

# ROBYN CRESWELL

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## PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

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- 2014 — **Yale University**  
Associate Professor with Tenure 2023—  
Associate Professor on Term 2018—  
Director of Graduate Studies, 2021— 2023  
Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature 2014—2018  
Director of Undergraduate Studies, 2017—2019
- 2018 — 2023 **Farrar, Straus and Giroux Publishers**  
Poetry editor-at-large
- 2011 — 2014 **Brown University**  
Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature
- 2010 — 2018 **The Paris Review**  
Poetry Editor

## EDUCATION

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- 2012 **New York University**, Ph.D. in Comparative Literature  
Dissertation: *Tradition and Translation: Poetic Modernism in Beirut*
- 2005 **New York University**, M.A. in Comparative Literature
- 1999 **Brown University**, B.A. in Comparative Literature  
*Magna cum laude*

## BOOKS

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*City of Beginnings: Poetic Modernism in Beirut* (Princeton University Press, 2019)

Winner of the Gaddis Smith International Book Prize; reviewed in *The New York Review of Books*, *Fence*, *Modernism/Modernity*, *Comparative Literature Studies*, *Journal of Arabic Literature*, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, *Asiatische Studien*, *La rivista di ArabLit*, *al-Quds al-'arabi*, *al-Jazeera.com*, *al-Faisal*

*The FSG Poetry Anthology*, co-edited with Jonathan Galassi (*Farrar, Straus and Giroux*, 2021).

## PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

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"Poets in Prose: Genre & History in the Arabic Novel," *Daedalus* 150:1 (Winter 2021), 147-159.

"Reimagining Arab Nationalism: Nazik al-Mala'ika and the Politics of Poetic Meter," *Critical Inquiry* 46 (Fall 2019), 71-96.

“Modernism in Translation: Poetry and Intellectual History in Beirut,” in *Arabic Thought Against the Authoritarian Age: Towards an Intellectual History of the Present*, eds. Max Weiss and Jens Hanssen (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 113-137.

“The Poetry of Jihad” (with Bernard Haykel) in *Jihadi Culture: The Art and Social Practices of Militant Islamists*, ed. Thomas Hegghammer (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 22-41.

“Is Arabic Untranslatable?” *Public Culture* (28:3, Fall 2016, 447-456).

“Crise de vers: Adonis’ *Diwan* and the Institution of Modernism,” *Modernism/Modernity* 17:4 (November 2010), 877-898.

## LITERARY JOURNALISM

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### Essays

“Reimagining al-Andalus,” *The New York Review of Books*, February 22, 2024 [on Arab ideas of Andalusia].

“Endless Organic Growth,” *The New York Review of Books* [online] January 5, 2023 [on Ibrahim El-Salahi]

“Then What Happened?” *The New York Review of Books*, November 3, 2022 [on *The Arabian Nights*].

“On the Road,” *The New York Review of Books*, October 7, 2021 [on Hanna Diyab].

“The Body and the Border,” *The New York Review of Books*, October 22, 2020 [on Adania Shibli].

“Making and Unmaking,” *The New York Review of Books*, July 2, 2020 [on Susan Stewart].

“Lebanon’s Infernal Circle,” *The New York Review of Books*, January 16, 2020 [on Rawi Hage].

“Playing a Part: Imru’ al-Qays in English,” in *A New Diwan* (London: Ginko, 2019).

“The Force of Looking,” *The Nation*, October 14, 2019 [on Kamel Daoud].

“The Art of Translation: Michael Hofmann,” *The Paris Review*, no.230, Fall 2019.

“A Free Man in Nablus,” *The New York Review of Books*, July 25, 2019 [on Isabella Hammad’s *The Parisian*].

“‘An Enthusiastick Sect’,” *The New York Review of Books*, March 7, 2019 [on studies of Sufism].

“Waking the Dead,” *The New York Review of Books*, November 8, 2018 [on Patrick Modiano].

“Hearing Voices,” *The New Yorker*, December 18 & 25, 2017 [on Adonis’ *Concerto for Jerusalem*].

“Persia’s Hybrid Art,” *The New York Review of Books Daily*, November 10, 2017.

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"The Seal of the Poets," *The New York Review of Books*, October 26, 2017 [Attar's *Conference of the Birds*].

"Syria: Stories from the Barrel of a Gun," *The New York Review of Books Daily*, May 15, 2017.

"Tripoli Nights with a Master of Arabic," *The New York Review of Books*, March 7, 2017 [on Elias Khoury's *Broken Mirrors*].

"The Art of Fiction: Elias Khoury," *The Paris Review*, no.220, Spring 2017.

"Voices from a Different Syria," *The New York Review of Books Daily*, March 21, 2016.

"The First Great Arabic Novel," *The New York Review of Books*, October 8, 2015 [al-Shidyaq's *Leg Over Leg*]

"Battle Lines," *The New Yorker*, June 8 & 15, 2015 [on the poetry of jihad]

"Syria's Lost Spring," *The New York Review of Books Daily*, February 16, 2015.

"Art Beyond Politics," *Harper's Magazine* [blog], August 26, 2014.

"Escaping Beirut," *The New York Review of Books Daily*, March 25, 2014.

"Poetry in Extremis," *The New Yorker.com*, February 13, 2014.

"The Winds of Revolt," *Harper's Magazine*, November 2013, 89-94 [on Abdellatif Laabi]

"Egypt's Oracular Novelist," *The New Yorker.com*, August 20, 2013 [on Sonallah Ibrahim]

"Chasing Beirut's Ghosts," *The New York Review of Books Daily*, July 20, 2013

"The Art of Poetry: James Fenton," *The Paris Review*, no.202 (Fall 2012).

"Egypt: The Cultural Revolution," *The New York Times Book Review*, February 10, 2011.

"On Egypt," *n+1*, January 29, 2011.

"Undelivered," *Harper's Magazine*, February 2011, 71-79 [on Sonallah Ibrahim and Albert Cossery].

"Eloquent Phantom," *Harper's Magazine*, July 2009, 75-79 [on Salih's *A Season of Migration to the North*].

"Unbeliever in the Impossible," *Harper's Magazine*, February 2009, 69-74 [on Mahmoud Darwish]

"In Memorium: Naguib Mahfouz," *n+1*, September 2006.

"Reimagining Robert Lowell," *Raritan* 24: 3 (2004), 104-120.

"Painting and Privacy: Anthony Hecht," *Raritan* 21:3 (2002), 18-34.

"On Frederick Seidel," *Raritan* 21:2 (2001), 68-84.

## Short Book Reviews

*The Republic of False Truths*, by Alaa Al Aswany, *The New York Times Books Review*, August 10, 2021.

*How Information Warfare Shaped the Arab Spring*, by Nathaniel Greenberg, *Journal of Arabic Literature* 51 (2020) 147-150.

*Sonallah Ibrahim: Rebel With a Pen*, by Paul Starkey, *Middle Eastern Literatures* (Fall 2017).

*The Return: Fathers, Sons and the Land in Between*, by Hisham Matar, *The New York Times Book Review*, July 5, 2016.

*Native Tongue, Stranger Talk*, by Michelle Hartman, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 47 (2015)

*Circling the Square: Stories from the Egyptian Revolution*, by Wendell Stevenson, *The New York Times Book Review*, July 10, 2015.

*La Revue Shi'r / Poésie et la modernité poétique arabe*, by Dounia Badini, *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 44:1 (2013), 103-107.

*In the Presence of Absence*, by Mahmoud Darwish, *Bidoun*, Spring 2012, 128-9.

*Habibi*, by Craig Thompson, *The New York Times Book Review*, October 16, 2011.

*If I Were Another and A River Dies of Thirst*, by Mahmoud Darwish, *The National*, November 12, 2009.

*My Happiness Bears No Relation to Happiness*, by Adina Hoffman, *The National*, April 10, 2009.

*The Terrorist in Search of Humanity*, by Faisal Devji, *The National*, December 26, 2008.

*Conversations with My Father, Adonis*, by Ninar Esber, *The National*, September 12, 2008.

*Unfortunately, It Was Paradise*, by Mahmoud Darwish, *Arab Studies Journal* 14:2 (2006), 159-162.

*A Time Between Ashes and Roses*, by Adonis, trans. Shawkat Toorawa, *Arab Studies Journal* 13:2/14:1 (2005/6), 121-124.

*The Great Fire*, by Shirley Hazzard, *The Yale Review* 92:3 (2004), 160-169.

*Terror and Liberalism*, by Paul Berman, and *After Jihad*, by Noah Feldman, *Arab Studies Journal* 11:2/12:1(2003/4), 168-174.

*Rock Harbor*, by Carl Phillip, *The Yale Review* 91:3 (2003), 173-179.

"Frederick Seidel of St. Louis," *The Nation*, December 30, 2002, 32-34.

## TRANSLATIONS

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### Books

*The Threshold: Poems*, Iman Mersal (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2022). [Arabic]

Winner of the National Translation Award for Poetry (American Literary Translators Association); shortlisted for the Griffin Prize; longlisted for PEN Translation Prize.

Reviewed in *The New York Review of Books*, *The New York Times*, *The Nation*, *4Columns*

Poems published in *The Paris Review*, *The Nation*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Republic*

*The Tongue of Adam*, Abdelfattah Kilito (New Directions, 2016). [French]

Reviewed in *Publishers Weekly* [starred], *Asymptote*, *Quarterly Conversation*, *Culture Trip*

*That Smell and Notes from Prison*, Sonallah Ibrahim (New Directions, 2013). [Arabic]

Reviewed in *The London Review of Books*, *The New York Review of Books Daily*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *TLS*, *Banipal*

*The Clash of Images*, Abdelfattah Kilito (New York: New Directions, 2010). [French]

Reviewed in *The Nation*, *Bookforum*, *Quarterly Conversation*

### Articles

“The European Way to Die,” Michel Houellebecq, *Harper’s Magazine*, February 2023.

“An Introduction to Popular Moroccan Poetry” [French] and “On the Anniversary of July 5” [Arabic] in *Souffles-Anfas :A Critical Anthology*, ed. Olivia C. Harrison and Teresa Villa-Ignacio (Stanford, 2016).

## CONFERENCES AND COLLOQUIA

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### Organizer

*Translation/Tarjama: The Aesthetics and Politics of Translating Arabic Literature*, Yale University, April 6, 2018. One-day symposium with international guests including Elias Khoury and Marilyn Hacker.

Lectures on translation by Adania Shibli, A.E. Stallings, Richard Zenith, Susan Bernofsky, Lydia Davis, Richard Sieburth, Dick Davis, Damion Searles, Marilyn Hacker, Elias Muhanna, and others.

### Papers

“Palestinian Atlal,” Princeton University, Near Eastern Studies (March 2023)

“Magazines and the Poetics of Occasion,” *The Journal as Form*, Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin (November 2021)

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- “Autonomy, Cold-War Liberalism, and Historical Agency,” Middle Eastern Studies Association (November 2021)
- “Finding a Voice: Iman Mersal in English,” D’Égypt et d’ailleurs, Marseille (June 2021)
- “*Wild Relatives* as Allegory for the Arab Winter,” Yale Middle Eastern Legal Studies Seminar, Madrid (January 2020)
- “Arabic Translation Workshop,” [invited panelist] American Literary Translators Association, Rochester (November 2019)
- “Filming the Syrian War,” [invited speaker], Current Dynamics between Europe and the Middle East and North Africa, Princeton University (May 2019)
- “Modernism in Translation: Poetry and Politics in Beirut’s Belle Époque,” Invited Lecture, Bard College (April 2019)
- “A Closer Look: Etel Adnan,” [invited lecture] Mass MOCA Museum (November 2018)
- “Personalism, Politics, and Poetry,” Middle Eastern Studies Association, San Antonio (November 2018)
- “Modernism and Its Afterlives,” New York Institute for the Humanities (October 2018)
- “Jewish Literature in Arabic: On Samir Naqqash,” Seminar in Modern Hebrew Literature and Jewish Literatures, Yale University (April 2018)
- “Tehran 1979, Damascus 2011: Adonis, Foucault, and Modernity,” Invited Lecture, Tufts University (March 2018)
- “Re-imagining Nationalism: Nazik al-Mala’ika and the Poetics of Pan-Arabism,” Yale Middle Eastern Legal Studies Seminar, Lisbon (January 2018)
- “Tehran 1979, Damascus 2011: Adonis, Foucault, and the Genealogy of Revolt,” Invited Lecture, Princeton University (March 2017)
- “Abounaddara: A Syrian Film Collective,” Yale Middle Eastern Legal Studies Seminar, Marrakesh (January 2017)
- “Arabic Modernism,” Invited Lecture, Harvard University, The Center for Middle Eastern Studies (October 2016)
- “Global Modernism: State of the Field,” Invited Panelist, New York University (October 2015)
- “A Corpus Not a Canon: A Workshop on the Library of Arabic Literature,” Invited Panelist, All Souls College, Oxford University (April 2015)
- “Arabic Modernism in Translation: Adonis, Elegy, and World Literature,” Invited Lecture, University of Toronto (February 2015)

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- “On the Authoritarian Turn: The State of the Egyptian Intelligentsia,” Roundtable, NYU Abu Dhabi Institute (September 2014)
- “Metaphor and Figural Interpretation in Adonis,” American Comparative Literature Association, New York City (March 2014)
- “Hikmet in Arabic,” Nazim Hikmet: One Poet, One Nation, One World, Brown University (February 2014)
- “The Poetics of Pan-Arabism,” Invited Lecture, CUNY Graduate Center (December 2013)
- “Travelling Genres: The *Tombeau* in Translation,” Arabic Literature: Migration, Diaspora, Exile, Estrangement, Columbia University (November 2013)
- “A Second Life in the Archives: Digitizing Arabic Literary Magazines,” Invited Lecture, Print Culture: Past, Present, Future, Brandeis University (October 2013)
- “Sonallah Ibrahim and the Egyptian Everyday,” Invited Lecture, Midans of the Self, Georgetown University (May 2013)
- “Egyptian Echoes: Nazik al-Mala’ika and the Poetics of Pan-Arabism,” Invited Lecture, Center for the Humanities, Tufts University (April 2013)
- “Poetry and Pan-Arabism,” Keynote, Jil Jadid Conference, University of Texas at Austin (February 2013)
- “Translating the Tradition: Anthologies, Archives, Magazines,” Invited Seminar, Mellon Dissertation Seminar, New York University (July 2012)
- “Nationalism and Modernity: The Origins of Free Verse,” Invited Lecture, New Directions in Middle East and North African Studies Symposium, Northwestern University (April 2012)
- “*Naql*: Tradition in Translation,” World Literature and Translation, NYU, Abu Dhabi (December 2011)
- “The Cry of its Occasion: Darwish’s Early Poetics” Middle Eastern Studies Association, San Diego (October 2010).
- “Adunis wa-l-diwan al-shi’r al-‘arabi,” Invited Lecture, Cairo International Poetry Conference, Cairo, Egypt (March 2009).
- “Adonis’s *Diwan* as Modernist Archive,” American Comparative Literature Association, Boston (March 2009).
- “Rhythm and Revolution in Benjamin’s ‘Moscow,’” Conference on Walter Benjamin, East Normal University, Shanghai, China (June 2007).
- “Poetic Historiographies: Mahmoud Darwish,” Middle Eastern Studies Association, San Francisco (November 2004).

## **AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

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2023	National Translation Award, ALTA (\$4,000)
2021	Guggenheim Fellowship (\$50,000)
2019	NEA Translation Grant (\$12,500)
2019	Gaddis Smith International Book Prize (\$10,000 research funds)
2018-2019	Yale Whitney Humanities Center Fellow
2015-2016	Berlin Prize (American Academy in Berlin)
2015	New York Institute for the Humanities Fellow
2013	Roger Shattuck Prize for Criticism (\$5,000)
2011-2012	Cullman Center Fellowship, New York Public Library
2009-2010	Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship
2009	PEN Translation Fund Prize (\$3,000)
Summers 2008, 2009	MacDowell Colony Fellowship
Summer 2009	UCross Foundation Residency
2005-2006	Fulbright Scholarship, Egypt [declined]
Fall 2005	Center for Arabic Study Abroad, CASA II Fellowship
2003-2004	Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship in Humanistic Studies
2001-2002	Center for Arabic Study Abroad, CASA Fellowship
1999	Alfred Bennet Prize in Comparative Literature, Brown University
1998	Phi Beta Kappa

## **INTERNAL GRANTS**

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2022	Junior Manuscript Colloquium (Yale University) \$3000
2018	Hillis Publication Fund Grant (Yale University) \$4890
2017	Kempf Memorial Fund (Yale University) \$10,700, for symposium: <i>Translation/Tarjama: The Aesthetics and Politics of Translating Arabic</i>



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*Literature*, April 6, 2018

2017	Title VI Grant (Yale, CMES) \$10,000 for symposium: <i>Translation/Tarjama</i>
2014	Griswold Faculty Research Grant (Yale University) \$3650
2012	Humanities Initiative Grant: <i>Digital Magazines: the Arabic Archive</i> (Brown University) \$5000

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## **COURSES**

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### **Yale University**

Spring 2022	The Arabian Nights Then and Now <i>Seminar on the Arabian Nights and its filmic and fictional adaptations</i>
Fall 2021	The Literature of Sports <i>Seminar on canonical sportswriting, from Pindar to David Foster-Wallace</i>
Spring 2021	The Arabian Nights Then and Now (bi-weekly reading group in Arabic) <i>Seminar on the Arabian Nights and its filmic and fictional adaptations</i>
Fall 2020	The Literature of Sports <i>First-year seminar on sportswriting, from Pindar to David Foster-Wallace</i>
Fall 2020	Dissertation Workshop <i>Weekly workshop for advanced graduate students in Comparative Literature</i>
Spring 2019	Arabic Poetry and Poetics <i>Readings in modern and classical Arabic poetry and poetic theory</i>
Fall 2018	Practice of Literary Translation <i>Seminar on the theory and practice of translation</i>
Spring 2018, 2019	How to Compare <i>Required course in methods of comparison for Literature majors</i>
Spring 2018	Practice of Literary Translation [w/Peter Cole] <i>Seminar on the theory and practice of translation</i>
Fall 2017	The Literature of Sports <i>Seminar on canonical sportswriting, from Pindar to David Foster-Wallace</i>
Spring 2017	Literature at the Limit (bi-weekly reading group in Arabic) <i>Readings in Israeli and Palestinian literature</i>
Spring 2015	World Poetry and Performance

*Required course in drama and poetry for Literature majors*

- Spring 2015      **Modernist Poetry as World Literature**  
*Readings in modernist poetry in French, Arabic, English, and Spanish*
- Fall 2014        **Art and Revolution**  
*Literary and filmic representations of revolution from Cuba, Algerian, and Palestine*
- Fall 2014        **Politics and Literature in the Middle East (bi-weekly reading group in Arabic)**  
*Canonical literature and film from the modern Arabophone and Francophone Middle East*

## **Workshops and Seminars**

**New York University**, MFA Arabic Translation (2023); **Academy for Teachers**, Master Class (Summer 2021); **University of Florida**, Editors Workshop (Spring 2013, 2017); **Essex University** (Summer 2016); **Université de Genève** (Summer 2016); **L'école de littérature** (Lagrasse, France, Summer 2012)

## **DOCTORAL STUDENTS**

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**Maru Pabon** Yale University, Department of Comparative Literature  
*Asst. Professor of Comparative Literature, Brown University*

**Iraj Sheidaee**, Yale University, Department of Comparative Literature  
*PhD 2021*

**Daniel Behar**, Harvard University, Department of Comparative Literature  
*Asst. Professor of Arabic Language and Literature, Hebrew University in Jerusalem; Post-Doctoral Researcher at Dartmouth College*

**Alexandrah Chreiteh**, Yale University, Department of Comparative Literature  
*Mellon Bridge Assistant Professor of Arabic Studies, Tufts University; Berlin Prize (Fall 2022)*

**Chana Morgenstern**, Brown University, Department of Comparative Literature  
*Fellow and College Lecturer, Newnham College, Cambridge University*

## **UNIVERSITY SERVICE**

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**Director of Graduate Studies, Comparative Literature** [2021—23]

**Chair, Graduate Reform Committee, Comparative Literature** [2021—23]

**Director of Undergraduate Studies, Comparative Literature** [2017-2019]

**Executive Committee, Yale Translation Initiative, Whitney Humanities Center** [2018—]

**Chair, Curriculum Committee, Comparative Literature** [Spring 2017]  
*Revised the departmental curriculum for undergraduate majors of Comparative Literature*

**Graduate Applications Committee, Comparative Literature** [2015, 2016, 2018, 2020]

**Prospectus Committee, Comparative Literature** [2015, 2017, 2018, 2020]

**Steering Committee, Yusria** (Yale University Seminar on Islam and Arabic) [2017-2019]

**Dissertation Evaluation:** Ariel Bardi [2015], Soren Forsberg [2018], Pelin Kivrak [2019], Julia Powers [2019], Samantha Fox [2020], Paul Frank [English, 2020], Jensen Suther [2022]; Ksenia Sidorenko [2023]; Nebojsa Todorovic [2023]

**Qualifying Exams:** Iraj Saidae [2014], Lital Abazon [2017], Hannah Kosman [French 2019], Xavier Lee [2019], Spencer Lee-Lenfield [2020], Maru Pabon [2020], Nyuol Matiok [2021]

**Senior Essay reader:** Jessica McHugh and Jane Balkoski [2015]; Sarah Bruley, Coryna Orgunseitan, and Ana Paula Rueda Molina [2017]; Stella Shanon and Al Mahdi Alaoui El Hassani [2018], Tomi Sontan, Sterling Brinkley, and Emily Ge [2019]

**Faculty Advisor,** JOLT Magazine (Journal of Literary Translation), 2016 -

**Selection committee member:** CIPE Research Fellowships for Juniors [Spring 2015], 320 York Humanities Grant [Spring 2018]

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## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

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**Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton)**  
Applications Reader 2022, 2023

**National Endowment for the Arts**  
Translation Grant Reader 2021

**Pulitzer Prize**  
Poetry Prize Juror 2018

**American Academy in Berlin**  
Applications reader, 2016-2020

**Cullman Center for Scholars & Writers**  
Applications reader, 2012-2014

**McDowell Colony**  
Applications reader, 2011

## **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

New York Institute for Humanities, Modern Language Association, Middle Eastern Studies Association, American Comparative Literature Association

