**Socio-Cultural Implications of Post-2011 Literature, Cinema, and Media in Egypt and the Arab World**

**Workshop 12 December 2015**

**Venue: Room 5.206 University Place**

**The School of Arts, Languages and Cultures**

**The University of Manchester**

**Free Event (no advance booking is required)**

Programme:

**9.45-10.00:** Opening Remarks (Dr Dalia Mostafa – University of Manchester)

**10.00-11.30 - Chair:** Dr Joseph McGonagle **(**University of Manchester)

* “Shut ub your mouse, Obama! [Shut up your mouth, Obama!]: Media Discourse, Self- Representation, and Identity Construction in Post-2011 Egypt”

**(Dr Walid El Hamamsy – Cairo University)**

* “‘*Entrapments**in the Shadow of Da*‘*ish*:’ The Vilification of the Northeastern Lebanese Border in the Aftermath of the 2011 Syrian Protests” **(Dr Michelle Obeid – University of Manchester)**
* “The Poetics of Hope and Frustration in the Works of Two Contemporary Egyptian Poets” **(Professor Faten Morsy – Ain Shams University)**

**11.30-12.00:** TEA & COFFEE BREAK

**12.00-1.00 -** **Chair:** Dr Anastasia Valassopoulos (University of Manchester)

Presentation + Film “The Living Martyrs: Palestinian Prisoners in Israeli Jails” (26 min) **(Professor Caroline Rooney – University of Kent)**

(The film was made by Professor Rooney and Will Parry).

**1.00-2.00 –** LUNCH (hosted by the workshop organisers)

**2.00-3.00:** **Chair:** Professor Zahia Smail-Salhi (University of Manchester)

* “Negotiating Narrative on Twitter: Collective Storytelling in the Context of the 2013 Military Intervention in Egypt” **(Mr Neil Sadler - PhD candidate - University of Manchester)**
* “Para-translation as Activism: Iraqi Women Writers’ Fiction in English-Arabic Translation” **(Mrs Ruth Abou Rached - PhD candidate - University of Manchester)**

**3.00-4.00 – Chair:** Dr Walid El Hamamsy (Cairo University)

Keynote: “The Prefigurative Politics of Volunteer Subtitling in the Egyptian Revolution” **(Professor Mona Baker - University of Manchester)**

**4.00-5.30** – **Chair:** Dr Dalia Mostafa (University of Manchester)

Film: “The Trace of the Butterfly” (68 min.) by **Egyptian Documentary Filmmaker Amal Ramsis** + Q&A with the filmmaker

**Abstracts:**

*“The Prefigurative Politics of Volunteer Subtitling in the Egyptian Revolution”* **(Professor Mona Baker - University of Manchester)**

The idea of prefiguration originally derived from anarchist discourse; it involves experimenting with currently available means in such a way that they come to mirror or actualize the political ideals that inform a movement, thus collapsing the traditional distinction between means and ends. Practically all the literature on prefiguration has so far focused on structural, organizational and interactional issues. Existing literature has examined how activist communities attempt to create in their own interactions and in the way they organize their work the kind of society they envision: non-hierarchical, non-representational, solidary, respectful of diversity. This presentation will explore the extent to which volunteer subtitling undertaken by disparate individuals for collectives connected with the Egyptian Revolution supports or undermines the prefigurative agendas of these collectives. In doing so, I will attempt to extend the current definition of prefiguration to encompass textual, visual and aesthetic practices that prefigure activist principles and actualize them in the present, focusing on the level of experimentation involved in subtitling video clips produced by two Egyptian collectives: *Mosireen* ([http://www.youtube.com/user/Mosireen](https://outlook.manchester.ac.uk/owa/redir.aspx?SURL=kVWRNaU-XBMMXvCTUbWaVoNynPC6aJTAzh_c64_lzzjnjD5Q-OHSCGgAdAB0AHAAOgAvAC8AdwB3AHcALgB5AG8AdQB0AHUAYgBlAC4AYwBvAG0ALwB1AHMAZQByAC8ATQBvAHMAaQByAGUAZQBuAA..&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.youtube.com%2fuser%2fMosireen)) and *Words of Women from the Egyptian Revolution* ([http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoJMzdw8wTSR5NY3zENZCmg](https://outlook.manchester.ac.uk/owa/redir.aspx?SURL=ANwVU2HD-9PmGuAynzCHa0RyWtLG-X6amxxlI1RWJ5TnjD5Q-OHSCGgAdAB0AHAAOgAvAC8AdwB3AHcALgB5AG8AdQB0AHUAYgBlAC4AYwBvAG0ALwBjAGgAYQBuAG4AZQBsAC8AVQBDAG8ASgBNAHoAZAB3ADgAdwBUAFMAUgA1AE4AWQAzAHoARQBOAFoAQwBtAGcA&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.youtube.com%2fchannel%2fUCoJMzdw8wTSR5NY3zENZCmg)).

\*\*\*

*“Shut ub your mouse, Obama! [Shut up your mouth, Obama!]: Media Discourse, Self- Representation, and Identity Construction in Post-2011 Egypt”*

**(Dr Walid El Hamamsy – Cairo University)**

This presentation examines the use of foreign languages in present-day media. It juxtaposes post-June 30, 2013 nationalist media discourse about a free Egypt, independent of, and indifferent to, foreign hegemonic interference, particularly American, against this media’s deployment of foreign linguistic registers to address the same powers it claims not to care about in their own languages. The paper highlights three examples: 1- ONTV’s political public service advertisements (PSAs) addressing a foreign audience to whom it declares what took place in Egypt on June 30 onwards was not a coup but a revolution in a variety of languages; 2- ONTV Mubashir’s temporary deployment of simultaneously interpreted transmission with the same purpose and around the same period; and 3- the recently emergent and media highlighted Mona El Behiry (AKA “Shut ub your mouse, Obama”), a presumably self-motivated citizen hosted on various TV channels and digital media addressing one scolding and belittling tirade after another to American President Barack Obama in broken English. All three phenomena are symptomatic of a contradictory and anomalous media attitude that both vilifies most foreign countries as part of a conspiracy theory against Egypt’s nascent democracy at the same time that it display an urgent need to still address that conspiratorial other in its own language. The paper aims to look at processes of othering and incitement underlying such anomalous attitudes and the implications of these on current Egyptian politics and society.

\*\*\*

“‘*Entrapments**in the Shadow of Da*‘*ish*:’ *The Vilification of the Northeastern Lebanese Border in the Aftermath of the 2011 Syrian Protests”*

**(Dr Michelle Obeid – University of Manchester)**

In August 2014, the northeastern Lebanese border town of Arsal endured an attack by Islamic State (*Da`ish*) insurgents who occupied and sieged the town. The Lebanese Armed Forces were immediately deployed to contain the much-feared imminent spread of violence to the rest of Lebanon. Within four days, an agreement was reached and the fighters retreated to the highlands, leaving carnage and a high death toll among both the local and refugee populations, while the threat lingered and as the media continued to deploy sectarian language thus vilifying the residents as ‘harbours of terrorists.’ In the paper I reflect on the predicament of the border and the descent from a condition of hope at the outset of the Syrian protests in 2011 to one of entrapment. The paper examines emerging anxieties over shifting subjectivities and the creation of the 'apathetic subject' that struggles to exercise political agency in a constellation of powers beyond reach, hence feeding into a Da`ish(an) agenda of chaos and regression.

\*\*\*

*“Negotiating Narrative on Twitter: Collective Storytelling in the Context of the 2013 Military Intervention in Egypt”*

(**Mr Neil Sadler - PhD candidate - University of Manchester)**

Narratives on Twitter are fragmented and lack clear boundaries. Most users’ Twitter feeds include tweets from many different authors, producing a situation of intense heteroglossia. These features pose challenges to the traditional concepts and categories of narrative analysis yet remain comparatively understudied. This presentation explores the extent to which narratives are collectively produced on Twitter, with a focus on the tension between collaboration and conflict in narrating the 30 June 2013 protests and 3 July 2013 removal of President Morsi in Egypt. I examine the accounts of these events provided on Twitter by three influential Egyptian tweeters: @Bassem\_Sabry, @Sandmonkey and @Zeinobia. I argue that the minimal overlap between the content of their tweets during this period suggests that, rather than telling distinct, individual narratives, they, along with many other users, were collaboratively producing a loosely bounded, but richly detailed and broadly coherent, common narrative. Yet this collaborative process should not be viewed in utopian terms, as differences of interpretation following 3 July necessitated a difficult period of narrative negotiation, with individual users attempting to influence the collective narrative, but not abandoning it. I explore possible implications of this collaborative approach to storytelling and question to what extent it may be representative of narrative practices on Twitter more broadly.

\*\*\*

**Film + Q&A with Egyptian Documentary Filmmaker Amal Ramsis**

**“The Trace of the Butterfly”**

**(Athar Al Farasha)**by Amal Ramsis, 68 min., Egypt/France/Turkey, 2014

October 9, 2011: armed security forces attack peaceful demonstrators in Cairo. During the clashes of what is referred to as the Maspero massacre, 20-year-old Mina Danial is killed alongside 26 other Coptic Christians. For many demonstrators, Danial had been their great hope for the future, seen as the Che Guevara of the Egyptian revolution. For his sister Mary, Mina’s death meant not only the end of a life, but also the start of something new. Over a period of two years, Mary Danial is accompanied by the director on a journey through Egypt’s revolution, documenting periods full of frustration and triumph, more deaths, and the oppressive grief for the victims who somehow are still present amongst their loved ones.

**The film won the Audience Award in Dortmund | Cologne International Women’s Film Festival.**