

CONFLUENCE
Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies

ISSN: 3085-5411
Journal Homepage: https://journals.imist.ma/index.php/confluence/index

Editorial: Inaugural Issue of *Confluence Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*

Confluence Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies offers a rigorous, inclusive, and internationally engaged platform for academic discourse across the humanities and social sciences. Launched in 2025 by members of the Linguistic, Literary, Cultural & Interdisciplinary Studies Research Laboratory at Abdelmalek Essaadi University, in partnership with IMIST-CNRST, the journal aims to foster scholarly production that transcends disciplinary boundaries and national borders.

Confluence Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies aspires to provide Moroccan and regional scholars a direct pathway into international scholarly conversations. Through its open-access model and robust double-blind peer review process, the journal not only ensures high-quality research but also promotes equitable access to knowledge production and dissemination.

The journal's scope encompasses a broad array of disciplines, including Language and Linguistics, Literature, Cultural Studies, Translation Studies, History, Media Studies, Pedagogy, and Digital Technologies. This inaugural issue exemplifies the journal's commitment to thematic and methodological plurality, engaging with critical questions at the intersection of politics, culture, technology, and representation.

Opening the issue, Karim Bejjit's "The North African Desert in American Travel Writing" traces the symbolic and imaginative evolution of the Sahara in American travel narratives, from early captivity tales to mid-twentieth-century literary pilgrimages. The desert becomes a site where romance, spirituality, violence, and colonial fantasy are projected, thereby sustaining its status as both an exotic spectacle and a resistant terrain. Following this, in "Graphic Occupation: Joe Sacco and the Artwork of Bearing Witness," Sawsan Malla Hussein analyzes Sacco's visual journalism through the lens of peace studies and testimonial ethics. Sacco's work subverts journalistic neutrality, blending historical reconstruction with personal testimony to disrupt hegemonic media narratives around Gaza.

Rajae Khaloufi's "Performance Knowledge and Practices beyond Dominant Discourses and Geographies" engages with the post-war Bosnian production *Crossing the Lines* to explore performance as a form of political resistance and psychosocial healing. Through testimonial art and embodied practice, the work facilitates community rebuilding and challenges historical silences. Continuing with literature and symbolic resistance, Brahim Barhoun's "Magical

Feminism as Ontological Resistance in Mhani Alaoui's *Dreams of Maryam Tair*" foregrounds the political potential of magical realism, framing Alaoui's narrative as a feminist, insurgent intervention against patriarchal hegemony, wherein mythic figures and symbolic spaces become sites of feminine epistemology. As Editor-in-Chief of *Confluence Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, Barhoun recused himself from the editorial handling of this article and of the co-authored interview included in this issue. Both were managed independently by other members of the editorial board to ensure impartiality.

The discussion then turns to media discourse. Sara Rguig's "The Representation of the Arab Spring in the U.S. Media" employs Critical Discourse Analysis to expose Orientalist tropes in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Her study reveals the ideological role of language in portraying Arabs as violent and irrational while reinforcing Western superiority. A regional media perspective follows in Omar Kouiyache and Oussama Badad's "Shifting Currents," which examines Moroccan and Spanish media coverage of irregular migration before and after Spain's political realignment on the Moroccan Sahara. Their comparative analysis demonstrates the impact of diplomatic shifts on public discourse, reframing migration from a humanitarian crisis to a narrative of bilateral cooperation. Continuing the theme of changing societal narratives, Hafssa Chahbane and Khalid Houssaini's "Leadership in the Age of Content Creators and Influencers" extends the discussion to digital culture, drawing on Moroccan case studies to argue that influencers represent a new paradigm of grassroots authority and mobilization.

Turning to travel, gender, and cultural experience, Aicha Bouchara and Jihane Benmassoud's "Exploring the Experiences of International Solo Women Travelers to Morocco" presents a qualitative account of safety, empowerment, and intercultural exchange. While Morocco's cultural richness draws visitors, persistent concerns over harassment and inadequate public infrastructure remain.

In the field of translation studies, Abdelmajid El Sayd's "The Interplay of Linguistic and Cultural Factors in Translating Theatrical Concepts" compares Moroccan practices for rendering English theatrical terms, advocating for approaches grounded in cultural context and informed by both classical and modern theory. Habiba Nakhli's "Gender in Translation Discourse" applies feminist translation theory to challenge patriarchal norms, showing through specific instances how "feminizing" translation strategies assert both visibility and ideological resistance.

Technological transformations and education are taken up by the rest of the articles. Chukwuma Livinus Ndububa and Bibian Ugoala's "Digital Pragmatics and Human Identity" examines interactions with chatbots, revealing distinct patterns of identity negotiation across ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini. Nafiaa Bouanani's "The Impact of AI on University Students' Academic Assertiveness" then narrows the focus to higher education, identifying both the confidence-enhancing potential and the autonomy-reducing risks of AI writing tools. Didi Naoufal's "Educational Integrity" discusses ethical frameworks for AI governance in Moroccan higher education, advocating a "glocal" policy approach rooted in cultural and religious principles. Abderrazak Zaafour's "Language Learning Through Collaboration" closes the articles' section with a study of Cooperative Project-Based Learning (CPBL) applied across Morocco, the U.S., the UK, and the Philippines, demonstrating its capacity to boost motivation, cognitive engagement, and cross-cultural competence.

The issue also includes "On Exile, Migration, and Hybrid Identity," a reflective interview by Mariam Bouaoud and Brahim Barhoun with Moroccan novelist Abdelhamid El Beyuki. The discussion delves into exile as a psychological condition and writing as a space of memory, resistance, and ethical imagination. El Beyuki articulates a vision of literature that challenges

cultural essentialism, confronts marginalization, and reaffirms plurality and belonging through storytelling.

The issue concludes with two thoughtful book reviews. Hakima Choukri's review of *The Experimental Turn in the Moroccan Novel, 1976–1989*, by Anouar El Younssi, commends the work for mapping a new trajectory in Moroccan literary historiography and for situating experimental Moroccan fiction within global theoretical conversations. In the second review, Ahlam El Haddad reads Eric Calderwood's *On Earth or in Poems: The Many Lives of Al-Andalus*, noting its critical interrogation of Andalusi memory as a politicized metaphor in modern cultural discourse.

2025 marks the founding year of the publication of *Confluence Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*. In 2025, we have decided to publish a single issue to establish our peer-review and editorial workflows. Beginning January 2026, *Confluence* will publish two issues annually, in January and July, providing authors with regular publication opportunities and ensuring compliance with the periodicity requirements of major international indexing databases. The schedule is intended to maximize the scholarly visibility of our authors' work and contribute to the journal's future eligibility for global indexation.

This inaugural issue is the product of a sustained and coordinated effort. We extend our sincere gratitude to the journal's editorial and advisory boards. Their intellectual guidance and disciplinary breadth have been instrumental in shaping this endeavor. We also acknowledge the indispensable support of IMIST-CNRST and Abdelmalek Essaadi University and their commitment to promoting critical scholarship.

As we inaugurate *Confluence Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, we do so with a shared conviction that scholarship should be accessible, collaborative, and transformative. We look forward to publishing future issues that will further enrich disciplinary knowledge, promote cross-cultural dialogue, and sustain the ethical imperative of academic inquiry.

On behalf of the entire editorial team, we welcome you to *Confluence*.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

As Editor-in-Chief of *Confluence Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, I am the author of one article and co-author of one interview included in this issue. The peer review and editorial decision-making for both contributions were conducted independently by other members of the editorial board to ensure objectivity and uphold the journal's ethical standards.

Brahim Barhoun
Editor-in-Chief
Confluence Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies
Abdelmalek Essaadi University