



2009/2010

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2009-2010

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## Letter from the Director

Welcome to the Hagop Kevorkian Review! The beginning of a new Title VI cycle after our successful application is a good time to rethink the way we present our activities to you. I hope that readers will now have a chance to explore the programme in this new format that allows for more immediate engagement with what we have done during the year.

As you can see, we have been extremely active on many fronts. We have expanded our MA programme which now hosts 42 students. The quality remains most impressive and the courses certainly offer a demanding set of options at the highest standards—standards that our students meet. The range of the theses is remarkable and we owe a debt to the faculty supervisors who gave such high levels of guidance to all the candidates. The Falak Sufi prize for outstanding original MA scholarship, now only in its second year, has already become a high point of our academic activities. Falak's family has most generously established a scholarship in her name and we are very proud this year to welcome the first holder.

Our workshops, distinguished lectures seminars, and screenings continue to focus in the main on contemporary and modern periods and issues, reflecting the nature of Title VI requirements and student interests. They also have the important function of bringing our students together in a setting that encourages collective critical participation. Colleagues at other universities regularly comment to me about the range of our offerings and the rigour of our workshop sessions in which we ask leading specialists to act as discussants of pre-circulated papers.

To everyone who is part of our team I owe a personal debt. Greta Scharnweber not only wrote the complex and successful grant for the new Title VI award, but she also organized the events of many different kinds that make the Kevorkian so special and constitute our outreach into the city and into other educational institutions. That all the students last year finished on time is a tribute to them and to the extraordinary work of our new DGS, Nadia Guessous, who shepherded them through their intellectual trials as well as their bureaucratic hassles. None of this would happen were not Amal Hageb in charge of our budget and its constantly changing procedures. Students are especially grateful for Amal's assistance in navigating all the pitfalls of scholarships, requirements and, not least, visas. Sarah Coffey handles all our front-of-house work and liaises with all of us on so many matters that I am amazed she does not lose track.

A programme such as this is crucial in producing and maintaining the highest standards in the study of the Middle East for students and participants in the academy, in journalism, in law, in the many kinds of NGO projects, in public education and in policy and politics as a whole. Serious study of the region and of Islam is often an uphill struggle given the many political crises, especially of the last decade. These difficulties make it more and more essential, nationally and internationally, that such programs develop and expand, always in intellectually challenging ways and always sharply questioning received truths, including our own! That is the project in which we engage with all our colleagues across the country and we need to work constantly to improve our relations with other universities and centers and to draw in a wider range of colleagues. This collective commitment and our shared responsibility in undertaking the study of and work in the Middle East is fundamental to the success of the Kevorkian. I hope you will enjoy reading about our progress this year and I hope, too, that you will feel free to participate in conversations about ways in which we might develop.

—Michael Gilson

# MARDOMI-NEJAD VS. THE GREENS

Iran's Political Struggle Captured in Election Posters

## Spotlight

By Arang Keshavarzian (Associate Professor, MEIS) and Greta Scharnweber (Associate Director, Hagop Kevorkian Center) with translation by Amir Moosavi, MEIS PhD Candidate and NES MA'07

Iran's hotly contested 2009 presidential election and its tumultuous aftermath have been a source for numerous op-eds, policy speeches, and activist events from Tehran to New York and everywhere in between.

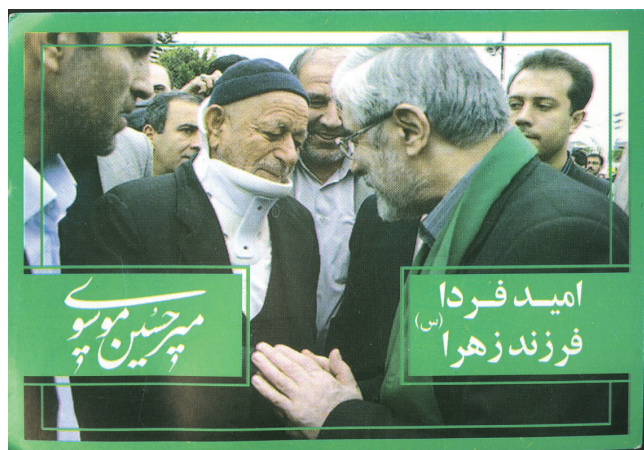
The mass protests and violence that followed the announcement of Ahmadinejad's victory overtook the several weeks of campaigning that preceded the June 12 elections that brought 85% of the electorate to the ballot boxes. One of the vehicles for expressing the platforms of the candidates as well as inspiring voters was the array of colorful and ever-present election posters. While previous elections also included banners and posters as means for citizens to demonstrate their political views and candidates to disseminate their messages, Iran's 10<sup>th</sup> presidential election saw an increase in significance and volume of visual and symbolic methods. Moreover, these posters hearken back to core themes or symbols of the Islamic revolution while also foreshadowing the deep cleavages exposed in the election and the conflicts in its aftermath.

### Reaching out to the People

Mass participation and populism were hallmarks of the 1979 revolution that toppled the monarchy, and were critical to Khomeini's ability to consolidate state power during the early years of the Iran-Iraq war. This theme continued to be noticeable in many of the 2009 election posters for all candidates. Unsurprisingly, Ahmadinejad utilized populist rhetoric and symbols just as he had since his 2005 successful presidential campaign. His campaign team went so far as to rename him *Mardomi-Nejad*, meaning "cut from the people's cloth."



*In the first poster (top right), which uses a photograph of a disabled child at one of his rallies, Ahmadinejad is represented as the protector of the oppressed and "downtrodden," a time-honored theme of the Islamic revolution. The caption reads: "Fellow Citizens, I have come [to the fore]. You come, too...[on] the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Khordad [Election day of 2009]; We will vote for Ahmadinejad. Support Doctor Mahmoud Mardomi-Nejad."*



Intriguingly, despite the very clear populist message, the supporters of the current president emphasized Ahmadinejad's title of "doctor" in order to remind voters that he holds a Ph.D. in engineering and has technical expertise. Additionally, the young woman in the photograph appears to be wearing makeup and her veil is more revealing than not, contradicting the idea that his politics exclusively target a religiously conservative strata of Iranian society.

Mir Hussain Mousavi, the leftist-influenced Prime Minister during the 1980s, also deemed it necessary to invoke images of his close rapport with "ordinary" Iranians. *The second poster (left) depicts Mir Hossein Mousavi speaking humbly to an elderly man in a neck brace. The caption*



*simply reads: “The hope for tomorrow, the child of Zahra [granddaughter of the Prophet Mohammed].”* On the one hand, his campaigners are referencing the reformist agenda for the future while reminding potential voters that Mousavi is a *seyyid*, or someone who claims descent from the Prophet Mohammed. This is reinforced by the campaign’s savvy use of the color green, which is associated with piety and the Prophet’s family.

#### The Many Greens

Mousavi’s use of the color green also resonated among less religious Iranians, for it symbolizes spring, rebirth and joy. Green was a reminder for more secular Iranians that Mousavi’s platform was a reformist departure from Ahmadinejad’s brand of social conservatism. Consequently, when protestors took to the streets to challenge the legitimacy of the election results as well as the violation of their civil and political rights, the “Green Movement” was born. Just as green was used before and after the election, other campaign themes were also adapted by Mousavi supporters in the contentious months following the election. For instance, the week before the election, Mousavi supporters printed posters that simply read *“Lying is Forbidden”* (far right). This referenced Ahmadinejad’s manipulation of economic statistics and exaggerations of his accomplishments in support of his candidacy. With the June 13 announcement of the results, these matter-of-fact posters took on even greater meaning for the so-called “Greens,” who viewed this outcome as fraudulent.

Despite much enthusiasm and possibly naïve optimism, by the winter the critics of Ahmadinejad and the supporters of greater democratization in Iran were demobilized through coercion and the dismantling of their organizations. *The Green movement’s dramatic rise and decline in the face of brutal repression has left many Iranians sympathizing with the slogan in the campaign poster above (center), which simply states: “waiting for green.”*



#### Iran in Context

The Center held three related and well-attended events on the June 2009 Iranian presidential elections and their aftermath—a teach-in, a panel discussion on Iran in Context, and a workshop for local high school teachers. An online Virtual Classroom unit features a variety of posters from the contentious 2009 elections.

Beginning in Fall 2010, led by Ali Mirsepassi of the Gallatin School, the Kevorkian Center will co-host a new Iranian Studies Initiative dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of modern Iran.

For more information, visit [www.isi-nyu.org](http://www.isi-nyu.org).

# Alumni Q and A: Medical Anthropologist Sherine Hamdy

*Daniel Smith (MA '10) is interested in medical history and the modern histories of Israel, Palestine, and Egypt*

**Sherine Hamdy** (Anthropology, Brown University) recently presented a chapter of her manuscript *Our Bodies Belong to God* for the Kevorkian Center's Research Workshop series. As a recent graduate of the Middle Eastern Studies PH D program, **Daniel Smith MA '10** asked her some questions about the project she began at NYU.

## Research Workshops

**DS:** Tell us about your interests and about the larger project you are working on, as it relates to your book.

**SH:** I'm a medical anthropologist by training, but I am also really interested in formations of ethical reasoning, and particularly in the intersections between religious and scientific modes of thought. I joined the faculty at Brown University in 2008, after having been a postdoctoral fellow, also at Brown, from 2006-2008. In the Department of Anthropology, I teach the social theory core for graduate students, the introductory course in our Science and Society program, an introductory medical anthropology course and a class on Ethnographies of the Muslim Middle East. I've also taught a course on the anthropology of bioethics, and a graduate seminar on anthropological approaches to the body.

The book as a whole explores the crises in medical and religious authority in Egypt through the lens of a national debate over the ethics of organ transplantation. The title of the book, that *Our bodies belong to God*, comes from a statement uttered by the famous Egyptian television shaykh, Muhammad al-Sha'rawi, who stated it as a position against organ donation; it was the chapter about Sha'rawi and his statement that I presented recently at NYU's Kevorkian workshop. Throughout the book, I demonstrate how the idea of the body belonging to God was uttered by religious scholars, patients, doctors, and family members to various meanings in the context of organ donation, depending on the context in which it

was uttered. For example, a mother might state that because God gave her two kidneys, it is from God's generosity and grace that she can sacrifice one of them to save her son in end-stage kidney disease. Or, a journalist might agitate against the dangerous mismanagement of toxic waste in Egypt's countryside, saying that the bodies are creations of God and the state is not only criminally negligent but also committing a grave sin by hurting its citizens' bodies with contaminated water resulting in kidney failure. Or, I met several male rural dialysis patients refusing offers from their wives who wanted to give them their kidneys, out of fear for what might happen to them and the children they might leave behind by saying that their bodies belong to God.

It is always hard to say what an ethnography is "about" – especially in capturing what anthropologist Victor Turner called "social dramas," because they are necessarily about so many different things. This book is about Muslim ethics in the context of Egypt's Islamic revival, it's about the failures of the health system, about the constitution and authorization of scientific knowledge, about political etiologies of disease, the horrible life-and-death decisions people have to make about which resources should go to whom within families, and the steadfastness and hope that they maintain through their religious faith.

**DS:** Describe the process of developing your dissertation, which you submitted to NYU in 2006, into this project. Has your research taken new directions? Have you faced obstacles during the process?

**SH:** I think of the process of turning a dissertation into a book as a kind of zooming-out. So I've spent a lot of time rewriting chapters to a much wider audience, and further digesting all the material. A lot of the material in my dissertation got cut out, and a lot more got added in for the book. It was definitely a long and drawn-out process, and I think the hardest part of it was my thinking that it shouldn't take this long. Once I realized that books, especially first books, just take a lot of time, it got easier.



*Photo courtesy of  
Sherine Hamdy*

Sherine interviews patients  
in a village near Fayoum.



**DS:** One of the most interesting aspects of *Our Bodies Belong to God* is its integration of medical anthropology and Islamic legal thought and ethics. Why do you think it is useful to combine these two approaches? What contribution do you hope your project will make?

**SH:** One of the contributions I hope to make is to explode the concept of “bioethics.” Particularly in the US and in this growing field of “international health,” bioethics is generally understood very narrowly, as a universalist context-free field. It was also quickly institutionalized in the field of biomedicine, such that it lost its critical edge. In Egypt, Muslim patients and doctors generally approach ethics in terms of Islam. So understanding the ways in which regular people approach bioethical questions requires knowing something about Islamic legal thought and ethics (fiqh).

**DS:** Your project focuses on Muslims’ views in three cities: Cairo, Mansoura, and Tanta. Rural areas and religious minorities like Copts appear to be out of the purview of your work. Do you think similar debates over organ transplantation are occurring within other religious communities, or may have relevance in rural areas?

**SH:** Actually, many of the patients who feature in the book come from rural areas. I focus on the cities because that’s where the major medical clinics are, and many of the patients whom I interviewed at length took great pains to commute to the clinics from their rural villages or towns, often three days a week, for dialysis treatments. Also patients in both rural and urban areas are increasingly aware of mismanaged toxic waste and they suspect that this may be a significant cause to their kidney failure.

I did interview some Coptic patients and doctors, and I wish there was more research I could draw on about Copts in Egypt, particularly in health-related issues. My general sense – though I don’t think I interviewed enough Copts to absolutely ascertain this – is that they did not articulate their misgivings about organ transplantation in religious terms. Of course poor Copts and Muslims alike are subject to the same toxic exposure, medical mismanagement, and poor access to health treatment – and Copts and Muslims of higher class statuses can afford better care. I heard some Copts with fewer resources state the same concerns about the efficacy or risks of the operation, and uncertainty in outcome of organ transplantation. And although they would talk about what was “haram” vs. “halal,” I never heard a Coptic patient articulate this misgiving in terms of the body belonging to God. The Pope Shenouda himself suffers from kidney failure and many in the Coptic community offered to donate kidneys to him, but he has refused, saying that he is too old to subject himself to such an invasive procedure. At the same time, like all the state muftis, the Egyptian Coptic Pope has condoned organ donation as a good thing.

**DS:** The subtitle of *Our Bodies Belong to God* is “Organ Transplants, Islam, and Egypt’s Crisis of Authority.” Could you briefly elaborate on this crisis?

**SH:** In Egypt, as elsewhere, there is often talk of crises. I think the crisis of medical authority (both actual and perceived) has been precipitated by the state’s withdrawal of health services coupled with an increased medicalization of larger social issues and the privatization of health care. And the crisis in religious authority has to do with the state’s ambitions in co-opting religious authority on the one hand and repressing activists who are mobilizing their rights in terms of Islamist political agendas, on the other. So I posit that one of the reasons why organ transplantation has remained unresolved as a bioethical “dilemma” in Egypt for over thirty years is the fact that the mechanisms that are supposed to resolve this question are in crises of authority. You can find physicians on both sides of the debate arguing about organ transplantation, and you can find religious scholars using the same language and depending on the same sources coming to different interpretations on whether one can donate, receive, buy or sell an organ. Of course, in order to view this state as a “crisis” you have to have normalized the notion that there should be a singular, codified approach to law, ethics, religion, or medicine. And how could only one approach be universalized when the practice involved is so personal, so complex, is always changing, and depends on so many shifting factors (like efficacy, safety, affordability, family members willingness to donate, access, risks, cause of disease, alternative remedies, etc.)?



Photo  
courtesy of  
Sherine  
Hamdy

Medical janitor plays “doctor” (for the picture) with a dialysis machine.

**DS:** What do you see as topics in need of further research, or other methodologies that could be utilized?

**SH:** There needs to be more social scientific research on health in general – among Egyptian Muslims and Christians – and also more historical work done on medical institutions in Egypt. As I mentioned above, the role of Copts is very interesting for the development of contemporary biomedicine, and their marginalization today in many subspecialties of biomedicine (at least in state universities) needs further study and analysis.

I would also love to see more political economic studies done on health care in the Middle East, and environmental studies tracing the impact of toxicity on health in general. There is so much work to be done! I’m having a hard time deciding on my next project, because there are so many fascinating directions I can go in.

# Riyadh Drift

## Social Marginalization and Urban Unrest in Saudi Arabia

*Pascal Menoret is currently a Post-Doctoral Associate at the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies, and will join the NYU Abu Dhabi faculty in Fall 2011. In the Fall 2009 Seminar Series he presented a segment of his current research, a manuscript entitled Thugs and Zealots: Youth and Politics in Saudi Arabia.*

“Petit Frère fume des spliffs et casse des voitures.”  
IAM

For the past 30 years, young residents of Riyadh have skidded cars on the Saudi capital's asphalt. This practice, nicknamed *tafheet* in local parlance, or ‘baby's scream’, entails stealing cars, drifting at top speed on urban and suburban highways, defying the police and the well-off neighborhoods. Alongside the urban and economic explosion of the 1970s-1990s, *tafheet* helped in creating a strong sense of community among mostly disenfranchised and Bedouin youth, providing them with what Mike Davis has called “cool worlds of urban socialization for poor young newcomers”<sup>1</sup> to the city. Entangled in drug and alcohol trafficking, causing spectacular road accidents and empowering the neo-urban youth seen by the dominant Saudi society as both a disgrace and a threat, *tafheet* has become synonymous with moral corruption. More recently, in the loaded context of the war against terror, it is dubbed ‘street terrorism’ (*irhab al-shaware*). Today, this seemingly fringe practice is the goal of a nationwide eradication campaign.



Photo by Pascal Menoret

This young drifter's nickname (al-Saqri) is displayed on the rear window; one of his attendants waves to the crowd amassed on the other side of the road.

*Tafheet* is a group enterprise in a country where collective action is strongly discouraged, if not overtly cracked down on. Nobody drifts alone, and even the teenagers who practice in their father's car in a remote neighborhood do it ‘for the eyes’ (*li-‘uyun*) of a local crowd. For many reasons, drifters wish to be surrounded by people who cheer them on, fund their activities, praise their feats, and lend a helping hand. Far from being a succession of more or less artistically performed drifting figures, *tafheet* aims at creating a sense of community around speed and the deviant use of roads and cars.

The exhibition of driving skills is restricted to dedicated spots that characteristically feature wide, empty, stainless stretches of asphalt, often located in recently built real estate developments and in neighborhoods that are not yet inhabited and policed.

<sup>1</sup> Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*. Excavating the Future in Los Angeles, London: Verso, 1990, p. 293.

Speed is a key element of *tafheet*: acrobatic figures are performed at around 150 mph, and the procession of cars moves at around 120 mph. This display of velocity is both purposeless and intentional: first, it is just for fun, to ‘get into the mood’ (*‘ashan nadkhul al-jaww*). Second, speed allows young rural transplants to leave their mark on the city, to impress and terrorize city dwellers, to appropriate and dominate an urban space that is to them foreign and hostile. Third, in a disciplined city such as the Saudi capital, where space is partitioned, monitored and integrally visible<sup>2</sup>, speed is a blatant challenge to the authorities: it is first and foremost a way to elude repression. Shifting swiftly from place to place is the only way not to get caught.

The drifter and his closest friends run what resembles a business and involves many players. The youngest guys in the group steal cars, as drifters prefer to drift in stolen vehicles. There is no mystique around the cars in *tafheet*: unlike drag racers for instance, drifters never customize their cars, and prefer to perform on factory-made vehicles. On the other end of the supply chain, ‘fundraisers’ collect petty cash from friends, provide food to the drifter and his circle and advertise for the upcoming show, either on the Internet or through word of mouth. Before the evening comes, scouts (*al-muajjehin*) select the best spots and the itinerary. When the procession gets ready to go, a car or two are chosen as ambulances (*al-musanedin*) and stay close to the drifter. The organization is almost pyramidal: at the top is the drifter (*al-mufahhat*), then his posse of attendants and helpers (*al-ta’ziz* and *al-musanedin*), then the scout (*al-muajjeh*) who selects the itinerary, the ‘radar’ (*al-radar*) who figures out the police maneuvers and the ways to avoid them, and finally the rank and file (*al-mushajje’in*), one of whom may eventually become a celebrated drifter.

The mere existence of this ‘state inside the state’, as many drifters cleverly describe their organization, is frowned upon by a state that strives to control urban spaces. In the 1960s and 1970s, had it not invited urban planners from Greece and France to design a ‘city of the future’ that would reflect Al Saud’s power and accommodate the rural masses so as to prevent social disruption? The ‘Bedouin question,’ which the sedentary Al Saud had thought solved through land reform and agricultural loans, was posed yet again, in the most surprising of terms—i.e. the low-intensity insurgency of those youth who ‘took the whole world as a butt and stepped on it.’<sup>3</sup> In the late 1990s, the state resorted to sheer repression: in 1998 for instance, the police counted 44,000 drifting cases—i.e. an average of a fine every 12 minutes. The crackdown went with a moral crusade launched by repentant drifters born again into religious preachers. ‘There is a thug who is a zealot’ (*fi wahid zahif mutawwa’*): the exclamation encapsulates the immense popularity of born again sheikhs who converted their capital from the asphalt to the minbar, addressed their audience in colloquial Arabic, were constantly joking and kept their distance from the contrition of average preachers.

These new preachers were less successful at attracting young Bedouins than at tipping off the police on the drifters’ strategies and plans. Repression in turn helped further politicize *tafheet*, gradually turning what once was a simple pastime into a challenge to law and order. Misusing cars and roads, imported and built by the royals and their friends, has become an alternative form of protest. Drifters and their fans address the figures of authority immediately available to them: the police, the developers, the car dealers, the neighborhood. That the founder of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Yusuf al-Ayyeri, was a celebrated drifter in Dammam in his teens is a strong reminder that there is no immaculate conception in politics. The strongest engagements may have their origins in more discrete forms of activism. *Tafheet* is clearly one of them.



Photo by Pascal Menoret

To hide one's face is not only a way to escape repression; it also points to the jihadists' model.

2 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, New York: Vintage Books, 1979, p. 187.

3 Anonymous, ‘‘Akhiran, al-kitab al-mamnu’: ‘al-hajwala fi ‘ilm al-‘arbaja’’ (Finally, the forbidden opus: Tafheet and the science of hooliganism), [maqhaa.com/forums/showthread.php?t=1561](http://maqhaa.com/forums/showthread.php?t=1561) (accessed 29 January 2008).



# A Cinema Across Borders: the First New York Kurdish Film Festival

## Visual Culture

Together with the London Kurdish Film Festival and ArteEast, in October 2009 the Center co-hosted a five-day film festival bringing together an exciting range of films and documentaries from across the Kurdish region and the Kurdish diaspora. The festival featured ten short films, a documentary and eight feature films, including the US premiere of *The Storm* by Kazım Öz. Filmmakers in attendance included Yuksel Yavoz, Kazim Oz, Hisham Zaman, Hineer Salem, and Jano Rosebiani. The diverse films provide powerful and unexpected insights through stunning cinematography, rich narratives, and deeply humane storytelling.



## First Kurdish Film Festival in US Showcases Diaspora Culture

*By Carolyn Weaver, Voice Of America, New York (reprinted with permission from VOA News, Oct 28, 2009)*

Organizers call it “a cinema across borders,” the first-ever festival of Kurdish film in the United States. The films chosen for the five-day event at New York University focused on a people widely dispersed, from those who still live in traditionally Kurdish areas in the Middle East, to Europe and North America. Across sometimes impassable barriers, they keep alive a shared language and cultural identity.

That struggle is both mirrored and sustained by a burgeoning Kurdish cinema, according to Sally Eberhardt, a director of the festival. She said organizers were confronted with a wealth of good films, but had slots for only nine full-length films and ten shorts.

“Choosing was incredibly difficult,” she said. “We were primarily limiting ourselves to films from the last few years, but even in doing that, there



were so many films to watch. There's no shortage of amazing Kurdish film out there."

*Yo!*, which won the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 1982, was chosen to represent the rich history of Kurdish cinema. The story of five Kurdish prisoners in Turkey, it was written and directed by the late Yilmaz Güney when he himself was in prison. His assistant, Şerif Gören, shot the film based on the director's notes smuggled out of prison.

Eberhardt says festival organizers screened films from all the regions where Kurds now live, their culture threatened by borders, war, repression or sheer distance. The Kurds' traditional homeland, called Kurdistan, touches on parts of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Armenia, but Kurdish communities now can be found in many other countries too.

Sadness at the loss of home, or separation from other Kurdish people and culture, pervades many of the films chosen for the event. *Bawke*, for example, by Hisham Zaman, is about a Kurdish father of a young son who faces being deported from Norway, their latest hope for refuge in a seemingly endless journey. He pretends not to know his son after he is arrested, so that the boy will be able to remain behind and have a better life.

"The theme of borders seems to go through a lot of the films," Eberhardt said, "and the divisions between the Kurds that happen by no fault of their own, through borders that were established decades ago, that they have had to live with ever since."

*Half Moon*, by Bahman Ghobadi, was the one film that is explicitly about borders. It follows the journey of Kurdish musicians living in Iran who travel to Iraq to celebrate the end of Saddam Hussein's rule, and new openness for Kurdish music. "In weaving their way from Iran through Turkey into Iraq," Eberhardt said, "it becomes this brilliant metaphor for how can it be that people who were once united now have to take this torturous path to go from one section of where they live, to another section of where they live."

Eberhardt noted that prejudice against Kurds and repression of their language and culture continue in some countries. *The Storm*, by Kazim Öz, which made its U.S. premiere at the festival, is about an apolitical young man who leaves his village in southern Turkey in the early 1990s to attend university in Istanbul. There he experiences government-backed violence against Kurdish activists and is radicalized. "He witnesses what's happening in Istanbul, and the repression that's starting to mount there," Eberhardt said. "He makes this really serious journey within the film."

Films by and about Kurdish women were another theme of the festival. In *Dengbej Women*, by the Women's Collective of



Photo courtesy of  
New Yorker Films

*Vodka Lemon* is set  
in a Yazidi Kurdish  
village in Armenia.

Photo courtesy  
of Hisham  
Zaman



In *Bawke*, a  
young boy is  
abandoned by  
his father.

Atilyemor/Filmmor Women's Cooperative, female dengbej, or traditional Kurdish bards, tell their stories, and sing their sad music. For many, a life in music still means rejection by their families.

*Vodka Lemon*, a dark comedy, by Hiner Saleem, closed the festival. Set in a wintry mountain village in Armenia, it tells the story of a widower who, during visits to his wife's gravesite, happens to meet and fall in love with a much younger widow. She is also a barmaid who serves up the drink of the title in a little shack in the snowy landscape.

The festival also featured a rare panel discussion among five Kurdish filmmakers from around the world, including Saleem, Öz, Zaman and Jano Rosebiani, who made the feature film, *Jiyan*, about the aftermath of the 1988 gas attack on the Iraqi Kurdish town of Halabja.

### NYKFF Curatorial Committee

Livia Alexander, Veysel Firat Bozcali (MA '10)  
Sally Eberhardt, Mustafa Gundogdu  
Graham MacPhee, Greta Scharnweber  
Fatih Seyhanoglu, Rosey Strub  
Kelly Stuart, Dilek Ulukaya

# New Muslim Cool

*Nadia Khalaf (MA '11) is interested in social anthropology as it relates to the built environment in the Persian Gulf. Living in New York has nurtured her interest in hip hop and graffiti culture*

What do Ice Cube, Q-Tip, Mos Def, T Pain, Lupe Fiasco and Akon have in common? While many people are not aware, each are successful, Muslim-American hip hop artists. They are representative of the fact that African-American Islam has had a profound influence on hip-hop music since its emergence in the early 1970s, and much of the “socially conscious” hip hop of the past two decades has emerged from the Muslim-American scene. In the commercialized world of hip hop – saturated with the deification of material wealth, violence and misogyny – Muslim hip hop stands apart. It often harkens back to “old school” hip hop philosophy, centered around the notion of unity in the face of oppression, and the promotion of activism.

Given the rich history of Muslim-American hip hop, you might expect *New Muslim Cool* to place Hamza Perez and his music within the genealogy of this sub-genre of hip hop. Although director Jennifer Maytorena Taylor’s documentary neglects this aspect, her film is a beautiful, engaging and enlightening portrayal of the life of a charismatic individual. Perez was born into a Catholic-Puerto Rican family in Brooklyn and, having spent his youth as a street hustler and drug dealer, his “rebirth” as a Muslim at the age of 21 took his life in new and positive directions. The film traces his work as a Muslim hip hop activist, anti-drug counselor and pioneer of a new Muslim community in Pittsburgh.

The film opens with Hamza’s life as a Muslim hip hop artist. By presenting Hamza’s performances (complete with flaming machetes!), songs and radio talk shows, the film reveals a Muslim hip hop culture outside of the mainstream—a genre that fills venues and unites the New York Muslim-American community. However, the unfolding of events during the filming of *New Muslim Cool* led the documentary in unforeseen directions. Hamza’s experience as a “revert” (the self-apellation of many American converts to Islam who believe that conversion represents a return to their roots) and his role in starting a Muslim community in Pittsburgh gave new meaning to his life’s jihad, with family life and community service often superseding his music career. It’s his journey as a Muslim, instead of his journey as a hip hop artist, that takes center stage.

The FBI’s raid of Hamza’s community mosque (on a Friday, during prayers), and his subsequent dismissal as a prison volunteer on the grounds of an inflammatory radio interview he had given early on in his music career, forced Hamza to “confront the realities of the post-9/11 world, and himself.” This blameless Muslim community, as well as Hamza’s productive presence as a faith-based counselor in a Pittsburgh prison, were perceived and treated as a threat to national security.

Although *New Muslim Cool* is much more about “Muslim” than it is about “cool,” the documentary is a unique and heart-warming portrayal of Muslim-American life. Most illuminating, however, was the post-film panel discussion, where Perez spoke eloquently of his experiences as a “revert” in New York City, a process that sometimes proved difficult for his Catholic family, and of the assistance he received from the large, active Boricua Muslim community in New York. Panelist Zaheer Ali of Columbia University also presented his fascinating doctoral work that traces the influence of African-American Islam on the evolution of hip hop. He has collaborated with PBS to produce “Beats and Risahlahs,” an interactive hip hop timeline that charts this influence since the founding of the International Zulu Nation in 1973.



*Photo courtesy of Specific Pictures*  
“New Muslim Cool” revels hip hop culture outside of the mainstream.

*New Muslim Cool* was screened by the Kevorkian Center at NYU in February 2010 in collaboration with the Center for Religion and Media, the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and the Islamic Center at New York University.

# The Program in Ottoman Studies

The Program in Ottoman Studies, established in 2006 to organize public events related to Ottoman Studies broadly construed, sponsored a full calendar of individual talks, a panel discussion, a research workshop, a conference, a movie screening and a concert during the 2009-2010 academic year. Within each year's roster of events, the Program aims to sample the broad chronological and geographic expanse that was the Ottoman empire, and to feature younger as well as established scholars. The Program is directed by Leslie Peirce, Silver Professor in the History department and Associate in the department of Middle East & Islamic Studies, and is assisted by Hasan Karataş, Lecturer in Middle East & Islamic Studies. This year's events spanned medieval Anatolia to modern day Istanbul and featured wandering dervishes, revolutionary officers and insurgents, and the public architecture and back streets of Istanbul.

In the fall semester, Ebru Turan (Fordham University) spoke about the construction of imperialistic language in historiography in sixteenth century Istanbul, Jeremy Walton (NYU) about the neo-Ottomanist architectural symbols as indicatives of political conflict over the public sphere in modern Turkey and in the spring semester, Nader Sohrabi (Columbia University) about the revolutionary purge of the representatives of the ancient regime immediately after the Young Turks' ascendance to power. In November, *Three Monkeys*, a film by the acclaimed Turkish director Nuri Bilge Ceylan about the inner dynamics of a family living in the poor neighborhoods of Istanbul was screened; Sibel Erol (NYU) and Bilge Ebiri (Independent Film Critic) engaged in a discussion on the themes, symbolism and use of color in the film. The Program organized a research workshop and a theme-based panel in the spring semester,



both designed to explore a topic and to engage audience participation. In February, Ipek Yosmaoğlu (University of Wisconsin, Madison) presented a paper on violence in late Ottoman Macedonia as a deliberate means of politicization of communal difference and the consequent formation of a nation; Ryan Gingeras (Lafayette College) provided comments. In April, a theme-based panel on Sufism featured Dina LeGall (Lehman College and CUNY Graduate Center) speaking on the current state of the secondary literature on Sufism and Ahmet T. Karamustafa (History and Religious Studies, Washington University in St. Louis) on tensions during the institutionalization of the Sufi orders in Anatolia. Our spring concert (pictured above), which took place in March featured Ahmed Erdoğan (CUNY Graduate Center), along with Mavrothi T. Kontanis and Emmanuel Hoseyn During, who provided examples from the different genres of Ottoman classical music. At the end of our spring program, we contributed to the organization of a large conference on the urban policies and practices that have come to (re)shape Istanbul. This conference was cosponsored with the Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service, Wagner Student Association, the Urban Planning Student Association, the Anatolian Culture Club, and the Turkish Cultural Center.

## Comparative Approaches to Middle Eastern Literatures

Thanks to generous funding from the NYU Humanities Initiative, Ph.D. students from the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and the Department of Comparative Literature who work with Middle Eastern literatures were able to start a graduate student colloquium ([www.adabnyu.wordpress.com](http://www.adabnyu.wordpress.com)).



Michael Beard, Univ. North Dakota, discussed *A Letter Named Jim*.

*Comparative Approaches to Middle Eastern Literatures*, as the colloquium came to be known, is composed of a series of seminars and workshops that aim at exchanging ideas and encouraging comparative research between non-European languages and cultures. The events featured both US and international scholars.

During the 2009-2010 school year seven events were successfully organized with the help of several co-sponsors, the main one being the Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies. The series covered a wide range of topics that spanned different regions and historical periods. From the eternal questions surrounding translation (Abdelfattah Kilito's "Thou Shalt not Translate me") to contemporary representations of war and trauma (Kamran Rastegar's *Surviving Images: War, Memory and Trauma in Lebanese and Iranian Cinemas*) and from medieval questions of genre and hybridity (Dominic Brookshaw's "A Genre without Borders? The Arabic *Ghazal* and its

Persian Cousin") to current questions of power, hybridity and language (Lital Levy's "Hebrew, Arabic, & What's In-Between: Language & Metalanguage in the Literature of Israel/Palestine").

Members of the 2009-2010 colloquium committee were: Amir Moosavi, Bilal Hashmi, Carlos Aguirre, Eman Morsi, Jeannie Miller, Lara Harb, Nergis Seckin and Tara Mendola.

The colloquium has organized three events for the 2010 fall semester. Incoming graduate students interested in participating in the Spring 2011 events should contact any of the current colloquium members: Ahmad Diab, Amir Moosavi, Carlos Aguirre, Eman Morsi, Suneela Mubayi and Tara Mendola.



# Autobiography

By Nazim Hikmet

Darwish poem  
from *A River  
Dies of Thirst*,  
translated by  
Catherine Cobham,  
© 2009. Reprinted  
by permission  
of Archipelago  
Books, New York.

Hikmet poem from  
*Poems of Nazim  
Hikmet*, translated  
by Randy Blasing  
and Mutlu  
Konuk. Translation  
copyright © 1994,  
2002 by Randy  
Blasing and Mutlu  
Konuk. Reprinted  
by permission of  
Persea Books, Inc.,  
New York.

I was born in 1902  
I never once went back to my birthplace  
I don't like to turn back  
at three I served as a pasha's grandson in Aleppo  
at nineteen as a student at Moscow Communist University  
at forty-nine I was back in Moscow as the Tcheka Party's guest  
and I've been a poet since I was fourteen  
some people know all about plants some about fish  
I know separation  
Some people know the names of the stars by heart  
I recite absences  
I've slept in prisons and in grand hotels  
I've known hunger even a hunger strike and there's almost no food  
I haven't tasted  
at thirty they wanted to hang me  
at forty-eight to give me the Peace Prize  
which they did  
at thirty-six I covered four square meters of concrete in half a year  
at fifty-nine I flew from Prague to Havana in eighteen hours  
I never saw Lenin I stood watch at his coffin in '24  
in '61 the tomb I visit is his books  
they tried to tear me away from my party  
it didn't work  
nor was I crushed under falling idols  
in '51 I sailed with a young friend into the teeth of death  
in '52 I spent four months flat on my back with a broken heart  
waiting to die  
I was jealous of the women I loved  
I didn't envy Charlie Chaplin one bit  
I deceived my women  
I never talked behind my friends' backs  
I drank but not every day  
I earned my bread money honestly what happiness  
out of embarrassment for others I lied  
I lied so as not to hurt someone else  
but I also lied for no reason at all  
I've ridden in trains planes and cars  
most people don't get the chance  
I went to the opera  
most people haven't even heard of the opera  
and since '21 I haven't gone to the places most people visit  
mosques churches temples synagogues sorcerers  
but I've had my coffee grounds read  
my writings are published in thirty or forty languages  
in my Turkey in my Turkish they're banned  
cancer hasn't caught up with me yet  
and nothing says it will  
I'll never be a prime minister or anything like that  
and I wouldn't want such a life  
nor did I go to war  
or burrow in bomb shelters in the bottom of the night  
and I never had to take to the road under diving planes  
but I fell in love at almost sixty  
in short comrades  
even if today in Berlin I'm croaking of grief  
I can say I've lived like a human being  
and who knows  
how much longer I'll live  
what else will happen to me

This autobiography was written  
in East Berlin on 11 September 1961

# Perfection is the same as imperfection

By Mahmoud Darwish

Time has flown, and I have not flown with it  
'Stop,' I said, "I have not finished dinner yet  
not taken all my medicine  
not written the last line of my will  
not paid any debt to life  
Life has seen me standing hungry by the fence  
and fed me with a fig from its trees  
seen me naked under the sky  
and clothed me in a cloud of its cotton  
seen me sleeping on the pavement  
and housed me in a start on its breast'  
Life said: 'Learn about me, you will find me waiting for you!"  
I said thank you to life, for it is a gift and a talent  
I learned about life with all the hardship I could  
and it taught me how to forget it to live it

Death said to me unbidden:  
'Don't forget me, for I am life's brother'  
I said: 'Your mother is a vague question of no concern to me'  
and death flew from my words to take care of its business

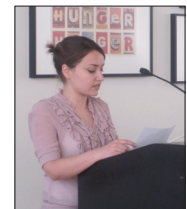
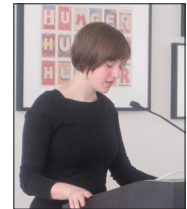
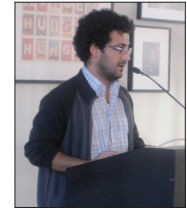
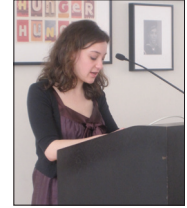
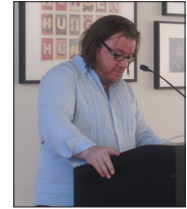
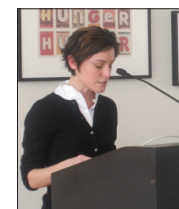
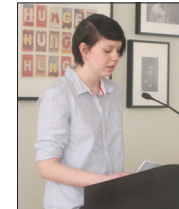
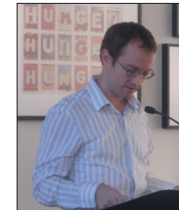
'Long live life!' I shouted, when I found it spontaneous  
instinctive, playing and laughing without a care in the world. It loves us  
and we love it  
It is harsh and gentle, a mistress and a slave-girl  
and weeps for nobody. For it does not have time  
It buries the dead in haste, dances like a courtesan  
falls short, then reaches perfection. Perfection is the same as imperfection  
and memory forgetfulness made visible

But I played with life as if it was a ball and a game of chance  
I never thought of the riddle: What is life?  
'How can I fill it and it fill me?' I asked when  
I saw death was giving me time to ask  
and I waited for time to pass. I said: 'Tomorrow I shall look into the question  
of life.' But I didn't find the time  
because time double-crossed me and took me by surprise, and has flown.

## National Poets/Universal Poetics: Mahmoud Darwish and Nazim Hikmet in Comparative Literary Perspective

Chaired by Elias Khoury and cosponsored by the New School, this conference featured presentations by Sinan Antoon, Simone Bitton, Mutlu Blasing, Sami Shalom Chetrit, Robyn Creswell, Ozen Nergis Dolcerocca, Sibel Erol, Nergis Erturk, Nedim Gursel, Hala Halim, Sibel Irzik, Elias Khoury, Ibrahim Muhawi, Hala Nassar, Yilmaz Odabasi, Noha Radwan, and Najat Rahman.

*Pictured right, NYU students and faculty read the poems of Darwish and Hikmet in Arabic, Turkish and English.*



# Dilemmas in Unembedded-Embedded Journalism

Matthieu Aikins (MA '11) is interested in the politics and culture of South and Central Asia. In Spring 2010, Matthieu organized Talking to the Taliban, a panel of prominent journalists active in shaping our understanding of Afghanistan today.

*"On their first day of class in Afghanistan, the new US intelligence analysts were given a homework assignment.*

*First read a six-page classified military intelligence report about the situation in Spin Boldak, a key border town and smuggling route in southern Afghanistan. Then read a 7,500-word article in Harper's magazine, also about Spin Boldak and the exploits of its powerful Afghan border police commander.*

*The conclusion they were expected to draw: The important information would be found in the magazine story. The scores of spies and analysts producing reams of secret documents were not cutting it."*

**"Military launches Afghanistan intelligence-gathering mission,"**  
Joshua Partlow,  
*The Washington Post*,  
February 20, 2010



Photo by Matthieu Aikins

The inhospitable terrain of the Hindu Kush stretches out in Ghor Province, in central Afghanistan. This is the 'highway' connecting Kabul directly to Herat and Iran, and it has been used increasingly by trucks as the highway via Kandahar becomes too dangerous to drive.

## Media

The anecdote above, appearing as it did in the capital's paper of record, is at first flattering; clearly, the *Harper's* article – my own – has been lauded as significant. Yet self-satisfaction gives way to disquiet: if one's reporting is more useful to the US military than their "scores of spies and analysts", what does that say about one's own role in the war? The *Washington Post* story suggests a connection with an ongoing drama of violence and occupation far more problematic than the common journalistic self-narrative of 'objectivity' would allow.

As the Western military offensive in Afghanistan intensifies, so too does the systematic production of knowledge associated with it. A notorious example is the Human Terrain System project, where anthropologists and other social scientists are embedded with US military units in order to 'map out' Afghan political

and social structures. Journalists, too, have increasingly embedded with the military as a means of accessing the war, a development encouraged by the fact that, as a result of increasingly Manichean tendencies in both parties to the conflict, we are no longer viewed as neutral observers as we were in the past, and have become the targets of insurgent kidnappings and assassinations. But living with the military entails a constant negotiation of what can and cannot be reported on, and, more insidiously, a tendency to sympathize with the soldiers who are so much more present than the held-at-a-distance 'locals.'

The alternative is to go 'unembedded,' the negative form denoting to what extent traveling and reporting independently is the exception in Afghanistan. It's generally more difficult, dangerous and expensive, but doing so can pay real dividends. Consider the example

of *Times of London* correspondent Jerome Starkey, who recently exposed a NATO cover-up of civilian casualties during a night raid by traveling on his own to an insecure area in Paktia Province. The official military investigation had claimed to have found the bodies of pregnant women "tied up, gagged and killed," the victims of an apparent "traditional honor killing," when, in fact, they had been prepared for burial after being shot by special operations forces. Starkey, who has been blacklisted by NATO, later commented: "their version of events, usually originating from the soldiers involved, is rarely seriously challenged."

My *Harper's* article involved independent travel in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and it was highly critical of both the US military and the Afghan government's complicity in criminality and human rights abuses. Yet its usefulness to the intelligence analysts highlights, I think,



how even an ‘unembedded’ reporter remains very much embedded in a specific project of geopolitical dominance. That we are over there reporting on Afghans, and not vice versa, reflects a particular history, and the very possibility of journalistic representation is the result of what Edward Said has called “cultural power.” Perhaps we should not be surprised if we find ourselves in service to it.

Most journalists would reject this characterization, I think. Central to our profession’s self-image is a notion of detached objectivity, what Walter Lippmann, its most famous exponent, called “as impartial an investigation of the facts as humanly possible.” In the context of international reporting, this means that an establishment figure like Bob Franken, a longtime correspondent for CNN, would claim: “When I’m reporting, I’m a citizen of the world.” Jay Rosen, press critic and professor of journalism, derides this “view from nowhere” as a “sustaining myth” and a “quest for innocence” that leads to “he-said she-said journalism.” He juxtaposes this with civic journalism, which acknowledges both its own agency and the realism and passion of its convictions.

Certainly the notion of pure professional objectivity – along with the fact-value distinction – no longer seems tenable. And yet I hesitate to accept that the converse is necessarily activism, and its attendant normative commitments. Does writing on the Western military presence, for example, necessitate that one have some position on whether or not those troops should pull out immediately? For even if we accept that a ‘global objectivity’ is an impossibility, might it not still be possible to hold oneself apart from commitments to specific controversies? And let’s not forget that the same reflection that undermines notions of objectivity may have similar implica-



Photo by Mattieu Aikins

Young members of the Afghan Border Police stand in front of portraits of Ahmad Shah Massoud and President Karzai in Spin Boldak. Many join the police in their late teens, and all have seen extensive fighting with the resurgent Taliban. Though the West’s exit strategy rests on handing over security to Afghan forces, the police in Afghanistan are poorly trained and paid, and are often involved in corruption, smuggling, and the drug trade.

tions for our political projects. Hence the urge for critical distance in Michel Foucault’s response to Noam Chomsky: “I’m far less advanced in my approach... that is to say, I admit to not being capable of defining, much less proposing, an ideal social model for the functioning of our scientific or technological society.”

But academics are able to find that critical distance, if they wish, in the remove of specialized vocabulary and scholarly journals; journalists occupy a position closer to the sphere of political action. Writing becomes, whether we acknowledge it or not, a political act. As reluctant as we may be, I doubt that we can escape the moral project of finding some grounding for those acts. Rosen warns of “the abyss of observation alone” and cites the Vietnam correspondent Michael Herr: “It took the



Photo by Mattieu Aikins

A young school teacher in the village of Hagda, in Bamiyan Province, Afghanistan. Women’s education was heavily suppressed in Afghanistan by the Taliban regime; in relatively peaceful areas of the country it is now returning.

war to teach it, that you were as responsible for everything you saw as you were for everything you did.” Perhaps responsibility, if not activism, is something that we as journalists can accept.

## COVERAGE IN CONTEXT

Over the past decade, interdisciplinary Middle East Studies has expanded tremendously. Likewise, and particularly since 9/11, journalistic coverage of the region has skyrocketed. However, these two growing sets of experts have not been in regular and meaningful communication with each other, nor are there enough programs and curricular materials to support the training of experts conversant in the languages and approaches of both journalism and Middle East Studies. NYU is well-positioned to host such communication across constituencies.

The Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies was recently awarded funding from the Social Science Research Council to support **Coverage in Context**, a public online curricular program that supports the training of aspir-

ing journalists in the approaches of interdisciplinary Middle East Studies. Drawing on expertise from NYU’s Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, the Program in Religious Studies and the Center for Religion and Media, the center will produce a six “webisode” series featuring conversations between innovative and media-aware academics as well as experienced journalists who have consistently produced coverage of the region within its complex historical and political context(s). Each module will address the analytical, theoretical, and practical concerns of journalists as well as academics.

The project, supported by the SSRC’s “Islam and Muslims in World Contexts” program, will be carried out over the 2010-2011 academic year at NYU.

# Immigration to NYC—Then and Now

## Teachers Visit Tenement Museum and Paterson, NJ for Immigration Seminar

*Beth Harrington (MA '10, concentration in Museum Studies) is interested in Middle Eastern arts and cultures. In February 2010, she co-organized a Teacher Training Seminar about Arab immigration to New York City.*

As part of the Kevorkian Center's outreach efforts, we offer Saturday Seminars several times throughout the year, creating an opportunity for public and private school teachers throughout the tri-state area to focus on subjects linked to the Middle East. In February, a group of 24 area teachers met at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum on a brisk Saturday morning. The teachers visited the apartment of Victoria Confino, a Ladino-speaking, Sephardic immigrant to New York's Lower East Side in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Tenement Museum has reconfigured former tenement apartments to recreate their historic interiors as lived in by original inhabitants. A costumed interpreter joined the teachers, answering questions as Victoria in her Ladino-inflected tongue. Victoria shared that as a Sephardic Jew in a predominantly Ashkenazi neighborhood, her shopping and school experiences on the Lower East Side were often difficult as her religion and language were different. Victoria's life in the tenement house was also difficult: in a scene familiar to many New Yorkers, the tenements offered little space and residents lived in very cramped quarters. Victoria's six brothers slept in the parlor room, she slept on the kitchen floor, and her parents and baby sibling occupied the third room of the apartment. Toilets were outside, behind the rowhouse, along with a well for water.

On the whole, Victoria's experience in the 1916 Lower East Side offers striking parallels to modern immigrant life. When placed in context with modern immigrants, these experiences show a continuum of racial issues, quotas, discrimination, and definitions of citizenship.

To get a better sense of how these issues compare today, our group continued out to Rutherford, New Jersey, to have a delicious Middle Eastern lunch at the Gainville Café. Dr. Nora Pharaon presented information about today's Arab immigrants to New York City. While many are aware of the sizeable Arab communities in Brooklyn, the third-largest Arab community in the United States is in Paterson, New Jersey. Dr. Pharaon, as a psychologist and social worker, briefly shared a history of Arab immigration to the United States and statistics of current residents. She also noted that many Arab-Americans are Christian (58% in a 2002 Zogby poll) not Muslim (24%), and that only 12% of the US Muslim population is Arab. Yet in the US, Arabs and Muslims are often conflated, which can cause identity struggles. Dr. Pharaon also listed some of the stresses of immigration she has encountered in working with Arab-Americans, including high levels of economic and social marginalization, tension in the family unit when family members



*Photos courtesy of the Tenement Museum*  
(above) A costumed interpreter plays Victoria Confino and explains to tours of students and educators what life was like as an immigrant on the lower east side in the early 1900s.



(right) Victoria Confino (back row, center) and friends. The Confino family, Sephardic immigrants, lived at 97 Orchard from 1914 to 1918.

come into contact with other cultural groups (i.e. intergenerational conflicts, tensions over the role of women, languages spoken), and above all, language barriers in interacting with other Americans.

After Dr. Pharaon's presentation, the group embarked on a short tour of Paterson, New Jersey. The journey, led by Hannibal Alkalin, highlighted local Arab-American-owned businesses, such as pastry shops and grocery stores where Middle Eastern foods are available for purchase, as well as various other sundries such as books, CDs, perfumes, and clothing. Much like the Lower East Side that Victoria Confino knew as a Mediterranean Jewish community, Paterson is dominated by Arab-Americans and allows a closer look into an Arab-American immigrant community.

The seminar focused on two specific sites of immigration to New York City: the Lower East Side Tenements and Paterson. While times have changed, our seminar revealed that many issues remain the same. Immigrants, then and now, struggle with poor housing conditions, navigate the challenges of speaking a new language, and attempt to integrate with other immigrants and Americans. Additionally, they must negotiate their identities as people who still have ties and memories in the countries they left behind while simultaneously reinventing their lives in the United States.



# Oranges, Figs, Olives

## Fruits of the Earth as Homeland

*Zeynep Sertbulut (MA '10) is interested in how food intersects with national and ethnic identity as well as a group's collective memory in the Middle East.*

*In April 2010, Zeynep co-organized one of the Kevorkian Center's Saturday Seminars for Teachers in New York City, entitled "Food, Culture and Politics in the Middle East."*

Fruits figure significantly as loaded cultural symbols in the articulation of Israeli and Palestinian collective memory. Both Israelis and Palestinians have used fruits as a way to create a bond with the land, albeit in dissimilar and asymmetrical ways. While fruits in Israeli narrative symbolize establishing and legitimizing Israeli connection to the land on the way *into* Israel, Palestinian narrative has prominently used fruits on the way *out* of Palestine to express the disruption of life and loss of their homeland.

Fruits have been activated in the construction of the Zionist collective memory as a narrative of return and national revival. One of the first attempts to state an exclusive claim to the land was the forestation campaign launched by the Jewish National Fund (JFN) in the early 1900s. Through this campaign, several hundred million trees were planted in Palestine. This massive campaign of tree-planting in Palestine was one of the first important symbols of the Zionist success of "striking roots" in the ancient homeland.

Tree-planting often figures in Israeli literature, with photographs "proving" that the Jews were "making the desert bloom," depicting that the land was thriving because of the return of its "rightful" inhabitants while negating the stereotypes of the Diasporic Jew as passive, rootless and disconnected from the nature. In one of the most popular "settlement-novels" of the Zionist pioneering period, *The Founders* (1933), Eliezer Smolny portrays his protagonist, Hermoni, the guard of the second Aliyah (1904-1914), as a "highly individualistic, ideologically committed, strong-willed, courageous, and hard-working" man, in line with the ideal image propagated by the Zionist leaders of the time. Hermoni describes how the new Jewish arrivals will re-establish their roots in the land by planting fruits and foods: "This is the kind of life we'll make for ourselves... We'll turn these barren valleys into gardens of Eden. They'll be covered with corn and barley, oats and hay, and

we'll plant vineyards and orchards on the hillsides in the place of thorns and thistles.... We'll plant figs and vines here in the winter, and turn these barren hills into a Garden of Eden."

The Israeli National Photo Archive, which documents the success of Hebrew labor, is full of pictures of Jewish immigrants as they plant fruit trees in Palestine, telling a similar story: the land was naked, *we* cultivated it; it was barren, *we* made it fruitful; it was deserted, *we* made it bloom, now that *we are here*. Similarly, a website dedicated to the Jewish families of Poland, describes a newly settled family in 1906 planting oranges in Palestine. A photo caption reads, "We must plant in the minds, and in the hearts and in the souls of people... planting as a symbol.... We are here."\*

For Palestinians, however, fruits symbolize their separation from the land. In *The Object of Memory* (1998), Susan Slyomovics suggests that refugees carry with them an 'internal Palestinian map' of tastes and smells in order to relive and reveal the reality of the threatened people-land bond and the disruption of their immediate attachment to the homeland. Sometimes foods are a metaphor for the lost homeland and direct connection with it, sometimes the signifier of a besieged nation, sometimes the symbol of childhood or an expression of Palestinian intellectual attachment to the homeland.

Many visual illustrations by Palestinian artists portray the images of an unblemished and intact Palestine, and of the people's connection to their land through the portrayal of Palestinians while harvesting oranges and olives. Sliman Mansour, a well-known Palestinian artist, presents a thriving Palestine with the images of peasants working in orange and olive harvests. Another artist, Amin Shtai, combines the figure of an olive-tree with a Palestinian man. The man's body and the trunk of the tree blend and the figure has one hu-

man leg and one tree leg—signifying the inseparability of the land with Palestinians.

These visual, oral, and literary representations of fruits in Palestinian narrative present pre-1948 Palestine as not only glorious and secure, but also not (yet) blemished by these tragedies. When the separation from the land is remembered, the fruits are portrayed in a way that embodies this separation and Palestinians' tragedy.

In *The Land of Sad Oranges* (1987), Ghassan Kanafani compares Palestinians' grief for losing their homeland and unity with the grief of orange trees that are violated by a brutal attack. Kanafani portrays the orange trees as "dried up and shriveled" in the hands of strangers. As the story's title designates, the oranges are depicted as witnesses to Palestinians' separation from their homeland.

In her poem "My Father and the Fig Tree", Palestinian-American writer Naomi Shihab Nye portrays a Palestinian man scorning the dried tasteless figs available in the US as he savors instead memories of the figs and trees he knew in Palestine. The poem closes with the man showing his daughter a fig tree in the backyard of their home-in-exile in Dallax, TX. Through this new tree, the father is invoking memories of Palestine, in a sense holding a fragment of his now-distant and absent homeland.

When Nye read this poem at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank years later, a male student went up to her in tears, saying "I don't want your father to love a fig tree in America. Because if he does, he may stop remembering us here." The outcry of this young student shows how Palestinians have internalized the images of the fruits of the homeland as embodying the bond between Palestine and Palestinians. Keeping these memories alive ensure that their separation and exile from the land will not be forgotten.

\* JewishGen Photo Archives, [www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Plonsk/plonskPHOTOpageIMAGES/index.htm](http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Plonsk/plonskPHOTOpageIMAGES/index.htm).

# Running Dry Water and the MENA Region

By Jeannie Sowers and Chris Toensing

Adapted and reprinted with permission from *Middle East Report* (Spring 2010, Issue No 254)

## THE MIDDLE EAST IS RUNNING OUT OF WATER

It is a statement that may seem both banal and unduly apocalyptic. Most of the land in this arid region is desert. Large oil-exporting states like Saudi Arabia and Libya exhausted their indigenous renewable water supply decades ago. The desalination plants of the Gulf are well known; the Great Manmade River constructed by Libya is notorious. At the same time, water runs freely from the tap in most heavily populated areas of the region. Though it has endured more than its fair share of war, the Middle East has mostly been spared the murderous drought and famine that has accompanied civil strife in the Horn of Africa. The inter-state “water wars” that have been predicted for some time have never been fought and, though the predictions keep coming, these conflicts are not on the horizon.

But the Middle East has entered a new water era, one in which its relative lack of fresh water supply will bump up against growth in demand. The total population of the region – defined as North Africa, Sudan, Somalia, the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and Iran – is expected to climb from 309 million in 2000 to about 651 million in 2030. Rising living standards, attained by at least portions of these populations, translate into more water consumption per capita. During the same period the absolute supply of water is projected to decrease, due to decreases in precipitation induced by climate change.

The combined impact of climate change and population growth will add to the number of countries experiencing water stress, particularly in light of increasing pollution loads that render much water unusable without costly treatment. The Middle East is already the most water-stressed region in the world.

What will water stress look like on the ground? At the very least, more states will shift the water burden onto the household, as the authorities have al-

ready done, for all intents and purposes, in Jordan, Palestine and Yemen. As many people in those countries already must, households will need to arrange for expensive private water delivery, endure water rationing and store water in tanks on the roof. The poor will increasingly be forced to obtain water informally, by dipping a few jugs in irrigation ditches each day or paying prices much higher than those of conventional water delivery systems. As in Iraq, where sanctions and war have severely degraded the water supply system, and the poor have long siphoned off their drinking water in such ways, the public health consequences are dire. Children are the most vulnerable to waterborne disease and contaminants. Although Middle Eastern states have made major strides in ensuring potable water and sanitation, water is not safe for large numbers of citizens living in rural areas and informal urban neighborhoods.

How have Middle Eastern states coped with actual and emerging water scarcity? Long ago the region consumed the water resources necessary to supply the population with food. The highest-profile strategy pursued by states has been construction of massive waterworks – dams for the water-rich, desalination plants for the water-poor – to expand arable land and supply burgeoning populations with water. But as Tony Allan famously argues, the real solution to aridity has been trading in “virtual water,” embedded not only in food but also industrial products that require water in their manufacture. The import of virtual water, enabled in part by oil revenues, allowed regimes to foster a myth of wise water management and plentiful supply.

*This summer, the Hagop Kevorkian Center co-hosted a three-day workshop for educators with MERIP on Water and the Middle East and North Africa, featuring the following scholars and analysts: Jeannie Sowers (University of New Hampshire), George Trumbull IV (Dartmouth), Elizabeth Zack (Univ. South Carolina Upstate), Müserref Yetim (NYU), Steven Caton (Harvard), Jennifer Derr (Bard College), Mandana Limbert (Queens College, CUNY), Thomas Lippman (Council on Foreign Relations), Mohammad Eskandari (Clark University), Zaid Al-Ali (University of Paris II), and Chris Toensing (Middle East Report).*



Photo by Jeannie Sowers, 2008  
Fishing in the shadow of industry. Damietta, Egypt.

This myth is unlikely to survive the stresses of the new water era. Instead, authorities may face the prospect of coping with growing water scarcity by encouraging a shift towards advanced irrigation technologies, increased use of wastewater in agriculture, and eventually reducing water supplied to the agricultural sector.

The increasingly acute water stress of the Middle East is a multi-faceted crisis. It is vital, for the time being, that the states of the region and their international backers forget the grandiosity of decades past and focus on the more modest tasks of repairing pipes, reducing waste and redressing imbalances in water use and distribution. “Water wars” are not around the corner, but the havoc wrought by climate change and poor water management upon the ordinary people of the Middle East could be no less tragic.

# The Multilayered Lives of Muslim Women

In August, 35 teachers from New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania participated in a three-day intensive workshop at the center that explored questions of gender and sexuality through careful reading and discussion of memoirs, short stories, travelogues, historical accounts, documentary and feature films from the Middle East and North Africa. Facilitator Nadia Guessous, Director of Graduate Studies at the center and an anthropologist by training commented on the outcomes of the workshop: "By drawing attention to some of the richness and complexity that falls out of view in dominant debates and representations, we enacted a different mode of apprehending the lives of Muslim women in the Middle East that is more attentive to what Muslim women themselves, in all their diversity and complexity, have to say about their own lives. The teachers and educators at the workshop were receptive to this mode of enquiry, even when it challenged some of their normative assumptions and epistemological inclinations."

The participating teachers' reflection essays excerpted below, with permission, speak for themselves.

What I most appreciated about the workshop was the anthropological approach, not just explained at the start to us by Professor Guessous, but also utilized by her throughout our three days. It is the way that she ran discussions and interacted with us that I will try to take away as a role model. The act of listening is a particular anthropological skill. I have thought of it in relationship to how an anthropologist works with informants—but never thought to apply that skill to how the "anthropologist teacher" works with students in the classroom.

-Joan Brodsky Schur, Social Studies Coordinator, Village Community School, New York, NY

The workshop modeled the kind of teaching [of] a text that I embrace [we were] urged to look at the words, to examine all the characters and to be open-minded about our conclusions. [Professor Guessous'] way of teaching opens the conversation rather than closes it, as was clear in the many interesting comments and conversations

-Virginia Balser, World Literature,  
Greens Farms Academy,  
Greens Farms, Conn.

Through these, participants began to gain further insight into Muslim women, but more so, it allowed us to examine the set of notions and assumptions through which the "West" views the women of the Middle East and Islam. Why do we ask what we ask about Muslim Women? It was in this sense that the workshop proved most insightful and useful in the teaching of World History...as it made me reflect about the assumptions we make when studying other cultures and societies.... The workshop discussions on the subject of choice among Muslim women were rich; more so was the realization that we bring the assumption of "lack of choice" to the very questions we pose about Muslim women.

-Maria Valentin, World History,  
Scarsdale High School,  
Scarsdale, NY

Being part of the Multilayered Lives course at this point in my journey towards understanding and respecting others provided a forum in which I could practice what I've been working on. The course also injected into my schema some new ideas and knowledge about Muslim women that I could integrate with the multiple histories and authors I am reading. Furthermore, the synergy of the participants resulted in an atmosphere in which I could yield my resistance. This course was an important layer in my growth as a citizen of this world.

-Emma-Suarez Baez, Curriculum Development/Literacy Coach, PS 340, Bronx, NY

Since I already [teach] Said's work, I know firsthand the merit of shaking students out of their intellectual comfort zone and underscoring the need for self-conscious study of the Middle East. What I have not yet done in my class, and will now do as a result of this seminar, is devote a full unit to women's issues as a means of reinforcing Said's arguments.

-Michal Hershkovitz, History, The Calhoun School, New York, NY

The structure of the course – lectures, discussions, readings, films – all were informative in content and in the diversity of perspectives. Nadia's skillful facilitation of the discussions were notable both in the insights she offered from her anthropological perspective and in the sensitive (and exhausting) handling of some of the controversial issues raised about the place of women in Islam...the anthropological perspective is rarely one that most of us have had an opportunity to use as a lens of understanding. Focusing on the lives and beliefs of people "on the ground" was a refreshing shift from the traditional historical or theological perspectives that dominate the discourse.... Foregrounding the study by examining the Orientalist legacies laid the historical context for our own beliefs and stereotypes, an endemic and entrenched perspective that necessarily needed to be "unpacked" to create more intellectual space for exploring the lives of Muslim women.

-Robert Schaecher, Ethics, World Religions and Moral Philosophy, Fieldston School, Bronx, NY



## In Fond Memory of Falak Sufi

**Falak Sufi** was born in Pakistan in 1983. She possessed a generous heart, the urge to engage with and change the world, and a brilliantly original, vivacious mind. She graduated from the National University of Singapore with first-class honors in Political Science. While young, she began to publish the work that showed her great gifts and talent. Among her interests were women and gender in South Asia, the historiography of this region, and the strength of the humanities. However, no list can capture the range of subjects about which she thought, spoke and wrote. She was a much beloved, deeply admired graduate student in Near Eastern Studies at NYU when she died tragically in Spring 2008. In honor of her memory and with the support of her family, the Center awarded the second annual Falak Sufi Memorial Essay Prize in May 2010 to **Helena Zeweri** for her essay entitled "Generating the Diaspora through Text: Afghan-American Writings on Belonging and the Homeland." An honorable mention went to **Killian Clarke** for his essay, "Saying Enough: The Impact of Authoritarianism in Egypt on the Kefaya Movement." Other submissions included:

- Claudia Paola Ambrosino, "Mussolini's Politics of Penetration and his Gamble for Domination in Egypt"
- Fatma Melek Arikan, "Anthropology of 'Turkey in the 1990s'"
- Matthew Boury, "An Evolution of Thought: A Study of Timothy Mitchell's *Colonising Egypt* and *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*"
- Beth Harrington, "Women as Transmitters: Social Constructions of Femininity and Marriage"
- Sarah Meyrick, "Queen Rania of Jordan's YouTube Channel: Framing, the Internet, and Political Discourse in the Digital Age"
- Daniel Smith, "Lost in Translation: Muhammad Rashid Rida's Fatwa on Qur'an Translation"
- Liam Stack, "Richard Mitchell and the Society of Muslim Brothers: The Genealogy of the Study of an Egyptian Movement"



Photo courtesy of the Center

(from left to right) Killian Clarke MA '12, Helena Zeweri MA '10, Seemi Sufi, Rashid Sufi and Dean Catherine Stimpson.

Competition for next year's award will begin at the beginning of the spring semester 2011. The Hagop Kevorkian Center remains indebted to the family of Falak Sufi for supporting this recognition of outstanding and original MA scholarship.

In the coming years, we are also grateful to Falak's family for making possible a permanent scholarship fund for aspiring students to attend NYU in her name. The first award has been granted to **Wajiha Naqvi** of Pakistan, who will be joining us as part of the MA class entering Fall 2010. Ms. Naqvi holds a B.S. in anthropology from the Lahore University of Management Sciences and has an interest in researching Islamic feminism. Further information about the Falak Sufi Scholarship can be found at [gsas.nyu.edu/page/grad.sufischolarship](http://gsas.nyu.edu/page/grad.sufischolarship).

## Studying Turkish in Istanbul

Students in NYU's Turkish program enjoyed a successful and active year. Dale Correa, Amanda McCabe, Jareka Dellenbaugh-Dempsey, Gizem Unsalan read Nazim Hikmet's poems in Turkish, English and Arabic at the Center's Nazim Hikmet/Mahmoud Darwish conference. The following students won language fellowships: Jennifer Auerbach (Critical Languages), Irina Levin (Critical Languages), Savannah Shipman (Critical Languages and ARIT), Amanda McCabe (ARIT), Christina Lordeman (ARIT), Leo Redmond who participated from the New School (ARIT), and Dale Correa (Institute of Turkish Studies fellowship for research in Turkey).



Photo courtesy of Sibel Erol

Several NYU students participated in the summer program for advanced Turkish at Bogazici University. Pictured here: Leo Redmond (The New School, MA0), an Bridget Purcell (Princeton, Ph.D.), Amanda McCabe (NYU, undergrad), Jennifer Auerbach (NYU, Ph.D.), Savannah Shipman (NYU, undergrad), Christina Lordeman (NYU, MA)

# Empiricism and Veteran Attitudes

## Interning with Iraq Veterans Against the War

*Sarah Edkins (MA '11)  
is interested in popular  
representations of Arabs in  
American culture and the  
history of US-Middle East  
Relations*

When I walked in for my first day as an intern with Iraq Veterans Against the War, I had little idea of what to expect. With a background in communications, I had come to the Kevorkian Center in hopes of someday helping to educate the American public and affect US foreign policy change in the Middle East through the development of public outreach curricula and PR campaigns for use by non-profits and NGOs. A marketing internship within the American movement for peace in the Middle East seemed like a good place to start, but veterans seemed far removed from the equation.



*Photo by Sarah Edkins*

*Iraq Veterans Against the War is a non-profit organization that relies on interns for organizational support.*

I was pleased to find that, despite the crude humor and military manner, IVAW occupies a respected niche in the movement. The national organization of post-9/11 veterans and active-duty service members opposes the US wars in and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, straddling a wide variety of goals and issues:

- Immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Reparations for the human and structural damages suffered by Iraq and Afghanistan, so that their peoples may regain the right to self-determination.
- Full benefits, adequate physical and mental healthcare, and other supports for returning servicemen and women.

As a veterans' organization, IVAW offers a unique credibility and the potential to reach an audience beyond the predictable core of the political left. IVAW co-founder Tim Goodrich explained, "When the average American hears a veteran – somebody who has seen combat and knows what it means – people listen, more than they do to anyone else, because this is somebody who has been on the ground, knows what the realities are, knows what these things mean." My job is to help veterans harness their potential through media: I develop educational materials and fact sheets that teach

communication skills like talking to reporters, writing op-eds, and drafting press releases. This approach allows veterans to effectively share their stories in their own, unfiltered voice. The position also encompasses internal communications, sharing news from the national office through audio Podcasts, posters and fliers, and social networking websites like Twitter and Facebook.

The value of the IVAW internship program lies in its reciprocity. As a low-budget non-profit, IVAW relies on volunteers to perform roles like communications. My education, experience, and insight into the field helps to satisfy a crucial need for the organization. As a graduate student of Near Eastern Studies, I seek new perspectives from which to study the region. IVAW offers an angle I might never have considered in an academic setting: unabashedly American, but ready to harshly criticize the positions and actions of the United States. IVAW's attempts to both understand and undermine the institutionalized American stereotypes of Arabs, Muslims, and the Middle East may not qualify as academic, but are essential to changing American attitudes, curbing violent US intervention in the region, and building constructive relationships with Middle Eastern states and peoples. This empirical understanding may prove just as important as anything available in the classroom.

**You can contact the Iraq Veterans Against the War at [www.ivaw.org](http://www.ivaw.org) or at 646-723-0989.**

# MA Student News 2009-2010

**Antonia House (MA '11)** is a McCracken fellow and has co-authored a book review with Jonathan House (2009) of Jimmy Carter's 2006 book *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid*. The review appeared in the *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* 6(3), 2009: 236-242.

**Besnik Sinani (MA '10)** is a FLAS fellow and his thesis is entitled "From Students of Knowledge to Hoxhas: Transnational Islam in Post-Communist Albania." He will present this research in an upcoming conference on Islam in the Balkans in October in Macedonia. Over the summer, he interned at the Middle East and North Africa Department at Human Rights Watch.

**Beth Harrington (MA '10)** has been asked to present her thesis "Spaces of Culture: Neoliberalism, Museum Franchising, and Abu Dhabi's Saadiyat Island," and will also present at the 2010 MESA Conference on a different topic. Beth was a Summer 2009 FLAS fellow and received a departmental scholarship from Near Eastern Studies. During the fall semester, she interned with the International Association of Art Critics-USA and is currently employed as a project manager at EmcArts, a nonprofit that provides consulting support to arts and cultural institutions as they grow, innovate and expand.

**Brian Torro (MA '11)** is a FLAS fellow and spent the summer studying Arabic at Cairo's CASA program. Brian blogs with Kalamna, the Kevorkian student blog.

**Caity Bolton (MA '10)** is a FLAS fellow and her thesis was entitled "Transcribing Tyranny: Darfur's Black Book and the Language of Resistance." Caity is now a secretary for the Area Teaching Committee of NYC, supervised by the Regional Bahá'í Council of the Northeastern States. She presented a conference paper entitled "Coherence and Collaboration: The Bahá'í Ruhi Institute as Contributing to an Ever-Advancing Civilization" at *We Have Never Been Secular: Rethinking the Sacred* at the New School for Social Research. She recently published "Ibrahim Mohammad, Khalil,"

an entry in the *Dictionary of African Biography* edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Emmanuel Akyeampong.

**Claudia Ambrosino (MA '10)** completed her thesis on "Mussolini's Politics of Penetration and His Gamble for Domination in Egypt." She returned to Italy during the summer to expand her research on this topic and intends to travel to pursue her studies of Arabic and to specialize in modern cultural topics, such as cinema, fashion design and media.

**Clémence Fonlladosa (MA '11)** is a departmental fellow in Near Eastern Studies and her proposed thesis topic involves the European Union's development policy in Egypt (based on Timothy Mitchell's account of USAID development policy in Egypt, in *Rule of Experts*).

**Daniel Smith (MA '10)** completed a historical study of the perceptions and medical treatment of Jewish immigrants from the MENA region in Israel during its first decade. Daniel is a FLAS fellow and attended Ulpan (Hebrew language intensive) in August at Haifa University, followed by travels in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries. He will return to the New York area for a job/internship in the non-profit sector and plans to apply to history Ph.D. programs.

**Eline Gordts (MA '11)** is in the joint Near Eastern Studies/Journalism program and has spent the summer in India working on her thesis topic: Islam in Leh (India). She was awarded a travel grant from the department of Journalism for the study.

**Fatma Arikan (MA '10)** has returned to Turkey for permanent employment. During the year, Fatma made valuable contributions to the department as a Program Assistant and graduate fellow. Her thesis was entitled, "A new generation of Islamic intellectuals in Turkey."

**Habib Battah (MA '10)** completed the joint Near Eastern Studies/Global Journalism program, and his final project is a documentary film that looks at political culture in Lebanon

following the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and the intensified polarization in Lebanese politics after the July 2006 war. He plans to resume a career in journalism in Beirut.

**Helena Zeweri (MA '10)** won the *Falak Sufi Memorial Essay Prize* and is a FLAS Fellow. Her thesis is entitled, "Defining 'Afghanness': Performing and Claiming Afghan Identity within the New York Afghan Diaspora." Helena was invited to participate in the *Stonybrook Graduate Student Ethnography* conference as well as the upcoming MESA Conference to present this work. Helena works as a Program Assistant at the NYU Center for Dialogues and as a Researcher for Femin Ijtihad. She plans to apply to Ph.D. programs in Anthropology and has a forthcoming entry in the *Encyclopedia of Asian-American Folklore* (2010, Greenwood Press) on Afghan-Americans.

**Janan Delgado (MA '10)** wrote her thesis on the legal and social history of child custody in fourteenth century Granada, with a specific focus on the fatawa of the Maliki mufti Abu Said Ibn Lubb (d.1381). She is presenting related work at the upcoming MESA conference. During the past year, Janan has been blogging and plans to continue exploring specific themes including Muslim youth identities in the West, space and movement. She is preparing to apply for Ph.D. programs in Islamic Studies.

**Killian Clarke (MA '12)** is a Research Analyst at Ferrari Consultancy, a position which he has held throughout the academic year, and will continue with through the coming year. Killian also writes for the Kevorkian Center Blog, contributing weekly articles on Middle East-related news and topics.

**Liam Stack (MA '11)** is a FLAS fellow and has spent the summer studying Arabic in Cairo, where he has worked as a freelance journalist. Last year he interned with the Counterterrorism Division of Human Rights Watch. He intends to write his thesis about Egypt's emergency law.

**Matt Aikins (MA '11)** is a departmental fellow



with Near Eastern Studies and spent his summer reporting from Afghanistan. He has published several articles on the region, including a piece that came out in *Harper's* this past year.

**Max Shmookler (MA '11)** is a MacCracken fellow and studied Classical Arabic on a summer FLAS in Cairo. During the academic year, Max interned at the International Rescue Committee and the Arab American Family Support Center. He also volunteered at the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Program at NYU Law School, was a research assistant at Human Rights Watch and an assistant English teacher. Max's proposed thesis topic is, "Refugee perceptions of mental health in Cairo."

**Melissa Brown (MA '11)** is a FLAS fellow and attended an intensive program in Palestinian Arabic in Jerusalem. She is tentatively researching for her thesis topic, "20th century arms development in the Middle East."

**Melissa Runstrom (MA '11)** received a summer FLAS to study Arabic in Cairo where she also carried out research focused on Egyptian temporary emigration. She is a departmental fellow and a Communications Assistant at the Center. Throughout the year she also tutored at the Arab American Family Support Center.

**Nadia Dropkin (MA '11)** is a FLAS fellow and studied Arabic at the American University of Cairo. While in Egypt, she recorded life histories for her thesis, which will focus on gender and sexuality in contemporary Egypt, with stress on the politics of desire as it pertains to women's homosocial and homosexual relationships. Nadia presented "The Forty-One informants of *Bareed Mistajil*: A Textual Ethnography of Queer Women and Transgender Persons in Lebanon" at the UCLA conference *State of the Art: Anthropology of the Middle East and North Africa*. She will also be presenting a paper at the upcoming MESA conference.

**Nadia Khalaf (MA '11)** is part of the Crown Prince's International Scholarship Program in Bahrain and is also a Program Assistant at the Kevorkian Center. This past summer, Nadia returned to Bahrain to research material on her great grandfather's (Haji Ahmed bin Salman Khalaf) house in Manama. The house

is on a list of traditional buildings to be renovated by the Shaikh Ibrahim bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Centre for Culture and Research, and potentially will be turned into a museum.

**Noor Shoufani (MA '10)** graduated with the Near Eastern Studies/Business option and is a departmental fellow and Program Assistant in the Kevorkian Center. Her final project was entitled, "Dubai: between Neoliberalism and the Welfare State." She has interned at the Synergos Institute in New York, assisting in establishing the strategy for the Arab World Social Innovators Program, which provides financial and technical support to 17 young social entrepreneurs in the Middle East. Noor is pursuing work in the NGO/non-profit sector focusing on economic development in the Middle East.

**Norah Rexer (MA '10)** is a FLAS fellow and wrote her thesis on prison narratives produced out of Morocco's years of political repression (1960s-1990s). During the past year, she interned at the Arab-American Family Support Center. She is currently working at the International Legal Foundation.

**Roman Matveyev (MA '10)** is a MacCracken Fellow and received a summer FLAS fellowship in 2009. His thesis was entitled "The Pulpit, the Sword and the Pipe: Seventeenth Century Reactions to Smoking in the Ottoman Empire." Roman plans to apply to Ph. D. programs while working and continuing his research.

**Sarah Edkins (MA '11)** is pursuing the Near Eastern Studies/Business option, and over the past summer coordinated the archival of documents at the Swarthmore College Peace Archive for the Iraq Veterans Against the War, where she is an intern. She also studied Arabic at Damascus University during the summer. She is working towards a final project to create a social media strategy for a local non-profit focused on the Middle East.

**Sarah Edmunds (MA '11)** is a departmental fellow and spent the past summer in Beirut studying Arabic and volunteering. Her thesis will focus on the construction of masculinity in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

**Sarah Meyrick (MA '11)** worked for the U

Mass Civic Initiative at U Mass Amherst during the summer managing a program of 25 Argentine Fulbright civil servants and 25 Iraqi college students. She will present at the MESA conference in November. For her thesis work, she intends to examine the intersection of state-building, democracy promotion and human security paradigms as well as how these manifest 'on-the ground'.

**Shardul Oza (MA '10)** completed the Near Eastern Studies/Business option and was a FLAS fellow. His thesis was entitled "Oil Politics in Saudi Arabia: Patronage and Reform in a Rentier State." In the past year, he interned at Innovations for Poverty Action a non-profit organization and currently works in India as a Knowledge Management Associate for the Centre for Micro Finance which conducts research on the microfinance sector in India and disseminates knowledge to policy-makers. During the past year, he wrote for the Kevorkian Center Blog, *Kalamna*.

**Sophie Chamas (MA '11)** spent the summer in Beirut conducting research among the Sh'ia community for her thesis, an anthropological study of sectarianism in Lebanon. She will look at the formation of the sectarian individual through welfare institutions, rituals and media. During the spring, Sophie interned at the Center for the Integration and Advancement of New Americans, a social services agency that works with new immigrants. Her publications include, "Sayyid Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah: Muslim Cleric and Islamic Feminist" in the *Journal for Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*.

**Zeynep Sertbulut (MA '10)** was invited to present her thesis, "The Culinary State: Shifting Ingredients of Israeli Identity" at an International Conference on *Food, Power and Meaning in the Middle East and the Mediterranean*, at Ben-Gurion University. Zeynep is a departmental fellow and a Program Assistant at the Center. She was also a Political Intern at the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations during Turkey's presidency at the Security Council, a Social Media/Communications Intern at the American Turkish society and a Research/Outreach Assistant at the Muslim Consultative Network.

# Radwan Ziadeh

## Scholar at Risk Finds a Home at Kevorkian Center

*Liam Stack (MA '11) is a former correspondent of the Christian Science Monitor and interned at Human Rights Watch last spring.*

Syrian lawyer, scholar and human rights activist Radwan Ziadeh has not been allowed to return to his country for almost three years. He fled into exile in 2007 after his work provoked threats from Syria's feared intelligence services, but thanks to Scholars At Risk, a national support network for academics who run afoul of rights abusing governments, Ziadeh found a temporary home at the Kevorkian Center in the Spring and Summer of 2010.



aggressive," says Ziadeh, detaining and trying a number of figures in the movement. "To this day the former President of the organization, Haytham Al Maleh, is in prison. He is 81 years old."

In 2005, Ziadeh co-founded the Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies with other members of the Human Rights Association and served as its Director, significantly increasing his public profile. The tipping point came when Ziadeh published a book in 2007 on the decision-making process of the Al Assad regime. The book was promptly banned and Ziadeh found himself called in to the office of the head of military intelligence, Major General Ali Mamlouk.

Ziadeh has been a pioneering and fearless critic of the Syrian government and a tireless documenter of, and advocate for, the human rights of its citizens. His career began during the Damascus Spring, a brief window of political opening that followed the 2000 death of Syria's autocratic leader Hafez Al Assad and was eventually shut in 2001 by his equally autocratic successor – and son – Bashar.

In 2000, Ziadeh was one of forty other lawyers who founded The Human Rights Association of Syria, where he served as editor of its magazine *Trends*. The organization, and its magazine, soon ran into trouble with the state: three of its staffers were imprisoned and the publication itself was soon banned.

The state response came as no surprise to Ziadeh, whose first book, a 1999 intellectual history on the spread of the idea of human rights in the Arab world, was banned in several countries including Syria, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia. But after he became associated with the Human Rights Association, the state began to watch him more closely.

"When Hafez Al Assad died in 2000 we thought there was space to speak out, but from 2001 to 2005 I was banned from leaving the country," he said. "They withdrew my passport and I couldn't travel at all."

Travel restrictions and other forms of state harassment did not stop the work of the Association, however, which continued to research human rights abuses in Syria and grew into a major thorn in the Al Assad regime's side. They began issuing annual reports on the state of human rights in Syria in 2003, and scored a media coup when their 2004 annual report was picked up by a range of major international broadcasters like CNN and the BBC.

"That is when the government started to become much more

"He threatened me because of the book, he looked at me and said 'this is the last time that we will see you here as a guest,'" said Ziadeh. "It made me feel like I could not work anymore inside Syria."

He spent the next few nervous months looking for a way to both continue his work and avoid prison. The only solution he could find was escape.

Three months after Mamlouk's threat, Ziadeh was offered a fellowship at the US Institute of Peace, to which he continues to contribute as a Senior Fellow. Since then, he and his wife have settled in Crystal City, Virginia and had a child who was born a US citizen. Thanks to Scholars At Risk, he has held a number of temporary academic appointments in addition to his work with the Damascus Center, the US Institute for Peace and the Kevorkian Center, including the Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University and the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University.

Ziadeh is still committed to the political work he began in Syria and deeply tied to the people he was forced to leave behind. His most recent book-length project, *Years of Fear: Enforced Disappearances in Syria*, looks at the plight of those who were forcibly disappeared by security services who Ziadeh says "are forgotten" in most accounts of Syrian politics. In April he traveled to Amman, Jordan for work but his family was unable to meet him there: each of his relatives has been barred from leaving the country. "In Syria the government will use your family as hostages to put pressure on your activities," he said.



# Faculty News 2009-2010

**Nida Al-Ahmad:** During the past academic year, I enjoyed teaching two graduate seminars at the Kevorkian Center—Modern Iraqi Politics, and Oil, Development and Power. I also served as a second reader on a handful of MA student theses, something I will continue next year. Last year, I also developed an article that examines the relationship between state power, violence and agency in the context of an inter and intra-state violence in Iraq from 1986 to 1987. I wrote a review for Al-Ali and Pratt's book "What Kind of Liberation? Women and the Occupation of Iraq" that appeared in the *Review of Middle East Studies*. Most recently, I received the Qatar Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University. As a post-doctoral fellow I will spend the 2010-2011 academic year working on a book manuscript based on my dissertation's research. The book will examine questions of state power and survival in Iraq from 1988 to 2005.

**Susham Bedi:** This year I taught at a STAR-TALK teacher-training program and gave four ACTFL OPI tester training workshops. Three workshops took place at NYU (one in November and two in February) and one in Madison, Wisconsin in May for their Asian language teachers. My novel entitled *Maine Nata Tora* (I broke relations) was published by Bhartiya Gyanpith in Delhi, India. My article "Looking In From The Outside: Writing and Teaching In The Diaspora" appeared in an anthology of conference papers published by University of Lausanne in Switzerland. I also had a few articles published in Hindi in literary journals like *Saakhi* and *Gagnanchal*.

**Peter Chelkowski:** Over the last academic year, much of my time has been devoted to preparing the volume, *Eternal Performance: Ta'ziyeh and Other Shiite Rituals* for publication. This has been a lengthy process and I am very happy to announce that this book was published in October. I participated in several conferences in the past 12 months, but two stood out as highlights. I delivered a paper at the conference, *Arabian Nights*, in Abu Dhabi in December. While there, I had the opportunity to visit NYU's new

facilities and view the site of the future campus. Last month, I attended the World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies in Barcelona and delivered a paper on "Foreigners in Iran." As usual, I taught a full load of four courses over two semesters: two graduate and two undergraduate.

**Tamer El-Leithy:** In addition to teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in the department, I conducted research on several projects related to my new interest in medieval Arabic legal documents. Over the course of the year, I continued work on a collaborative research project entitled Islamic Law Materialized (based at the CNRS, Paris). The ILM working group develops a innovative database for editing and analyzing pre-Ottoman legal documents (8th-15th c.); this resource will serve as the basis for a new history of Islamic law—one based on evidence of court practice rather than traditional accounts that rely on prescriptive sources like jurisprudence. It also allows unprecedented regional comparisons and diachronic analyses of legal forms and court practices. This year, our ILM group met for three workshops and we will also present the project at the Conference of German Oriental Studies in Marburg (September 2010). Another product of my work on the ILM project was a new paper I wrote and presented on the question of medieval Middle Eastern archives, and traditional scholarly claims regarding their absence in light of recent archival discoveries and a new conceptualization of 'archiving practices' in the medieval Middle East. This coming year (2010-11) I will be on sabbatical; I was awarded a research fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin and I look forward to devoting my time to research on a new collection of legal documents. I plan to use these documents to reconstruct two Christian neighborhoods in late-medieval Cairo and analyze their resident Coptic families and their strategies of social reproduction.

**Sibel Erol:** In addition to my elementary, intermediate and advanced Turkish classes, I offered an undergraduate seminar on Orhan Pamuk in the spring, as my article reading Pamuk's *Snow* as parody, which had originally appeared in

*Comparative Critical Studies* was reprinted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism* vol. 288. Most of my presentations during the year focused on film: I gave a paper on Fatih Akin's use of literature in film at MESA, talked about Nuri Bilge Ceylan's films at a luncheon seminar at Princeton, introduced and led the discussion on the Yilmaz Guney film *Yo!* during the Center's Kurdish Film Festival, and with *New York* magazine film critic Bilge Ebiri, discussed a screening of Nuri Bilge Ceylan's *Three Monkeys*. I will have the opportunity to continue this dialogue on film in my seminar Masculinities and Turkish Cinema in spring 2011. In terms of language pedagogy, I participated in a round-table discussion for evaluating Turkish teaching materials at MESA, and presented on self-learning books and *Advanced Grammar Modules*. I served on the Fulbright Committee for the selection of Turkey-bound Teaching Assistants of English, and continued with my term on the board of Turkish Studies Association.

**Barry Flood:** I began the academic year in September by delivering the Wilkinson Lecture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, "From King of the Mountains to the Second Alexander: Going Global in Medieval Afghanistan." During the year I delivered lectures at Johns Hopkins University, the University of Delaware, Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, Northwestern University, and École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris. My graduate teaching for the year focused on Islamic ornament and questions of transculturation and material culture, while my undergraduate classes included a survey of Islamic art and a seminar on Orientalism and Representation. In the summer of 2010, I participated in a symposium entitled *Late Antique Iconoclasm*, hosted by the Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity, and in a three-week workshop, *1500-1600. Entre Islam et Nouveaux Mondes: les réformes dans un contexte global*, organized by the Institut National de L'histoire de L'art in Paris, where I presented a paper based on my current research, "Entre aniconisme et idolâtrie; l'Islam et l'image dans les polémiques de la Réforme." The year saw the publication of two articles, "La communauté

imaginaire,” *Qantara* (73, November 2009), and “Masons and Mobility: Indic Elements in Twelfth-century Afghan Stone-carving,” in Anna Filigenzi & Roberta Giunta, eds., *Fifty Years of Research in the Heart of Eurasia*, Istituto Italiano per l’Africa et l’Oriente (Rome, 2009).

**Michael Gilsenan:** I gave a paper and acted as a discussant *The European Social Science and History Conference* in Ghent in the Spring as a participant in one of five panels on inheritance and kinship. The anthropology-history collaboration was exhilarating and recalled the great days of the 1960s when joint conferences were common. The organization of what turned out to be an excellent workshop on Islamic Law and Society in May at the Kevorkian continued this combination of disciplines, drawing mostly on NYU and Columbia faculty but with several guests from Britain. I gave a workshop presentation at the Center in December about my research on inheritance with Brinkley Messick as discussant. I also submitted a long paper on disputes about wills and inheritance in the Hadhrami Arab diaspora 1860-1883 for publication.

**Ogden Goelet:** In addition to my normal teaching duties on the undergraduate level, I have been adjusting my graduate courses to connect with one of my two major writing projects. I am currently under contract with Cambridge University Press to produce an instructional reader in Middle Egyptian, the fundamental dialect with which Egyptian language training usually begins. One of the chief aims of this reader will be to teach students to work primarily from line drawings and photographs of the inscriptions themselves and to analyze texts more contextually. My other chief project is an epigraphical expedition to the temple of Ramesses II in Abydos, where I and Dr. Sameh Iskander, a MEIS graduate, have been photographing and recording the well-preserved inscriptions and scenes of one of the most colorfully decorated monuments of the New Kingdom. We have now photographed the entire temple and will soon publish jointly the first of several articles on our initial findings there. This winter we will continue collating line drawings with a team of four epigraphers. Finally, I have been co-editing a two-volume *Festschrift* for Dorothea Arnold, the curator of Egyptian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

**Bruce Grant:** In 2009, I was pleased to see the release of a monograph I had been at work on for some time, *The Captive and the Gift: Cultural Histories of Sovereignty in Russia and the Caucasus*. The book was both a critical study of how the multifaith, ethnically and linguistically saturated Caucasus has come to be understood in the Russian imagination, as well as a historical anthropology of alternative visions of sovereignty in that setting. Its release gave me the opportunity to pursue a handful of new projects: an ongoing study of the history of Sovietization of one community in northwest Azerbaijan, with particular regard for its rich social life around rural religious shrines; a study of changing social mores in the rapidly transforming capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, from model socialist urban centre to nationalizing metropolis; the role of satire in authoritarian settings as seen through the life and work of Celil Memmedquluzade, editor of the Azeri-language, Tbilisi-based, multi-regional journal, *Molla Nesreddin*, which was published from 1906 to 1931. In 2010, I began serving as President-Elect of ASSES, the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (formerly AAASS), where our current goals have been to internationalize the profile of the organization and to widen our membership through greater inclusion of work being done across greater Eurasian space.

**Nadia Guessous:** This was a year of many transitions for me. After having spent a year on a fellowship at Amherst College, where I was working on my dissertation and teaching in the women and gender studies department, I joined the Kevorkian Center as a Faculty Fellow and Director of Graduate Studies in September 2009. I went from teaching and interacting with undergraduate students at a small liberal arts college in Western Massachusetts to teaching and advising MA students at a large research university in the heart of New York City. I went from being a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology at Columbia University to becoming a member of an area studies program where I am surrounded by colleagues and students from diverse disciplinary backgrounds who share a deep passion for the study of the Middle East and North Africa. I could not have wished for a better place to make all these transitions. Teaching graduate courses on the an-

thropology of gender and sexuality and on the anthropology of Islam has been particularly rewarding. While my initiation into the intricate art of being a Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) has entailed a steep learning curve and taken up most of my time, other highlights this year include the publication of my study on women and political violence during the years of lead in Morocco by the Moroccan Human Rights Commission; participating in a panel on postcolonial tragedy at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association; finishing my dissertation on Moroccan leftist subjectivity in the wake of the Islamic Revival; catching up with colleagues, friends and family in Morocco after a two-year absence; and running a three day workshop on gender and sexuality with high school teachers as part of the Kevorkian Center’s teacher training program.

**Hala Halim:** In tandem with a graduate seminar on Arabic translation, I was teaching in the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies in fall 2009. I organized *Horizons of Translation*, a lecture series co-sponsored by the Department of Comparative Literature and the Humanities Initiative with speakers from different universities addressing Latin America, the USA, Europe, and the Arab world. A Goddard Fellowship in spring 2010 afforded me the time to do some research in Egypt and to add two new chapters to my book manuscript as well as revise extant chapters. In spring, too, I served as respondent/discussant on a panel entitled “Language Politics and Translation,” in the conference *National Poets/Universal Poetics: Mahmoud Darwish and Nazim Hikmet*, organized by the Kevorkian Center and Eugene Lang College, The New School for Liberal Arts. A few days later, I gave a keynote address in *Ports of Call: Cultures of Exchange*, a conference organized by the graduate students of the Department of Comparative Literature, UCLA.

**Gabriela Nik Ilieva:** This year I continued working as Advisor of the South Asian Studies Minor and Coordinator of the Hindi and Urdu Language programs. I taught Hindi language courses, as well as Ancient Indian Literature and Modern South Asian Literature courses. I co-directed Hindi-Urdu and Arabic-Persian two-week teacher-training workshops funded by STARTALK grants awarded by the National

Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland and ran two four-day OPI ACT-FL workshops for Hindi-Urdu school and college teachers. In addition, I am co-directing a three-year project "Language for Health: The Practice of Medicine in Hindi-Urdu" in partnership with the University of Texas, funded by a grant from the Flagship Initiative of the National Security Education Program. I am also a consultant for the development of the Urdu and Hindi Language Teaching Standards documents. My cooperation with the Center for Applied Second Language Studies, University of Oregon, Eugene on the development of a Standards-Based Test, has been particularly fulfilling since it can provide programs across the US and study abroad programs with efficient tools for placement and assessment of language proficiency. Besides several other language workshops I organized and conducted at NYU, I also participated in a number of conferences, including the First International Conference on Heritage Languages. I am working on a poetry collection in Hindi translation and several sets of materials for Hindi language learning and teaching.

**Deborah Kapchan:** After a year's sabbatical (2008-2009) doing research on the spread of Sufism in France, funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, I am now teaching a graduate seminar entitled Theorizing Religious Performance: Transnational Sufism. I am also teaching a course entitled Writing Public and Global Culture (a writing seminar), and co-directing a Humanities Initiative working group with Jason Stanyek around issues of sound and writing called Theorizing Sound Writing. I am currently editing a volume entitled *Intangible Rights: Cultural Heritage and Human Rights*, and this past year published three journal articles about my research among Sufis in France. They include "Learning to Listen: The Sound of Sufism in France," in *The World of Music*, "Singing Community/ Remembering in Common: Sufi Liturgy and North African Identity in Southern France" in *International Journal of Community Music*, and "The Promise of Sonic Translation: Performing the Festive Sacred in Morocco" in *American Anthropologist*.

**Hasan Karataş:** In the 2009-2010 academic year, I resided in New York and continued

offering Ottoman Turkish courses on various levels. In the spring 2010, I introduced an undergraduate seminar titled Religion and Politics in the Early Modern Middle East, which focuses on the interaction between religious and political actors in the Ottoman and Safavid Empires. During the year, I wrote a considerable portion of my monograph on the Halvetiye Mystical Order in Anatolia. I presented parts of this monograph in the annual MESA conference in Boston, the *European Social Sciences and History Conference* in Belgium and the *Middle East History and Theory Conference* at University of Chicago. I also completed two articles on the roles of family and property in the formation of mystical orders and the rise of urban historiography in the late Ottoman Turkey respectively. These articles were submitted for review in academic journals. Besides academic occupations, I gave talks and moderated discussions in local NGOs. My talk in the New York Gateway Initiative was on the role of religion in modern day Turkish politics. I moderated a discussion of the novel titled *Bastard of Istanbul* by celebrated Turkish writer Elif Safak in the Turkish American Society. Lastly in May 2010, I began serving as consultant to an international organization called The Union of NGOs of The Islamic World.

**Manouchehr Kasheff:** During the 2009-2010 academic year, I participated in two workshops concerning teaching foreign languages. The first one was for a week in February 2010 at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, followed by a Startalk workshop for two weeks in late March 2010 at the same university. I also worked as an assistant editor on the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

**Marion Katz:** Over the past year, I completed the manuscript of my book on the history of women's mosque access and submitted it for publication. I also continued research and began writing on a study of prayer in Islam for Cambridge University Press, focusing on issues of religious authority, ritual learning and mastery, and the social distribution of the knowledge and practice of canonical prayer (*salaṭ*). In addition, I presented work at the *Conference on Gender in Judaism and Islam* at the University of Pennsylvania in March, and participated in the *Ninth*

*Annual Critical Islamic Reflections Conference* at Yale in April and the workshop on Reason and Authority in Islamic and Jewish Law at the University of Toronto in May.

**Farhad Kazemi:** I will be on a sabbatical leave in the fall 2010. I will return to one-semester teaching in the spring before retiring from NYU after some forty years of service. During this academic year, I will be completing a coauthored book manuscript *Transnational Forces in the Gulf* to be published by the University of Pennsylvania Press. A related workshop at NYUAD, funded by a grant, will take place in December 2010. Moreover, I will be delivering the Yarshater Lectures on "Iranian Politics and Society" at UCLA in November which will eventually be published as a book. Needless to say, I am looking forward to a busy and engaging year.

**Philip Kennedy:** The 2009-2010 academic year was my second year as Faculty Director of the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute, a year in which we moved into new premises at the NYUAD Downtown Campus. The Institute hosted a series of lectures on Islamic art and architecture, Islamic political theory and Arabic literature. I also co-convened an international conference on the *Arabian Nights* together with Marina Warner; we are currently editing the proceedings of this event and two other related conferences into a single volume with the working title *The Arabian Nights: Encounters and Translations in Literature and the Arts*. This year, I was awarded a five-year research grant by the NYUAD Institute to establish the Library of Arabic Literature, a parallel text series of English-Arabic facing page editions of the works of pre-modern Arabic literature. Work so far has been to set up editorial and advisory boards. I gave a presentation of the project at the School of Abbasid Studies conference in Leuven's Catholic University this year and was pleased by the reaction of colleagues. The series will be published by NYU press in a special imprint for the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute. Among the rewarding highlights of my year were public interviews with Sinan Antoon at the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair and Parviz Tanavoli, Iranian sculptor and artist, at this spring's Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Festival. I have also finished a draft on my monograph on anagnorisis in Arabic literature, and have upcoming ency-

clopaedia articles and journal reviews.

**Arang Keshavarzian:** During the past academic year, my first at NYU, I busied myself with acclimating to my new intellectual environment. Central to this transition was my development of two new graduate courses. The first seminar examined political and socioeconomic processes in the Middle East from a transnational perspective. This topic is related to my current research, which analyzes the eras and concepts of late imperialism and globalization by examining the political economy of the Persian Gulf from the vantage of local circuits of trade and transnational coalitions of interests. I published the first essay from this project in *Geopolitics* (May 2010) as a part of a co-edited special section with Waleed Hazbun. The second seminar was designed to introduce students to competing approaches to the study of Middle East politics. Unlike the thematic course on transnationalism, this broad survey was an opportunity to discuss diverse issues and reflect on foundational debates in the field of comparative politics. Thanks to the energetic and thoughtful participation of the students, both seminars were stimulating and enjoyable for me; I hope that the students had a similar experience! In addition to teaching a lecture course on Middle East politics, for undergraduates I offered a seminar titled Iranian politics in comparative perspective. This also is related to my ongoing research and writing on contemporary Iranian politics—always a contentious and eventful topic.

**Mehdi Khorrami:** During the 2009-2010 academic year, I was involved in a number of teacher training workshops. I taught at NYU's STARTALK teacher training program and I co-organized a major teacher training workshop for instructors of Persian in Tajikistan. This workshop was held in June 2010 in Dushanbe. On literature front, I continued my research on *Who Writes Iran: Literary Discourses and Counter-Discourses in Contemporary Persian Fiction*, a book project which focuses on analyzing literary counter-discourses and counter-narratives in contemporary Persian fiction. Throughout the year, I participated in a number of conferences including the *World Congress of Middle Eastern Studies* where I co-organized (with professor Sholeh Vatanabadi) a panel entitled "Cultural Turn in Iran's June 2009 Post-Election

Uprising." The panel was selected as one of the special sessions of the conference. Professor Vatanabadi and I also collaborated on developing a conference proposal, "The Authentic Literary Narratives of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)." The proposal has been approved by the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute and it will be held in March 2011 at the NYUAD campus.

**Zachary Lockman:** I was on leave in the fall of 2009 — the first semester of leave I had taken in quite a few years — and in addition to my continuing work with graduate students, writing large numbers of letters of recommendation, and participating in a couple of academic workshops and conferences, I tried (with only partial success) to devote at least a little time to thinking about a new research project. My last term as chair of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies program in the spring of 2010 was rather insane, owing in part to some rather sudden turnover in the department's staff and the ensuing disruption of normal work life. I am relieved to have completed my service as chair and would like to thank my colleagues in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies as well as everyone at the Kevorkian Center for their support and collaboration. Relieved of administrative responsibilities for the first time since I came to NYU in 1995 — except for a few stretches of leave — I now look forward to getting to do more of the fun side of academic life: teaching, research and writing.

**Ali Mirsepassi:** Last year was a very exciting year for me. A group of NYU colleagues and I worked on the creation of the Iranian Studies Initiative at NYU and I am delighted to say that ISI-NYU is a new program and you can check out the website that has been designed for the Initiative at: [www.isi-nyu.org](http://www.isi-nyu.org). ISI-NYU is collaboration between the Gallatin School and the Kevorkian Center and draws on faculty members from departments and centers across the University. Our activities for the academic year included a lecture series, lunch discussions and art exhibitions. My new book, *Democracy in Modern Iran: Islam and Political Change*, NYU Press, was published in May and received more public attention and reviews I anticipated. I spent most of my spring and the summer on preparing the final copy of the manuscript for my new book *Political Islam, Iran, and the Enlightenment: Philosophies of Hope and Desire*.

This book will be published by the Cambridge University Press and will be out in November.

**John Morgan:** During my most enjoyable stay at the Center as a Visiting Scholar, I published three articles, read two papers and published a new book. The articles were "Lessons from the American Rabbinic Experience: What Muslim Clergy Need to Know," *Journal of Religion and Society*, XII (Summer, 2010), 1-14; "Professionalization of Islamic Ministry in America: Components of the Legitimizing Process in Western Society," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, JSRI volume 9, no. 26 Summer 2010; and "Harry Stack Sullivan and Interpersonal Psychotherapy: The Father of Modern Social Psychiatry," in *FOUNDATION THEOLOGY* 2010. (Oxford University Faculty Theology Monograph Series). The papers I read were "Islamic Clergy and the Professionalization Process in American Society," *IX International Congress on Religion and Sociology*, Invitational from the Department of Culture, Government of Cuba, Havana (July 4-6, 2010) and "The Little Traditions of Christian Spirituality: The Amish and Quakers in America," presented to the Theology Summer School at Oxford University (July 21-29, 2010). My new book, *Beginning with Freud: Classical Schools of Psychotherapy* was published by Wyndham Hall Press and my book, *Muslim Clergy in America: Ministry as Profession in the Islamic Community* went into a second edition based primarily on research done at the Center.

**Shahan Mufti:** I taught a Reporting the Middle East Class at the Kevorkian Center in the fall of 2009. During the year I published reportage and essays in *Harper's Magazine*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Columbia Journalism Review* and other publications. I served as a consultant for the Asia Society project, "Pakistan 2020: A Vision for a Better Future and a Roadmap for Getting There." A task force associated with the project brought together people from the United States and Pakistan including top-level former diplomats and military personnel as well as human rights workers, academics and practitioners to chart a positive course for Pakistan and America-Pakistan relations. A report will be released by Asia Society in November. This summer, I was invited by the Donahue Center at the University of Massachu-



setts Amherst to conduct a series of lectures for a group American and Pakistani college students brought together for a six-week summer session. In the fall I will be teaching at the Kevorkian Center once again and also at Marymount Manhattan College.

**Iren Ozgur:** During Spring 2010, I was an adjunct lecturer at the Kevorkian Center. My research interests lie mainly in the areas of Islamic social and political movements, religious education, popular culture, and identity politics. During my time at the Center, I taught a graduate seminar that introduced and examined some of the key issues and debates that have shaped Turkish politics, society and culture. In addition to teaching, I participated in conferences and presented papers. In March, I presented a paper at Columbia's Center for Democracy, Tolerance, and Religion on Islamist politics and religious education in contemporary Turkey. During that month, I attended a conference on emerging fault lines and new public spheres at the University of Denmark and presented a paper on changing trends in Islamist popular culture. In April, I gave a talk at Princeton's Near Eastern Studies Department on Islamist cinema and music in Turkey. Later that month, I moderated a panel at a conference on urban planning in Istanbul. During this time, I continued writing film reviews.

**Leslie Peirce:** I spent the 2009-2010 academic year on leave in Istanbul, during which time I was supported by a John S. Guggenheim fellowship and an appointment as residential research fellow at Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Studies in Istanbul. During the year, I conducted research on a new project on abduction and violence in the early modern Ottoman domains. While in Turkey, I gave talks on various aspects of my research at a number of universities, including Yildiz Technical University, Sabanci University, Bilgi University, and Bosphorus University, all in Istanbul, and Bilkent University in Ankara. At the Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes in Istanbul, I gave a talk in a lecture series on Ottoman women entitled "I am my own agent": Women and the Rocky Road to Marriage in Early Modern Anatolia." In May, I participated in a conference on Heybeli Island in the Marmara Sea that was sponsored by the Swedish Research Institute;

the conference topic was "Istanbul as Seen from a Distance," and my paper concerned the southeastern Anatolian city of Aintab (today's Gaziantep) a generation after the Ottoman conquest. I also participated in a symposium at the Research Center for Anatolian Studies, *Order and Disorder: New Challenges for the Early-Modern Ottoman World*; my presentation was entitled "Violence in a Post-Conquest Era". Istanbul is rife these days with documentary film makers. I was featured as a "talking head" for one, Lion TV (Britain), in the Ottoman segment of their seven-part program on the history of the Middle East. This program, "The River Runs West," is scheduled to air on BBC, PBS, and Turkish Radio and Television in fall 2011. Among my publications was an essay on the Middle East for the *American Historical Review* Forum on Historiographies of Sexuality, entitled "Writing Histories of Sexuality in the Middle East" (December 2009).

**Maurice A. Pomerantz:** This past year was filled with many memorable occasions. First of all, I successfully defended my dissertation at the University of Chicago, entitled the "Licit Magic and Divine Grace: The Life and Letters of al-Şāhib ibn 'Abbād (d. 385/995)." The dissertation was an examination of the Arabic-language correspondence of a famous 10<sup>th</sup>-century vizier and man of letters. It was gratifying to be able to see the project to a fitting conclusion. I also prepared two short articles on further materials relating to other aspects of the vizier's works that I was not able to examine in my dissertation. These will be published in volumes honoring two scholars that have been mentors and friends. Another highlight of the past year was teaching the Arabian Nights course for undergraduates during the spring semester. One portion of the course, "Children of the Nights" focused upon the many poems, stories, novels, movies, music and other works that have been inspired by the *Arabian Nights'* tales. I was particularly pleased to accompany a group of my students to see Jason Grote's play *1001* performed at Montclair State University in New Jersey. After the show, my students had the opportunity to discuss the play with the playwright and director. I am grateful to the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and the College of Arts and Sciences for providing funding for this event.

**Everett Rowson:** Two things stand out for me from what was a very busy year of teaching, research and administration. In the fall, I offered a new undergraduate seminar, mostly for our departmental majors, on the thought of the eminent eleventh-century Islamic scholar al-Ghazali, who is still today one of the major influences on Muslims' understanding of their religion, and was able to cover a lot of ground – Islamic law, theology, philosophy, mysticism – through the translated works of a single thinker. In the spring, I was honored to be invited to give the plenary talk at the *Twenty-Fifth Annual Middle East History and Theory* graduate students' conference at the University of Chicago. The theme this year was urbanism, which gave me the opportunity to talk about, and contextualize, a notorious eleventh-century Arabic text in which a rogue from Baghdad crashes a party in Isfahan and, in what becomes a drunken frenzy, launches into an extended comparison of the two cities, thereby offering modern scholars both extremely rich material for social history in general and a real sense of what cities, and civic pride, meant in the medieval Middle East. I am now working on turning my conclusions into publishable form.

**Ella Shohat:** I was on leave for the 2009-2010 academic year, and was able to start on new research, anthologize and republish several essays, and put out a new edition of *Israeli Cinema* with a new extensive postscript chapter. I also coauthored with R. Stam an article on "Postcolonial Studies at France," forthcoming in *Interventions*. I was fortunate to receive a Fulbright Lectureship/Research Grant that sent me to The University of Sao Paulo, Brazil in the Spring/Summer. While there, I developed research on cultural intersections between the Middle East and Latin America. I looked forward to returning to campus and teaching again in the fall.

**Helga Tawil-Souri:** I was on leave in 2009-2010, finishing my manuscript on communication and hi-tech infrastructure as forms of bordering mechanisms in Palestine/Israel. Some other things I've worked on this part year include two pieces on checkpoints, one published in *International Journal of Cultural Studies* and one in *Jerusalem Quarterly*. Having spent lots of time at checkpoints, I came to realize that ID cards in Palestine/Israel also function as (uneven)

borders. My first article on ID cards, "Orange, Green, and Blue: Colour-Coded Paperwork for Palestinian Population Control," is published in Elia Zureik's edited volume, *Surveillance and Control in Israel/Palestine: Population, Territory and Power*. I presented my initial research on ID cards at a conference in Cyprus, which I had never been to before. After visiting the divided city of Nicosia, I wrote an essay titled 'Walking Nicosia, Imagining Jerusalem' published on-line at Re-Public. Another article based on spending time at internet cafes in the Palestinian Territories surrounded by teen-agers playing "shoot-'em up" videogames, "The Political Battlefield of Pro-Arab Videogames on Palestinian Streets," was republished in the volume *War Isn't Hell, It's Entertainment: War in Modern Culture and Visual Media*. A project that I enjoyed was putting together a special issue of *Middle East Journal of Communication and Culture* on 'Towards a Palestinian Cultural Studies' for which I was guest editor. Being on leave also allowed some travel time: I gave talks at a number of universities in the UK, at Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies; and presented papers at MESA, WOCMES, and other conferences.

**Nader Uthman:** The past academic year proved to be another stimulating and fulfilling period, pedagogically and scholastically. In November, I co-organized a panel for the Middle East Studies Association's annual conference entitled Poetics, Politics & Prisons of Exile in Arabic Literature, where I presented research on Ghassan Kanafani. At Columbia, I presented a paper on canonicity and pedagogies of Arabic literature. After being invited to translate contemporary Arabic fiction for Bloomsbury-Qatar Foundation's volume *Beirut 39* (2010), I served as a delegate to the conference *Continuing the Conversation: Bridging Civilizations through Translation* in Doha in May. I also published a review of the latest translation of Mahmoud Darwish's poetry collection in the *Journal of Arabic Literature*. In the summer, I led the Arabic segment of NYU's STARTALK teacher training workshop, before embarking on a rewarding and intensive Arabic summer session with a stellar group of NYU students.

**Shouleh Vatanabadi:** During the past year I have been continuing my research and writing

on the topic of politics of translation and cultural flows as it relates to the Middle East. As part of this project, I published, "Translating the Transnational: Teaching the other in Translation" *Cultural Studies*, Special Issue: Transnationalism and Cultural Studies, 23: 5; and "Stories beyond Histories, Translations beyond Nations", in *Middle East Critique*, 18:2. With my colleague, Professor Mehdi Khorrami, I co-organized the panel, "Cultural Turn in Iran's June 2009 Post-Election Uprising" for the World Congress of Middle East Studies, held in Barcelona in July. The panel was selected as a special session in the conference program. I also contributed to this panel with my paper, "Women, Iranian Post-election Uprising and Cultural Texts." Another noteworthy result of our collaborative work has been our conference proposal for the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute, "Moments of Silence: The Authentic Literary Narratives of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)" scheduled to be held in March 2011 at NYUAD. On the teaching front, I gave a course this summer at Bogazici University in Istanbul on cinema and politics of globalization, which turned out to be an extremely productive and gratifying experience.

**Jeremy F. Walton:** I'm pleased to report that my first year at NYU was both productive and deeply edifying. In addition to a variety of presentations on my research about civil society, Islamic practice and secularism in contemporary Turkey – including two at the Kevorkian Center itself – 2009-2010 witnessed the publication of my edited volume *Anthropology and Global Counterinsurgency* (University of Chicago Press; John Kelly, Bea Jauregui, Sean T. Mitchell and Jeremy Walton, coeditors). *Anthropology and Global Counterinsurgency* broadly interrogates recent American military appropriations of anthropological knowledge in theaters of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, while also opening new directions in the anthropology of warfare and global regimes of power more generally—it invites readership from a diverse array of academic disciplines, including scholars of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. I also had several publications in edited volumes, including "Neo-Ottomanism and the Pious Aesthetics of Publicness: Making Place and Space Virtuous in Istanbul," in the volume *Orienting Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe* (Routledge; Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal and İpek Türeli,

editors) and "Civil Islam and the Contradictions of Modernity: Ethnographic Notes from Turkey," in the volume *Survey of the Sociology of Islam & Muslim Societies: Secularism, Economy and Politics* (Ithaca Press; Tuğrul Keskin, editor). As the 2010-2011 academic year begins, I'm enthusiastic to continue to hone my research, writing, and pedagogy, especially through conversations with colleagues and students at the Kevorkian Center and in the Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies program.

**Muserref Yetim:** My research and publications focus on the problems of establishing rules/institutions governing relations among independent political entities. I am particularly interested in the problems associated with international water rights, trade, finance, and monetary institutions. Currently I am writing a book that attempts to clarify the dilemmas confronting Middle Eastern watercourse states as they pertain especially to instances of bargaining failures over water resources. As comparanda, I also consider other potential and acute water conflicts around the world. My activities in the last year include chairing a session entitled "Social Justice, Capitalism and Economic History," at a Politics and Economic History event hosted jointly by Montana State University and Stanford University. I also gave talk at *Running Dry: Water in the Middle East and North Africa* organized by the Center in July. This fall, I am teaching a new graduate course, Political Economy of Natural Resource Conflicts, in addition to my International Political Economy course. Both are offered through the Wilf Family Department of Politics.

**Radwan Ziadeh:** From March to August this year, I was a Prins Global Fellow at the Kevorkian Center. My time at NYU was short, but very productive. During my fellowship, two books have gone to press, and I published two book chapters and submitted five articles on democratization and human rights in Syria for publication. I was also able to participate in several international conferences, including the *World Movement for Democracy* in Jakarta, where I accepted an award on behalf of the Syrian Human Rights Movement. I really enjoyed the environment at the Center, which allowed to me to connect with such accomplished scholars.

# Events Archive 2009-2010

## RESEARCH WORKSHOPS

An interdisciplinary and cross-regional series of papers-in-progress pairing paper authors with complementary discussants. Discussions revolve around theory, method, and approaches to modern Middle Eastern Studies.

**Lisa Hajjar (University of California, Santa Barbara)**  
*Does Torture Work? A Sociolegal Assessment of the Practice in Historical and Global Perspective*  
Discussant: Karen Greenberg, NYU

**Toby C Jones (Rutgers University)**  
*Oil's Domain: The Tyranny of Nature in Saudi Arabia*  
Discussant: Karl Appuhn, NYU

**Michael Gilsenan (New York University)**  
*Translating Colonial Fortunes: Dilemmas of Inheritance in Muslim and English Law Across a 19th-C. Diaspora*  
Discussant: Brinkley Messick, Columbia

**Ipek Yosmaoglu (University of Wisconsin, Madison)**  
*Violence and Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia*  
Discussant: Ryan Gingeras, Lafayette College

**Sherine Hamdy (Brown University)**  
*Our Bodies Belong to God: Islam and Bioethics in Egypt*  
Discussant: Chris Dole, Amherst College

**Narges Erami (Yale University)**  
*Economies of Pleasure: A Reading of Temporary Marriage in the Holy City of Qum*  
Discussant: Beth Baron, CUNY Graduate Center

**Lisa Pollard (University of North Carolina, Wilmington)**  
*Making the Sudanese Mahdi 'Arab'*  
Discussant: Eve Troutt Powell, University of Pennsylvania

**Yoav Di Capua (University of Texas, Austin)**  
*The Arab Experience of Existentialism*  
Discussant: Gary Wilder (CUNY Graduate Center)

## SEMINAR SERIES

An interdisciplinary series of lectures and presentations pertaining to the field of Middle East Studies

**Tamer El-Leithy (New York University)**  
*Converting Cultures: Islamization, Acculturation, and Ethnicity in Medieval Egypt*

**Jack Shaheen (Southern Illinois University)**  
*The Shaheen Collection: Arab Images in American Popular Culture*

**Janet Klein (University of Akron)**  
*Transnational Developments Affecting Peace and Conflict in Kurdistan: Recent Events in Historical Perspective*

**Pascal Menoret (Princeton University)**  
*Riyadh Drift: Social Marginalization and Urban Unrest in Saudi Arabia*

**Joost Hiltermann (International Crisis Group)**  
*A Post-US Iraq: After the Pull-Out, the Deluge?*

**Jeremy Walton (New York University)**  
*Neo-Ottomanism as Pious Principle and Public Memory in Istanbul*

**Dana Golan (Breaking the Silence)**  
*Female Veterans of the Israeli Occupation Forces Speak Out: Israeli Soldiers' Perspectives on the Moral Price of Occupation*

**Jennifer Olmsted (Drew University)**  
*Gender and Economic Isolation in an Era of Globalization*

**Ellis Goldberg (University of Washington)**  
*Historical Narrative as Political Theory: The Unentailed Inheritance of Tariq Al-Bishri*

**Rosalind O'Hanlon (University of Oxford)**  
*Scribes, States, and the Social Order in Early Modern India*

**Flagg Miller (University of California, Davis)**  
*On Militancy and the Art of the Egg: Theological Lessons from the Osama Bin Laden Audiocassette Collection*

**John Ryle (Bard College)**  
*Elections in the Sudan: A Report from the Field*

## Visual Culture Series

*A series of films and presentations centered on visual art and media from and about the modern Middle East.*

### Z32

Presented by filmmaker Avi Mograbi (Israel, 2009)

### Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People

Presented by filmmaker Jack Shaheen (USA, 2006)

### Project Kashmir

Presented by filmmakers Geeta Patel & Senain Khesghi, (USA, 2008)

### Islamicate Cultures of Bombay Cinema

Presented by Richard Allen (NYU) and Ira Bhaskar (Jawaharlal Nehru University)

### In the Shadows of a Leader: Qaddafi's Female Bodyguards

Presented by filmmaker Rania Ajami (USA, 2006)

### Three Monkeys (Üç Maymun)

Directed by Nuri Bilge Ceylan (Turkey, 2008), presented by Sibel Erol (NYU) and Bilge Ebiri (Independent Critic)

### Coffee Futures

Presented by filmmaker Zeynep Devrim Gursel (USA, Turkey, 2009)

### New Muslim Cool

Presented by filmmaker Jennifer Maytorena Taylor (USA, 2009). After-film discussion with Hamza Perez, Zaheer Ali (Columbia), and artist Popmaster Fabel.

### Falafel

Directed by Michel Kammoun (Lebanon, 2006), presented by Elias Khoury (NYU)

### Amreeka

Directed by Cherien Debes (USA, 2009), presented by Emira Habiby Browne, Center for the Integration and Advancement of New Americans

### Afghan Star

Presented by filmmaker Havana Marking (UK/Afghanistan, 2009)

## A Cinema Across Borders:

### The First New York Kurdish Film Festival

**Feature Films:** *Half Moon*, Directed by Bahman Ghobadi (Iran-Austria-France, 2006); *Crossing the Dust*, Directed by Shawkat Amin Korki (Iraq-France, 2006); *My Marlon and Brando*, Directed by Hüseyin Karabey (Turkey, 2008); *Yol*, Directed by Yılmaz Güney/Şerif Gören (Turkey-Switzerland, 1982); *The Storm*, directed by Kazım Öz (Turkey, 2008); *Close Up Kurdistan*, Directed by Yüksel Yavuz (Germany, 2007); *Jiyan*, Directed by Jano Rosebiani (Iraq, 2002); *Bawke & Winterland*, directed by Hisham Zaman (Norway, 2005; Norway, 2007); *Vodka Lemon*, directed by Hiner Saleem (Armenia-France-Italy-Switzerland, 2003)

**Short Films:** *Cheese...Hope Dies Last* by Hüseyin Tabak (Austria/Germany, 2008); *Shadow and Wind* by Arin Inan Arslan (Turkey, 2006); *The Border* by Zahavi Sanjavi (Iraq, 2005); *My Beautiful Son Will Be The King* by Salem Salavati (Iran, 2008); *Totico* by Khadija C. Baker (Canada, 2007); *Dengbej Women* by Women's Collective of Atölyemor (Turkey, 2006); *The Seed* by Müjde Arslan (Turkey, 2009); *Oven* by Ashkan Ahmadi (Iran 2007); *Border* by Sattar Chamani Gol (Iran, 2008)

## NEW BOOK SERIES

### The Kurdish Experience through the Visual Arts

**Müjde Arslan** on *Kurdish Cinema* (Agora Bookhouse, 2009); **Susan Meiselas** on *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History* (2nd ed, Univ. of Chicago, 2008); and **Kerim Yildiz** on *Kurds: Through the Photographer's Lens* (Trolley Ltd., 2008).

### Barry Flood (NYU)

*Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton University Press, 2009)

### Victor Kattan (University of London)

*From Coexistence to Conquest: International Law and the Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1891-1945* (Pluto Press, 2009)

### John Morgan (Graduate Theological Foundation)

*Muslim Clergy in America: Ministry as Profession in the Islamic Community* (Wyndham Hall Press, 2010)

### Radwan Ziadeh (Damascus Center for Human Rights)

*Years of Fear: Transitional Justice in Syria* (Forthcoming 2010)

## PROGRAM IN OTTOMAN STUDIES

### Ebru Turan (Fordham)

*Histories in Verse: Ottoman Imperialism and Its Supporters in Early 16th C. Istanbul*

### Jeremy Walton (New York University)

*Neo-Ottomanism as Pious Principle and Public Memory in Istanbul*

### Ipek Yosmaoglu (University of Wisconsin, Madison)

*Violence and Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia*

**Discussant: Ryan Gingeras, Lafayette College**

### Ahmet Erdogdular (CUNY Graduate Center), Mavrothi T. Kontanis, and Emmanuel Hoseyn During

Concert: *Songs of the Sultans*

### Nader Sohrabi

*Revolution, Purges, Nationalism: The Young Turks in Power*

### Dina LeGall, Ahmet Karamustafa

*Sufis, Saints, and Popular Religion*



## Conferences, Symposia, and Special Events

### **Radars/Affect/Space: Israel, Palestine, Mexico, US**

Presenters: Amy Sara Carroll and Ricardo Dominguez (Electronic Disturbance Theater), Laila El Haddad and Mushon Zer'Aviv (You Are Not Here), Teddy Cruz (University of California, San Diego), and Helga Tawil-Souri (NYU)

### **Talking to the Taliban**

Presenters: Alex Strick van Linschoten (Independent Journalist), Michael Semple (Harvard University), David Rohde (New York Times), Barnett Rubin (NYU)

### **National Poets/Universal Poetics: The Works of Nazim Hikmet and Mahmoud Darwish in Comparative Literary Perspective**

Chaired by Elias Khoury, presentations by Sinan Antoon, Simone Bitton, Mutlu Blasing, Sami Shalom Chetrit, Robyn Creswell, Ozen Nergis Dolcerocca, Sibel Erol, Nergis Erturk, Nedim Gursel, Hala Halim, Sibel Irzik, Ibrahim Muhawi, Hala Nassar, Yilmaz Odabasi, Noha Radwan, and Najat Rahman. Co-sponsored by The New School

### **Iran in Context: A Roundtable Discussion**

Presenters: Ali Mirsepassi (NYU), Kaveh Ehsani (DePaul), Norma Claire Moruzzi (UIC), and Arang Keshavarzian (NYU)

### **'Middle Eastern Art' in Translation: A Conversation with Critics, Artists & Curators**

Presenters: Jessica Winegar, (Northwestern), Coco Fusco (New School/Parsons), Maymanah Farhat (critic), Sukhdev Sandhu (NYU), Barry Flood (NYU), Iftikhar Dadi (Cornell), John Jurayj (artist)

### **Urban Planning in Istanbul: Shifting Spaces/Shifting Identities in Europe's Capital of Culture 2010**

Presenters: Saskia Sassen (Columbia University), Caglar Keyder (Bogazici University), Ipek Tureli (Brown University), Ayse Erol Sibel (NYU), Jeremy Walton, (NYU), Alex Washburn (NYC City Planning), Banu Karaca, (Sabanci University), Zeynep Korkman (University of California, Santa Barbara), Ozlem Unsal, (City University, London)

### **Hip Hop 'Araby: Political Expression and Popular Culture**

Presenters: DAM, The Narcycist, Omar Al-Khairi (London School of Economics), and Hisham Aidi (Columbia)

### **Sanctions and Iran**

Presenters: Joy Gordon (The Nation), Roane Carey (The Nation), Trita Parsi (National Iranian American Council)

### **Approaches to Law and Society: Courts the State and Islam**

Participants: Michael Gilseman (NYU), Brinkley Messick (Columbia), Morgan Clarke (Manchester), Iza Hussin (UMass), Anupama Rao (Barnard), Tamer El-Leithy (NYU), Khaled Fahmy (NYU), James Baldwin (NYU), Marion Katz (NYU), Laurie Benton (NYU), Sally Engle Merry (NYU)

## Comparative Approaches to Middle Eastern Literatures

*A series of lectures curated by graduate students participating in the Arab Literature Colloquium. The series is sponsored by the Department of Comparative Literature and the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, with additional support from the Humanities Initiative and the Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies.*

### **Kamran Rastegar (Tufts University)**

*Surviving Images: War, Memory, and Trauma in Lebanese and Iranian Cinemas*

### **Michael Beard**

**(University of North Dakota)**

*A Letter Named Jim*

### **Dominic Parviz Brookshaw (University of Manchester)**

*A Genre without Borders? The Arabic Ghazal and its Persian Cousin*

### **Abdelfattah Kilito (Mohamed V University)**

*Thou Shalt Not Translate Me*

### **Sibel Irzik (Sabanci University)**

*Military Coup Narratives & the (Dis)articulations of the Political in the Contemporary Turkish Novel*

### **Lital Levy (Princeton University) and Jeffrey Sacks**

**(University of California, Riverside)**

*Hebrew, Arabic, & What's In-Between: Language & Metalanguage in the Literature of Israel/Palestine*

### **James Montgomery (Cambridge University)**

*Reading al-Farabi with Berio and Bacon: An Essay in Crosspollinating 'The Philosophy of Plato'*

## TEACHER TRAINING

*Saturday Seminars are hosted by the Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies in collaboration with the Steinhardt School of Education at New York University. Middle and High School teachers as well as Community College faculty from the tri-state area regularly attend alongside teachers-in-training from Steinhardt. The programs increase the quality of Middle East-related content in the K-16 curriculum.*

### SATURDAY SEMINARS

#### **“Middle Eastern” Art in Translation: Strategies and Tools for Teaching Culture**

**Presenters:** Jessica Winegar (Northwestern) Maymanah Farhat (independent art writer and curator), and Reem Fadda (Cornell)  
**Partners:** ArteEast, Queens Museum of Art

#### **Political Participation in Iran: Elections and the Everyday**

**Presenters:** Kaveh Ehsani (DePaul), Norma Claire Moruzzi, (University of Illinois at Chicago), and Arang Keshavarzian (NYU)  
**Partners:** Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)

#### **The Kurds: Culture, Politics and History Across Borders**

**Presenters:** Janet Klein (University of Akron) and Jamsheed Akrami (William Patterson, Columbia)  
**Partners:** ArteEast, First Kurdish Film Festival of New York

#### **Global Education, Human Rights and the Middle East Region**

**Presenters:** Paul Beran (Harvard), Melinda Wightman (Ohio State University), Greta Scharnweber (NYU), Jean Campbell (Portland State), Felisa Tibbits (Human Rights Education Associates), Kathryn Lohre (Harvard), Stephanie Skier (Institute for Intermediate Studies), Marieke van Woerkom (Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility).  
**Partners:** Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Middle East Outreach Council

#### **Immigration to NYC: Then and Now**

**Presenters:** Sarah Pharaon (Lower East Side Tenement Museum), Nora Pharaon (TAMKEEN)  
**Partners:** Lower East Side Tenement Museum, TAMKEEN: The Center for Arab American Empowerment

#### **Food, Culture and Politics in the Middle East**

**Presenters:** Barbara Petzen, (Middle East Policy Council), Yael Raviv (Umami Food and Art Festival, NYU), Annia Ciezadlo (Independent Journalist)  
**Partners:** Middle East Policy Council

#### **How Islamic is Islamic History? Interfaith Relations in the Mixed Societies of the Medieval Muslim World**

**Presenters:** Tamer El-Leithy (NYU), Everett Rowson (NYU)

#### **Coffee: The Culture, Politics and Economy of one of the World's Most Sought-After Commodities**

**Presenters:** Maurice Pomerantz (NYU), Elena Serapiglia (Yale), Maxwell Amoh (Yale), Greta Scharnweber (NYU), Margaret Favretti (Scarsdale High School)  
**Partners:** PIER (Programs in International Educational Resources) at Yale University, The Peabody Museum of Natural History, the Scarsdale Teachers' Institute

### SUMMER INSTITUTES

#### **Running Dry: The Politics of Water in the Middle East**

**Presenters:** Chris Toensing (MERIP), Greta Scharnweber (NYU), George Trumbull (Dartmouth), Lizabeth Zack (University of South Carolina), Thomas Lippman (CFR), Mohammad Eskandari (Clark University), Jeannie Sowers (University of New Hampshire), Zaid Al-Ali (Univ. Paris), Muserrif Yetim (NYU), Jennifer Derr (Bard College), Steven Caton (Harvard University), Mandana Limbert (CUNY)  
**Partners:** Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)

#### **Multilayered Lives: Muslim Women in the Middle East and North Africa**

**Facilitator:** Nadia Guessous (NYU)





# HAGOP KEVORKIAN CENTER REVIEW 2009/2010

