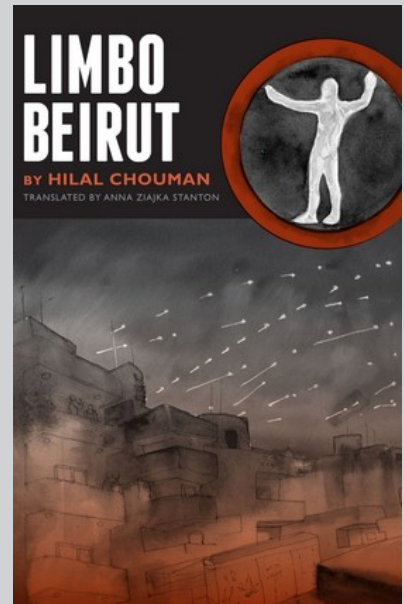


# Beyond Untranslatability: Translation Ethics and the Pragmatics of Affective Language Practices in the Translation of Contemporary Arabic Literature

**April 21, 2017 at 11:00-12:30 | Campbell Hall 209**

The untranslatable is that which the translator can never fully encompass within his or her own words, yet to which every one of these words is both ontologically and materially indebted. In this talk, I explore how particular strategies of translation enabled me to deal with the untranslatable aspects of the contemporary Arabic novel *Līm̄bū Bayrūt* (2013) by Lebanese writer Hilāl Shūmān (b. 1982) as I was translating this work into English. By critically interrogating my own translation praxis in this way, I stage a rhetorical move away from seeing translation as either a problematic attempt at, or a politicized rejection of, the domestication and absorption of a source text into a new language. Translation takes shape here instead as a procession of intimate and affective exchanges between text and translator, and between Arabic and English, that serve to reproduce in the translated volume qualities of the original text that are irreducible to a metric of dictionary equivalence. Taking seriously Jacques Derrida's admonition that the untranslatable is what animates language, and that without it there is only death for language and for those who dwell within it, I examine the preservation of untranslatables within a specific translation event as a matter not only of pragmatic importance but of ethical responsibility.



**Anna Ziajka Stanton**, Assistant Professor, Comparative Literature, The Pennsylvania State University, she is the translator of Hilal Chouman's novel *Limbo Beirut* (2016) and author of a book in progress on Arabic-English translation.

## SPONSORS:

NELC, The Humanities Institute, Comparative Studies, The Middle East Center, CLLC