

Arabic, Persian, and Turkic Poetics: Towards a Post-Eurocentric Literary Theory is a pioneering book that offers a fresh perspective on Arabic, Persian, and Turkic literature in their interrelations. The authors challenge Eurocentric paradigms while creating a framework for exploring these traditions on their own terms. Authored by an international team of scholars, the chapters centre the conceptual foundations of their respective literary traditions, with a focus on the discipline of comparative poetics (*‘ilm al-balāgha*) in the Islamic world.

By liberating the study of Islamicate literary texts from Eurocentric theoretical paradigms, the book paves the way for a more inclusive global discourse in literary studies. Specifically, the roots of this collaborative research in comparative poetics and in the rhetorical traditions of the Arabic, Persian, and Turkic worlds will foster new methods of close reading that are in line with the aesthetic standards intrinsic to these texts and their traditions. Engaging and insightful, this book is essential reading for anyone interested in broadening their understanding of world literature and literary theory.

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RASHWAN
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ARABIC, PERSIAN, AND TURKIC POETICS

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ARABIC, PERSIAN, AND TURKIC POETICS

Towards a Post-Eurocentric Literary Theory



Editors

Hany
Rashwan

Rebecca
Ruth Gould

Nasrin
Askari

ARABIC, PERSIAN, AND TURKIC POETICS

A generation ago it could still be written in an authoritative work on comparative poetics that ‘Neither Arabic nor Persian literature has an originaive poetics per se. But they obviously establish a lyric tradition, and the highly developed rhetorical studies seem to serve as surrogates for poetics.’ If one thinks that Aristotle’s *Poetics* and the traditional Western trinity of drama, lyric, and epic must apply universally, one does not do justice to the Middle Eastern tradition. For Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish literature a different set of standards is valid, and those literatures must be studied on their own terms. This is done in the present volume, the first of its kind: an excellent and coherent collection of studies of literary theory and poetics in the premodern Islamic world, where each language has a literary tradition with its own character, but where central critical concepts are held in common.

*Geert Jan van Gelder, Laudian Professor of Arabic Emeritus,
University of Oxford*

Arabic, Persian, and Turkish poetics are too often studied in isolation from one another, or in the stifling shadow of European poetics and European literary theory. This volume does the very opposite. It brings a series of important studies – by a wide-ranging, international cadre of scholars – of distinctive works from the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish traditions into conversation *with each other*. And, by excavating and foregrounding literary-theoretical terms native and inherent to Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, it posits a literary theory that is both post-Eurocentric and non-Eurocentric. This will be required reading for anyone wishing to work within any of or across Arabic, Persian, and Turkish literature and poetics.

*Shawkat M. Toorawa, Professor of Arabic and of Comparative Literature,
Yale University*

In a world where the literary dialogue has long been dominated by Eurocentric perspectives, this volume emerges as a beacon of enlightenment, daringly challenging the status quo and charting a revolutionary course in the study of Islamic poetics. With unparalleled depth and an unyielding commitment to the rich terminologies and concepts inherent to Arabic, Persian, and Turkic literary traditions, the authors collectively herald a new dawn for post-Eurocentric literary theory. This is not merely a book; it is a clarion call to scholars, inviting them to venture beyond familiar horizons and immerse themselves in the majestic and multifaceted realm of Islamicate literary cultures. By resolutely placing indigenous poetics and theoretical frameworks at the forefront, this volume paves the way for a future of scholarship that honours the profound cultural distinctions of these traditions, while boldly engaging with the wider world of literary discourse. This volume, therefore, is not just groundbreaking – it is indispensable for scholars, students,

and enthusiasts aspiring to truly comprehend Islamic poetics and champion a more inclusive and representative global literary theory.

*Mohammad Salama, Professor and Associate Dean of Faculty,
George Mason University*

This volume launches from urgent questions in the field of comparative literature: What does it mean to compare? Who compares? Why and when? It highlights rich traditions of premodern comparative practices which challenge the modernist, Eurocentric biases of the field. The volume also transcends, through serious expert engagement with literature and theory in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, the chronic inferiority complex towards Euro-American literary theory, which has for a long time kept these literary traditions captive, framed by imposed Western theoretical frameworks. These long, rich traditions have always theorised themselves, offering pioneering insights into language, poetics, and rhetoric. The groundbreaking work in this volume resets the entire field of comparative literature, recognising the urgency of studying the literature of the Islamicate world on their own terms, not merely as passive subjects of study but as active and significant participants in the so-called field of World Literature and the study of the Humanities at large. The work here announces the welcome advent of a post-Eurocentric, decolonised literary and critical practice.

*Huda Fakhreddine, Associate Professor of Arabic Literature,
University of Pennsylvania*

In this groundbreaking volume, the reader encounters a superb collection of studies that detail and illuminate the distinctive characters of the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish literary traditions as well as the numerous and subtle ways in which they have interacted with one another. With depth and nuance, the thirteen chapters convey the integrity and logic of a wide range of types of literary expression, with examples drawn from the tenth to the twentieth centuries, in the three languages. In elucidating the conceptual and aesthetic underpinnings of these varied modes of expression in their own terms, the volume represents a pioneering and much needed post-Eurocentric exploration of central literary categories of the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish traditions and elucidates what might be termed an Islamicate comparative poetics – and thereby enriches the repertoire available for developing a transnational and global literary theory.

*Louise Marlow, Professor of Religion,
Wellesley College*

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TOWARDS A POST-EUROCENTRIC LITERARY THEORY

Edited by
HANY RASHWAN, REBECCA RUTH GOULD, AND
NASRIN ASKARI

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