

International Study Day

on

The MENA in English Literature

Thursday, 30 November 2023
At the 30 Laboratories Building

Chaired by
Dr Souad BAGHLI BERBAR

Confirmed Keynote Speakers:
Dr Nat CUTTER
University of Melbourne, Australia

Prof. Azzeddine BOUHASSOUN
University of Ain Témouchent

**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Abou Bekr Belkaid University – Tlemcen
Faculty of Letters and Languages
LLC Research Laboratory**

Call for Papers

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The Middle East and North Africa are part of “the Orient” which is not a mere geographic region but a concept that has been construed as the polar opposite of the Western European world which claims to have hegemony over it for imperialistic purposes. According to Edward Said (1978), “the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience”. Hence, Orientalists are self-imposed specialists of the Orient who have been “dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it” (Said 1978, 3). They claim with Karl Marx that Orientals “cannot represent themselves, they must be represented” (cited by Said 1978).

This International Study Day will therefore propose to examine the image of the MENA in English literature; or the Orient as a whole, including Turkey, as seen by authors writing in English ever since their encounters with the Orient, personally or imaginatively, from the early modern period until the present day. Literature is construed in its broadest sense to include poetry, drama, fiction, travel literature, life writing and even newspapers, treaties or letters as long as they are printed sources (even if accessed in electronic format) but NOT social media, blogs or podcasts.

The earliest reference to a MENA place in English literature occurs in the General Prologue to Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1400) where he mentions Tlemcen (spelt Tramessine) – the capital of the Zianides since 1235 (Baghli Berbar 2014). In the eyes of the Orientalists, the “Orient” has a number of “inherent characteristics” such as being monolithic, changeless, inferior, simple and irrational, as well as primitive, exotic and mysterious (Taib 2009).

We invite papers addressing issues that can shed new light and provide new interdisciplinary critical readings of any literary production that can be connected with the depiction of the Middle East and North Africa in the Anglosphere, ranging from demonised, biased or stereotypical perception of the other to more positive, even laudatory, visions.

Abstracts of about 250 words should be sent to berbar.souad@gmail.com no later than 20 November 2023.

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