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Oral Presentation O7.1

**BETWEEN BEING AND BECOMING: THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN
THREE MAGHREBIAN NOVELS**

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What is culture? What is identity? These are the questions that Francophone Maghrebian (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia) authors like Leola Houari, Yamina Benguigui, and Albert Memmi ask. Whoever has spent a substantial time abroad understands the feeling of loss that one often feels for their homeland. Even if one can return, the feeling of loss continues, but this time for the foreign country. This feeling of loss is even stronger because a return is often no more than a dream. For the children of immigrants, the situation is even worse because they grow up in the liminal space between two cultures, two languages, and two identities, without ever fitting into one, unique space. When one is uprooted, one often experiences an identity crisis, produced from the confusion of not knowing where one's identity allegiances lie. In Francophone literature, a principal theme is the search for identity in the ambiguous space between two "lost" cultures. This work will explore the interstitial dynamic, socio-cultural and linguistic identity space of the Francophone author of the Maghreb.