

CONFLUENCE
Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies

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

Editorial

Volume 2, Issue 3 — July 2026

Confluence Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies

This regular issue of *Confluence Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* brings together twenty contributions: thirteen research articles, three interviews, and four book reviews. The research articles fall into four broad areas. Literary and cultural studies open the issue, followed by work in language, discourse, and translation, then media and communication, and finally education and technology. The ordering reflects a deliberate movement from the interpretation of texts to the study of the languages in which texts are made, then outward to the media systems that circulate public discourse and the classrooms where language is taught. Read in sequence, the contributions display the range of methods, from close reading and critical fabulation to corpus analysis, framing analysis, and mixed-methods classroom research, through which the humanities and social sciences examine culture today.

Mouna Ben Haddou opens the issue with a study of diasporic counter-narrative in Laila Lalami's *The Other Americans*. Drawing on Said's theory of Otherness, Crenshaw's intersectionality, Gramsci's cultural hegemony, and Scott's hidden transcripts, she argues that Lalami's polyphonic structure unsettles the myth of an inclusive American melting pot. In her account, private mourning and intergenerational memory carry political weight; the novel tells a story and, in the telling, performs an act of resistance.

Douae Abridaa and Sawsan Malla Hussein read four novels across a single mnemonic frame: Cynthia Ozick's *The Shawl* and Saul Bellow's *Mr. Sammler's Planet* against Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* and Ibtisam Azem's *The Book of Disappearance*. Their question is what happens to Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory when the catastrophe it describes has not ended. Moving through objects, sites, and bodies, they argue that a shawl mediating irrevocable loss differs in kind from house keys and Ottoman land registers that underwrite a claim to return, and that Jaffa's erasure through renaming differs from an indifferent New York that merely neglects the past. Postmemory, they contend, needs recalibration rather than rejection once trauma refuses to become past, and the comparison throughout presumes asymmetry rather than equivalence between the two histories.

Chadi El Mtouni turns to Saeida Rouass's *Assembly of the Dead*, set against the 1906 Algeciras Conference and the case of the so-called "Moorish Jack the Ripper" of Marrakesh. Using Saidiya Hartman's method of critical fabulation, he examines how Rouass speculatively recovers thirty-six real murder victims whom Moroccan historiography, in Brahim El Guabli's

phrase a "gender-unaware history," had reduced to silence. El Mtouni resists both the local patriarchal negligence that deemed these women expendable and the colonialist gaze that homogenized them.

Chaimae Belahrache and Brahim Barhoun offer the first sustained standalone analysis of Yamit Armbrister's *One Moroccan Woman*. Their concept of settler countermemory names a paradox. Tamar Ben Zaken's memories of Muslim foster motherhood, Arabic sound, and shared domestic ritual in Marrakesh contest Ashkenazi racism and the Israeli erasure of Moroccan Jewish identity, yet her narrative remains complicit in the Zionist erasure of Palestine. Reading with Ella Shohat and Olivia C. Harrison, the authors follow Tamar's de-Maghrebization from Marrakesh to Kiryat Gat and insist that the novel's political value lies in its unresolved contradiction.

Oral tradition anchors the next contribution. Mohamed Rouichi reads three Moroccan folktales, "The Girl Who Fell in Love with the Hermit," "The Vizier and the Chicken," and "The Tale of Hatim Tai," through an interdisciplinary lens that joins anthropology, sociology, psychoanalysis, and gender-attuned criticism. The tales negotiate tensions between spiritual aspiration and filial duty, articulate expectations of just kingship, and place compassion at the center of moral life.

Two articles then carry the issue to Nigeria. James Aboi Dominic and John Kwasu Katung read Wole Soyinka's *King Baabu* through New Historicism, tracing the playwright's outrage at military despots-turned-politicians and at a cycle of power in which regimes change while predation continues. Chibuike Smart Mbarachi and Chinyere Christiana Ndeche investigate Yejide Kilanko's *Daughters Who Walk This Path* sociopragmatically, showing how Kilanko's contextually Yoruba and Nigerian English constructs a dual identity, indigenous and national on one side, literary and anglophone on the other. Their attention to language in literature points toward the linguistic studies that follow.

Azouz Belkharraf and Zakariae Azennoud examine the word *hijra* in Arabic newspaper discourse through corpus-assisted discourse analysis. Running three association measures in GraphColl across a specially built corpus, they map the collocational networks through which the press renders migration a social problem in one context, a youthful hope in another, a geopolitical crisis in a third. Their study also makes a case for extending largely English-dominant corpus methods into Arabic. Omar Ajbar stays with the Arabic lexicon but shifts to translation. His three-phase analysis of the Qur'anic term *Hajj*, lexical, conceptual, and contrastive, finds that the common English equivalent "pilgrimage" fails to carry the term's conceptual and ritual specificity, and he recommends foreignization when translating such terms.

Media and communication form the third cluster. Brahim Elboukhari and Abdelmalek El Kadoussi question whether the Habermasian ideal of a rational, dispassionate public sphere can serve to evaluate the MENA region. Analyzing roughly 1,200 user comments across three Moroccan cases, they propose an "Affective Public Sphere" driven by a moral economy of shared values, in which accountability lies dormant until a transgression violates something the community holds sacred, whether humanitarian grief, national identity, or cultural dignity. The digital street then erupts. Their conclusion carries a warning: the affective mobilization that gives voice to the voiceless also produces a majoritarian consensus that states can co-opt to justify censorship. Omar Kouiyache brings framing analysis to Morocco's hosting of AFCON 2025, comparing twenty-five articles from *Morocco World News* and Algeria's *El Watan*. The same tournament yields two irreconcilable stories, one of organizational success and soft power, the other of manipulation and artifice; the divergence says more about regional rivalry than about football.

The research section closes with education. Salma Driouach, Ahmed Ibrahimi, and Bouchra Chougrani analyze the structural tension between professional competency frameworks (the CEFR Companion Volume, DigCompEdu, EAQUALS, and national FLE frameworks) and the pedagogical architecture of MOOCs, proposing a four-step alignment mechanism that distinguishes competencies teachable at scale from those requiring situated practice. Mohamed Chahbi and Imane Bakkali report a mixed-methods study of an augmented reality reading activity built around Jemaa El-Fnaa with thirty Moroccan middle school learners of English. Performance gains and high engagement followed the intervention, though the authors acknowledge the limits of a short study conducted without a control group.

Three interviews follow. Imane Derrazi and Brahim Barhoun speak with novelist and former journalist Karima Ahdad about her trajectory from *Cactus Girls* to *The Other Woman*, her six a.m. writing discipline, her commitment to realism, and her reinvented Scheherazade, a woman who tells stories to save herself from herself. Brahim Barhoun and Zineb Duali interviews Mohamed El Ftouh on *Diwan Al-Ahali*, his 508-page historical novel of Tetouan, in a conversation, translated from Arabic, about what he calls the aesthetic wager of historical fiction, namely interpreting the silences of the archive without falsifying it. Inass Essrhir talks with Tahir Shah about Moroccan storytelling, the collaboration between Mohammed Mrabet and Paul Bowles, and a view of translation in which the translator does not reproduce a tale but creates the new variant that keeps it alive.

Four book reviews close the issue. Abdellatif Labkadri reviews *The Last Rekkas* by Aomar Boum and Majdouline Boum-Mendoza, a chronicle of foot couriers in southern Morocco. Niapégué Sanou assesses Étienne Fakaba Sissoko's debut novel *Le Trône des Illusions*, a satire of coups and governance in the fictional Republic of Gayma that cost its author his freedom before it cost him his country. El Makke Maagoul evaluates *Decolonising Approaches to Users and Audiences in the Global South*, edited by Tarik Sabry, Winston Mano, and Andrea Medrado, a collection that rethinks audience research beyond Western frameworks. Omar Artal reviews Christoph Wulf's *Handbook on Intangible Cultural Practices as Global Strategies for the Future*, published twenty years after the UNESCO Convention on intangible heritage.

A shared habit of mind holds these twenty contributions together. Each takes a cultural object, whether novel, folktale, headline, or sacred term, seriously enough to ask what work it does in the world. We thank the contributors, the peer reviewers, and the editorial team at *Confluence*. Special thanks go to the research laboratory LLCIS at Abdelmalek Essaadi University, whose support makes this journal possible. The issue speaks in many registers, from many places. Such plurality is no accident of the submission pile; a multidisciplinary journal exists to cultivate it.

Brahim Barhoun
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Confluence Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies
Abdelmalek Essaadi University
July 2026

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This issue includes contributions from members of the editorial team, including the Editor-in-Chief and members of the LLCIS Research Lab. All such submissions were subject to the journal's standard double-blind peer-review process and evaluated independently to ensure fairness, objectivity, and the highest standards of scholarly integrity.

The authors have declared no conflicts of interest.