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The author

Robyn Creswell is an Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at Brown University and poetry editor of *The Paris Review*. He is the translator of Abdelfattah Kilito's *The Clash of Images* (New Directions, 2010) and Sonallah Ibrahim's *That Smell and Notes from Prison* (New Directions, 2013). A former fellow of the Cullman Center at the New York Public Library, his essays and reviews have been published by Harper's Magazine, *The New York Times Book Review*, *n+1*, and *The Nation*.

Bibliography

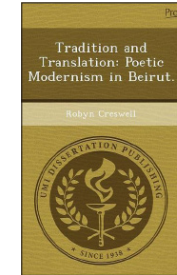
That Smell and Notes from Prison by Sonallah Ibrahim, translated by Robyn Creswell (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2013)

Tradition and Translation. Poetic Modernism in Beirut. (BiblioLabsII, 2012)

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Tradition and Translation. Poetic Modernism in Beirut. (BiblioLabsII, 2012)



This dissertation presents a reading of modernism in Arabic poetry, a movement that flourished in Beirut between 1955 and 1975. It explores how the poets and theorists of this group, centered around the magazine *Shi'r*, redefined the parameters of Arabic poetry through their multiple projects of translation (naql), whether of foreign texts or classical predecessors. This redefinition involved a variety of literary and institutional strategies, whose common goal was to win for poetry a measure of autonomy from the region's rapidly metastasizing states. At a time when post-colonial Arab regimes sought to establish control over their respective national cultures, modernist poets fought to secure a margin of independence. By analyzing the theory and practice of modernism in poetry, this study shows how the Arabic literary field was restructured according to a new, globalized conception of the relations between culture and politics. The introduction lays out the historical context for this movement, arguing that it occurs at a moment of legitimation crisis for intellectuals across the Middle East. The first chapter narrates the movement's intellectual origins in the Social Syrian Nationalist Party. Looking at the life and writings of Yusuf al-Khal, editor-in-chief of *Shi'r*, it charts the modernists' move away from their political beginnings toward ideal of literary autonomy, mediated by the specifically Cold War figure of "man." Chapter two examines the Syrio-Lebanese poet Adonis' most important collection, *The Songs of Mihyar the Damascene*, arguing that its melancholic apostrophes are the symptoms of a turn away from nationalist politics toward an international space of exile. The third chapter examines debates about the Arabic prose poem, particularly as it was practiced by Unsi al-Hajj, the form's most radical advocate. It pays especially close attention to al-Hajj's encounter with Antoine Artaud, read as a figure for the impossibility of translation. The final two chapters center on Adonis' work as an anthologist and elegist, the "internal translations" by which he fundamentally reconfigured the canons of Arabic poetry. The conclusion suggests that Arabic modernism is, in historical terms, a late modernism, a movement whose emergence coincides with its own institutionalization.

That Smell and Notes from Prison by Sonallah Ibrahim, translated by Robyn Creswell (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2013)

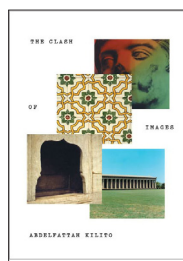


That Smell and Notes from Prison is Sonallah Ibrahim's modernist masterpiece and one of the most influential novels written in Arabic since WWII. Composed after a five-year term in prison, the semi-autobiographical story follows a recently released political prisoner as he wanders

through Cairo, adrift in his native city. Living under house arrest, he tries to write of his tortuous experience, but instead smokes, spies on the neighbors, visits old lovers, and marvels at Egypt's new consumer culture. Published in 1966, *That Smell* was immediately banned and the print-run confiscated. The original, uncensored version did not appear in Egypt for another twenty years.

For this edition, translator Robyn Creswell has also included an annotated selection of the author's *Notes from Prison*, Ibrahim's prison diaries—a personal archive comprising hundreds of handwritten notes copied onto Bafra-brand cigarette papers and smuggled out of jail. These stark, intense writings shed unexpected light on the sources and motives of Ibrahim's groundbreaking novel. Also included in this edition is Ibrahim's celebrated essay about the writing and reception of *That Smell*.

The Clash of Images by Abdelfattah Kilito, translated by Robyn Creswell (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2010)



“Reading Kilito has always been, for me, an adventure. Kilito dares the reader to travel with him, riding over the frontiers between fiction and reality, between literary criticism and storytelling. He is a writer with his own personal library; a reader who invents an imaginary

present out of fragments drawn from the past. *The Clash of Images* is a marvelous book, a mysterious alchemy of tale and teller. This student of Roland Barthes proves the French master's point: every critic could be a novelist in disguise.”—Elias Khoury, author of *Gate of the Sun*.

Abdelfattah Kilito's *The Clash of Images* is an enchanting collection of linked stories set in a coastal city of memories. It is a time when the old Arabic world of texts and oral traditions is making way for something new—the modern era of the image, the comic book, photo IDs, and the cinema. Together, the stories form a kaleidoscopic memoir of growing up in two worlds, a brilliant mixture of cultural and family history. Here are tales of first kisses and first reads, Tintin and the Prophet Muhammad, fantasies of the Wild West, the inferno of the bathhouse, and the lost paradises of childhood. *The Clash of Images* is a magic lantern of a book, a celebration of storytelling and all its pleasures that is beautifully translated by Robyn Creswell, who won a PEN Translation Fund Award for this collection.