du.se](mailto:clv@du.se)) and Carles Magrinyà Badiella ([cmb@du.se](mailto:cmb@du.se)). Notification of the editorial decision will be sent to the authors by 15 March 2021 and complete essays in English (max. 7,500 words, including works cited) should be submitted by 15 September 2021. The collection of essays will be published by an international academic publishing house with peer-review system.

#### Works Cited

Dagnino, Arianna. “Transculturalism and Transcultural Literature in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” *Transcultural Studies* vol. 8, 2012, pp. 1-14.

Damrosch, David. *Comparing the Literature: Literary Studies in a Global Age*. Princeton UP, 2020.

Malik, Maleiha. "Anti-Muslim Prejudice in the West, Past and Present: An Introduction." *Patterns of Prejudice* vol. 43, no. 3-4, 2009, pp. 207-212.

Parekh, Bhikhu. *European Liberalism and 'the Muslim Question'*. Leiden: Amsterdam University Press, 2008.