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2011-2012

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# Reflections and Acknowledgements

The passing year was exciting for the center in many ways. We began with financial uncertainties but have managed to weather a storm of cuts to our federal National Resource Center (NRC) grant. The generous support of NYU's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences ensured that we were able not only to maintain our various first-rate programs, but have also renewed and increased our efforts through newly hired faculty and a conscious expansion to include more content related to Central Asia and the Indian Ocean regions.

As the content of this HK Review demonstrates, events in the Middle East continue to demand our attention, and we have vacillated between admiration and despair as we watched unprecedented political changes unfold in Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria and beyond. Indeed, many of our students, alumni, and faculty have contributed to the discourse and analyses of the uprisings across the region. Our robust academic events program dedicates a special series to reflecting on the uprisings, and we will continue to provide a forum through which our students and faculty may provide deeper context to these exciting, if all too often tragic, moments.

Now, as ever, a deep understanding of the languages, cultures, and histories of the modern Middle East remains crucial to our collective interests. Working closely with the departments of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and Hebrew and Judaic Studies, we support a robust language training program in Arabic, Hebrew, Hindi, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu. Despite the atmosphere of continued cutbacks at the US Department of Education, we have been fortunate to continue granting Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) scholarships to students at the BA, MA and PhD levels to study these and other languages to advanced levels.

This year we graduated our largest ever class of students from our MA program in Near Eastern Studies—29 received their degrees. We wish them the best as they venture out into the world, and we plan to welcome yet another large class this Fall. We unfortunately must say goodbye to the inimitable Nadia Guessous, who has accepted a position in at Rutgers University in Women and Gender Studies. Nadia's contributions to our graduate program have been insightful, and her attention to the well-being of our students is deeply appreciated. We wish her well in her next exciting step and look forward to future collaborations. Maya Mikdashi, just finishing her PhD in Anthropology at Columbia University will take on the Director of Graduate Studies role beginning Fall 2012. A legal anthropologist, Mikdashi's work navigates the intersections and impasses between law and citizenship in Lebanon through an investigation of personal status laws. We also are fortunate to be adding a new faculty position in the Center. Benoit Challand, a political sociologist, joins the Center in September

as our first Clinical Assistant Professor of Near Eastern Studies. Challand received his PhD from the European University Institute, and has taught and completed research at universities across Europe. His mixed background in political sociology and history informs his work on Arab civil society, questions of aid and development and religion and modernity. Challand's and Mikdashi's expertise will add considerably to our curriculum and to our intellectual community. We welcome them both.

The Center staff deserves recognition for the hard work that they do to keep things running smoothly. Arthur Starr, in his first year in the Program Coordinator position, has managed to hit the ground running and will help us shepherd in our largest incoming MA class yet. Lauren Marten's invaluable assistance with virtually all of the Center operations has been carried out with great attention to detail, a willing spirit, and a sense of humor. Our graduate student assistants continue to be an indispensable part of the Kevorkian team—and this year we bid farewell to Rafat Azad, Gozde Guran, Rebecca Keleher, Lila Nazemian, and Sean O'Neill.

We should take a moment to recognize the departure of Peter Magierski from NYU Libraries as he makes the move to Columbia University over the summer. He helped build a number of exciting resources at the Middle East Collection at Bobst, including but not limited to the Afghan Digital Library and the more recently acquired Jack G. Shaheen archive on stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims in US media and culture. This latter collection holds nearly 3,000 moving images including motion pictures, cartoons, newsreels, and television programs, as well as editorial cartoons, advertisements, books, magazines, comic books, toys, and games, the Jack G. Shaheen Archive reveals U.S. representations of Arabs from the early-20th century to the present. The archive is a major focus for the Center's fundraising and outreach efforts in the coming months and years. We are proud to have launched a travelling exhibition culled from the archive called "A is for Arab" with the Asian/Pacific/American Institute this past February. The exhibit will make a prominent appearance at this year's annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), and NYU distinguished scholar Jack Shaheen will speak at a variety of events inspired the exhibit and by his work. We hope you will join us in celebrating and supporting this amazing collection.

Last but not least, we welcome back the Center's director, Michael Gilsenan, from a fruitful research leave. He will see us through yet another dynamic year of programming and academic achievement.

**Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, Interim Director**  
**Greta Scharnweber, Associate Director**

# Area Code for the Heart

by Ahmad Diab, PhD Candidate MEIS



It was a stupid idea. I woke up after a short sporadic sleep and decided that the smell of shaving cream might lessen the bitterness of yesterday's news.

How stupid! I was trembling in fear of what the process would entail: looking abject helplessness straight in the face.

There, where the heart is, blood and limbs are everywhere. Their images flow out of my slick laptop screen into my nightmares. I stand before the mirror but see no one. "Alright, trace the contour of your chin and shave quickly," I thought. I rub in the cream and start with a stroke of the blade. I cut myself, and blood flows warm and steady.... I look at the mirror again and I see half a bloody face with the jaw blown off, bits of mouth and chin dangling below the collarbone. Don't people die from such an injury? What god chooses to prolong the pain of a child caught between the butcher's claws! I remember civilization's superfluous question from yesterday's paper "Can the internet handle the graphic footage?" I walk out of the bathroom mourning for someone who will never know the feeling of a clean shave.

My first shave was in Homs. My first trans-sectarian inter-neighborhood love was in Homs. So were my first sip of maté and first cigarette puff. My first book fair, and my first play. Homs, which I cannot claim is my birthplace,

## "Blood and limbs are everywhere"

was where I came of age. Deek Al-Jin's teenage lust, and my first proud insurrection during our university military training. Homs was my first pious whim and first certitude in skepticism. Homs was the first realization of oppression

and my discovery of the old Homs recipe to soothe pain with humor. Today, Homs is inventing a new balm, however, strained with a mix of the blood of its children. Homs is declaring the revolution. Entirely Homs. No NATO and no leftist revolutionaries. Not from Aleppo, or from Damascus. Today Homs writes a new history for herself ... for us. Today Homs ridicules the dictator in her new dazzling ways ... ex-

*This article, originally in Arabic and published in Jadaliyya, was abridged and translated by the author.*

actly as she ridicules our cowardly silence. We will laugh. We will laugh a lot on our free tomorrow. We will laugh at all the times we laughed at this tiny joke of a Homs.

Today, however, we cry. We cry for how the killed will rescue the killed—for a while. We cry for how the displaced will shelter the displaced—for a while. We cry for how we all abandoned you, Homs. My internationalist friend tells me "40,000 leftist foreigners went to Spain to fight fascism in the 1930s. Today we can't even acknowledge another Guernica happening even when it's being broadcast live, in full color, 24/7." I think of all of those who fought for Palestine the day we lost it...of the benches of first love... of "Al-Farabi"...the high school the regime of death has turned into a checkpoint for its sniper fire. My high school. On my Facebook page, I make out the most recent names of the dead piling up. Their son was in my class, I say. That one is my dentist's brother and this one is the son of that restaurant's owner next to "Al-Dababeer" park.

The news coming from "Al-Dakhil" (how handy my Palestinian terms have become) is "blood and limbs are everywhere... blood and limbs are everywhere." 031, the area code of the heart, is all out of place. The phone rings at home, and there's no answer. Did my brother get home or is he stuck at work? Where do the dwellers of upper floors seek shelter? Whose names are going to rise from the dust of the massacre tomorrow? How many more mutilated "Hamzas" separate us from the fall of the palace sitting on Mount Qasioun? Who will miss the great ascendance? How long are we to wait before Syria's *nakba* bears its Darwish? Who will remind tomorrow's newborns? And how are we going to return the Syrian to his Syrian brother? Where? How? Who?

"Blood and limbs are everywhere"

Outside my window, women are celebrating the Giants' win. I only see their Karama-blue jerseys. Outside my window, men are cheering the Giants' win. I only hear howls of the terrified in Baba Amr. I had a friend from Baba Amr. His name was Ahmed. In the early days of our adolescence when we started learning English, he and I had a passion for this language. He used to invite me over to meet the lat-



## **“Blood and limbs are everywhere”**

est tourist he had met downtown. We should practice with someone with a better English than ours, we thought. Today, I know we spoke better English than all of those Spanish, Dutch and Japanese backpackers. Today, I know all we wanted was a brief escape from the dictator's prison. All we wanted was to know what people were like when they were not born into a dictatorship. We, naïvely, thought if we could whisper in a foreign tongue then we could escape the surveillance over the soul. Today, I wish some of those guests would remember Ahmed's generosity and the name of the neighborhood where their pictures were taken.

“Blood and limbs are everywhere”

I pass by the images from Homs like a seasoned refugee would pass by his first camp. I pass by the sounds from Homs like I did the first time; dazzled and amazed by that distinctive, disarming drawl. Today, I have some of it myself. I pass by Homs like a first-time Palestinian. There were so many nights when we stayed up mourning for Jenin and Gaza. But it's only today that I fully grasp what it means to be a Palestinian. The agony shines brighter than ever when the butcher bombs your very own, the playgrounds of your youth, the hiding places of your memory. So this is what it must have felt like for Grandma? So this is how the heart is shattered into a thousand pieces?

“Blood and limbs are everywhere”

I was not born in Homs, and I left a long time ago. But today I mourn Homs like the most loyal of her sons. I do not know how much of a Homs I am, but I wonder how many shish sandwiches from “Kreish” it takes to become one? How many Hummus plates from “Shamso”? How many Homs jokes must one memorize? And now, how many names of the dead? I do not know what will be left of my Homs when I return to it, but I dream of it liberated, ridding itself of the last statues of the dictator. Perhaps the silver lining is that dreams of return are not that foreign after all.



*Image Courtesy of the artist*  
The Dictator by Yasir Al-Safi.

# Not The State, But A Way of Life

By Khelil Bouarrouj, MA'13 NES

In speaking about post-revolutionary Tunisia at the Hagop Kevorkian Center, Harvard professor Malika Zeghal argued that the fixation on the nature of the state, whether “secular,” “theocratic,” or “civil,” is misplaced. The state is secular and sedentary. What is being contested in the realm of real politics between the secular vanguard and coastal elite, on the one hand, and the Islamist *hizb al Nahda* and their partisans, on the other, is not the state but a way of life with both sides often drawing on parallel references. Consider this line in Article 1 of the Tunisian constitution: “[Tunisia’s] religion is Islam.” It symbolizes President Habib Bourguiba’s compromise with the Sheikh of Zeitouna University, the leading ecclesiastical institution in Tunisia. The arch-secularist Bourguiba assented to such a declaration as it neither proscribes Islamic law nor threatens the secular character of the state. Zeghal quoted an old guard Tunisian secularist who quipped that one may as well say the state has an arm and a leg. It is simply a platitude. But, for Islamists, this statement is not inconsequential and, rather, may serve as a legitimization for “Islamization.” Hence the same phrasing has dramatically divergent significance for different people.

Another case merits attention. Broadcast owner Nabil Karoui faced up to five years in prison after the airing of French animation film *Persepolis* on Nessma TV. Uproar ensued in response to a scene illustrating God. Blasphemous in the eyes of many Tunisians, not all of them Islamists, the director was prosecuted by an aggregate of pious lawyers. But the case had nothing to do with freedom of expression *per se*. Instead the charge was the disruption of “public order” and the basis is none other than the Bourguiba constitution: “The Republic of Tunisia shall guarantee the inviolability of the human person and freedom of conscience, and defends the free practice of religious beliefs provided this does not disturb public order.” This provision was



Al Nahda's electoral victory last year has further ignited the debate as to where the balance between private and public Islam should lie. The party has stated its intention to not impose Shari'a, but many secularists remain suspicious. A status quo of reverence for Islam alongside secular laws remains the likely course.

meant to restrain public expressions of Islam and promote laïcité (public secularism), but texts are not ahistorical tracts. Their exegesis is informed through contextual and contingent values. Meanings and intentions, then, may be subverted or revised due to paradigmatic shifts. What was meant to reinforce secularism, defined as the absence of public displays of faith in the name of “public order,” may, conversely, preserve dogma. “Public order” as a precept may dictate the suppression of, say, public prayer in the name of a secular space. Or it may entail the effective outlawing of “indecentcy” toward public sensibilities for the sake of communal peace. The concept of “public order” is thus up for grabs.

In spite of (or, perhaps, because of) their avid hostility, the secularists and Islamists are often competing on different sides of the same coin. Each hurling accusations that the other side seeks to stifle freedom of public worship or freedom of the press. Arguably, statist secularism and state religiosity necessitate some form of subordination. Is there a middle way for Tunisia? Allowing Tunisians to maintain public order without suppressing piety in the public space or effectively banning speech that floats Shari'a?

That many self-styled liberal Tunisians expressed



aversion to the depiction of God conveyed the reality that while not all Tunisians are practicing Muslims or prone to outbursts of religious orthodoxy, most still uphold a sacred place for Islam in public life. The governing *al Nahda* has sought to maintain a balancing act between expressing liberal bromides while placating their conservative base through rhetoric on the need for art to respect “tradition,” a less laden word than faith. *Al Nahda* claims it seeks a moderate path between reconciling the sacredness of Islam with modernist ideas of freedom, but has not fully articulated its approach and, worryingly for many secular Tunisians, have defended prosecutions of anti-Islamic images (two Tunisians were recently sentenced for caricatures of the Prophet Mohammad). The party prefers, however, to avoid such debates as those instigated by Nessma TV and has portrayed the broadcast days before the election as a deliberate baiting of fundamentalists in order to soil the party’s image by way of extremist association. Karoui’s trial was repeatedly postponed and many envisioned an almost interminable case. In the end, he was let go with a minimal fine.



Tunisia's January 2011 revolution propelled its previously marginal people into the heart of contemporary Arab politics as a model for the “Tunisianization” of the Arab world.

This debate cannot, of course, be eluded or marginalized. Bourguiba had a simple motto: *L’etat cest moi* (I am the state). The mainstream Islamists and the secular left are not aspiring to remodel the state in their image. Hitherto the nation has never debated its identity, its parameters of permissibility and the very way of life – to borrow Zeghal’s expression – political discourse and practice should cultivate. In actuality, the Tunisian nation has never been properly born. With the era of *Bourguibaism* finally over, Tunisia’s new elected class, the first in national history, will have to openly debate and contest, and eventually derive an answer of sorts, as to what manner of politics and public space truly reflects majoritarian values while securing individual rights. Bourguiba, like many other leaders in the Arab region, falsely presented his way as a reflection of popular sentiment without consulting the people. Now real politics has begun and average Tunisians will have a vocal say on issues from women’s rights to the education system. The inevitable renegotiation of the social contract may pivot away from the official secularism of the ancient regime without marching toward theocratic enforcement. Where that balance is struck between sacredness and freedom of expression is bound to be dynamic as democracy progresses. Cultures are not hermetic, of course, and are shaped by contingent discursive processes that are always adjusting. The newly-minted political engagement will itself define the very meaning of sacredness, public order, and public space with which it is now grappling. As Zeghal argues and as a *Nahda* spokesman told the *New York Times*: “The struggle is philosophical and it will go on and on and on.” Anyone hoping for a quick denouement between the secularists and the Islamists after the dust of the so-called “Arab Spring” settles misses the mark. This debate is not settled anywhere. It is the essence of politics, and as long as it continues, this battle will carry on unabated. Tunisia’s future remains a question mark, but there may be one certainty: That this humble and long forgotten nation that gave birth to the Arab uprisings may still offer a guiding path as the region is reborn. All the more reason to pay attention, once again, to Tunisia.

# A Shift in Balance

## Mona El-Ghobashy Explains the Egyptian Revolution

By Jared Malsin, MA '13 NES and Global Journalism

What caused the Egyptian uprising of 2011? In a magisterial lecture at the Kevorkian Center on November 11, 2011, Barnard College political scientist Mona El-Ghobashy sought to dismantle two dominant frames through which the uprising has been understood in both American media and the academy. She argued that the uprising was not inevitable, nor was it purely a “performance” crafted and enacted by activists. Rather, the revolution was a contingent event that cannot be explained by any pre-existing theoretical framework. Furthermore, she suggested that the revolution could not have happened without three specific events: the Egyptian elections of December 2010, the flight of Tunisian dictator Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, and the demonstrators’ defeat of the police on January 28, 2011. El-Ghobashy’s case is theoretically strong, cogently argued, and an important analysis that should be considered by anyone seeking to understand the singular event that took place in Egypt in 2011.

El-Ghobashy called for the dismissal of two dominant “families of explanation” of the uprising: one characterized by what she termed the “logic of inevitability,” the other, the “logic of dramaturgy.” The first group of explanations cites a range of background conditions and grievances that supposedly made the revolution inevitable. The second group of explanations, frequently found in journalistic accounts, regards the revolution as “expertly crafted drama” authored by a small group of internet-savvy activists. El-Ghobashy did not spend time attacking the specifics of these other models, and rather moved on to the meat of her own thesis, which she views as mutually exclusive with these two alternatives.

In contrast to the literature on “durable authoritarianism,” El-Ghobashy views Arab regimes as a “dynamic equilibrium,” a state of balance between the forces of the opposition and the government,



Photo Courtesy  
of Maged Helal  
Photography

which must use a mix of cooptation and repression to manage anti-regime mobilization. She noted that before the uprising, this balance seemed undisturbed in Egypt, since none of the signs of breakdown described in the scholarship on “durable authoritarianism” (conflict among elites, defeat in war, patronage crisis) were present. Instead of searching for a list of necessary conditions, she argued, it is more useful for comparativists to look for events that shift the balance of forces in a given country.

El-Ghobashy argued that three factors upended the balance of forces in Egypt: the December elections, Ben Ali’s flight, and the over-running of the police forces. The elections were a turning point, she said, because for the first time the opposition (particularly the Muslim Brotherhood) was completely shut out of government, rather than receiving a token representation in parliament, as they had in 2005. This escalation of political exclusion resulted in better coordination among opposition groups, including both political parties and activ-

ist groups like the April 6<sup>th</sup> Movement. The election was also essential because police violence at polling stations “gathered together” the entire country in the act of witnessing the regime’s repression.

The Tunisian revolution and the ouster of Ben Ali was also critical in El-Ghobashy’s view, because it transformed the calculations of both Egypt’s government and the opposition. The departure of a seemingly immovable Arab autocrat meant that both sides had to rethink what might be possible outcomes of a pre-planned protest scheduled for January 25, 2011. The expanded horizon of possibility, this analysis presumes, compelled vastly more Egyptians to join demonstrations across Egypt than would ordinarily have.

Similarly, El-Ghobashy argued that the demonstrators’ defeat of the police in the first days of the uprising also altered Egyptians’ calculations of what was possible. The police, the key mechanism of authoritarian rule for the previous 30 years, had been dismantled, and the regime itself had therefore been denaturalized in the minds of ordinary Egyptians.

One potential challenge for El-Ghobashy’s analysis is that this third factor, the breaking of the police force, could be considered a result rather than a cause. The decommissioning of the police was the effect of the unprecedented size and intensity of the demonstrations on January 25 and January 28, this argument goes, and not the other way around. El-Ghobashy acknowledged that this is a point of inconsistency but countered that the rest of the revolution could not have taken place as it did without the early overwhelming of the police by the protesters. As a statement of causality, this argument rings true, but it creates another problem for El-Ghobashy, because the same thing could be said for other pivotal moments during the course of the revolution. For example, one could just as well argue that Mubarak would not have been toppled without the demonstrators’ maintaining their occupation of Tahrir Square during and after the “Battle of the Camel” of February 6. To name any event that took place after noon on January 25 as a key “cause” of the revolution might appear to confuse cause and effect. In a way, however, this criticism only illuminates the inner logic of El-Ghobashy’s account of the entire uprising as an extraordinary series of contingent events. It might be difficult to isolate “causes” resulting in another set of easily-bounded effects.

El-Ghobashy also responded to disagree-

ments with her classification of “proximate causes” and “background conditions” of the revolution. She sees the weak state of the Egyptian economy as a background condition, since this the economy had been stagnating for over a decade before January 2011. Other longstanding factors also go into this category, including police brutality, official corruption, and so on. A number of important factors do not seem to fit neatly into either category. For example, was the relative strength of Egyptian civil society, which was surely necessary for the uprising to take place as it did, a background condition? In her April 2011 *Middle East Report* article, El-Ghobashy gives an eloquent account of how broad and diverse sectors of society (students, trade unions, Copts, Bedouins, neighborhoods, towns) were already “versed in the politics of the street” over a decade of protests, preparing them for battle in January 2011. But this strength was not simply a bedrock, “background” condition. It was experience accumulated over time. One could point to the protests coinciding with the 2005 elections, the 2008 textile workers’ strike, the 2010 protests around the death of Khaled Said, and recent Coptic protests as important “trial runs” for the uprising. This is an important storyline about the gradual strengthening of various protest groups over several years, culminating on January 25, 2011.



Photo Courtesy of Maged Helal Photography



# A Life Unfinished

## Anthony Shadid, 1968-2012

By Grace Maalouf, MA '12 NES and Global Journalism

*"It is said about many, but in the case of Anthony Shadid it is bitterly true, that the world is poorer for his passing. We will all be dumber without his stories. There is no one else who can do what he did. Many will continue to try, however, and we can consider that one of Anthony's last bequests." — Thanassis Cambanis, *The Atlantic**

When news broke this past February that veteran foreign correspondent Anthony Shadid died while reporting in Syria, the initial assumption by many was that he'd fallen victim to the increasing violence. Other reporters, both local and foreign, had been caught in the crossfire, and Shadid himself was no stranger to trouble on his trips. But this was quickly corrected: the reporter who had been shot in Ramallah, harassed in Egypt, and kidnapped in Libya, was killed by an asthma attack brought on by horses.

He was traveling through Syria with *New York Times* photographer Tyler Hicks, who had been one of the three other journalists kidnapped with Shadid in Libya in 2011. Hicks carried Shadid's body across the Syrian border to Turkey, where his wife and two-year-old son were waiting.

The journalism world was stunned. Shadid, only 43, was the Beirut bureau chief of the *Times*, and long an authoritative and skilled writer on the Middle East.

"Anthony was not a thrill seeker, but he understood that the truth had to be found at the source," Hicks later wrote in his account of the two reporters' journey. Shadid's dedication to uncovering that truth was clear in his work. For those of us who study or write about the region, his stories proved time and again that it was possible to write intelligently, analytically, compassionately about a place often misunderstood—and still reach a wide audience.

When the "Arab Spring" began to unfold in 2011 and he traveled to Egypt and Bahrain and Libya, we followed his writing closely. Other reporters could tell the story, and we read their

work voraciously, but the appearance of an Anthony Shadid byline carried special weight; it was sent around more quickly, discussed more often. His gift came from years of experience in the region, deep insight, and an ability to create characters who drew readers in.

Take, for example, a May 2009 piece he wrote from Baghdad:

*Across the street from the tidy rows of tombstones in the British cemetery, mute testimony to the soldiers of an earlier occupation, Mustafa Muwaffaq bears witness to the quieter side of the United States' six-year-old presence in Iraq.*

*In wraparound sunglasses, shorts and shoes without socks, the burly 20-year-old student waxes eloquent about his love for heavy metal of all kinds: death, thrash, black. But none of it compares, he says, to the honky-tonk of Alan Jackson, whose tunes he strums on his acoustic guitar at night, pining for a life as far away as a passport will take him.*

*"You know, I wanna go to Texas and be a country boy," he said, as he stood in the sweltering shade of Baghdad's Academy of Fine Arts. "I wanna be a cowboy, and I wanna sing like one."*

Shadid went on to delve into cultural influences that the American occupation had brought to Iraq, analyzing the ambivalence of the Iraqi people themselves toward the ever-present coalition troops. But like so many of his pieces, it began with a personal story, its character rendered real by Shadid's words.

In a commemorative piece written for *The At-*

*lantic* after Shadid's death, correspondent Thanassis Cambanis said he and other journalist friends used to tease Shadid "through affairs like the Anthony Shadid contest, in which friends tried to top one another with ever-more absurd Shadidian turns of phrase that piled history upon olfactory sensation upon narrative upon character. When we tried it, it was an uproarious joke. When Shadid did it, it was poetry."

Cambanis' description rang true for any reader who had been familiar with Shadid's work. A March 2003 story he wrote from Baghdad about a bombing during American and British air attacks reads:

*"Shards of corrugated tin dangled from roofs like chimes, colliding on the winds of a savage sandstorm. Shattered pipes poured sewage into the streets. The charred carcasses of cars sat smoldering, hurled onto the sidewalk.*

*Ali Abdel-Jabbar watched helplessly as his friend, Mohammed Abdel-Sattar, lay on the ground, his legs torn off. He lived. Across the street was the severed hand of Samad Rabai, tossed gracelessly in a pool of blood and mud. He died."*

After his death, nearly every biographical account of Shadid pointed out that he spoke Arabic, which had given him the keys to the Middle East's journalistic kingdom; his language skills, rare among foreign correspondents, lent credibility and empathy to his stories of the region. But what most eulogies failed to mention was that Shadid's Arabic was not the product simply of his Lebanese upbringing. He had studied Arabic at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and at the American University of Cairo; in his

Photo courtesy of Corentin Fohlen/Sipa USA  
Ras Lanouf front line, Libya - Anthony Shadid, the Beirut bureau chief of  
New York Times, during conflict between rebels and Qadhafi forces.



final book, *House of Stone*, he described the resultant dialect as “an Oklahoma-accented Arabic, sprinkled with Egyptian colloquialisms.”

His Arabic wasn’t a convenient inherited talent, but a skill he worked hard to acquire and refine, because he knew how critical it was to the story he had always wanted to tell. From early on, his pursuit of journalism was driven by this desire. In an interview shortly before his death, he told a *Mother Jones* reporter that, from the time he was 15 or 16, the “one thing that shaped (his) life” was that he knew he wanted to be a journalist.

“And not just a journalist,” he said, “but a journalist in the Middle East, and to go back to the Arab world and try to understand what it meant to be Lebanese.”

Shadid, born in America to parents of Lebanese descent, began his journey back to Lebanon through his reporting: first in Cairo, where he worked for the *Associated Press*; next with the *Boston Globe*, for whom he covered the occupied West Bank; then in Baghdad, where he served as bureau chief for the *Washington Post*. His coverage of the Iraq war in 2003 and its repercussions in 2009 for the *Post* earned him two Pulitzer Prizes, and he was a finalist in 2007 for

his wonderful reporting on Lebanon’s war between Hezbollah and Israel.

He moved to the *New York Times* in 2009, and made his way back to Lebanon at last. There, he bought and restored his grandfather’s home in the South, a journey chronicled in the posthumously-published *House of Stone*. His wife, Nada Bakri, also a *Times* correspondent, scattered his ashes in the garden of that home, according to his wishes.

*In 2010, the Hagop Kevorkian Center hosted an event featuring Anthony Shadid in conversation with political scientist Jillian Schwedler. They eloquently discussed their respective crafts of journalism and scholarship, how they do or perhaps should overlap, and how both professions might arrive at a more contextualized understanding of the Middle East. It is significant to note that participation in such a program at a university was not unusual for Shadid. Despite his demanding travel schedule, he prioritized sharing his knowledge with students and to the ongoing exchange with scholars that informed his exemplary reporting. To view the unedited conversation, see [neareaststudies.as.nyu.edu/object/kc.news.shadid](http://neareaststudies.as.nyu.edu/object/kc.news.shadid)*

# VISCERAL POLITICS AND SARTORIAL RIFTS

## Feminism in the Age of the Hijab in Morocco

An interview with Nadia Guessous, Director of Graduate Studies, Hagop Kevorkian Center

Questions by Fatima Malik MA '13 NES and Global Journalism

In "Visceral Politics and Sartorial Riffs," you point out the "aversion" the *banat al-yasar* (Moroccan leftist feminists) you worked with felt towards *muhajabat* (women who wear the hijab). Could you briefly explain your concept of aversion?

Aversion is indeed a key concept in my work. Aversion is a moral turning of oneself away, an estrangement (*from*), an averted state of mind or feelings, a mental attitude of opposition or repugnance, a fixed, habitual dislike, an antipathy. When I use the term aversion, what I seek to describe is a profound discomfort and antipathy that operates on a visceral level. Visceral aversion is bodily as well as discursive and is not always fully theorized or articulated. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the visceral as affecting the viscera or bowels, which are regarded in some philosophical traditions as the seat of emotion, pertaining to or touching deeply, inward feelings. While I am not comfortable using words like "unreasoning," "crude," or "elemental" to describe aversion towards the *hijab*, I do mean to suggest that aversion in its iterations is often unselfconscious, deeply felt, intense, embodied, and not fully theorized. Expressions of aversion often seem like they are emanating from the stomach. Very often this aversion is not explicit but functions as background assumption and as self-evident truth in everyday interactions. It is taken for granted and questioning it usually elicits surprise and bafflement, if not outrage. Visceral aversion, I believe, can give us insights into the kinds of dispositions that are cultivated by particular subjectivities and modes of appraisal including ones that see themselves as reasonable.

In my project, I take aversion towards the *hijab* as an entry point to think about the embodied assumptions and layers of educated emotions that are constitutive of the *banat al-yasar* generation. Aversion towards the *hijab*, I argue, reflects the constitutive role of embodied practices in the fashioning and sedimentation of feminist subjectivities for this particular generation. It also serves to renew emotional investment in a pre-Islamic Revival vision and embodiment of the Moroccan feminist project and to draw boundaries around it. By marking the *hijab* as both intolerant and intolerable, leftist feminists, I argue, erase their own normativity and justify their exclusionary practices towards veiled women. Because aversion towards the *hijab* operates at a visceral level, *banat al-yasar* are able to exclude *muhajabat* without this ever tarnishing their self-representation as uniquely capacious and tolerant.

What is it about the *hijab* that is so divisive and creates such a "rift" among feminists in the Muslim World?

The question as you formulate it presumes that there is something inherent to the *hijab* that is divisive, as if the meaning of the *hijab* is fixed and can be determined in advance. What needs explaining in my view is not the putative divisiveness of the *hijab* but the tendency among some feminists to be disturbed by it. The question for me is, what it is about the Moroccan feminist left that makes it so averse to the *hijab* and what is the genealogy of this aversion?

Moroccan leftist feminists embody many assumptions about modernity, progress, tradi-

tion, religion, the body, and feminism that are celebrated in dominant liberal and Western discourse. In my work I hope to denaturalize assumptions and ways of being that are generally seen as not requiring an explanation. Rather than provide an anthropological account of "traditional" ways or of non-modern lives, I reflect on how leftist feminists are fashioned as particular kinds of modern(ist) subjects, on how they inhabit, discursively construct and sometimes problematize modernist constructions of "tradition." Instead of providing an anthropological analysis of the *hijab*, I focus on leftist feminist aversion towards it in order to think not about the *hijab*, piety or the Islamic Revival but about the conundrums and aporias of contemporary Moroccan leftist feminist subjectivity. I therefore problematize the assumption that non-modern and non-secular practices require anthropological explanation while modern, progressive and secular ones are taken to be natural. By focusing on the paradoxes and aporias that are constitutive of modern and progressive subjectivities, my project seeks to participate in thinking about modernity in non-teleological ways by highlighting some of the tragic consequences that can accompany the search for its realization. Finally, my project seeks to think about the affect of politics and the centrality of embodiment to questions of subjectivity.

At the start of the workshop, you mentioned that this paper is written in a spirit of cross-generational exchange. What do you feel are the advantages of your particular positionality, and also its challenges, as they relate to your project?



As a history of the present, my project is in part a cross-generational call addressed to founding members of the Moroccan feminist movement in which I urge them to resist turning away from a new generation of women who are the heirs of their struggles. My own critique of aversion towards the *hijab* is made possible by and is an extension of the kinds of arguments developed by Moroccan leftist feminists about the need for an inclusive women's movement, about not reducing women to their bodies, about the need to take women's ethical and political commitments seriously, and about the importance of working on the self and striving towards coherence. Although I am aware that I do not share many of the formative experiences and influences that have contributed to fashioning the leftist feminist subjectivity that I write about, it is by taking their insights and perspectives seriously and combining them with what I have learned in the last decade about the Islamic Revival, about modernity and secularism, that I am left unsatisfied by the inability of leftist feminists to rethink what modernity and progress are supposed to look like. So when I draw attention to some of the paradoxical moves and effects that constitute and accompany leftist feminist aversion for the *hijab*, my aim is not to undermine the leftist feminist perspective but rather to take it seriously on its own terms while asking it a new set of questions.

I believe that a critique of aversion for the *hijab* is possible from *within* a leftist feminist tradition. That is why I see myself not as asking leftist feminists to put their commitments and attachments aside, but rather, to take their own ideas, experiences and critiques *more* seriously in their encounters with *muhajabat*. Feminists have grappled with and rethought deeply entrenched notions about gender roles, politics, the body, the family, and the law. I believe that they can grapple just as well with this challenge without forsaking their feminist critiques and attachments.

The fact that I situate myself within the tradition that I write about gave me tremendous access while conducting research for this project, and I am deeply grateful for that. However, it also made the processes of research and writing difficult in their own ways. There were many moments when I struggled



Photo courtesy of Nadia Guessous

This image appeared alongside an article titled "Girls' Scherning" that had nothing to do with the hijab or with veiled women, but rather discussed young women's strategies used to circumvent parental authority in order to spend time with their boyfriends, go dancing or traveling. This is a very good example of the kind of discourse that seeks to discredit the hijab as no more than masquerade and cunning.

to figure out how to handle normative assumptions that were being banalized and taken to be transparent, often by women I felt close to and who assumed I was in agreement. I also struggled to make sense of my own inability to relate to views that were taken for granted by so many of the feminists that I admired and respected, and with the ethics of articulating a critique while seeking to understand a political tradition on its own terms. This difficulty did not end with the research process but continued to preoccupy me throughout the writing process. Indeed, unlike other anthropologists whose work might never be read by the people they write about, I do not have the luxury of not worrying about the opinions and reactions of the Moroccan leftist feminists with whom I worked. The fact that my father (a Moroccan leftist intellectual) is highly respected amongst them and in the leftist community overall, that I developed close friendships with many of the leftist feminists about whom I write, and that I plan on going back to Morocco for the rest of my life are amongst the variables that I had to contend with while writing my dissertation. While many Arab feminist scholars based in the US have written about the challenges of working within the gender norms of their own societies, the challenges that I struggle with have more to do with inhabiting my leftist kinship ties and managing the expectations of a modern, progressive, leftist and feminist community. They also have to do with reconciling my discomfort towards certain leftist feminist practices with my desire to engage in a respectful and agonistic form of criticism and provide an anthropology of modern subjectivity. I do not claim to have resolved these difficulties although I have done my best to work through them.



Photo courtesy of Nadia Guessous

The hijab is frequently described in leftist feminist circles as a masquerade, as a way to circumvent parental and familial authority. Stories about female students wearing the hijab in order to cheat on exams by hiding headphones under their headscarves, prostitutes hiding under their hijab, or women covering up in order to meet their lovers without being recognized by their husbands or family members proliferate in leftist feminist discourse. An example of this kind includes a cover story published by the left-liberal Moroccan magazine NICHANE in November 2008.

How does this paper tie into the larger project (your PhD dissertation), which you are currently in the process of turning into a book?

The project is an ethnographic and genealogical study of leftist feminist politics and subjectivity in the wake of the Islamic Revival in contemporary Morocco. Two conundrums emerge in the book. When contemporary Moroccan leftist feminists talk about formative influences in their lives, many recall the

influence of a "traditional" and pious father figure who was just and egalitarian, and inspired their commitment to and struggle for gender equality. However, when they speak of their "failed and disappointing leftist husbands and comrades who claim to be modern when they are in fact traditional," tradition is equated with lack of change, narrow-mindedness, double standards, hypocrisy and the uncritical exercise of male privilege. That the same leftist feminists who positively invoke a traditional figure when talking about their formative years go on to chastise progressive leftist men for their "traditionalism" is the first conundrum informing this project. Among the questions that it raises are: Why must a feminist critique of leftist men be predicated on the repudiation of a traditional way of being that is at the same time invoked as having inspired and enabled leftist feminist politics? What are the conceptual assumptions underpinning this formulation? And, how does this conception of the past and of history relate to the second conundrum underlying this study of Moroccan leftist feminist subjectivity? More specifically, why is a feminist movement built on a critique of the gender politics of the left and committed to creating an inclusive women's movement unable to open itself to a new generation of young women who have adopted the *hijab*?

These two conundrums, I suggest, are inter-related processes that reflect the subject-constituting nature of political subjectivity and share a particularly modern and leftist genealogy. To treat them as inevitable outcomes of modernity and progress that require no explanation is to naturalize effects of what is in fact a very particular genealogy. It is this genealogy that I wish to bring into view in my project.



# From the Margins of Middle East Studies

## Marking Identity and Culture in Latin America

By Arthur Starr, Program Coordinator, Kevorkian Center

On April 5th, Paulo Pinto, professor of Anthropology and the Director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the Universidade Federal Fluminense in Brazil, gave a lecture titled "Muslims in Brazil: Local and Transnational Trends in the making of Diasporic Islam." One of the most interesting aspects of his lecture was his discussion of cultural and religious identity among the Muslim population in Brazil, which is comprised of Brazilians of Middle Eastern heritage and also an increasingly large population of Brazilian converts to Islam. While Professor Pinto's discussion mainly focused on the contemporary Middle Eastern community in Brazil, the presence of immigrants from the Middle East traces back to the late nineteenth century, when the growing economies of countries in the Americas, such as Brazil and Argentina, provided attractive incentives to stimulate immigration.

The decision to migrate to the Americas, particularly Latin America, was usually influenced by the possibility of joining family or members of their home community wherever they settled. Middle Eastern migrants to Latin America traveled predominantly from the eastern Mediterranean region known as the Levant or the *Mashreq* (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Israel), although considerable migrant populations have also come from Turkey, Egypt and Iraq. Many migrants were extremely mobile; a family that initially settled in Central America or the Caribbean might choose to move to Mexico or South America to pursue economic opportunities. By the late twentieth century though, Middle Eastern migrants were finding Latin American destinations less desirable, given the local economic and political crises. Migration from the Middle East continues today but in much smaller numbers.

The patterns of migration and "sending countries" have varied greatly, but one finds that Christians were almost always the majority among Middle East migrants to Latin America, although many countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela received large Muslim populations. Scholars estimate that well over seven million Arabs – the majority of Syrian, Lebanese or Palestinian origin – live in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the largest communities in Brazil (1.5 million) and Argentina (1 million). Although these immigrants encountered popular prejudices, often reinforced by a common stereotype of the Middle Eastern immigrant as an itinerant peddler, prominent leaders of Arab descent now include two former Ecuadoran presidents, President Carlos Menem of Argentina and Carlos Slim Helú of Mexico, currently the richest man in the world.



*Photo courtesy of wikimedia commons*

A popular *rotisseria* in Rio de Janeiro serves up Arab-influenced dishes. The abundance of such restaurants is testament to the long history of immigration to Brazil in particular and Latin America in general.

In addition to the influence of prosperous segments of the Middle Eastern diaspora to Latin America, one of the most interesting aspects of this transnational migration is evidenced by cross-cultural influences in food culture. In Mexico, Middle Eastern immigrants have heavily influenced local cuisine as seen by food items such as *tacos al pastor* (shepherd style) and *tacos árabes* (arab tacos). *Horchata*, a drink popular throughout Latin America, traces its roots back to Al Andalus. In Brazil and Argentina, most bakeries make items influenced by Arab cuisine such as *empanadas*, *alfajores*, *pasteles*, *esfirras* and *kibbe*. This influence also extends back to the Middle East. In Syria and Lebanon, returning migrants brought back *yerba mate*, a South American drink that is now widely popular in these respective countries. Migrants from the Middle East have been circulating to the Americas for over two centuries, yet scholarship on this migration, although rich, has generally fallen through the cracks of area studies and the social sciences. Happily, research on this fascinating topic is on the rise, evidenced by Paulo Pinto's remarkable research as well as the work currently being done by NYU's Ella Shohat on Arabs in Brazil.

# The Uludere/Roboski Incident and Illegal Oil Trade in Eastern Turkey

By Fırat Bozçalı, MA '09 NES and PhD candidate, Anthropology, Stanford University



Photo courtesy of Fırat Bozçalı

Silopi, Turkey: A truck equipped with an amplified gasoline tank (with approximately 600 liters of capacity).

On December 28, 2011, a group of smugglers were mistaken for Kurdish guerillas and were accidentally bombed by Turkish jets near the Turkish-Iraqi border. The smugglers were from two border villages, *Gülyazı* (*Bujeh* in Kurdish) and *Ortasu* (*Roboski* in Kurdish) in the *Uludere* (*Qileban* in Kurdish) district of Şırnak province. They were smuggling diesel fuel and cigarettes on mules from Iraq. In the air strike, 34 smugglers were killed; 28 of them were under 23 years old. Three smugglers survived the strike. According to the survivors, land forces blocked the path of the group, forced smugglers to concentrate in two spots, and launched signal rockets before the air strike. However, the Turkish law requires border guards to warn smugglers to stop and allows directly targeting smugglers only under the condition of self-defense. In this case, the smugglers were not warned properly and they were not armed. The air strike was a

case of disproportionate use of force. The air strike turned out to be a terrifying scandal. It was further fueled by the fact that some of the murdered smugglers are relatives of the village guards, paramilitary forces that are armed by the Turkish state. Although Turkish authorities identify oil smuggling with the PKK, a pro-Kurdish illegal armed organization, this incident shows that both pro-state and pro-Kurdish circles carry out smuggling and local state officials overlook activities of smuggling. The incident was called the *Uludere* incident by the Turkish media, whereas the Kurdish media identifies the incident with the name of the Kurdish village, referring to it as the *Roboski* massacre.

The government acknowledged that the bombing was conducted as a result of false intelligence. It was later reported that upon intelligence on guerilla intrusion, aerial drones

monitored the region and detected the smugglers three hours before the bombing. However, the oppositional circles including the pro-Kurdish BDP (the Peace and Democracy Party) questioned the source of the false intelligence and whether a military or civilian authority made the final decision to attack. In May 2012, a Wall Street Journal article claiming that the American drones, predators, provided the intelligence fueled the public debate around the source of false intelligence. This debate coincides with the Turkish efforts to push the US for the sale of armed drones that depends on an approval from Congress.

The *Uludere/Roboski* incident directed attention to smuggling in the region. In fact, every year, one billion gallons of smuggled oil enter Turkey.<sup>1</sup> Oil smuggling is a lucrative and sustainable business in Turkey due to high tax rates, one of the steepest in the world at \$2.50 per liter. Although half of the oil is smuggled by sea, the other half enters through the eastern borders of Turkey. In the last two decades, oil smuggling has emerged as a substantial livelihood activity for people facing social and economic devastation wrought by a three-decade long armed conflict between the Turkish army and Kurdish guerillas in Eastern Turkey. Oil is smuggled into Turkey either inside the gasoline tanks of vehicles via official border gates or inside barrels carried on the back of mules and/or horses over mountainous border areas.

The first type of oil smuggling emerged in Eastern Turkey during the 1990s. Following the 1991 Gulf war, a Kurdish territorial entity emerged in northern Iraq even though it was not internationally recognized. Suffering from a double embargo-sanctions imposed by the UN and the internal blockade imposed by Iraqi government—the Iraqi Kurdish region relied on international aid efforts carried out via the Turkish-Iraqi border crossing. In carrying aid cargos from Turkey to Iraq by land routes, truckers started taking in extra diesel fuel in their gasoline tanks and selling it in Turkey to make extra money. Although the UN regime of sanctions banned



any oil export transaction from Iraq, truckers assembled a kind of oil pipeline that is locally known as “the oil pipeline on wheels.” Iraqi, Kurdish, and Turkish officials occasionally restrained the oil trade, but they never completely stopped its operation. In fact, the Turkish state regularized and hence legalized the oil trade and monopolized its nationwide distribution by passing a regulation in 1999.

In circumventing international law, the Turkish authorities created a border trade regime, a special system that facilitates commerce in particular goods between two borderlands. However, the diesel fuel carried over the border was distributed nationwide through the state-

owned Turkish Petroleum International Company (TPIC). A similar border trade regime was imposed during the 1990s along the Turkish-Azerbaijani (Nakhcivani) border. Upon the 2003 invasion of Iraq, a shortage of refined oil emerged in Iraq. While this shortage limited the scope of the oil pipeline on wheels between Turkey and Iraq, Turkish authorities also later lifted the special border trade regime. Turkish authorities re-introduced standard regulations that allow a regular truck to carry 400 liters and a tractor-trailer up to 550 liters of fuel across the land borders. On smaller scales, therefore, arbitrage of oil still operates at the Turkish border crossings with Iraq, Azerbaijan (Nakhchivan), Iran, Georgia, and Syria.

Aside from oil pipelines on wheels, a significant amount of oil is smuggled into Turkey inside barrels borne by mules and horses as in the case of *Uludere/Roboski*. In fact, smuggling by mules has a longer history even though the items of smuggling have changed over time. While carpets, food-stuffs, or livestock are traditionally smuggled across eastern borders, new items such as oil or cigarettes have been introduced into these established smuggling channels. This type of smuggling is common in provinces of Van, Hakkari, and Şırnak, which make up the majority of the Turkish-Iranian-Iraqi border. The oil is first carried between mountain villages on both sides of the border. The smuggled

oil is then transported to the city centers in tanker trucks. It is estimated that every year 300 million liters of smuggled oil enter Turkey through this border zone and more than 35,000 mules and horses are raised for use in oil smuggling in the region.

Although the *Uludere/Roboski* incident aroused indignation, the killing of smugglers on the border zone is not particularly unusual. Between January 2009 and April 2010, on the Turkish-Iranian border, 301 Turkish citizens and 62 non-citizens were caught in the borderlands and referred to the courts on allegations of smuggling. There were 37 killings and 18 incidents of injury in the same period.<sup>2</sup> Most of these incidents are not mentioned in the national media, appearing only locally. In fact, the *Uludere/Roboski* incident was first mentioned in social media and Kurdish news agencies. The Turkish national media started reporting on the incident only after the Turkish army officially acknowledged the air strike the following day.

The debates on the *Uludere/Roboski* incident continue inside and outside of Turkey and ignite new debates on the Kurdish question of Turkey as well as arms deals between the US and Turkey. The incident reminds us of Turkey's darker history, such as the pre-trial execution of 32 Kurdish villagers accused of smuggling near the Turkish-Iranian border in 1943 as well as the allegedly accidental air bombing of two Kurdish villages and the killing of 38 villagers in Şırnak province in 1994.

*Photo courtesy of Firat Bozçalı*

A state-imposed standard fiberglass oil tank (with approximately 4000 liters of capacity) located in the flat bed of a truck in Silopi, Turkey.



1.) *Parliamentary Research Commission on Oil Smuggling's Damage to the Economy and to Human and Environmental Health* (10/238), available online at: <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/sirasayi/donem22/yil01/ss978m.htm>. [Turkish] 2.) *Activity Report of the Parliamentary Investigation Commission on Human Rights, October 2009-October 2010*, available online at: [http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/insanhaklari/rapor\\_donem23.htm](http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/insanhaklari/rapor_donem23.htm). [Turkish]

# A 'Bridge' to Iran?

## (Re)presenting Iran to American Audiences

By Becca Keleher, MA '12 NES

"When I was coming up on stage, I was thinking, what should I say here? Should I say something about my mother, my father, my kind wife, my daughters, my dear friends, my crew—a great and lovely crew. But now, I just prefer to say something about my people. I think they are truly peace-loving people. Thank you very much."

—Asghar Farhadi accepting the Golden Globe for Best Foreign Language Film in Beverly Hills, California, January 15, 2012

When Iranian director Asghar Farhadi received Awards for his film *A Separation*, it was not particularly surprising that he would reference his homeland—given that his work was categorized to represent Iran—but the manner in which he did so was compelling. By asserting that Iranians are "truly a peace-loving people," and expressing happiness that Iran held the spotlight for reasons of artistic accomplishment rather than "war, intimidation, and aggression," Farhadi implicitly affirms that there is a *need* for such assertions.

Farhadi's remarks allude to the overwhelmingly negative manner in which dominant Western discourses portray Iran and its people. Compounding the sheer inertia of Orientalist discourse, images from the 1978-79 revolution and subsequent embassy seizure (or 'hostage crisis') have been seared into the American imaginary and still today mass media depictions are saturated with hostile rhetoric casting Iran as an existential threat to the West. American productions such as *Not Without My Daughter* (1991), and *The Stoning of Soraya M.* (2008) provide essentialist representations of monstrous Iranian men and their repressed women along with other negative images that Western spectators have been primed to expect. The normalized conflation of Iranians and violent religious extremists demonstrates how hegemonic discourses, collective life, and historical memory in the United States lack alternative frameworks of understanding in regards to Iran. For many American spectators, the association between Iran, militant Islam, belligerent fundamentalism, and a 'nuclear threat' has been ingrained so thoroughly as to serve as a conceptual grid that over-determines the ways in which audiences approach and think through all things 'Iranian'—including

"At this time, many Iranians all over the world are watching us and I imagine them to be very happy. They are happy not just because of an important award or film or a filmmaker, but because at the time when talk of war, intimidation, and aggression is exchanged between politicians, the name of their country Iran is spoken here through her glorious culture, a rich and ancient culture that has been hidden under the heavy dust of politics."

—Asghar Farhadi, accepting the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in Hollywood, California, February 26, 2012

documentary and feature films. This creates challenges for those working to undermine the essentialist tropes that reify Iran's radical alterity. Curating a film program is a challenging task in itself, but the issue is complicated even further in the case of an Iranian film series targeted at Western audiences.

Kevorkian's "Iran on Film: A Forum on Culture, Politics and Daily life in Documentary Cinema," collaborated with Link TV's "Bridge to Iran" series. The series uses independent documentaries to contest the negative portrayal of Iran in the United States by providing a fuller and more nuanced portrait of the country and its people. Persheng Vaziri, Link TV producer, explained that the conditions for Iranian filmmakers on the ground have grown more difficult, particularly in the aftermath of the 2009 presidential elections. She explains, "When we were programming this new series we were finding that it was very difficult to access filmmakers inside Iran," leading producers to select works from Europe-based Iranians, including: Nader Takmil Homayoun's *Iran: A Cinematographic Revolution*; Maryam Khakipour's *Siah Bazi* (2005), a theater documentary; and Nahid Sarvestani's uneasy encounters with Farah Pahlavi in *The Queen and I* (2009). Only one of





In Nahid Sarvestani's *The Queen and I*, the filmmaker pursues a politically fraught relationship with the former queen of Iran, Farah Pahlavi.

the series' films is from a filmmaker inside Iran. It is directed by the country's most prominent female filmmaker, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, whose position arguably provides her some leeway to grapple openly with contentious issues in a way which lesser-known filmmakers cannot. In *We Are Half of Iran's Population* (2009), Bani-Etemad provides a compelling glimpse into the women's rights movement three months prior to the 2009 presidential elections; activists are recorded posing questions directly to the candidates, who later view them in a private screening and respond. Ahmadinejad, however, declined to participate.

The "Bridge to Iran" program complicates and challenges the essentialist motifs that predominate popular media portrayals of Iran in the United States, but it also generates additional dilemmas and silences. For example, the series does not include documentaries by conservative filmmakers close to the Islamic Republic nor films documenting the lives of regime supporters. While such works may be dismissed as propaganda (thus undermining the purpose of the series), they could provide a space for American audiences to critically engage with an adversarial point of view. When asked by an audience member about the absence of pro-regime filmmakers from the program, Vaziri acknowledged the value of their films but expressed concern over alienating American audiences: "It is interesting to see a very different point of view, which they offer. And maybe because we live in a West-

ern world...we won't appreciate the ways that they tell their stories, because usually it is so full of religious references that it is made for a specific kind of audience, and a Western audience wouldn't really be able to relate to that." It is perhaps true that such filmmakers have a non-Western audience in mind when they produce films and that a great deal of religious references may trigger the circuit of negative associations between Iran, Islam, and fundamentalism. Vaziri's remarks intimate a serious lack of confidence in American spectators, which may be warranted given the arrogant ahistoricism and intellectually lazy reliance on villainous stereotypes that have dominated the ways in which Iran is understood. Indeed, how does one go about responsibly framing films that seem at odds with a program's aims? To run the risk that these films would simply be viewed and read according to the problematic tropes that the series confronts and works so hard to undermine would be a bold but potentially disastrous move. Yet the exclusion of such representations, and a concomitant emphasis on works from 'independent' filmmakers ostensibly more relatable to American audiences, avoids challenging the discursively and institutionally structured assumptions that necessitate building a 'bridge to Iran' in the first place. Thus, by focusing on those figures with whom they identify more readily, spectators have an easier time avoiding an uncon-



*We are Half of Iran's Population* by Rakhshan Bani Etemad reveals the interests of various women's rights NGOs and interrogates the 2009 presidential candidates on their proposed policies affecting women.

fortable confrontation with their own problematic assumptions. Audiences can congratulate themselves for seeing individual Iranians as human beings without addressing the complicated issues that figure into their approaches to and thought processes on Iran.

Although projects like "Bridge to Iran" are premised on the very real need to undermine negative stereotypes, they remain shackled to them. They reify the demand that is often placed upon Iranian artists to serve as spokespeople for their country. While it is possible that filmmakers like Asghar Farhadi see themselves as ambassadors, it seems likely that many are responding to the pressure exerted by the negative images and discourses to represent their country. But the burden of addressing our own arrogant ignorance should not rest on their shoulders. If American audiences are sincerely interested in deepening their understanding of "others," they must look within society and undertake a serious, honest interrogation of assumptions and expectations. Only when we can view the works of artists on the insights of their work, rather than as merely a lens for understanding a nation or a culture can we find ourselves free of the need for that metaphorical bridge. Then, perhaps the next time someone like Asghar Farhadi accepts a major award in Hollywood, he or she won't feel the need to defend or explain their country.

# Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party

## Inside an Authoritarian Regime

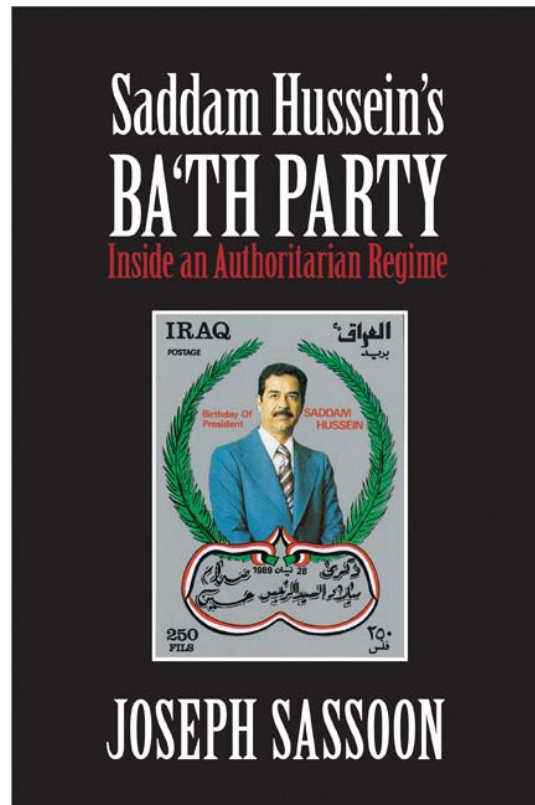
By Matthew MacLean, PhD Candidate MEIS and History

Joseph Sassoon's work is an excellent contribution to the literature on Saddam Hussein's Iraq and post-WWII authoritarianism. Unlike most scholarly and polemical books on post-1968 Iraq, Sassoon's analysis is based on an extensive archive of primary sources not previously available to the public, including copious numbers of government documents, audio recordings of meetings led by Saddam Hussein, and interviews of key regime figures conducted by Sassoon himself after 2003. These documents offer a window into how Saddam Hussein and the Ba'th Party managed to dominate the Iraqi state and society for thirty-five years. Sassoon's portrait of life under Saddam is thus far more nuanced – but no less chilling – than those of previous authors. *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party* will be an important work for many years to come, invaluable to anyone seeking to understand the functioning and durability of authoritarian states in the Middle East and elsewhere.

The book is organized thematically. The first chapter offers a broad overview of the history of the Ba'th Party in post-WWII Iraq, while focusing on the lessons learned by Saddam and the Party at each historical turn. Chapters 2 through 5 describe the internal structure of the Ba'th Party and the methods by which it controlled the security services, army, and state bureaucracy. Chapter 6 describes the development of Saddam Hussein's personality cult, and Chapter 7 examines the system of rewards and punishments developed to ensure the loyalty – or at least the passivity – of the Iraqi people. Finally, Chapter 8 analyzes Ba'thist control of the economy, education system, and religious institutions under Saddam's rule. Some of the most interesting passages are based on specific examples from the archives, such as an account of a small-town branch of the Ba'th Party (90-94). Sassoon describes the Party's hierarchical structure in part through the poignant life story of a loyal party member whose rise through the ranks was eventually blocked for unknown reasons (57-61). The amount of information contained in this party member's file, along with other examples such as that of an army officer whose marriage did not receive state approval (144-145), vividly illustrate the extent to which ordinary Iraqis were subject to state surveillance and control. Saddam's extraordinary ability to manipulate those who worked for him is most evident in the case of a minister who was set up to be imprisoned and perhaps killed; he never knew whom he had offended. Having avoided the death penalty, he went to Abu Ghraib prison for two years, was pardoned by Saddam, and then asked to serve again as a minister (166-168).

Sassoon departs from the conventional wisdom on Saddam's Iraq at a number of important points. As the title suggests, he rejects the label "totalitarian" in describing the Ba'thist state (5). While the regime did seek to maximize its surveillance and control of the Iraqi people, it did not transform Iraqi society in accord with an ideological vision. Rather, the main goal of the Ba'th was to preserve its own power. Nor could Saddam have transformed the social or economic structure of Iraqi society if he had wanted to, as the Ba'th Party had no well-developed intellectual or political theory beyond its endlessly-repeated slogan of "Unity, Freedom, Socialism" (277). This gave Saddam significant room to maneuver and adapt his rhetoric to changing times while preserving the extensive system of surveillance, punishments, and rewards that secured his power. For instance, though Saddam made a show of promoting the Islamic faith after 1991, the surveillance apparatus continued to monitor mosques for any sign of dissent. Other notable reversals included Saddam's positions on the Shatt al-Arab waterway, the rights of women, and tribalism (169).

Sassoon also emphasizes the relative lack of sectarianism in the Ba'th regime. In Saddam's Iraq, government documents did not ask whether someone was Sunni or Shia (203). Loyalty to Saddam himself was more important, and Saddam himself only rarely asked about sectarian affiliation (3). It seems that the highly sectarian nature of post-2003 Iraqi politics was largely a response to the Coalition Provisional Authority's emphasis on sectarian affiliation. Sassoon effectively refutes the mainstream American media's ongoing representation of Iraqi society as irredeemably divided along Sunni-Shia and Arab-Kurdish lines.



Courtesy of Cambridge University Press

Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime

"Saddam Hussein" continues on the next page

*"Saddam Hussein" continued from the previous page*

Sassoon demonstrates that Saddam and the Ba'th Party did not stay in power simply through fear and repression. Rather, there existed a complex system of rewards and incentives to encourage participation in regime-sponsored rituals and public displays of loyalty to the party and leader (206-216). These included jobs, medals and other awards, university positions, and "Friends of the President" cards, which entitled their bearers to an annual meeting with Saddam Hussein himself. As in other authoritarian societies, many Iraqis willingly participated in, or at least resigned themselves to, the overwhelming power of the Ba'th Party.

*Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party* paves the way for the inclusion of Iraq in comparative studies of authoritarian systems. As similar archives of other postcolonial Arab regimes are not accessible to researchers, most of Sassoon's theoretical background is derived from studies of Eastern Bloc nations. This suggests the importance of cross-regional comparisons of authoritarian regimes, and that the dictatorships of the Middle East are not uniquely "Arab" or "Islamic" in character. Within Middle Eastern studies, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party* is an important contribution to understanding the long period of late-20th century authoritarianism that has now begun to crumble.



Photo Courtesy of Joe Goulait (Smithsonian Institution)

Members of the Baath Party receive these certificates, which bear the likeness of the Party's former ruler, Saddam Hussein, in front of a Mosque...

## Towards a New Image of Hamas, Not without Limitations

By Emma Alpert,  
MA '13 NES

In her most recent book, *Hamas: From Resistance to Government*, Italian journalist Paola Caridi traces the trajectory of The Islamic Resistance Movement, or Hamas, from its roots as a marginal Islamist movement to a powerful political player in the region. In an effort to complicate the dominant view of Hamas, Caridi's book offers a thoughtful synthesis of historical analysis, personal interviews with Hamas members, and an exploration of the complex regional dynamics. Caridi thus presents a picture of Hamas that brings to the fore the often overlooked voices behind the movement and their ongoing struggle to define a coherent political identity within the tumultuous reality of the Palestinian context.

The book is organized more or less chronologically, mapping the life of Hamas from its founding charter in 1987 to the spring of 2011. The first two chapters provide a poetic albeit bleak picture of life within the confines of Gaza, the

birthplace of Hamas. Among its other distinctions, Gaza also has the highest population density (with a population of nearly 1.7 million) and the highest unemployment level on the globe. Caridi describes Gaza as a place of contradictions: "its welcome, its Mediterranean air, its southern flavor" set against the "steel skeletons of the destroyed buildings" and the beaches "polluted by waste dumped out at sea."

From her exploration of the social fabric that would become Hamas's stronghold – Gaza's large refugee population, politicized university students, and economically deprived working class – Caridi delves into the complex cast of characters that defined the early phase of the movement. The bulk of the book goes on to investigate Hamas' inner-workings, internal debates and strategies, and landmark moments leading up to the 2005 decision to participate in the PNA elections. The last chapter deals with the aftermath of the "Gaza Massacre" or

Operation "Cast Lead" in the winter of 2008 and the Gaza Blockade, as well as recent developments within Palestine in the wake of the 2011 uprisings throughout the region.

While Caridi's text is ambitious in scope, three main questions emerge: How can we understand the roots of the movement, in particular its use of violence? What led Hamas to win the 2006 elections and how has its transition into formal politics affected the movement overall? And finally, what is Hamas' relationship to the numerous players involved in the conflict including Israel, Fatah, the PNA, other regional governments and the United States?

With respect to the first question, Caridi's key argument is that one should not understand Hamas as a terrorist organization, but rather a complex social, religious and political movement that has used terrorism. By tracing the roots of Hamas violence, Caridi demonstrates

*"Hamas" continues on the next page*



how Hamas' relationship to violence has shifted over time, responding and reacting to changes in the political situation. Moreover, Caridi situates Hamas violence, particularly its use of suicide attacks, in the context of the structural and overt violence perpetrated by the Israelis. She notes the massacre of 27 Palestinian Muslims in the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron by Jewish extremist Baruch Goldman; an incident that Hamas leaders cite as prompting the retaliation that led to their first use of suicide bombings.

Caridi goes on to argue that this act of revenge eventually transformed into a strategy with a life of its own. The justifications for Hamas violence became divorced from the need to retaliate and evolved into an entirely new kind of legitimization – "it (Hamas) began to argue that Israeli society was militarized," a shift in logic that Caridi characterizes as dangerous. However, she also notes that Hamas later shifted away from suicide tactics, including periods where they were abandoned all together. Namely, between 1998 and 2001 and following the Cairo Declaration in March 2005, when Hamas agreed to "maintain an atmosphere of calm" by halting attacks against Israel. With this transition away from violence as their primary means of resistance, Hamas' place in the political realm also began to shift.

Through interviews with Hamas leadership, Caridi suggests that the transition from resistance to governance has not always been smooth and indeed remains in a state of ambiguity. As a newly elected Hamas official put it in 2006, "now there is a Hamas government...[but] Hamas is still a resistance movement." While Hamas flirted with taking on a more political role in the past (most notably before the 1996 elections), it largely remained steadfast in its role as resistance to mainstream politics. Through the movement's earlier forays into political life, including the *al-Khalas* political party and university level elections, Hamas had numerous experiences to draw once their political activity reached the national level.

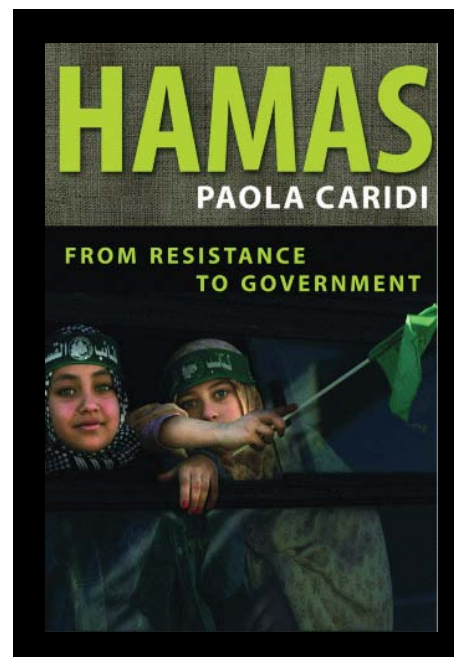
Of the 2006 elections, Caridi describes the mobilization of Hamas' political agenda as a "capillary" reaching "cities, the refugee camps, and the villages, and it involved not only Gaza's social fabric, but...also all of the

West Bank." As a movement working closely with the people, Hamas built a reputation as honest, trustworthy and humble; an image they have worked to maintain even through their increasing power and influence. In this way, Hamas succeeded in parlaying its role as a deeply embedded social organization into a reliable alternative to mainstream Palestinian politics, enabling them to defeat Fatah in the 2006 elections.

A shortcoming of the book is Caridi's use of language pertaining to "targeted assassinations" versus "suicide bombings" or "terrorism." These terms represent a complex and controversial issue in the overall conflict; one that Caridi hints at but ultimately shies away from addressing. By reproducing this language throughout her book, the implication is that "targeted assassinations" represent a legitimate Israeli military strategy that kills only guilty parties, whereas "terrorism" implies religiously motivated acts of violence whose target is always civilians. This assumption requires further complication, which Caridi fails to provide, such as an investigation of the structural and power relations, the outcomes and the representations of violence being perpetrated by both parties.

In the final chapter, Caridi makes the claim that there are only two paths for Hamas moving forward – one defined by a continuation of pragmatism and moderation and the other defined by a relapse to violence and extremism. This argument runs contrary to her claims throughout the book that describe the complexity, multiplicity and contradictions within the Hamas movement. Is it not feasible to imagine a scenario in which Hamas pursues some policies to further political legitimacy, while at other times making choices that favor violence? Or, in another scenario, where the military wing and the political wing disagree on a coherent strategy, thus allowing the movement to pursue contradictory policies simultaneously.

A final, yet important critique relates to Caridi's "Emotional Prologue" in which she recounts her own first-hand encounter with a suicide attack near her home in Jerusalem. In these first pages of her manuscript, Caridi illustrates the scene following a suicide attack



*courtesy of Seven Stories Press*

in which a Palestinian police officer blew himself up on the Number 19 bus a few blocks from her home. She describes her own horror at the attack and at suicide attacks more generally, giving her readers almost visceral intimacy with the event. She goes on to say that, "perhaps it was precisely that attack that gave me an entry point into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." While moving, the anecdote is largely irrelevant to the scope of the book, as the attack was not linked to Hamas. By framing the book in this way, Caridi is, in fact, contributing to the very stereotypes of Hamas that she wished to undermine.

Ultimately *From Resistance to Government* offers a nuanced chronology of one of the most infamous, yet misunderstood movements in the Middle East and its rise to power. Caridi's work is a unique contribution to the range of scholarship on Hamas, particularly through the insight gained from her interviews with the Hamas leaders and supporters. However, the story she presents requires a critical reading, one that takes into account Caridi's discursive framing of violence within the larger Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

# Meeting Places

## NYC High School Embarks on First Study Tour in Israel and Palestine



*Photo courtesy of Friends Seminary, NYC*

Palestinian students at the Friends School in Ramallah got acquainted with the digital cameras they would use to document their city for the “Meeting Places” oral history and photography project.

*In 2011, the Hagop Kevorkian Center led a study tour for 11 Friends Seminary teachers to Israel, the West Bank and Jordan. One year later, led by Kevorkian alumnus Anna Swank Bothwell (MA '08 NES), and Bram Hubbell, a frequent attendee of Kevorkian's Saturday Seminars, the teachers have returned to the region, bringing seventeen Arabic language high school students with them. On their inaugural trip to Israel and Palestine, the students toured Jerusalem, visited the declining Dead Sea, stayed with Palestinian host families in Ramallah, and spent a lot of time working on an oral history project (called Meeting Places) with Palestinian students at the Friends School in Ramallah. Friends Seminary's progressive curriculum includes an Arabic language classes taught by Anna Swank Bothwell alongside a Middle Eastern History, course taught by Bram Hubbell. A few travel blog entries written by students alongside their photos highlight some of the lessons learned on the trip.*

### WE ARE FRIENDS By Will N. '12

I will definitely remember today (Thursday, 3/22) for the rest of my life. It was one of those days that was so long and so full that it felt like at least two days, if not three. We toured Bethlehem, where among other things we visited the Church of the Nativity. We also toured Hebron, an experience which I will certainly never forget. Of all the places we've visited, it was in Hebron that I could see most tangibly the effects of the conflict in this region. Makeshift barriers closed off networks of streets. Waist-height barriers split deserted streets down the middle. A religious site was physically split into a synagogue and a mosque. Truly, I think one has to see Hebron to feel the full weight of the place and of the conflict.

On the same day as this intense visit, and halfway into a trip full of visiting and looking and observing, it was a welcome release to do something tangible: to write on the separation wall.

We had driven to a spot of the wall covered with artwork. Many of the enormous murals were beautiful and uplifting, and I felt bad painting over parts of them. But we found some free spots, and went to work. It was truly exhilarating. And I have to say, it was one of the most “Friends”-like experiences I've ever had. We were all painting messages of hope and peace, and beyond that I was moved by how much we were supporting each other, both metaphorical and literally: Not only did we cheer each other on and applaud each other's handiwork, but I actually lifted Rose up on my shoulders so she could find space to write. I also wrote my own message; after much internal debate, I decided to write the phrase that kept coming to my head: “WE ARE FRIENDS.” And walking away in the sunlight, with empty spray-paints cans in hand and classmates at my side, I really felt that these words were true.

*“Meeting Places” continues on the next page*



Photo courtesy of  
Friends Seminary, NYC

Service learning and environmentally conscious projects formed the backbone of group activities.

Here, the students volunteered with an environmental center in Auja, West Bank, to make mud bricks.

## THE HUMAN ELEMENT by Eliza A. '12

After spending almost two weeks traveling throughout Israel, I find myself confused on many levels. I have so many questions I wish I could find answers to, and I have so many emotions all of which seem to be in conflict with each other. In reflecting today with the group on our experiences in the West Bank and hearing from a representative from the American Jewish Committee, I wish I knew how I felt. When reflecting on the experiences I have had here it is almost impossible to try and separate out all the political voices both here and in the international community; however, when I think about my Palestinian host mother, I find it easy to separate all this noise out.

I saw my host mother as the Palestinian version of my grandmother, who I call Nanny. The similarities between the two are almost endless and at times just funny. To start with, I don't think there were five minutes that went by during my home stay where my host mother did not offer

me some type of food. She was always cooking something warm and delicious and even between meals was offering me lots of snacks, which my Jewish Nanny would refer to as nosh. During meals, my host mom refused to sit down until everyone had everything they could possibly need, a scene that is mirrored during meals at my Nanny's house. One of the more funny similarities between the two is their abundant collections of free hotel mini shampoo, conditioner, and body wash bottles. Something so simple and silly, yet something for me that made me feel a connection between the two.

On the more emotional side, my host mother made me feel at home from the moment I walked in the door. She always checked on me to see if I needed anything, told me over and over that I could take anything I needed without asking, and really did everything to make me feel comfortable. For me, this was the greatest part of

my home stay experience, the warmth and real love I felt from my host mother. She took away all the fears and anxieties I had and allowed me to fully enjoy my experience. Throughout my life, my Nanny has given me so much unconditional love, comfort, and support that I have always been grateful for, and my host mother in Ramallah provided all of that for me.

When I reflect on the experiences of this trip, the criticisms of it, and the larger conflicts within this region, I have found it really easy to lose sight of the human element in all of this. When I think about my host mother and the way she treated me with love and warmth despite my personal religion and political views, I find it a little bit easier to see the human side and I am incredibly grateful and thankful for that. I am more appreciative that I feel I am coming away from this experience with more of a human connection absent of all politics.





Photos courtesy of Friends Seminary, NYC  
Arabic practice, in and out of the classroom, was an integral part of the Friends Seminary students' experience in Ramallah.

## LIKE ME By Jacob P. '12

Wow. This week has been amazing. When we arrived in Ramallah, I was apprehensive, to say the least, about my stay with a host family. But, in all honesty, these past few days have changed the perspective through which I view other cultures. Right off the bat, I launched into the most profound philosophical discussions with the Friends students, which ranged from the beauty of our universe to the political conundrums to the existence of God. I was amazed at how much these students were like me, and I was also fascinated by the cultural differences.

The following morning, our group shared our oral history project with the Ramallah Friends students, and they shared their ideas with us. The energy they brought to the project warmed my heart, and I cannot wait to hear their stories on the oral history website. Later in the day, our group went to the Friends Lower School, which hosts grades K-6. We spent time in their classrooms and taught them how to use the cameras with which they will take pictures of Ramallah.

Although the days I have spent with our group have been amazing, the nights with my host brother have been life-changing. The crowded, bustling city of Ramallah turns into a much calmer city in the night and in the past few days I have grown to love wandering around its streets with my host brother and his friends. What surprised me the most is how nice everyone is to one another. First of all, everyone knows everyone, and second, every-

one greets one another with a "marhaba" or "shu akhbaarak."

At first I was hesitant to use my Arabic, because all of the the Ramallah Friends kids are nearly fluent in English and the Fusha (formal Arabic) of the classroom is much different from the dialect of the streets. But, as I became comfortable with my host brother and listened to the conversations with his friends, I grew more confident and learned the idioms of the local language.

Over the past few days, I have become a part of the "boys." I've learned how to play the most complicated card game of my life, been informed of the inside jokes and ate at the best shawarma place ever. I've grown accustomed to the olive oil and cheese breakfast, the traffic-lightless streets, and the pestering salesmen. I greet my friends with an "Eish wale" (slang Wassup) and am no longer scared of the overly friendly locals who originally intimidated me.

I could go on forever, but I would rather not. What I have told you is only the tip of the iceberg (roughly 2% of the whole structure). I never want to forget my experiences here, nor do I want to forget the lessons that I drew from them even though we are from different cultures and hold different beliefs. We are the same where it matters most: we both want peace, we both want to laugh, we both value passion, and we both enjoy a good felafel.

To view the full Friends Seminar blog on the trip, including slideshows, visit: <http://friendsnyctravels.blogspot.com/>

# People Power

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From the Editors of the *Middle East Report*

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## Faculty Development Seminar Aims to Understand Revolts in the Arab World

*In June 2012, in partnership with NYU's Faculty Resource Network ([www.nyu.edu/frn](http://www.nyu.edu/frn)) and the Middle East Research and Information Project ([www.merip.org](http://www.merip.org)), the Hagop Kevorkian Center hosted an intensive faculty development course on the Arab Uprisings for professors from community colleges and minority-serving institutions. Co-taught by Chris Toensing (Editor, *Middle East Report*) and Jeannie Sowers (Professor of Political Science, University of New Hampshire), the course aimed to provide context and nuance to participants' understandings of the complex events that have unfolded since that fateful January, 2011.*

Revolution is a weighty word, one as freighted with past disappointments as with hopes for the future. In the Arab world, where the first spontaneous popular revolutions of the twenty-first century have begun, cabals of colonels long expropriated the term to glorify their *coups d'état*. It is an accomplishment of the groundswells in Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011 that no prospective Asad or Qaddafi will get away with stealing the word again. Thanks to Tunisians and Egyptians, everyone has received a crash course in what revolution looks like.

There is a distinction to be drawn, of course, between political revolution and social. What Tunisians and Egyptians have achieved is political revolution—changes of personnel atop the pyramids of government forced by pressure from below. The Tunisian and Egyptian crowds aimed for social revolution, a far more thorough transformation of the polity, the relations between state and society, and ultimately the society itself. Most political revolutions carry within them the seeds of such metamorphosis, but very few in modern history have bloomed in full, for a variety of reasons, one being that the unifying energy of the initial phase frequently dissipates as the insurrectionists dissolve into competing factions. But a second, often more consequential, reason is that the specter of social revolution chills the rich and powerful to the bone. Elites can accommodate political revolution. A Zine El Abidine Ben Ali or a Hosni Mubarak can be abandoned, ruling party machines can be junked, dozens of ministers and police chiefs can be fired and even put on trial, without upsetting the authoritarian bargain between the ruling caste and the ruled, not to speak of upending the class hierarchy. But sacking the old guard is where the elites want matters to halt. In most revolutionary situations, forces of counter-revolution rally to ensure that redistribution of wealth, in particular, does not transpire.

At this juncture, it is plain that counter-revolutionary elements have

stirred themselves to action in Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere. Will they win or lose? The balance sheet can be read both ways.

On the revolutionaries' side of the ledger can be counted at least one *fait accompli*: The steady degradation of the post-colonial Arab republics into ruling-family fiefdoms has been arrested. In Tunisia and Egypt, there will be no handover of presidential power from father to son or son-in-law (and it seems safe to say that no such transfer will occur in Yemen, either). Amidst tales of the Ben Alis' and Mubaraks' fantastic wealth, it seems unlikely that successor regimes will feel able to plunder the Tunisian or Egyptian treasuries with quite the same aplomb. The rise of citizen journalism via social media, the ransacking of ruling-party and Interior Ministry offices, the new prominence of privately owned satellite television channels, the collective civic education performed by the uprisings themselves—all of these factors militate in favor of greater transparency and accountability in the respective political cultures.

The more open Tunisian and Egyptian politics become, the more the steps toward democracy there will reverberate in the region. Of course, the political permeability of the Arab world is an old theme, but it is one underscored by the lightning-quick diffusion of the spirit of revolt from Tunisia to Egypt to Yemen, Bahrain, Libya and elsewhere. It cannot be just the common lexicon of Arabism or the reach of satellite television and the Internet that account for the spread of popular struggle, as these parts of the picture have been present for some time. It was rather the rawness and immediacy of the specific grievances of Mohamed Bouazizi and Khalid Sa'id – under-employment and police brutality – that garnered the instinctive empathy of their peers, young and old. Once the pent-up fury of the region was released, it could not easily be contained.



*Photo courtesy of Teresa Previdi*

Participants in the "People Power" Seminar contemplated the political, social, economic, and other implications of the revolts across the Arab world in a week-long intensive course. Clockwise from back left: Jeannie Sowers (University of New Hampshire), John Wrynn (Saint Peter's College), Valerie Mitchell Sigwalt (Bethune Cookman University), Aaron Koenigseker (US Air Force Academy), Ted Sawruk (University Hartford), Chris Toensing (MERIP), Winona Somerville (Dillard University), Marilyn Schaffer (University Hartford), Peter Heller (Manhattan College), Teresa Previdi (University of the Sacred Heart), Jacob Abadi (US Air Force Academy) and Kandace Harris (Shaw University).

A looming tension, however, is the inevitable lag in speed between political change and economic developments. The basket of World Bank and International Monetary Fund policies known as neoliberalism is deeply discredited by the Tunisian and Egyptian experiences, but it would be misleading at best to proclaim an end to the neoliberal era in the Arab world. Crony capitalism's future is perhaps cloudy, but the example of Naguib Sawiris in Egypt illustrates that individual crony capitalists can adapt to revolutionary situations.

On the counter-revolutionary side of the register, a bold-faced entry is the coolness, if not outright hostility, of outside powers to social revolutionary projects. Saudi Arabia sent troops into Bahrain to calcify the backbone of the royal family amidst the revolt in the island kingdom. But its interventions have not stopped there: Throughout the uprisings of 2011, Saudi diplomacy urged besieged rulers to crack down as harshly as possible. Israel has also openly stated a preference for the status quo. Washington will strive for a swift restoration of the stability it prizes and it will not smile upon grand reapportioning schemes that threaten to incur delays. Stability, as in the past, is found in dialogue and incremental reform undergirded by dependable armies. In Washington, the army is seen not only as the guarantor of US alliances but also as the guardian of democracy.

It is an odd misreading of the Arab reality, looking backward or forward. In Tunisia, the army played the "neutral, professional role" expected by Washington only because Ben Ali had excluded it from the circuits of booty. In Egypt, the army eventually turned on Mubarak, but its subsequent behavior – moving to ban strikes and demonstrations – betrays its rootedness in the nexus of autocracy, crony capitalism and stability worship. The lesson of Tunisia and Egypt for other Arab rulers, meanwhile, is to divide the military or to rely upon foreigners for regime security. In most Arab countries, the military is a reliable force of counter-revolution.

But no balance sheet would be complete without returning to the new actor that strode onto the stage under the winter sun—the people. For the first time in decades, in one capital after another, the regimes, the security men and their underwriters, foreign and domestic, cannot hope to determine the course of events by themselves. The resolution of the Arab revolutionary situation is unknown and unpredictable, a fact that does not mandate optimism, but does command rapt attention.



## The Program in Ottoman Studies

The Program in Ottoman Studies, directed by Leslie Peirce, Silver Professor in the History Department, was established in 2006 to organize public events related to Ottoman and Turkish history and culture. As in previous years, this year's events covered a wide range of topics and offered the audience the opportunity to hear about our guests' ongoing research and scholarship. The talks reflected the thematic and methodological diversity of the ever-expanding field of Ottoman Studies. The events were well attended and attracted diverse, both academic and non-academic, audiences.

Sam White (Oberlin College) was our first speaker this year. An environmental historian, White discussed his recent book on the Ottoman experience of the "Little Ice Age;" Fatma Muge Goccek (University of Michigan) spoke about collective violence against the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic from the late eighteenth century to 2009; Dana Sajdi (Boston College) spoke about the emergence of new forms of literature in the eighteenth-century Levant; and Maria Mavroudi (University of California Berkeley) spoke about Byzantine intellectuals in the court of Mehmet the Conqueror.

In addition, the Program collaborated with the Hagop Kevorkian Center's workshop series on two occasions. In the fall, Judith Tucker (Georgetown University) and Fred Cooper (NYU) discussed Tucker's study of piracy in the early modern Mediterranean. This spring, Mary Neuburger (University of Texas, Austin) and Larry Wolff (NYU) talked about a chapter from Neuburger's forthcoming book on tobacco in Ottoman and post-Ottoman Bulgaria.



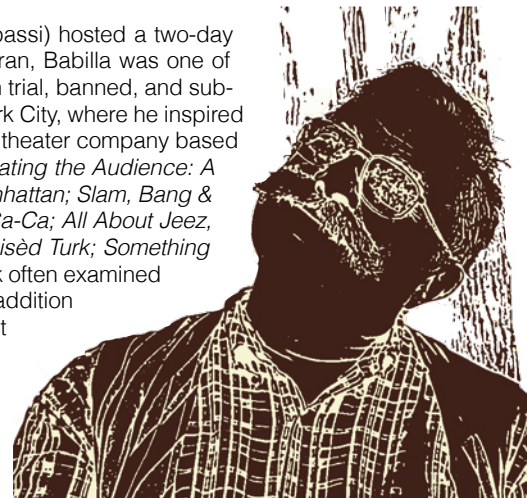
Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Sultan Mehmed II, from the Sarayı Albums.

## Suddenly Something Recklessly Gay

The Iranian Studies Initiative Celebrates Assurbanipal Babilla (1944-2011)

A year after his death, the Gallatin School's Iranian Studies Initiative (chaired by Ali Mirsepassi) hosted a two-day event honoring Assurbanipal Babilla's body of work in theater and visual arts. Born in Tehran, Babilla was one of Iran's leading avant-garde directors in the 1970s. After his exhibit of self-portraits was put on trial, banned, and subsequently burned during Khomeini's regime, he fled his country in 1979. He came to New York City, where he inspired audiences and nurtured a new generation of experimental theater artists. Purgatorio Ink, his theater company based in Soho, produced many of his works which include *Three Angels Dancing on a Needle*; *Eating the Audience: A Presbyterian Tragedy*; *The True Story of a Woman Born in Iran and Raised to Heaven in Manhattan*; *Slam, Bang & Poof!*; *The Rise and Fall of H.M. Dick*; *Suddenly Something Recklessly Gay*, or *Cirque de Ca-Ca*; *All About Jeez*, or *the Sacred Squirt*; *The Sisters Karamazov*; *Homo Americanus*; *Othello and the Circumcised Turk*; *Something Something Über Alles*; and *Assyrian Monkey Fantasy*. As these titles might suggest, his work often examined the clash of the spiritual and the sexual using outrageous humor and shocking imagery. In addition to his theater work, he was a lifelong painter and sculptor, using found materials and vibrant compositional techniques. He also wrote stories and translated other Iranian writers and was a beloved teacher and friend to many. The exhibition at the Gallatin school presented 39 of his works curated by Leyla Ebtehadj and Mariam Touzie; the pieces selected represented the dominant styles in Babilla's art following his immigration to the United States. An opening reception featured a special performance by Susan Deyhim, and a panel of Babilla's theater collaborators discussed his life and work and read excerpts from his plays.



# All the News that's Fit to Click

By Sasha Von Oldershausen, MA '13 NES and Global Journalism

Interning at the *Huffington Post* this summer has been a lesson in understanding what the confluence of journalism and Middle Eastern studies really looks like—outside of the classroom. Since working here, I've come to realize that my peers in the Global Journalism program and I have a very idealized perception of what international coverage really means.

In classes, we painstakingly labor over the usage of a specific term, making sure not to generalize, stereotype, or reduce our subjects to anything less than their complicated, three-dimensional selves. We sometimes employ theories like orientalism or postcolonialism to our narratives. Our headlines are textbookish, and we often shirk away from making them sound “sexier” for fear of misrepresentation or misattribution. Because that is the GloJo stu-

dent's biggest fear: misrepresentation.

We constantly hear about the ruthless media mill, how it exoticizes and generalizes groups of people. We then return to our journalistic endeavors totally paranoid over the possibility of perpetuating these mistakes.

At the *Huffington Post*, there isn't much time or space for this cautionary approach to journalism. The newssite, like all digital newspapers, depends on “clicks” – literally how many times someone presses that part of their mouse that goes, “click” – and so our priorities lie with generating as many of those clicks as possible. What generates clicks? Fast turnover of information, for one thing. Sexy headlines (we even had one headline that used

lyrics from the Carly Rae Jepsen hit, “Call Me, Maybe.” The story was about newly-elected Mohamed Morsi's wife). Digital slideshows are a click goldmine because each time someone looks at the next photo... “click!” You can go to virtually any *Huffington Post* story, and there will unmistakably be a slideshow at the bottom of the entry.

It's not that the editors don't value the same things that my peers in GloJo value. *The Huffington Post* is a very young and intelligent group of people, many of whom graduated from similar programs filled with the same ideals. But in the end, they are pressured to answer to something bigger. After all, the news biz is just business. And business depends on the consumer. Perhaps the most disheartening part of my experience this summer has been trying to understand who, exactly, the consumer is and what it is s/he will find interesting enough to “click.” After answering to this elusive consumer all summer long, I look forward to spending my final month of summer conducting research for my thesis on a saffron farm in the eastern part of Iran.

## Notes from the Field

### Fortuitous Happenstance & the Generosity of Strangers

I arrived in Granada, Spain last summer with only the barest inklings of a project. While it is a commonplace in ethnographic literature for anthropologists to relate how their well-laid plans go awry, my own experience was that of very little planning being unexpectedly met with fortuitous happenstance and the generosity of strangers. Accompanied in the first two days of my stay by a Palestinian-American friend who took the lead in getting to know and then introducing me to a number of Granadan Muslims, I made the acquaintance of a Swiss woman who invited me to join in *iftar* (fast breaking) with her at the Mezquita Mayor (the largest and most prominent of the city's mosques, opened in 2003) once Ramadan began. I took to walking up there on a nightly basis, and was often amazed by how quickly my initial awkward overtures transformed into meaningful relationships as the women at the mosque graciously absorbed me into their gatherings.

While I was initially wandered around the city with notebook in hand, ready to pose a script of questions to anyone who would talk to me, I soon began leaving it at home when I would go out. Returning at the end of the night, I would do my best to capture all the complex conversations and arguments—as well as things left unsaid—that had happened around me during the day, as yet unsure that any of it would translate into a coherent work down the line yet compelled to record nonetheless.

—By Rosa Norton, MA '12 NES

### Becoming Reacquainted with a Post-Revolutionary Egypt

I hadn't been back to Cairo for three years. When I was an undergraduate I had lived in Cairo for several summers. I could never claim to be a Cairene, but my time there had given me a feeling of familiarity, a sense that I sort of knew the place. Now I was returning and I didn't know what to expect. What does a country that has just experienced a revolution look like? How would Cairo have changed? I stepped out of Cairo International Airport and a group of taxi drivers flocked toward me. I picked one of them, and asked him to take me to Maadi. He offered me a cigarette and then we drove in silence. It was almost midnight but the streets were still packed with traffic – just as I remembered them. I asked him about the *thawra*. He shook his head and told me life had gotten harder since that winter, when Hosni Mubarak had been forced out of office. I asked him how. Tourists weren't coming, he said, and he had a son who couldn't find work. But he had hated Mubarak, he said. And he had protested on January 28 and even spent a night in Tahrir. He didn't know who he would vote for in the parliamentary elections; he had to research the different parties, he said, and determine who would be able to fix the economy. “I never did research on the elections before,” he said, “Since we always knew the results already.”

Not so similar after all. The five weeks of field research I conducted in Cairo were full of encounters like this, defined at the same time by continuity and profound rupture. Though it felt and looked much as it had before, the city I visited was not the one I had left in 2008. Every experience was, at the same time, familiar and strange. Beyond the many fascinating academic insights that my research yielded, I discovered during my trip that at a more visceral level revolutions at the same time seem to change nothing, and yet also change everything.

—By Killian Clarke, MA '12 NES

# 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 New York University when she died tragically in Spring 2008. With the generous support of her family, Kevorkian has awarded an annual scholarship in honor of her memory.



*Photo courtesy of the Kevorkian Center*

Susanna Ferguson, MA '12 after receiving the Falak Sufi Memorial Essay Prize, poses for a picture with Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Deans Catharine Stimpson and Malcom Semple.

with Palestinian refugees in Beirut as part of the Learning for the Empowerment and Advancement of Palestinians (LEAP) summer program. This will allow her to continue working on her language skills while gaining more first-hand experience in the region and conducting preliminary research for her MA thesis.

**Anum Afzal** will join the Kevorkian Center in Fall 2012 as our third Falak Sufi fellow. A citizen of Pakistan, she completed her BA in Psychology at Stanford University. Anum's aspires to contribute to the fields of human rights, sociology, and international law. She is specifically interested in the concerns of Muslim women under the seemingly competing frameworks of International Human Rights Law and Islamic Law.

**Wajiha Naqvi**, the first Falak Sufi Fellow, graduated in May '12. Her thesis explores the role of Sufi music festivals as a model of peace-building between Pakistan and the US. The project is based on ethnographic research conducted among organizers, performers and audience members at the New York Sufi festival and the Caravanserai program. In our program, Wajiha reached the advanced level

in Persian language and completed an internship with a local arts foundation.

Since joining the Kevorkian Center in Fall 2011, our second Falak Sufi Fellow, **Mehwash Ansari**, has been studying Arabic and taking courses on gender and feminism, war and violence, and the modern state. Mehwash has completed an internship in Lebanon working

Kevorkian also awarded the fourth annual Falak Sufi Memorial Essay Prize that recognizes originality and promise in M.A. scholarship in March 2012 to **Susanna Ferguson MA '12**, for her paper "Gender Based Violence and Women's Human Rights." An honorable mention went to **Walker Gunning MA '12** for his essay, "Toward a Cinema of Revolution: 18 Days in Tahrir Square."

Other Essays submitted for the prize include:

- "Music of the Revolutions: Memory, Diaspora, and Cultural Production in the Arab World" by Emma Alpert MA '13
- "Late Ottoman Palestine and Zionism: Jewry's Internal Debates and Challenges" by Justin Finkelstein MA '12
- "Under the Strenuous Conditions of the Modern World:" Organizing Arab Education in Hamidian and Mandatory Palestine" by Laura Goffman MA '12
- "Economizing Farmers: Banks, Financial Capital and Olive in the Countryside" by Gozde Guran MA '12
- "Modern Temporalities: The Enabling (and Disabling) of Gendered Subjectivities" by Deborah Guterman MA '12
- "Towards a Multidirectional Telos: Feminism in the Wake of the Islamic Revival in Egypt and Pakistan" by Fatima Malik MA '13
- "An Ethics of Memory: A Comparative Study of Memory and Practice in Mary Carruthers' The Book of Memory, Brinkley Messick's The Calligraphic State, and Dale Eickelman's Knowledge and Practice in Morocco" by Rosa Norton MA '12

The Hagop Kevorkian Center remains indebted to the family of Falak Sufi for supporting this recognition of outstanding MA candidates and their writings.



# MA Student News: Class of 2013

**Arash Afgahi:** During this academic year, I presented a paper entitled "Poetry and the Politics of Identity: The Evolution of Winter as a Trope," at the OASIES graduate student conference. I will present the same paper at MESA in November. For part of the summer, I will be in Tajikistan for the Critical Language Scholarship program in Persian, and also continue my internship at Alwan for the Arts. I am interested in exploring issues of diaspora, resistance, and exile in contemporary Iranian and Afghan ("Persian-ate") literature.

**Emma Alpert:** With an academic year FLAS for Arabic, I took Intermediate Arabic with Professor Nader Uthman and studied with Professor Ella Shohat both semesters, examining issues of cultural identity, displacement and memory with a focus on Palestine and Israel. I will be traveling to Birzeit University on a summer FLAS to continue my study of Arabic and pursue research for my thesis. I want to focus on artistic and cultural production in Palestine and in the diaspora, exploring the relationship between art, identity and Palestinian activism.

**Mehwash Ansari:** I intend to spend my summer in Lebanon, where I will volunteer and teach at the Burj al-Shamaleh Refugee Camp in Tyre/Sur with the LEAP Program. I will also use this opportunity to practice my Arabic language skills and conduct research for my thesis, tentatively on welfare networks and the Lebanese Civil War.

**Ryah Aqel:** I will be at Birzeit University in Palestine, studying Arabic on a Summer FLAS award. While there, I also plan to research the assassinations of Palestinian political figures in the 70s, and their lives as writers and teachers.

**Mediha Belgemen:** I will be in Turkey during the summer, and hope to interview women who identify as feminist, Kemalist or Islamist, in preparation for my thesis. I am interested in exploring the role of women in the context of modernity, Islam, and secularism in Turkey.

**Mohamed Khelil Bourraouj:** After join-

ing the MA program with an interest in Lebanon, I have shifted my focus to the Arabian Peninsula. I hope to spend the summer at Stanford University doing archival work on the massive infrastructure development in Saudi Arabia. In the summer, I also plan to publish a review of Toby Jones' *Desert Kingdom in Crossroads: International Journal of Arabian, Gulf, and Yemeni Studies*.

**Tina Carter:** I will study Arabic this summer at the University of Wisconsin. I am interested in examining the role of piety in the invocations of rights in New York's Muslim communities. I hope to research and write my thesis on this topic while continuing to study Arabic on an academic year FLAS next year.

**Kate Cella:** I will be spending the first part of my summer in Ras al Khaimah, UAE, for my thesis work on the Gulf's stateless non-citizens, the *bidoon*. After I return, I'll be interning at *Foreign Policy* magazine as an editorial researcher.

**Eda Dogancay:** I will be in Turkey over the summer conducting research. My areas of interest are democratic theory, identity politics, nationalism, and citizenship. I hope to write my thesis on the discursive shifts in Kurdish nationalist movement from the 1990s to the present.

**Katharine Forman:** I am a summer FLAS recipient, and will study Arabic at Birzeit University. I am interested in studying the architecture of settlements in the West Bank, and want to examine the kinds of subjects (both Palestinian and Israeli) that are created and managed through their very specific special arrangements.

**Laura Garland:** I will be attending an advanced Arabic immersion program at the University of Wisconsin supported by a summer FLAS. I am interested in researching American missionary work in the Gulf, so I also plan to do background reading and archival work related to that over the summer.

**Bayann Hamid:** I will be studying Arabic intensively this summer at the University of

Wisconsin, and hope that more intensive language training will assist me in research for my thesis, which tentatively deals with women in the medieval Mediterranean.

**Fatima Malik:** After wrapping up my duties as Program Assistant at the Kevorkian Center at the end of May, I plan to spend the summer in Pakistan, traveling between my hometown of Karachi and a village in rural Sindh to do research on a development project there.

**Jared Malsin:** After an intense but rewarding first year in the joint journalism MA program, I am traveling to Cairo this summer to study Arabic on a FLAS scholarship, and also plan to travel to Gaza to carry out research for my Master's thesis on smuggling tunnels under the Egypt-Gaza border.

**Matt Pinas:** I am traveling to Cairo this summer to do research on Egyptian soccer fans (ultras), and the role they played in the protests in Tahrir Square in January 2011, particularly in the context of the street fighting that occurred between the protestors and the police. While in Cairo, I also plan to work on my Arabic language skills through formal classes or tutoring sessions.

**Cyrus Roedel:** This summer I will be studying Arabic at Yarmouk University in Irbid, Jordan on a summer FLAS award. I am interested in rural and provincial politics in Jordan, and will use my time there to do research on the subject for my thesis.

**Jing Sun:** I am taking two classes at NYU this summer. As an MA student with a business concentration, I am interested in development in Libya post regime change, and plan to research the possibility of it following the development patterns of Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

**Sasha von Oldershausen:** This year, I published articles in the Local East Village of the *New York Times*, *The Gotham Gazette*, and the *Huffington Post*. I will spend the early part of the summer as a World Intern at the *Huffington Post*, working under Kevorkian alum, Eline Gordts. In August, I hope to be on a saffron farm in Iran, observing and researching agricultural practices for my thesis, and improving my Persian language skills.

# MA Student News: Class of 2012

**Matthieu Aikins:** In 2011, I made several trips to Afghanistan, both for my work as a journalist, and to complete research on the political economy of the private security industry there, which is the subject of my MA thesis. Entitled, "Contracting the Commanders: The Political Economy of the Private Security Industry in Post-2001 Afghanistan," it was supervised by Professors Arang Keshavarzian and Barnett Rubin. Last year, I received a National Magazine Award in Canada for my writing, and was nominated for an American National Magazine Award this spring. In May, I plan to move to Kabul, where I will continue my work as a writer and researcher.

**Shifa Ali:** For my thesis, titled "Remaking Tangier: 'Poetic Ways of Making-Do' in Urban Spaces of Transformation," I worked with Professors Hala Halim and Deborah Kapchan to explore various aspects of the ongoing urban transformation of the city of Tangier, Morocco. This summer I will be interning at the Middle East Institute, and continue to study Arabic, Urdu and Kashmiri.

**Rafat Azad:** I served as a Program Assistant and the Video Librarian at the Kevorkian Center this year, and was on a departmental fellowship. My thesis, entitled "Organ Transplant Debates in Islam: The Quest for Social Benefit ('*Maslaha*') and Consensus," explored the role of juristic committees and scholarly consensus in negotiating the legal principle of *maslaha*, and was supervised by Professors Marion Katz and Everett Rowson. I plan to study Arabic in Cairo this summer.

**Shirin Barghi:** My thesis was entitled "Strangling Journalism Education in Iran" and was supervised by Professors Mehdi Khorrami and Mitchell Stevens. I have always had my mind set on pursuing a career in journalism, but after writing about journalism education in Iran for my thesis, I have developed a new interest in further examining the symbiotic relationship between the academic training of journalists and the quality of the press in countries with limited media freedom such as Iran. Since there are no English-language resources on journalism edu-

cation in Iran, I am currently toying with the idea of turning my thesis into a book.

**Phil Beverly:** I spent most of the year working on my thesis, which examined the ways in which two Arab-American organizations (the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and the Association of Arab-American University Graduates) challenge stereotypical portrayals of Arabs in American society. Entitled "Shaking off the Shaikh: How Two Major Arab American Organizations Combated Arab Stereotypes 1967-1990," it was supervised by Professors Helga Tawil-Suri and Mehdi Bozorgmehr. My research took me to the archives of the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, MI, and Eastern Michigan University. I also got the opportunity to talk to several former activists and leaders of the two organizations.

**Matthew Carrieri:** In the summer and fall, I interned at the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, worked at NYU's Center on International Cooperation, and participated in a Teacher Training Saturday Seminar at the Kevorkian Center, where I talked about Libyan political economy. In the winter and spring, I co-wrote the panel papers for and attended a conference ("Cyber Dialogue 2012") on stewardship and dissent in cyberspace. My thesis, entitled "Free Market Logic: The Sociopolitical Effects of Structural Adjustment in Pre-Revolution Egypt and Tunisia," was supervised by Professors Arang Keshavarzian and Benoit Challand. Next year, I will begin work at Citizen Lab, a think tank at the University of Toronto devoted to the intersection between global security and digital media, on projects such as information controls in the Middle East pre- and post-Arab Spring, development of circumvention tools and dissent monitoring in Iran in the run-up to the 2013 elections, and research on surveillance/filtering in conjunction with the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard Law School.

**Killian Clarke:** During this final year of study, I published a paper I had originally written as an undergraduate thesis, entitled "Say-

ing 'Enough': Authoritarianism and Egypt's Kefaya Movement" in the journal *Mobilization*. I presented my thesis research at the annual meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society. Entitled "The Activist Networks Behind the 2011 Egyptian Uprising," my thesis was supervised by Professors Arang Keshavarzian and Jeff Goodwin. I will present it at an Arab Spring panel at the American Sociological Association's annual meeting in August 2012. Next year, I plan to return to working life, with a position at the management consulting firm, McKinsey & Company.

**Magda el-Ghitany:** My thesis, entitled "Debating Salafism in Post-Revolutionary Egypt," was supervised by Professors Nadia Guessous and Yogesh Chandrani. I will be presenting a paper on it at the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) conference being held at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in June. In November, I will be presenting another paper on Salafism in the revolutionary Egyptian public sphere at MESA.

**Susanna Ferguson:** In the fall, I interned for FeminIjtihad, a London-based NGO which links academic scholarship on Muslim women's rights to activists and organizations working at the grassroots level. In the spring, I worked on my thesis, which was entitled "Faithful Subjects of Rights: Feminism, Citizenship, and Subjectivity in Damascus, Syria," supervised by Professor Nadia Guessous and Lila Abu-Lughod. I also won the Falak Sufi prize for a paper on violence against women, which was related to my thesis project. I plan to spend the summer in NYC working and studying French before beginning coursework at Columbia in fall 2012, where I will pursue a PhD in Middle Eastern history.

**Justin Finkelstein:** I spent last summer at the Middlebury Arabic School at Mills College in Oakland, CA, where I improved my Arabic skills. During the academic year, I continued my engagement with the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, culminating in my Master's Thesis, entitled "The Palestinian Refugee Problem: Conflicting Histories, Contentious Solutions," supervised by Professors Zachary Lockman and Peter Valenti. It examines and analyzes disparate narratives of the creation of the Pal-

estinian refugee problem proposed by influential scholars and activists like Benny Morris, Ilan Pappé, Norman Finkelstein, Nur Masalha, Efraim Karsh, Alan Dershowitz and Mitchell G. Bard, and possible solutions to the issue.

**Laura Goffman:** My thesis was entitled “‘Under the Strenuous Conditions of the Modern World’: Organizing Arab Education in Mandatory Palestine 1923-1946,” and was supervised by Professors Zachary Lockman and Tamer el-Leithy. I will be starting a PhD program in Middle East History at Georgetown University in the fall.

**Walker Gunning:** In my two years at the Center, I focused on applying film and media studies to events throughout the Middle East including the recent Egyptian Revolution. I presented a version of my thesis, “Toward a Cinema of Revolution: 18 Days in Tahrir Square,” supervised by Professors Thomas de Zongotita and Nader Uthman, at the Media and the Arab Spring Conference in Dublin, and at NYU’s Draper Program. A portion of the thesis received honorable mention for the Falak Sufi Memorial Essay Prize. I was also a finalist for the 2012 Threesis Academic Competition. After graduation, I plan to move to Washington DC, and am currently pursuing employment in policy, research, or consulting.

**Gözde Güran:** This year I received a GSAS fellowship and worked as an Outreach Assistant at the Kevorkian Center. My thesis was about the corporate practices employed for managing risks to local communities along the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, and the making of the transnational controversy around it. Entitled “Socially Responsible Pipeline: Techno-Political Spaces of Governance and Contestation around the BTC Project,” it was supervised by Professors Arang Keshavarzian and Sally Engle Merry.

**Deborah Guterman:** My research has revolved around questions of Jewish identity and subculture in the diaspora among Israel-critical Jews. My thesis was entitled “‘Di Tsung Iz Nit In Goles’ or ‘The Tongue is Not in Exile’: Producing Countermemories of the Jewish Diasporic Experience,” and was supervised by Professors Yogesh Chandrani and Arang Keshavarzian. After graduation, I will be working for Duke University Press as an editorial assistant.

**Rebecca Keleher:** This year I was awarded an academic year FLAS for Persian. While working as fiscal assistant for the Kevorkian Center, I also interned with ArteEast on their arthouse cinema network project, and was a member of 3rd Ward. My thesis was entitled “Rethinking Positive Images: Transnational Circulation of Iranian Cinema and the Pitfalls of Praise,” and was supervised by Professors Mehdi Khorrami and Shouleh Vatanabadi. After graduation, I plan to continue living and working in New York.

**Grace Maalouf:** After spending the summer doing research in Beirut, I wrote my thesis on Lebanon’s civil-war “disappeared,” and issues of political reconciliation and collective memory. Entitled “Buried in Silence: Lebanon’s ‘Disappeared’ and the Politics of Civil War Memory,” it was supervised by Professors Zachary Lockman and Mohamad Bazzi. I hope to continue writing about the Middle East and international relations after graduation.

**Isaac Molho:** I received a summer FLAS award (2011) and completed an intensive Arabic immersion program at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. I wrote my MA thesis about the campaign to implement a personal status code in Bahrain. Entitled “The Codification of Islamic Family Law in Bahrain: 1982-2009,” it was supervised by Professors Marion Katz and Nadia Guessous. I am planning to enter the job market after graduation, and am considering pursuing a career with the federal government, ideally related to foreign policy and diplomacy.

**Hania Mourtada:** I was on a departmental fellowship this past academic year. My thesis was about the ban of the niqab in both private and public schools and universities in Syria in the summer of 2010, and the politicization of women’s bodies and bodily comportment in the context of the current Syrian conflict. Entitled “The Vagaries of Syrian Womanhood: The Authoritarian State and the Politics of the Niqab,” it was supervised by Professors Nadia Guessous and Mohamad Bazzi.

**Wajiha Naqvi:** Supported by the Falak Sufi Scholarship, this year I interned at Alwan for the Arts. My thesis was on the role of Pakistani Sufi music in the United States in the context

of two Sufi music initiatives, within the larger context of the role of art as a tool of cultural diplomacy between United States and Muslim countries. Entitled “The Role of Pakistani Sufi Music in the United States: The New York Sufi Festival and Caravanserai: A Place Where Cultures Meet,” it was supervised by Professors Deborah Kapchan and Yogesh Chandrani. After graduation, I will intern at the Middle East Institute, a non-partisan research organization based in Washington DC, as a Research Assistant in their Pakistan center. In the future, I wish to work in international development, with a particular focus on development of the arts.

**Lila Nazemian:** My thesis was entitled, “Shifting Aesthetics of a Traditional Performance: Qawwali Music in America,” and was supervised by Professors Deborah Kapchan and Ella Shohat. It mapped the ways in which the *qawwali* tradition has shifted in the twentieth century, and examined how the aesthetics have evolved in American *qawwali* production. I have accepted a part-time position at *Médécins Sans Frontières*, which will begin in June.

**Rosa Norton:** My thesis was entitled “Sensory Turns: On Being and Becoming Muslim in Contemporary Granada, Spain,” and was supervised by Professors Nadia Guessous and Bruce Grant. Next year, I am starting a PhD program in anthropology at UC Berkeley, for which I have received a fellowship from the Institute of European Studies, and also a FLAS for Arabic. My proposed project is on Andalusia’s Islamic past and present.

**Kieran O’Conor:** My thesis focused on the development of parallel Irish and Palestinian nationalisms in the early twentieth century and the resultant sympathy and cooperation between Irish and Palestinian nationalists, particularly post-1967. Entitled “One Struggle: Irish and Palestinian Nationalism and Cooperation since the Twentieth Century,” it was supervised by Professors Arang Keshavarzian and J. Joseph Lee. I will be moving to Cairo in June 2012 to study Arabic at CASA.

**Sean O’Neill:** This academic year, I served as a Program Assistant at the Kevorkian Center, with a focus on social media/publicity, and was on a departmental fellowship. I wrote my thesis on illegal Palestinian laborers work-



ing in Israel which was entitled "The View from Above: A Spotter Helps Drivers Smuggle Palestinian Workers Across The Green Line," and was supervised by Professors Zachary Lockman and Ted Conover.

**Alexandra Sprano:** I had a GSAS Scholarship this past academic year. My thesis, "Constructing Gaziantep: Formulations of Social Memory in an Urban Landscape," used a set of museums and historical restoration projects in Gaziantep, Turkey as a case study to examine issues of pluralism, nationalism and nostalgia. It was supervised by Professors Bruce Grant and Haidy Geismar. I will be presenting the paper at the MESA conference in November. After graduation, I plan to move back to Alaska and will be starting a job search.

**Liam Stack:** My thesis was on the expansion of military trials for civilians under the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, Egypt's ruling military junta. Entitled "'You Should Thank God You're Not Inside': The Expansion of Military Trials in Post-Revolutionary Egypt," it was supervised by Professors Arang Keshavarzian and Khaled Fahmy. I have reported from Egypt, Libya, Syria and Turkey since January 2011, as part of the Cairo bureau of the New York Times. After graduation, I will continue my work with the *Times*.

**Merel van Beeren:** My thesis was entitled "The Daily Battles of the Turkish Journalist," and was supervised by Professors Sibel Erol and Brooke Kroeger. After graduation, I'm off to Amsterdam where I'm looking to pursue my interest in journalism and my dream of setting up my own digital magazine. I look forward to putting into practice what I have learned, and to using my new skills to explore various corners of the Middle East while working in my hometown. Writing about press freedom in Turkey for my thesis has also ignited a passion for foreign correspondence work, a possibility I am excited to explore.

**Miriam Wakim:** My thesis was entitled "Investing in Citizenship or Security? Economic Discourse and Youth in Bashar al-Asad's Syria," and was supervised by Professors Zachary Lockman and Arang Keshavarzian. After graduation, I will look for employment in areas that help me combine my prior work experience with my academic training from Kevorkian.

## PhD Student News

**Dena al-Adeeb:** I was an Adjunct Instructor at the Morse Academic Plan for the Foundations of Contemporary Culture through the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, New York University. My publications this year include: "Migratory Sacred Spaces: Re (Creating) 'Ashura,'" in the edited volume *Contemporary Iraqis: Voices of Cultural Resistance Anthology* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, forthcoming). My presentations include, "Illustrating the Cost of War: Artists Respond to a Decade of Conflict," Noble Peace Forum, University of Minnesota and Carnegie Mellon University, Minneapolis, Minnesota; "Transnational and Transdisciplinary Turns in West Asia/North Africa Visual Culture," Contemporary Research in Arab American Studies: New Trends and Critical Perspectives, Arab American National Museum, New York, NY; "Critical Analysis of Transdisciplinarity in the Arts," University of California, Berkeley, CA, and numerous others. Lastly, I exhibited "Bagdadi Mem/Wars" at the Worth Ryder Gallery in California and "Not About Bombs" at the Intermedia Arts Center, Minneapolis.

**Charles Anderson:** I have recently accepted a position as Visiting Assistant Professor of Middle East History and Politics at Bard College. In the fall, I will be teaching three courses: History of the Modern Middle East; the State and Social Movements in the Middle East in the Twentieth Century; and an upper-level seminar, Capitalism, Rural Society, and Peasant Rebellions in the Arab World, 1800-1939. I will also help organize the Middle Eastern Studies program's annual schedule of campus events.

**Lale Can:** During my final year in the Joint Program in History and Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, I was awarded a three-month visiting fellowship at the Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) in Berlin, Germany. The fellowship is for work on a post-doctoral project titled "Petitions and Political Imaginaries: Central Asian Supplicants in Ottoman Lands, 1865-1914." My paper, "Connecting People: A Central Asian Sufi network in turn-of-the-century Istanbul," was published this March 2012 in *Modern Asian Studies*. In the fall, I will begin a tenure-track position at the City College of New York as an assistant professor in the History of the Islamic World.

**Omar Cheta:** I was awarded NYU's Mellon Dissertation Fellowship in the Humanities and the Humanities Initiative's (Honorary) Graduate Student Research Fellowship. The fellowships will support me during the forthcoming academic year 2012-2013, which is my last year of dissertation writing. I also presented a paper at the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting in Washington DC in December 2011. The paper was entitled: "How Commerce Became Legal: Defining 'Commerce' in Late Ottoman Egypt."

**Dale Correa:** After defending my dissertation proposal, I conducted dissertation research in manuscript collections in Uzbekistan and Turkey for the 2011-2012 academic year with support from the International Research and Exchanges Board Individual Advanced Research Opportunities fellowship and the Social Science Research Council International Dissertation Research Fellowship. While in Uzbekistan, I served as copy editor for the new handbook of manuscripts in the collection of the Abu 'l-Rayhan al-Biruni

Institute of Oriental Studies of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences. My article reconstructing the epistemology used by Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 333/944) in his commentary on the Qur'an was published this year at the International Symposium on Imam al-Maturidi and Maturidism. I have also been awarded a graduate student fellowship at the NYU London Center for Spring 2013.

**Samuel Dolbee:** I presented at the Joint Atlantic Seminar in the History of Medicine and the Middle East Studies Association conference in the fall on the topic of pesticides, public health, and class in French Mandate Syria and Lebanon. This summer I will be in Istanbul's Başbakanlık Archive for research on the topic of "Peasants, Pests, and Pine Trees: State Power and Environmental Control in Late Ottoman Syria" with the support of the Social Science Research Council's Dissertation Proposal Development Fellowship.

**Mohamed Elshahed:** As a PhD candidate in the Middle East and Islamic Studies department at NYU, I became a fellow at the American Research Center in Egypt and received an International Dissertation Research Fellowship from the Social Science Research Council. Recently I was selected for the Provost's Global Research Initiatives' Summer Dissertation Writing Program. I have also participated in a number of seminars, workshops and conferences including delivering the keynote address at the International Federation of Landscape Architect's annual meeting in 2011. I have written for a variety of publications such as *Architectural Record*, *Journal of Architectural Education*, *Al Jazeera*, *Egypt Independent* and *Jadaliyya*.

**Rania Jawad:** I have accepted a full-time position in the Department of English Literature at Birzeit University, Palestine, starting in the fall of 2012. My forthcoming essay titled "Sa'dallah Wanun in Palestine: On and Offstage Performances and Pedagogies" will be published in the edited book volume *Doomed by Hope*:

*Essays on Arab Theatre* (2012) published by Pluto Books Limited in English and Arabic. I am also a contributor to *Jadaliyya* Ezine and I am scheduled to defend my dissertation in 2012.

**Matt MacLean:** I am a first-year student in the Joint PhD program in History and MEIS and my academic interest is the social history of the 19th and 20th-century Persian Gulf, specifically the UAE. Before coming to NYU, I taught history at a high school in Brooklyn for several years, studied colloquial Arabic and Gulf history while on a Fulbright in the UAE, and completed an MA in Arab Studies at Georgetown University. I was the graduate assistant for a group of sophomores in the NYU CAS Presidential Honors Scholars program who traveled to Abu Dhabi over spring break. I am currently working on an article about Emirati autobiographies and memoirs, as well as two book reviews. This summer I'll be taking intensive language courses at the CLS Persian program in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

**Amir Moosavi:** After conducting research in Iran and Lebanon last summer, I submitted my dissertation prospectus in fall 2011. I also organized and presented on a panel entitled "Comparative Approaches to Arabic and Persian Literatures" at the 2011 MESA conference. During the Spring 2012 semester, aside from beginning my dissertation research, I was an adjunct instructor for a MAP course along with teaching introductory Arabic and Persian courses at the CAS Speaking Freely Program. Finally, I gave guest lectures at Boston College and Lehigh University.

**Alexander Winder:** During the summer and fall of 2011, I translated and reviewed translations for [www.TahrirDocuments.org](http://www.TahrirDocuments.org). Throughout the fall and spring, I have worked toward completing my coursework and preparing for Qualifying Exams. During the Spring 2012 semester, I was an adjunct instructor for Zachary Lockman's "Palestine, Zionism, and Israel" course.

# Faculty News

After spending the past two years in Cairo as Chair of the American University in Cairo's History department, **Khaled Fahmy** announced this past Spring his official departure from NYU and the department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. It is bittersweet news, as Professor Fahmy not only is one of the most important academic voices in the study of the modern Middle East in general and Egypt in particular, but he is also a beloved teacher and colleague to many students and faculty here at NYU. Having joined MEIS in 1999, Fahmy dedicated more than 10 years of his distinguished career to our programs. He will be sorely missed, but we know that in his new role he will contribute to both AUC's as well as Cairo's intellectual communities in the same manner he did while at NYU. We look forward to future collaborations and of course to following his prolific and insightful writings about Egypt in the months and years to come.



NYU Students and faculty gave Fahmy a parting gift of an historic map of Greenwich Village.

**Adam Becker:** I have this year completed a draft of a book on the encounter between American Protestant missionaries and the indigenous Syriac (Aramaic) Christian population of northwestern Iran and what is now south eastern Turkey in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. I focus on what some scholars have termed "missionary modernity" and how out of this encounter "Assyrian nationalism" developed among this Christian population, many of whom today understand themselves to be descendants of the ancient Assyrians. I taught a graduate seminar this past fall on Christian missions and secularism. My plans for the summer are to finish translating and commenting on Syriac church canons from the seventh century – the first to deal with the consequences of the Arab conquest – and write an essay on Augustine's *Confessions* for a volume on self-writing and autobiography. I continue to read Syriac texts with students weekly and year round.

**Zvi Ben-Dor Benite:** It is customary to report mostly on one's accomplishments and advances in the frontiers of research and teaching. In this regard I would like to mention a new course comparing European and East Asian Muslim histories that I taught in the fall in the Morse Academic Plan. I also mention a long study I undertook on the translation of Muhammad 'Abduh's *Rissalat al-Tawhid* into Chinese and its reception in China. Above all, however, was my great experience this year as Interim Director of the Kevorkian Center. I leave this position with a deep sense of appreciation and gratitude for the center's staff: Rebecca Keleher, Lauren Marten, Arthur Starr, and in particular Greta Scharnweber. This

year we are also bidding farewell to Dr. Nadia Guesous, who completed three great years as Director of Graduate Studies and Faculty Fellow and is moving to Rutgers University. Each of these individuals has taught me more than one thing this year about running a complicated center such as ours, and I am grateful to have had the chance to learn "from within" why it is so great. I would also like to praise our MA students, each one a unique scholar of the Middle East and each working on a fantastic project. I thank you all, staff and students alike.

**Benoit Challand:** After the publication of an article for *Constellation (International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory)* offering a comparative analysis of the ongoing Arab revolts, I had the pleasure to teach a seminar in the fall on that same topic. It turned out to be an extremely rewarding experience since many students had very detailed knowledge of what was taking place in the various countries shaken by these uprisings. This one-semester involvement might have been short, but it was also pleasant to remain in touch with masters' students to advise on their final dissertation, or to meet them during a talk on Islamic charities that I gave at the Center at the end of March 2012. I will have more involvement in the coming years as well with the Center, as I have been hired as a Clinical Assistant Professor beginning in Fall 2012. Beside this short stint at NYU, I have been finishing my second year as visiting associate professor at the New School for Social Research, teaching various graduate courses on the contemporary Middle East and social theory. Over the summer I will be presenting two papers of my ongoing research, one in Berlin

dealing with the European Union's response to the Arab revolts, and another one in Cambridge, where I will present part of my work on Islamic charities.

**Peter Chelkowski:** In 2011, I was particularly happy to celebrate the publication of *The Gift of Persian Culture: Its Continuity and Influence in History*, (Vol. I, in the Reza Ali Khazeni Memorial Lectures in Iranian Studies), by the University of Utah Press. I served as editor of this volume, and look forward in the coming months to the publication of the second book in the series, which I have also edited. During the Fall 2011 semester, I taught a graduate course on Modern Iran. I also taught a MAP course on Islamic Societies, which had 125 students. In Spring 2012, I was on sabbatical, continuing my research into the libretto of the opera *Turandot* by Puccini. I am probing the connections between Puccini's libretto and a story by the 12th-century Persian poet, Nezami.

**Tamer El-Leithy:** This academic year (2011-2012) was my first year back in New York after a sabbatical leave I had spent as a fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin. I taught two very rewarding graduate seminars: "Everyday Life in Medieval Cairo," a colloquium in which students are introduced to different genres of Arabic documents (e.g. private letters, endowment deeds, court records) and the skills needed to decipher and understand them; and "The World of the Geniza," where students learned about the unique Cairo Geniza, a trove of Judeo-Arabic documents related to the Jewish community of medieval Egypt, including thousands of unusual documents (e.g. private and mercantile correspon-



dence, marriage contracts, petitions for alms) that allow us a rare window onto everyday life and the history of non-elites. This semester, we focused on letters of the Indian Ocean Merchants, a business network that extended from al-Maghrib, through Cairo, all the way to India. My undergraduate courses consisted of my usual MAP lecture course, "The Making of the Muslim Middle East, 600-1100 a.d." and an advanced seminar on "Conversion & Apostasy in the Middle Ages." In addition, my article, "Living Documents, Dying Archives: Towards a Historical Anthropology of Medieval Arabic Archives" was published in *al-Qantara* (2011). I also wrote a new paper, "A Eunuch's Complex in the City of the Dead: Extinction, Patrimony, and Family in Early-Ottoman Egypt," and presented it at the workshop, Approaches to Islamic Law in Society (May 2012). This paper is part of my upcoming, second project, on family, law and property in late-medieval Egypt (15th-16th c.); I am currently revising it for publication as an article. I also revised and submitted another article on transsexuals, marvels, and gender relations in Mamluk society (14th-15th c.).

**Sibel Erol:** In addition to teaching elementary, intermediate and advanced Turkish, I worked with some students on Turkish topics. Irina Levin read narratives of Meskhetian Turks in Turkish; Merel van Beeren wrote an MA thesis on the freedom of the press in Turkey; and Jennifer Auerbach, PhD candidate in Education, proceeded to do research about how the university context contributes to students' definitions of self-identity. Fulbright assistant Nergis Unal contributed to all levels of Turkish. This year's Evliya Celebi undergraduate Turkish prize went to Laura Wynn. In terms of research, my article "The *Chronotope* of Istanbul in Orhan Pamuk's Memoir *Istanbul*" was published in *The International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* in the fall. In it, I returned to an original interpretation of *Chronotope* that I had last discussed in an article on children's literature about westward journeys. A former article on Pamuk's *Snow* will be reprinted a second time in *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism* this summer.

**Finbarr Barry Flood:** During the fall of 2011 I was on research leave, working towards completion of my book, *Islam and Image: Polemics, Theology and Modernity*. I was also involved in writing essays and entries on objects for the catalog of the exhibition *Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition*, which opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in March. During this past semester, I taught a graduate lecture course around the exhibition,

which included the wonderful experience of holding several classes in the exhibition galleries on Mondays, when the museum is closed to the public. In addition to my work on the *Byzantium and Islam* catalog, I published several essays and articles this year, including "Memory in Material and Light/ Mémoire de matière et de lumière," a catalog essay for Zarina Hashmi, *Noor*, Galerie Jaeger Bucher (Paris, 2011); "A Ghaznavid Narrative Relief and the Problem of Pre-Mongol Persian Book-Painting," in David Knipp, ed., *Siculo-Arabic Ivories and Islamic Painting 1100-1300* (München, 2011); "Notes from the Field: Anthropomorphism," in *Art Bulletin* (93/4, March 2012). I also spoke at conferences and gave invited lectures in Asia, Europe and the US, including "Whitewash and Gold: The Aniconics of Mosque Ornament," keynote at the Transcultural Visuality Learning Group of Heidelberg University, Workshop on Color, Istanbul (June 2011); "In the Footsteps of the Prophet: The Prophet's Sandal and the Image as Relic in Medieval Islam," National Museum of Georgia, Tbilisi (June, 2011); "Ontology and Alterity: the Hadith, Modern Semiotics, and the Making of Islam's 'Image Problem'," at the conference Memoria e Imagen del Islam/Memory and Image of Islam, Casa Árabe, Cordoba, Spain (October 2011); "The Flaw in the Carpet: Disjunctive Continuities and Riegl's Arabesque," Ornament as Portable Culture: Between Globalism and Localism, Harvard University (April 2012); a contribution to the exploratory seminar "Remapping Geographic Imaginaries: Pathways of Circulation and New Cognitive Regions," Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University (May 2012); "Voiceless Fish and Breathless Trees: Aspects of Iconoclasm in the Church Mosaics of Early Islamic Jordan and Palestine," colloquium on Late Antique floor mosaics, Metropolitan Museum of Art (May 2012); plenary speech at Inter-Asian Connections III: Hong Kong, Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (June 2012); "The Gwalior Qur'an and the Ghurid Legacy to Indo-Islamic Art," at the symposium *Autour du Coran de Gwalior: polysémie d'un manuscrit à peintures*, Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris (June 2012).

**Michael Gilson:** I was on sabbatical this year so had more chances to read and write. A three-workshop series in Cambridge in April was a great chance to try out ideas on migration, law and inheritance. I'm off to Honolulu (Law and Society conference) and Singapore (Law and Empire conference) in June, with Tokyo and Hong Kong thrown in for good measure. Seminars at the University of

Victoria and Simon Fraser University showed me the beauty of the Vancouver region. Working in what are still very new fields for me is stimulating and the third of our Islamic Law and Society workshops at the Kevorkian in May brought a terrific group of mostly younger scholars together. I have two more years as director and we all hope the government doesn't pull the plug on the program!

**Ogden Goelt:** In addition to my normal teaching duties at 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. The reader will familiarize students with hieroglyphic texts as they actually appear in their original form, rather than relying on the computer-generated hieroglyphs that are employed in the fundamental grammar books. The other project is an epigraphical expedition to the temple of Ramesses II in Abydos, where Dr. Sameh Iskander (a MEIS graduate) and I have been photographing and recording the well-preserved inscriptions and scenes of one of the most colorfully decorated monuments of the New Kingdom. Nearly all the line drawings made over the past four years have now been collated, so the project is now essentially completed. We are now submitting a book proposal to publish our results of the project. Eventually, we hope to have a two-volume work containing large-scale plates, photographs, and commentary. Finally, I have been co-editing a two-volume *Festschrift* for Dorothea Arnold, the curator of Egyptian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which we hope to finish over this summer.

**Nadia Guessous:** In my last year as Director of Graduate Studies and Faculty Fellow at the Kevorkian Center, I continued advising all MA students in Near Eastern Studies while serving on various MA thesis committees and teaching graduate seminars in anthropology and gender studies. In May, I was delighted to see every member of our largest ever class of MA students graduate. They were joined by several students from prior cohorts who returned from leave to finish the program. I was also very pleased by the fact that three of our graduating students and three of our recent alums have been admitted to top PhD programs (in history and

anthropology) and top law schools this year. Other highlights include a new seminar that I taught for the first time this year which builds on my own work on feminist subjectivity and the politics of feminism. Entitled "Feminist Texts, Feminist Subjects," the course explores key texts and debates in Middle East and Islamic feminist studies in order to think about the politics of feminism, feminist subjectivity, and the relationship between feminism and modernity. In addition to advising and teaching, I gave a number of talks and papers this year including on a panel on political disenchantment, cynicism and nostalgia at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting in Montreal, Canada; on a panel on affective politics at an interdisciplinary conference at Princeton University; and at the Kevorkian Center Research Workshop at NYU. I also submitted a few articles for publication this year including two book reviews and an article entitled "Visceral Politics and Generational Rifts: Feminism in the Age of the Hijab in Morocco" which I am now in the process of revising. This summer, I will be spending two months in Morocco. I received a short-term research grant from the American Institute for Maghreb Studies to update my research on feminism, religion and secularism in post Arab Spring Morocco, and to begin research on a new project on the "politics of culture" in the wake of the Islamic Revival. I am also participating in a research project on civil society in Morocco that seeks to better understand the relationship between Moroccan NGOs and international donors. For the next two years, I will be a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Women's and Gender Studies and the Institute for Research on Women at Rutgers University where I will be focusing on my research and writing, and turning my PhD dissertation into a book manuscript. As I move on to this next chapter in my academic career, I look forward to the challenges ahead but will miss the warmth, dynamism, and enthusiasm of students, staff and faculty at the Kevorkian Center and at NYU.

**Bruce Grant:** Over 2011-2012, I was pleased to see an article I had been at work on for some years appear. "Shrines and Sovereigns," based on ethnographic work in Azerbaijan and a critical reading of anthropologies of Islam in the former USSR, appeared in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. In 2011 I served as President of ASEES, the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies – the largest scholarly body in the world dedicated to the study of the former Soviet bloc – where we have been active in increasing our membership from the Caucasus and Central Asian

regions. In turn, I very much enjoyed presenting new work aimed at rethinking understandings of Eurasian space in a keynote lecture to the American Association of Geographers in early 2012. For summer and the year ahead, I was grateful to receive the support of a Guggenheim Fellowship to launch a new project of idioms of authoritarianism in the Caucasus past and present, foremost through the production and circulation of an early twentieth-century, Azeri-language satirical journal, *Molla Nesredin*. I return to Baku and Tbilisi for archival research and interviews over the summer.

**Hala Halim:** This was a year of projects completed. Most importantly, I wrapped up and submitted my book manuscript, on Alexandrian cosmopolitanism, and was gratified by the readers' reports I received. With the book manuscript out of the way, I could afford the time to write an article about *Lotus*, a trilingual journal that was published by the Afro-Asian Writers' Association from the late 1960s until the early 1990s, and the space for anti-Eurocentric, internationalist comparative work that it constituted. The article has been accepted for publication in the Duke University Press journal *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*. In spring 2012 semester, I enjoyed offering a graduate seminar on "Mediterraneanism in Literature and Culture" which drew students from my two departments, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and Comparative Literature, and beyond.

**Henriette Dahan Kalev:** I came to NYU for sabbatical as a visiting scholar at the Taub Center. Concluding a long period of founding and chairing the Gender Studies Program in my University, Ben Gurion, Israel, my plans were to complete academic commitments: A co-authored book titled *Palestinian Activism in Israel A Bedouin Woman Leader in a Changing Middle East* and a few articles which were in publication process. My table was piled up with commitments and I was planning to do just that. This program was interrupted by an exciting invitation from my friend and colleague Professor Zvi Ben Dor. Zvi invited me to teach a graduate course on "Topics of Political Economy in the ME in the Arab Spring." It was a challenge I couldn't refuse. This meant that I only had one semester to complete my initial plan and the other to teach. I designed an interdisciplinary research seminar for non-economic graduate students. Students selected specific topics of interest and structured and constructed them under my supervision. We discussed topics relating to the impact of remittances on the state's econo-

mies in Lebanon and Syria, the ecological dangers of the Argan oil industry in Morocco and the instability banking system in Morocco. We discussed other issues on labor both in the East Bank Jordan and the West Bank occupied Territories of Palestine, the impact of neoliberalism on Turkey's economy and politics, the politicization of Ultra's football in Egypt and still in Egypt the military-industrial complex. Working on specific topics for a full semester, contextualized within political economic fields, provided the students with an intellectual opportunity to profoundly reflect on and exhaust the topics. The students presented in class and wrote outstanding final papers. Along with the fruitful teaching experiences I had at the Kevorkian Center, the intellectual discussions in the seminars, films and other events proved to be enriching sources of professional update and fresh discourse. Eventually, my articles were all published on time and the book is due October 2012 to Palgrave Macmillan. Last but not least, I wouldn't have had such a smooth teaching experience without Arthur Brian Starr's and Lauren Marten's devoted assistance, and a feeling of warm hospitality without Professor Michael C. Gilsenan, Dr. Nadia Guessous and Greta Scharnweber. Thank you all for upgrading and challenging me on my sabbatical at NYU.

**Manouchehr Kasheff:** During the past year alongside teaching one course, Elementary Persian, I continued to work as one of the editors of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* at the Center of Iranian Studies at Columbia University. I was very pleased with the interest demonstrated by the students in their systematic work and the rapid progress they were making towards achieving proficiency in the various applications of this language. They were provided with supplementary materials covering a variety of areas concerning the study of Persian. They were not required to learn these, but their homework and classroom activity showed that they found them useful according to their areas of interest. One of the students received a scholarship to attend the summer intensive course in Tajikistan. This summer I am busy continuing to work as one of the editors of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

**Arang Keshavarzian:** The 2011-2012 academic year will be highly memorable for me. There are several reasons for this, but on the professional front I applied for and received tenure. My colleagues, in particular Zach Lockman, were awfully supportive throughout my time at NYU and during the tenure process. I am also thankful to the gradu-

ate and undergraduate students that were encouraging both before and after the decision. I will also remember 2011 as the year that I taught the department's graduate gateway course, "Problems and Methods." There was a lot of material to cover and many students with diverse interests, but learning from the many guest speakers and precocious first year MA and PhD students made the seminar as rewarding as it was challenging. Besides this course much of my time was spent following and processing the Arab Uprisings. I taught a new undergraduate course on social movements in the Middle East, gave several talks on the topic, and published a few short essays on the topic. Finally, helping our new son Leo through his first year was a wonderfully gratifying experience and despite the lack of sleep unexpectedly energizing.

**Zachary Lockman:** Like its predecessors, the 2011-2012 academic year was quite busy. In fall 2011 I offered a newly-designed undergraduate seminar on "The United States and the Middle East," mainly for MEIS and History majors, along with a graduate course ("Palestine and the Politics of History") intended mainly for PNES students. Both courses were rewarding experiences for me and, I must hope, for the students enrolled in them. In Spring 2012 I taught my undergraduate lecture survey course "Palestine, Zionism and Israel" – always timely, alas – and worked with yet another cohort of doctoral students to help prepare them for their exam in modern Middle Eastern history. On the scholarly front, a Turkish translation of my book *Contending Visions of the Middle East* was published, including a new preface (a Serbian edition is forthcoming), and a major article on which I'd been working for some years also finally appeared, in the Australia-based journal *Settler Colonial Studies*. Various departmental tasks kept me busy as well, and I participated in as many talks, panels and interviews on the ongoing struggles and transformations in the Arab world as I could manage, including the John C. Pflaum Lecture at Dickinson College, where the current chair of the History Department recalled having taken a course of mine as an undergraduate at Harvard a very long time ago. My role as chair of the wing of MESA's Committee on Academic Freedom that deals with North America also required a fair amount of time and energy. I'll be teaching in Fall 2012 but look forward to being on leave in Spring 2013.

**Pascal Menoret:** This was my first year at NYU Abu Dhabi, where I taught a core curriculum class on urban politics and a seminar on Saudi Arabia's

politics and society. I spent the spring in New York teaching a graduate seminar on the anthropology of the Arabian Peninsula. Both teaching experiences were extremely rewarding and added fuel to my writing efforts; most memorable were a thorough critique of the rentier state by Abu Dhabi undergrads and epic discussions of ethnographic fieldwork with New York grad students. At NYUAD, Nathalie Peutz, Justin Stearns and myself designed a major entitled "Arab Crossroads Studies;" the Abu Dhabi equivalent of New York's MEIS undergrad program, it will be on the books this coming fall. Last December I organized in Abu Dhabi a panel on Cairo's informal urbanism, during which Egyptian environmental activists showed our students why Cairo was greener than most megacities. In New York, I used my spare time writing my new book, tentatively entitled *Kingdom Adrift: Urban Spaces and Youth Rebellion in Saudi Arabia*, for which I recently signed a contract with Cambridge University Press. Last but not least, I presented papers at a conference in Algiers, at the MESA annual meeting, at the Kevorkian Center, and discussed my book manuscript at the Harvard Academy.

**Ali Mirsepassi:** This was a very productive and exciting year for me. The Iranian Studies Initiative (ISI-NYU) had a very successful series of lectures and other programs. We organized nine public lectures, a films screening and discussion event, an art exhibition/performance, and a two-day conference. I finished a new book manuscript titled: *At Home and in the World: Islam, Cosmopolitanism, and Democracy*. I also published several articles including, "Jack Shaheen: a Philosopher/Journalist." This short article will be published in Fall 2012 in a volume in honor of Professor Shaheen's life and his public service. This year was also a very busy lecture year for me. I was invited to give lectures at, Stanford University, Columbia University, Montclair College, Haverford College, New School, and several other institutions. I am now working on my new book project on an Iranian intellectual, "Ahmad Fardid," and I think this project will keep me busy for some time.

**Leslie Peirce:** In the fall semester I taught a new undergraduate lecture course, "Gender, Culture and Society"; the opening of the new Islamic galleries at the Metropolitan Museum in November meant that for the first time since coming to NYU, I could include a museum-based assignment in the syllabus (most students really enjoyed the opportunity). In the spring semester, I was on research leave, work-

ing on a biography of the Russian wife of the Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent; three weeks in Istanbul in June allowed me to research aspects of her life. This year I published three articles: "Passages Interdits: Structures du désir dans le monde Ottoman au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle," in J. Dakhli et al. ed., *Histoires de l'amour: Fragilités et interdits, du Kamasutra à nos jours* (Bayard); "Abduction with (dis)honor: Sovereigns, bandits, and heroes in the Ottoman world", *Journal of Early Modern History* (in a special issue devoted to honor and the state); and "Becoming Ottoman in sixteenth-century Aintab", in E. Özdağlı ed., *Istanbul as seen from a distance: Centre and provinces in the Ottoman Empire* (I. B. Taurus). In October I participated in a panel on migration and exile in the Renaissance at the CUNY Graduate Center that was sponsored by the Renaissance Society of America; in November in a MESA panel on Ottoman Identity; and in February as one of two participants in a Mellon Research Initiative in Early Modern Studies at U.C. Davis (the theme was "Abducting Reputation—Gender & Honor in the Early Modern World"). I gave the Phi Alpha Theta History lecture at Seton Hall University in April, and in June a lecture at the Netherlands Institute in Turkey on urban life in early modern Istanbul.

**Nathalie Peutz:** This past year, my first year teaching in Abu Dhabi, much of my efforts went to curricular development. I taught two new courses, had the wonderful opportunity of bringing the students in my "Anthropology and the Arab World" class on a fieldtrip to Oman, and enjoyed several classroom visits by invited speakers: Steven Catton, Dawn Chatty, AbdAllah Cole, and Sulayman Khalaf. My colleagues, Pascal Menoret and Justin Stearns, and I developed a new interdisciplinary major at NYUAD in Arab Crossroads Studies and look forward to welcoming our prospective majors this fall. Meanwhile, I have continued working on my book manuscript on development, conservation and heritage in Yemen's Socotra Archipelago, and published a related article on world heritage and sovereign nostalgia in Socotra in the fall (*Transculturales* 10/11 2011). I was pleased to find out late last summer that my co-edited book, *The Deportation Regime*, received the 2011 Bronze Award from the Association for Borderlands Studies. A highlight of being in Abu Dhabi has been easy travel within the region. I presented papers at conferences in Cairo and Sharjah and returned to Socotra in December-January, where I was surprised to witness the considerable impact of the Arab revolts. A short article I wrote based on this visit, "Revolution in So-



cotra," was published in *Middle East Report* in May. This summer I'll be staying in Abu Dhabi to continue work on my book manuscript.

**Maurice A. Pomerantz:** This was another productive and fulfilling year of research and teaching of which there were many highlights. Among the most exciting for me personally and professionally occurred during the summer of 2011 with a trip to Beirut where I began a project on the Maqāmāt of al-Hamadhānī a delightful collection of picaresque tales describing the imaginary travels of a trickster throughout the central lands of the Islamic world composed in the 11th century. In my work with Dr. Bilal Orfali from the American University of Beirut, we located a lost tale likely belonging to this work describing the attempts of a quack physician to sell his wild medical compounds to a gullible audience. Working from an early manuscript, we reconstructed, edited and translated this "lost maqāmah," and it will be published soon in the journal *Arabica*. In February of 2012, I also had the pleasure of organizing a two-day international conference at NYU Abu Dhabi entitled "Courts and Performance in the Middle East 700-1600" with Evelyn (Timmie) Birge Vitz (NYU French). The conference explored commonalities in court cultures of the Middle East and was attended by 20 scholars from all over the world, including experts on Abbasid, Byzantine, Crusader, Persian, and Ottoman studies. In conjunction with the conference, the well-known scholar of Arabic courtly music, George Sawa, gave a concert and lecture on the styles of Abbasid court music which was well-attended by a large public audience in Abu Dhabi. In addition to these highlights, two of my papers were accepted for publication in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* and *al-Machriq*. I also delivered papers at three other conferences: the Middle East Studies Association, the American Oriental Society, and a conference on Qurʾān and Arabic Literature hosted by the Ismāʿīlī Institute in London. I am currently revising these papers for future publication. Finally, as I leave the department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies next year for a Fulbright scholarship in Lebanon, I would like to express my sincerest thanks and warmest wishes to all of my colleagues and friends in this department.

**Everett Rowson:** My first full year as departmental chair has inevitably been dominated by administrative concerns, although I am pleased to say that most of them came to a happy conclusion, including successful searches for two new tenure-track faculty members who will be joining us next

year. Now we just have to find offices for them—space being an ineluctable problem at NYU. On the teaching front, I very much enjoyed offering an undergraduate MAP (core) course for the first time, to 86 students, on medieval Islamic societies, as well as a graduate text seminar on the classical Arabic literature of ethics and advice (ranging from sophisticated philosophical discussions of the nature of good and evil to practical manuals of advice for rulers). My research has been on a back burner for a while now, alas, but summer means getting back seriously to my writing on gender and sexuality in medieval Islamic societies, including an essay for a *Festschrift* on the earliest extant work of Arabic erotica, dating from the tenth century and titled *The Encyclopedia of Pleasure*.

**Ella Shohat:** During the past academic year I have given a number of lectures, including on "Judeo-Arabic" at the "From Al-Andalus to Multiculturalism Symposium" conference sponsored by the NYU King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center; and on postcolonial issues, including a keynote address at The Society for Multi-Ethnic Studies: Europe and the Americas, Barcelona University; the Netherlands Research School of Gender Studies and Postcolonial Studies in Utrecht, Netherlands; at the Berlin Documentary Forum 2 at Haus Der Kulturen Der Welt in Germany. I also participated in a thematic conversation panel titled "Rethinking Palestine/Israel through the Arts" at the Middle East Studies Association annual conference in Washington, D.C. I participated in a number of book readings and lectures in conjunction with the republication of *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation*, including at The New School for Social Research; at the international Diaspora Film Festival held in Toronto; at the London Palestine Film Festival; the Barbican Centre, London; Daarkom Cultural Center in Brussels; and Ghent University in Belgium. I gave a lecture on the notion of "The Moorish Atlantic" in the Contemporary Research in Arab American Studies: New Trends & Critical Perspectives, at the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. In the Spring I team-taught with Sinan Antoon a new course, "Narrating Iraq: Culture Between Nation and Diaspora," which was sponsored by the Humanities Initiative Team-Teaching Stipend. My publications include: remarks on the work of Jack Shaheen in celebration of The Jack G. Shaheen Archive, co-sponsored by the Asian/Pacific/American Institute; my 1991 essay "Gender and Culture of Empire," republished in *The Gender and Media Reader*, edited by Mary Celeste Kear-

ney; my co-authored essay, "The French Intellectuals and the Postcolonial," published in *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*; and our book *Race in Translation: Culture Wars around the Postcolonial Atlantic* has just been published by New York University Press.

**Justin Stearns:** This was my first year in Abu Dhabi, and it was a busy one. I taught a Core class in the fall on the relationship between science and religion in Christianity and Islam, as well as a survey of Middle Eastern History from 600-1800. In the spring, during a seminar on al-Andalus, I was able to take my students (including three students from NYU-NY) on a week-long trip to Morocco and Spain, which was a wonderful experience for all of us. The end of the year also saw the efforts of my colleagues Nathalie Peutz, Pascal Menoret and myself to create an Arab Crossroads Studies major come to fruition, a major that will be offered at NYU-AD from this coming fall onwards. On the research side, I had two articles published this past year, one a historiographical piece on the work of the Austrian historian Gottfried Liedl that came out in *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, the other a survey of the study of science in the Muslim world that appeared in *History Compass*. I have continued to work on the Moroccan intellectual al-Yūsī (d. 1691), and have become increasingly interested in debates about smoking in Morocco in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

**Helga Tawil-Souri:** I taught three new courses, an undergraduate and graduate version of 'Mediating Israel/Palestine' and a course on international development that focused on first-third world relations through the lens of coffee. I was happy to see some of Middle East MA and Undergrad Honor's students graduate this year. In terms of research and writing, I published a number of articles on the relationship between place and media during the Egyptian uprising, a couple of articles on the political aspects of Palestinian cultural studies, a review essay on mapping Israel/Palestine, as well as an article on ID cards in Israel-Palestine as 'soft' borders published in *Geopolitics*. Based on the research carried out for my book, an article titled 'Digital Occupation' was published in the Winter 2012 issue of *Journal of Palestine Studies*. I was invited to give talks at UC Santa Cruz, Rutgers, CUNY and Syracuse, and gave the keynote speech for the annual global media conference, Global Fusion, held in Philadelphia. Most of all, I enjoyed attending the Shifting Borders conference in Beirut and spending some rainy winter-time in Lebanon.



# 2011-2012

## Events Archive

### RESEARCH WORKSHOPS

The program's academic cornerstone features new unpublished work by established and up-and-coming scholars of the region. Promotes cross-regional and interdisciplinary engagement of analytical issues in Middle Eastern studies and beyond.

#### **Connecting the Dots: The Regional History of the Mandate Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Transjordan 1918-1948)**

Presenter: Cyrus Schayegh (Princeton University)

Discussant: James Gelvin (University of California, Los Angeles)

#### **Toward an Effective History of Turkish Pluralism: Alevism and the Narrative of the Nation**

Presenter: Kabir Tambar (Stanford University)

Discussant: Berna Turam (Northeastern University)

#### **Piracy and Mediterranean Regionalism In The Early Modern World**

Presenter: Judith Tucker (Georgetown University)

Discussant: Fred Cooper (NYU)

#### **Coffee House Babble: Smoking and Sociability in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Bulgaria**

Presenter: Mary Neuburger (University of Texas, Austin)

Discussant: Larry Wolff (NYU)

#### **Visceral Politics and Sartorial Rifts: Feminism in the Age of the Hijab in Morocco**

Presenter: Nadia Guessous (NYU)

Discussant: Stefania Pandolfo (University of California, Berkeley)

#### **Arabs, Turks, and Monkeys: Ottoman Ethnography and Cartography of Syria and Palestine**

Presenter: Salim Tamari (Institute of Jerusalem)

Discussant: Abigail Jacobson (Brandeis University)

#### **An Algeria without France: On the Origins of Algerian Nationalism**

Presenter: Amal Ghazal (Dalhousie University)

Discussant: Patricia Lorcin (University of Minnesota)

#### **Sufism in Twentieth Century Central Asia**

Presenter: Eren Tasar (Washington University in St. Louis)

Discussant: Yanni Kotsonis (NYU)

## Seminar Series

An interdisciplinary series of lectures and workshops.

### **Global Gametes: Reproductive 'Tourism' and Islamic Bioethics in the High-tech Middle East**

Marcia Inhorn (Yale University)

### **The Post- Islamist Revolutions: Making Sense of Arab Uprisings**

Asef Bayat (University of Illinois)

### **Dissidents vs. Dictators: America and the Arab Spring**

David Keyes (Director

Cyberdissidents.org)

Ahed Al Hendi (Founder, Syrian Youth for Justice)

### **Libya: from Dictatorship to Revolution**

Ali Ahmida (University of New England)

### **Musical Geographies of Islam in Europe: Al-Andalus and its Futures**

Charles Hirschkind (University of California, Berkeley)

### **Theories of the Egyptian Revolution**

Mona El-Ghobashy (Barnard College)

### **The Islamists in the Tunisian Revolution and Transition: Religion, Public Order, and Secularism**

Malika Zeghal (Harvard University)

### **Yemen's Civic Revolution**

Sheila Carapico (University of Richmond)

### **Life after Prison: A Reflection on Life Post-9/11 for Arab Americans**

Mohamed Yousry (NYU)

### **Replacing Time with Space: Land Struggles in Israel/ Palestine**

Oren Yiftachel (Ben Gurion University)

### **Morocco Modern: Artisans in the Medina of Fes**

Orit Yekutieli (Ben Gurion University)

### **Muslims In Brazil: Local and Transnational Trends in the Making of Diasporic Islam**

Paulo Pinto (Universidade Federal Fluminense)

### **Trauma and War on the Syrian Stage**

Edward Ziter (NYU)

### **Unrest In Saudi Arabia and Bahrain: Reflecting on Authoritarianism and Resistance in the Arabian Peninsula**

Toby Jones (Rutgers University)

Pascal Menoret (NYU Abu Dhabi)

### **Judah Ibn Tibbon's Arabic Hebrew Bible**

Sarah Pearce (NYU)

### **Today's Egypt**

Khaled Fahmy (American University in Cairo)

## New Book Series

Features new, ground-breaking publications.

### ***Salafism in Yemen, Transnationalism and Religious Identity***

Columbia University Press, 2012

Laurent Bonnefoy (Institut Français du Proche-Orient)

### ***Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party***

Cambridge University Press, 2012

Joseph Sassoon (Georgetown University)

### ***Hamlet's Arab Journey***

Princeton University Press, 2011

Margaret Litvin (Boston University)

### ***Violence, Nonviolence, and the Palestinian National Movement***

Cambridge University Press, 2011

Wendy Pearlman (Northwestern University)

### ***Hamas: From Resistance to Government***

Seven Stories Press, 2012

Paola Caridi (Independent Journalist)

Discussant: Benoit Challand (The New School)



## Visual Culture Series

Films and presentations centered on visual art and media from and about the modern Middle East.

### **The Armenia-Turkey Platform: Five Short Films**

Canay Ozden  
(Massachusetts Institute of  
Technology)

### **Enfoldment and Infinity: Manners of unfolding in Documentary Media**

Laura Marks (Simon  
Fraser University)

### **Queer/Palestinian: Critical Strategies in Palestinian Queer/ Women's Filmmaking**

Patricia White (Swarthmore  
University), Helga Tawil-  
Souri (NYU), Colleen  
Jankovic (University of  
Pittsburgh), Nadia Awad  
(video artist), Vicky  
Moufawad-Paul (A Space  
Gallery), Raafat Hattab  
(video artist)

### **Silencing the Song: An Afghan Fallen Star**

Havana Marking  
(Filmmaker), David  
Edwards (Williams College),  
Wazhmah Osman (NYU)

### **Arna's Children: An Evening in Memory of Juliano Mer-Khamis, 1958 – 2011**

Zvi Ben-Dor Benite and  
Ella Shohat (NYU)

### **Miral: A Palestinian/Israeli Dialogue On and Off Screen**

Rula Jebrael (author),  
Zachary Lockman (NYU),  
Helga Tawil-Souri (NYU)

### **A is for Arab: Stereotypes in US Popular Culture**

Jack Shaheen (NYU)

### **Iran on Film: A Forum on Culture, Politics and Daily Life in Documentary Cinema**

Maryam Khakipour  
(Filmmaker), Negar  
Mottahedeh (Duke  
University), Persheng Vaziri  
(Producer, LinkTV)

### **Siah Bazi/The Joymakers, (directed by Maryam Khakipour)**

Peter Chelkowski (NYU)

### **Guilty Until Proven Innocent: Law Enforcement, Media Stereotypes & the Civil Rights of Arabs and Muslims in America**

Faiza Patel (NYU), Jack  
Shaheen (NYU), Moustafa  
Bayoumi (Brooklyn College),  
Ramzi Kassem (City  
Univeristy of New York Law),  
Jack Tchen (Asian/Pacific/  
American Institute, NYU)

### **Reel Arabs VS Real Arabs: Historicizing/Critiquing/Remaking the Arab Image in Popular Culture**

Jack Shaheen (NYU)

### **The Queen and I (directed by Nahid Sarvestani)**

Arang Keshavarzian  
(NYU), Nahid Mozaffari  
(Independent Scholar)

### **We Are Half of Iran's Population**

(directed by Rakhshan Bani  
Etemad)  
Anna Fahr (NYU)

## PROGRAM IN OTTOMAN STUDIES

The Program in Ottoman Studies is led by Professor of History Leslie Pierce (MEIS) and Guy Burak (PhD '12, MEIS). The series focuses on the interdisciplinary study of the periods and geographies associated with the rule of the Ottoman Empire.

### **The Little Ice Age: Crisis in the Ottoman Empire** Sam White (Oberlin College)

### **Deciphering Denial: Ottoman Past, Turkish Present and the Collective Violence Against Armenians 1789-2009** Fatma Muge (University of Michigan)

### **Piracy and Mediterranean Regionalism In The Early Modern World** Judith Tucker (Georgetown University) and Fred Cooper (NYU)

### **Byzantine Intellectuals Translating from Greek into Arabic at the Court of Mehmet the Conqueror** Maria Mavroudi (University of California, Berkeley)

### **Coffee House Babble: Smoking and Sociability in Ottoman and post-Ottoman Bulgaria** Mary Neuburger (University of Texas, Austin) and Larry Wolff (NYU)

## COVERAGE IN CONTEXT

A two-year-long project funded by the Social Science Research Council in collaboration with the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute. Videos are posted online at <http://neareaststudies.as.nyu.edu/object/kc.media.coverageincontext>.

### **Blogistan and Beyond: Religion, The Internet, and Politics in Iran**

Annabelle Sreberny (University of London), Narges Bajoghli (NYU), Hamid Dabashi (Columbia), moderated by Arang Keshavarzian (NYU)

### **Tahrir Square 2012: The Voices of Women and Religious Minorities**

Viola Shafik (Freelance Lecturer and Filmmaker), Yasmin Moll (NYU), moderated by Dina Ramadan (Bard College)

### **Iran on Film: A Forum on Culture, Politics and Daily Life in Documentary Cinema**

Maryam Khakipour (Filmmaker), Negar Mottahede (Duke University), and Persheng Vaziri (Producer, LinkTV)

### **Media, Islam, and the New Arab Journalist**

Lawrence Pintak (Washington State University), Mohamed el-Nawawy (Queens University of Charlotte), and moderated by Mohamad Bazzi (NYU)

### **Television, Religion, and Gender in the Afghan Culture Wars**

Havana Marking (Filmmaker), David Edwards (Williams College), and Wazhmah Osman (NYU)

## Teacher Training

As mandated by our Title VI grant, Seminars are hosted by the Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies in collaboration with the Steinhardt School of Education, including an intensive summer course with NYU's Faculty Resource Network. Middle and High School teachers as well as Community College faculty regularly attend alongside teachers-in-training from Steinhardt. These programs increase the quality of Middle East-related content in our region's K-16 curriculum.

**Social Movements** [Asef Bayat (University of Illinois). Arang Keshavarzian, (NYU), Rene Rojas (NYU)]

**Spotlight on Libya** [Ali Ahmida (University of New England), Matthew Carrieri (NYU), Micah Zenko (Council on Foreign Relations)]

**The Politics of Water** [Abigail Schade (Davidson College), Greta Scharnweber (NYU)]

**Islam in China and In Europe** [Zvi Ben-Dor (NYU), Sylvia Maier (NYU), Yufeng Mao (Fordham)]

**Islam, Art and the Museum** [Finbarr Barry Flood (NYU & Institute of Arts)]

**A is for Arab: Stereotypes in US Popular Culture** [Jack Shaheen (NYU Visiting Scholar), Anan Ameri (National Arab-American Museum)]

**Spotlight on Yemen** [Sheila Carapico (University of Richmond), Daniel Varisco (Hofstra University)]

**Spotlight on Syria** [Paulo Pinto (Universidade Federal Fluminense), Bassam Haddad (George Mason University)]

**People Power: Revolts in the Arab World** [Chris Toensing (Middle East Report), Jeannie Sowers (University of New Hampshire), Bassam Haddad (George Mason University), Sheila Carapico (University of Richmond)]

## IRANIAN STUDIES INITIATIVE

Led by Ali Mirsepassi and a steering committee drawn from MEIS and other NYU faculty with support from the Gallatin School and the Hagop Kevorkian Center.

### **The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Arab Spring**

Juan Cole  
(University of Michigan)

### **Medieval Narrative Poetry and the Persian Past: Transgressed Boundaries and Porous Identities**

Richard Davis  
(Ohio State University)

### **Cosmopolitan Kinship and Care of The Self: The Lyrical Legacy of Sa'di of Shiraz**

Fatemeh Keshavarz  
(Washington University)

### **Deconstructing Iran's Reconstruction Era 1989-1997**

Naghmeh Sohrabi  
(Brandeis University)

### **Suddenly Something Recklessly Gay: A Two-Day Event Celebrating the Work of Iranian Theater and Visual Artist Assurbanipal Babilla**

Curated by Leyla Ebtehadj  
and Mariam Touzie

### **Conversing With The Ghosts of the Revolution For The Sake Of Life**

Shahla Talebi  
(Arizona State University)

### **The Politics of New Media: How the Internet shaped the Iranian Green Movement**

Babak Rahimi  
(University of California, San Diego)

Peter Chelkowski (NYU)  
Sarah Afshar (NYU)

### **Epic Implications: Shahnameh, Iranian Nationalism, and the Delusional West**

Mahmoud Omidshahar  
(California State University LA)

Hamid Dabashi  
(Columbia University)

### **Strike Too: Iran, the Arab Spring, and the Difference A General Strike Makes**

Charles Kurzman  
(University of North Carolina)

Jeff Goodwin (NYU)

### **Changing Images of Iranian History and Identity: From Tradition to Modernity**

Ahmad Ashraf  
(Columbia University)

## Conferences, Symposia, and Special Events

### **“Arab Spring” Or “Arab Winter”? An Update on the Arab Revolutions**

Mustapha Tlili (NYU), Hamadi Redissi (University of Tunis), Ambassador Frank Wisner (Former US Ambassador to Egypt, 1986-1991), Zachary Lockman (NYU)

### **The McGhee Alumni Salon Series- The Arab Spring: One Year Later**

Bassam Abed (NYU SCPS), Hisham Melhem (Journalist)

### **The Hagop Kevorkian Center Open House/Alumni Career Panel**

Noor Shoufani (Education for Employment Foundation,) Amir Moosavi (PhD Candidate MEIS NYU), Eline Gordts (Editor-*Huffington Post*), Sarah Edkins (International Coalition of Sites of Conscience)

### **An Afternoon Concert of Traditional Arab Music and Modern Compositions for Solo Oud**

Kinan Adnawi (Musician)



# HAGOP KEVORKIAN CENTER REVIEW 2011/2012

