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**Call for Papers**

**The American University in Dubai**

**April 5-7, 2018**

***Widening the Lens: Beyond the Orient and Occident***

***in Narrative Perspectives of the East and West***

We live in an age in which mass media representations of the Middle East have done much to influence Western attitudes toward the region’s peoples and cultures. Similarly, Middle Easterners’ views of the West have also been affected. That these representations have so consistently advanced disparaging stereotypes has resulted in an unfortunate legacy of cultural misunderstanding that demands investigation and redress. The literary arts, from the Middle Ages to Modernity have all too often represented cultural differences in ways that have aided in the construction and/or perpetuation of an antagonistic East/West divide. While the exploration of this divide has been valuable, what is now needed is an exploration of how literature has also engaged in productively complex, nuanced intercultural dialogues that complicate, fracture, and ultimately widen the narrow lens used to frame the relationships between East and West. The conference *Widening the Lens: Beyond the Orient and Occident in Narrative Perspectives of the East and West* seeks to explore how the dialogue between literatures of the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and North America approach, inspire, challenge, and ultimately benefit each other. In other words, this conference intends to consider that literature can help correct the divisions caused by entrenched cultural stereotypes, and that this help can take a myriad of forms.

The goal of this conference is to examine works of literature and other forms of creative expression that try to move beyond the stereotypes of Orientalist and Occidentalist imagination to construct a more authentic rapport between the two regions. Participants will consider works that try to bridge cultural, religious, and linguistic differences in order to engage in constructive, though not uncritical, dialogues between the East and West. To accomplish this, the English Division at the American University in Dubai invites papers that focus on expanding the perspectives by which the cultures of the East and the West regard one another.

Topic Suggestions:

* American and European perspectives of the Middle East and North Africa
* Middle Eastern and North African perspectives of the United States and Europe
* Comparative studies of Middle Eastern/North African and US/European works or authors
* Perspectives on Christianity and Islam
* Critical approaches to gender and sexuality in the East and West
* Representations of democracy in the East and West
* Literary translations between East and West
* Pedagogical approaches to teaching Middle Eastern literature in the West, or Western literature in the Middle East
* Literature that widens the lens between the East and the West, including but not limited to Young Adult/Children’s Literature, War Literature, Essays, Biography, Autobiography, and Poetry
* Film, Media, and Popular Culture pieces that move beyond stereotypes
* Dialogues arising from Post-Colonial tensions and conflicts

Please send 300-word proposals to **literatureconference@aud.edu** no later than **December 22,** **2017**. Proposals should include name, contact information, affiliation, and title of paper. Presentations should be a maximum of twenty minutes in length. Panel proposals (comprised of three to four presenters) are also welcome; please include the names, contact info, affiliations, and paper titles for all members. Notification of acceptance to the conference will be sent via email by January 5, 2018.

*Widening the Lens: Beyond the Orient and Occident in Narrative Perspectives of the East and West* will be hosted by the American University in Dubai’s School of Arts and Sciences. Conference website is forthcoming.