



International Digital Humanities Lecture

Choose Your Own Adventure:
A Digital Exploration of Mahri Poetry

Prof. Samuel Liebhaber
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4:30 pm | COOR 170

The Mahri language of Southern Arabian is one of the few indigenous, non-Arabic languages remaining on the Arabian Peninsula, and since Mahri is a non-written language, poetry in the Mahri language is a strictly oral art form. As a result, the process of poetic creation in al-Mahra is guided by a hierarchical series of questions that the poet addresses at the moment of inspiration.

I have developed a digital exhibit of Mahri poetry that enables visitors to explore the diversity of poetic expression in al-Mahra and experience the formation of a poem in the moment. By adopting a web-based medium, the online project challenges the traditional, genre-based classification of Arabian vernacular poetry and encourages the reception of these poems as oral expressions. The talk will outline the theoretical and experiential basis of my research on Mahri poetry as well as provide a demonstration of the digital project, *When Melodies Gather* (forthcoming, Stanford University Press, Spring 2018).



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