Response to Events of September 11

Students and faculty discuss issues relating to Islam at the conference on Presenting & Re-presenting Islam

Individuals associated with the Center for Middle Eastern Studies continue to respond publicly and privately to the horrific events of September 11 and their aftermath in a variety of ways. In accordance with the part of its mission to educate the American public about the Middle East, the Center and its faculty sponsored lectures, symposia, short courses, roundtable discussions, conferences and interviews. Approximately 20,000 people were reached through lectures and conferences alone; adding the number reached through interviews printed in newspapers or held on radio or TV programs, that sum is easily in the hundreds of thousands. A few representative media where interviews were given include the Associated Press, local affiliates of NBC and ABC, National Public Radio (NPR), the Christian Science Monitor, the San Antonio Express-News and the Austin American-Statesman (a complete list is on file at Center). Reporters, professors, high school teachers, and average citizens called the Center looking for information about Islam, and over time, the political and historical background of the Taliban in Afghanistan, as well as a host of other issues.

Many professors sought to use these events as opportunities for engaging students and colleagues in and out of class with the issues raised by the changing situation. Responses ranged from the intensely personal—contributing funds to various relief agencies and offering words of support to concerned international students—to the very public—marching in demonstrations and speaking or writing on relevant issues.

The Center asked faculty and staff to report back how they personally responded, and here, in alphabetical order, are some of the early self-reported responses received by the Center shortly after the events took place.

Kamran Ali, Assistant Professor in Anthropology, Carel Bertram, Lecturer in Islamic Art History at the Center, and Khaled Mattawa, Assistant Professor in English (Creative Writing), along with two other professors, participated in a panel discussion and public forum sponsored by the University of Texas Humanities Institute titled "International Perspectives on September 11 and the Current Crisis" on November 6, 2001, which was attended by approximately 250 people. The goal of the event was to offer interested central Texans information about the perspectives of other communities around the globe on recent events.

Kamran Bokhari, MA Candidate in MBS, spoke to 40 employees of SupportKids about the Middle East and the events of September 11 on October 8, 2001 as part of a sensitivity training and cultural awareness program.

Mounira (Maya) Charrad, Assistant Professor of Sociology, in an immediate response to the events of September 11, asked students to observe a minute of silence and to be aware that whatever their own emotions and opinions, it was necessary to respect all opinions, to realize that achieving peace in the world has to begin with achieving peace in the classroom. She suggested that these events, whatever they ultimately meant and whatever issues were raised, would likely remain with them for the rest of their lives.
John Downing, John T. Jones, Jr. Centennial Professor in Communication, on September 12 was in a graduate video-conferenced course with his own class, a class in the Instituto Tecnológico, Monterrey, Mexico, and a class at the Université de Quebec in Montreal. The prior agenda was replaced in favor of a spontaneous three-way discussion. About ten days later, he was one of five panelists in a College of Communication seminar on the crisis. Having published a lengthy journal article analyzing Soviet news media coverage of the war in the late eighties Afghanistan, Dr. Downing contributed some thoughts from that perspective. On the panel, he read excerpts from a widely internet-circulated letter from an Afghan-American writer living in San Francisco and another from a prominent Pakistani Muslim commentator. Along with a number of academic and graduate student colleagues, Dr. Downing co-signed a letter to President Faulkner, indicating their distance from the President's harshly worded attack in the Houston Chronicle, that was later reprinted in The Daily Texan.

Saba Gohri, graduate student in the joint MES/LBJ program, helped organize a panel at the LBJ School of Public Affairs entitled “Racial and Ethnic Issues Post September 11” to discuss the ramifications of these events for Arab Americans, other ethnic minorities, and immigrants. Discussants included Kamran Aghaie, Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, State Representative Dawnna Dukes (D-Austin), and Arthur Sakamoto, Associate Professor of Sociology and Asian Studies. Dr. Aghaie noted that racial profiling is an example of groups taking advantage of a general belief that heightened security is necessary, and Dr. Sakamoto added that it “serves a psychological need for people that something is being done.”

Clement Henry, Professor in Government, spoke on Wednesday, October 24, 2001 at St. Mary's University Peace Commission in San Antonio on the current situation and prospects for peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Hillary Hutchinson, Executive Assistant, on September 29, participated in a discussion with the Austin Area Inter-religious Ministries on differences and similarities among Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs.

S. Akbar Hydar, Assistant Professor of Asian Studies, prepared a second summer session 2002 course entitled, “Afghanistan: Religion, History, and Politics” intended to address the increased interest in Afghanistan post-September 11.

Akel Kahera, Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, and Sulafa Abou Samma, Center Outreach Assistant, along with several other local Muslims, participated in a two-and-a-half-hour roundtable discussion sponsored by the Austin American-Statesman and led by religion writer Kim Sue Lia Perkes; the result of this discussion was a lengthy and well received feature in the “Life and Arts” section on September 23, 2001. Sulafa and Keith Walters, Associate Director of the Center and Associate Professor of Linguistics, were members of a panel for the Texas Department of Health on October 11, 2001 on understanding Islam, which some 125 employees attended.

Abraham Marcus, Center Director, and Clement Henry, Professor in Government, participated in two discussions with the Liberal Arts Plan II students on September 19 and October 1, 2001 on the events of September 11. Panelists tried to help students understand the root causes of the disaffection felt by many Middle Easterners toward the United States.

Annes McCamt-Baker prepared a list of twelve scholarly books on the Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies for the Austin American-Statesman as a reading list to help the public understand the issues involved in the events of September 11.

Esther Raizen, Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, gave a talk at a meeting of Hillel, Hadassah, and the UT Jewish Women Faculty on November 1. The topic was “The Aftermath of the September 11 Events from the Perspective of an Israeli.”

Christopher Rose, Outreach Coordinator, was frequently called upon in the days following September 11, 2001. On September 14, he spoke to ten teachers at Hutto Middle School, Hutto, TX about September 11 events. In the result he wrote, “Horrific Acts not True to the Faith of Islam” appeared on the op-ed page of the Austin American-Statesman (September 16). On September 18, he spoke to 25 students in the College of Education and was a guest on Jay Trachtenburg’s community call-in show on KTU radio. On September 21, he spoke to the student body and faculty at St. Andrew’s Upper School, Austin. On September 26, he participated in a panel discussion on “War in the Middle East” sponsored by Sigma Kappa Delta (Sociology Honor Fraternity) with about 100 students and 5 faculty in attendance. On September 28, he spoke to 40 employees of Ambion, Inc., as part of sensitivity training and cultural awareness program. On October 2, he spoke to 40 students and faculty at School of Social Work. On October 10, he participated in two panel discussions (along with representatives from the Islamic Center of San Antonio) about Islam and the Middle East for 100 reporters, editors, and staff of the San Antonio Express-News and answered questions about accuracy and sensitivity needs in reporting. On October 25, he spoke to 100 members of the West Austin Rotary Club. On November 6, he spoke to 300 attendees at UT-QUEST program. With Hillary Hutchinson, he led a book discussion group on November 28 on Karen Armstrong’s Islam: A Short History.

Karen Wilkins, Associate Professor, with assistance from her colleague John Downing organized a one-day workshop in the College of Communication on teaching controversial
The University of Texas Press has recently published three works pertaining to the Middle East by members of the University faculty. They are Modern Hebrew for Intermediate Students: A Multimedia Program by Esther Raizen, Translating the Garden by M. R. Ghanoonparvar, and Deconstructing the American Mosque: Space, Gender, and Aesthetics by Akel Kahera.

Modern Hebrew for Intermediate Students, a sequel to Modern Hebrew for Beginners, is a combination of text and workbook designed to be used with web-based materials. Dr. Raizen is Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures and Director of the Modern Hebrew Project.

Translating the Garden allows the reader to follow the author in the process of translating Shahrokh Meskub's Dialogue in the Garden from Persian into English, focusing on the many decisions a translator must make. Dr. Ghanoonparvar is Professor of Persian and Comparative Literature.

Deconstructing the American Mosque explores the plurality of aesthetics found in this country's collection of mosques, which also reflects the heterogeneity of the American Muslim community. Dr. Kahera is Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures.

Available also at UT Press, along with the Center's new books Passage to Dusk by Rashid al-Daif and They Die Stranger by Mohammad Abdul-Wali, is the Center's tale of a childhood in Mecca, The Sheltered Quarter, by Hamza Bogary, in reprint. Planning the Family in Egypt: New Bodies, New Selves by Kamran Ali, the Center's new book in its Modern Middle East Series, will be out in August. All books are available through the University of Texas Press website: <http://www.utexas.edu/utpress/>.

Outreach News

The Center's outreach program was busy during the late summer and fall of 2001. Following the successful completion of the summer teachers' workshop, "World Cultures through the Arts," the Center, in conjunction with the three other Title VI-funded National Resource Centers on campus, launched a public relations campaign. The four outreach coordinators began meeting jointly with representatives from school districts around Central Texas to develop a long-range plan for educational outreach, including field trips to different places of worship in the Austin area, including a Hindu temple, a Buddhist shrine, a Christian Orthodox monastery, and an Islamic mosque. The Outreach Program organized another teacher's workshop for June 4-7, 2002 entitled, "On War and Peace." The focus of this workshop was how to teach about cultural conflict in the pre-college classroom. This event was again co-sponsored by the other area studies Centers on campus, and included a film festival with award-winning films from around the world, such as the now-famous Kandahar, filmed in Iran in 2001, about a women searching for her sister in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.
New Faculty at the Center

Dr. Kamran Asdar Ali joined the Department of Anthropology and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies in fall 2001. He graduated from John Hopkins University with his PhD in 1997, and his revised doctoral dissertation will be published this summer by the University of Texas Press as Planning The Family in Egypt: New Bodies, New Selves. The book argues that development initiatives in general and family planning in particular, seen in the wider context of capital expansion and accumulation in the late twentieth century, help train and produce new bodies and selves. Family planning programs do not just reduce the number of children and regulate reproduction. They also introduce or foster notions of individual choice and responsibility, risk aversion, and personal independence. In short, they help construct a new kind of individuality guided by the legal rights of citizens rather than by communitarian and familial control. The fieldwork for this project was conducted in Sharqiya and in Cairo, Egypt between October 1992 and March 1994, with support from the Population Council and the Department of Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University.

Before joining the University of Texas, Dr. Ali was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Rochester in New York from 1995-2001. Between 1999 and the present, Dr. Ali has also been the Research Co-Director for the Project on Tourism, The Mediterranean Program, Robert Schuman Center, European University Institute (Florence, Italy), where he has organized three workshops in the last two years on tourism in the southern Mediterranean. Another area of research for Dr. Ali is the history of the labor movement in Pakistan, and he was co-organizer of an international workshop on “Labor and Trade Union Politics” held in Karachi, Pakistan on December 23-26, 1999. Additional research issues that interest Dr. Ali include gender, political economy, and post-colonialism.

In addition to his research, Dr. Ali has recently also provided political commentary (“Pakistan’s Dilemma”) in the form of Press Information Notes published by the Middle East Research and Information Report on September 19, 2001. A longer version of the same article was published on September 30th in the Austin American-Statesman. As he states, “the massive displacement of the Afghan population, the destruction of their homes and villages and the loss of 1.5 million Afghan lives during that country’s long civil war has somehow been erased from the consciousness of the Western media.”

The terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 brought these issues back to the forefront of public consciousness. Without any clearly defined US policy in the early 1990s to develop Afghanistan economically, the Pakistanis supported the Taliban as a way of creating a stable government on its Western border, which could also serve as a conduit for gas and oil from the landlocked Central Asian states to Pakistani ports. In addition, Ali argues that by accepting U.S. demands in exchange for fresh promises of international largesse, the Pakistani military might be saving itself from the wrath of a US-led coalition. In the process, however, the regime appears willing to plunge Pakistan into an uncharted future, with no regard for such stability as remains in Pakistani social life.

Assistant Professor Dr. Samer Mahdy Ali joined the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures in the fall 2001. Previously a Fellow of The Working Group on Modernity and Islam at the Institute for Advanced Study in Berlin, Germany, he also taught Arabic literature at the Free University there. He finished his doctoral degree at Indiana University, Bloomington, in August 2001 under the supervision of Suzanne Stetkevych in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures. While pursuing his doctoral degree, he worked as both a Proficiency Tester in Arabic and as Editorial Assistant for the Journal of Arabic Literature. Dr. Ali’s research interests include classical Arabic poetry, Islamic kingship, and women court poets as well as ethno-poetics and folklore. His dissertation, Ardor for Memory: Mythicizing the Patricide of al-Mutawakkil in Court Poetry, dealt with the oral performance of poetry in Abbasid society. He used methods from anthropology and folklore to examine the function of public delivery in promoting cultural memory. He was able to conduct his dissertation research with the support of a Fulbright-Hays doctoral research
grant, which allowed him to visit archives in Egypt, Spain, and Germany. The archival work yielded Arabic manuscript descriptions of literary salons in the Middle Ages.

In Fall 2000, he gave a paper at MESA entitled “Gatherings under the Moonlight: A Performance-Centered Approach to Poetry and History.” The paper investigated how poetry performance in literary salons helped form and disseminate historical memory in Abbasid society. At this year’s MESA meetings, he gave a paper entitled “Identity and Handicap: Praise Poetry as Image Making.” The paper emphasized the function of praise poetry in repairing the public image of men of state.

Dr. Ali had two publications come out in 2001. The first was “A Verdurous Encomium for a Murderous Patron: Contradiction and Mythology in al-Buhturi al-Ta’,” in Writers and Rulers: Perspectives from Abbasid to Sufi Times and the second was a review of “Muhammad in the Modern Egyptian Popular Ballad” by Kamal Abdel-Malek in Edebiyat. In 2002, The Dictionary of Literary Biography will publish his entry on al-Buhturi (d. 897), an influential poet whose art continued to attract audiences ten centuries after his death.

In preparation are an article “Abbasid Islam—Monotheism or Henotheism? A View from the Court” and a book Generosity like God’s: The Cultural Foundations of an Old Arab Virtue. In the fall 2001, Dr. Ali offered two new courses entitled “Memory and Identity in Ancient Arabia” and “Loyalty and Rebellion in Arabic Literature.” In spring 2002, he taught “The Arabic Novel” and a course devoted to the Arabian Nights.

Dr. Ali is also a board member of the Austin chapter of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee.

Assistant Professor Dr. Khaled Mattawa joined the Department of English in the creative writing program in the Fall 2000 and the CMES faculty in Summer 2001. An Arab American poet whose native language is Arabic, he writes in English. His teaching interests include writing poetry, translation theory and practice, and postcolonial literature and theory. He is currently working on a new poem called “Genealogy of Fire.” Described as both “traditional” (partly for his use of the archaic pronoun “thou”) and “an original and distinctive voice,” Mattawa’s work has been published in a variety of literary magazines, including The Kenyon Review, Poetry East, Ploughshares, and Exquisite Corpse; it has also appeared in nearly one dozen anthologies of American poetry. Mattawa is interested in the role that bilingualism plays in his poetry and the role of translation in the writing process generally. He feels that bilingualism ought to be integral to a composition and not treated as merely a footnote and that translation needs to be acknowledged as a creative act. Dr. Mattawa has himself translated Arab poets Hatif Janabi, Saadi Yousef, and Hassem Shafiq into English. Of writing poetry, Dr. Mattawa says that the most important task is to find the “exact” word or the “exact language” to express an idea.

A native of Libya, he was originally admitted to the United States as a political refugee in 1979. He lived in the South for many years, finishing high school in Louisiana and completing bachelor’s degrees in Political Science and Economics at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. He went on to earn an MA in English and an MFA in creative writing from Indiana University in 1994, where he also taught creative writing and won an Academy of American Poets award. In addition, he has won the Alfred Hodder Fellowship at Princeton University, the Pushcart Prize, and the Blementhal Award of the North Carolina Writers Network for 1998-1999. He finished his Ph.D. in Spring 2000 at Duke University. Dr. Mattawa joined the University of Texas after serving a one-year term as a Visiting Professor at Denison University in Ohio.

Below is a reprint of one of his poems that examines the topic of bilingualism:

Borrowed Tongue

Maybe I’m a fool
holding two threads,
one black, one white,
waiting for dawn
to tell them apart.

But I’m only practicing
my religion which
I neither borrowed
nor stole.

Maybe I’m a fool
thinking of a better answer
than the transplant patient
who said I’m sorry
someone had to die.

No, I haven’t outgrown
my tongue. It’s a coat
your mother gives you,
crimson or cobalt blue,
satin inside, the collar
wide enough to cover
your whole neck.
All winter you wear it
then spring comes
but never goes.
That’s Arabic to me.
I wear a white shirt now—
thin gray stripes,
top button gone—and it fits.
Faculty and Staff News

Nina Berman, former Associate Director of the Center and Associate Professor in the Department of Germanic Studies, left UT in the summer of 2001 for Ohio State University, where she is Associate Professor in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures. She had been teaching at the University of Texas since 1994. We wish her well in her new position where she is Associate Professor in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures.

Carel Bertram, Lecturer in Art History in the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, leaves for San Francisco State University where she becomes a member of the Humanities Faculty as of fall 2002. Carel brought zest and knowledge to the Study of Islamic art history, and will be much missed after her three years with the Center.

Dr. Bertram also has has three articles forthcoming in 2002: "The Politics of Architectural Language in Bosnia," CENTROPA, with Dijana Ahtic; "Suraq, Muhammad's Mount on His Journey to Heaven," in The Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World, (Macmillan Reference USA); and "The Ottoman House in the Turkish Imaginative: Monumentalizing the Quotidian," Yeni Türkiye Dergisi Project Turk, a 20-volume research summary supported by Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Turkey, Turkish Historical Society.


Diana K. Davis, Assistant Professor in Geography, will be offering a new course in Spring 2002 entitled "Political Ecology in the Global South." The course focused on political ecology as an approach to studying environmental change and degradation.

Robert and Elizabeth Fernea continue to jointly teach a continuing education seminar with regularly scheduled classes for older adults through SAGE (Seminars for Adult Growth and Enrichment). The course is called "The Middle East Today." The first year it was offered, it drew 65 students; the second year, 58 students; this year, 120 students enrolled.

Clement Henry, Professor of Government, and Robert Springborg recently published Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East (Cambridge University Press). It was released in the United Kingdom in September and in the United States in October. Dr. Henry's recent academic presentations include "Habib Bourguiba: La trac et l'héritage," Department of Political Science, University of Aix-en-Provence; and "Commercial Banking Systems. The Neglected Variable in Political and Economic Development" and "Islamic Financial Movements: Midwives of Political Change in the Middle East?" both with Dr. Catherine Boone (Government) for a panel on "Ideas, Movements, and States: Theoretical Perspectives on Islam and Politics" at the American Political Science Association meeting in August, 2001. Professor Henry received research funds from AIMS (American Institute for Maghrib Studies) for his work on "The Structural Adjustment of the Commercial Banking Systems of the Maghrib."

Virginia Howell, the accountant for the Center for Middle Eastern Studies since February 1997, was recognized for her outstanding service at a luncheon on May 29, 2002 given by the Dean of Liberal Arts, Richard Lariwier. Virginia received a plaque recognizing her enormous contributions to the Center, a cash award of $3,000 and a dinner certificate for two at The University of Texas Club.

Carol Justus, Adjunct Associate Professor in Classics, continues to be involved with the administration of a grant from the Diebold Foundation for $11,000 for the development of an Indo-European Documentation Center. In 2002, she published a journal volume, "On Language Grouping and Archaeology" General Linguistics 37 (Pegasus Press) and a book chapter, "Hittite" in the Intercontinental Dictionary Series, Mary Ritchie, ed., which includes an online hypertext lexical implementation. She also recently published two articles, "Word Order and the First Person Imperative" in Stability, Variation and Change of Word-Order Patterns Time (Rosanna Sorinola, Erich Poppe, & Ariel Shisha-Halev, eds., John Benjamins) and "English 'have': 'have', an Archais Paradigm," in a volume edited by Valerij Demjankov & Tatiana Yanko.

Deborah Kapchan, Associate Professor in Anthropology, has received a
three-summer Fulbright-Hays grant to study oral, Moroccan poetry in dialect.

Dan Laufer, lecturer in business, has been cited in The Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) October 2001 for his Israel course website <http://memic.utexas.edu/memic/cmes/lauffer/links.html> as an important source of information for researchers and practitioners on the topic of the business environment in Israel. He has also recently accepted a job as Assistant Professor of Business Administration at the University of Cincinnati, where he will begin teaching in the fall 2002. We thank Dan for his contributions to the Center and its mission over the past few years and wish him well in Cincinnati.

Harold Liebowitz, Professor of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, received a 2001 University Cooperative Society Subvention Grant for publication of Excavations at Tel Yif‘an 1976-1989: Vol. I The Late Bronze Age and a special grant from the Rapoport-King Scholarship fund for directing research undergraduate Lydia Bloom.

Annes McCann-Baker, Center Editor for the Middle East Translation Series, journeyed to Cairo to work with various authors and translators, and to consult with AUC Press on joint future projects.

Abraham Marcus, Associate Professor of History and Center Director, was associate editor of two recently published encyclopedias: The Encyclopaedia of World History (Houghton Mifflin) and the Garland Encyclopaedia of World Music: The Middle East (Routledge).

Lisa Patterson, Administrative Assistant for the Center, for Middle Eastern Studies, gave birth to a healthy boy, Ian Marcus Patterson (IMP) on April 23, 2002. Mother and child are doing well, and Lisa returned to work part-time on June 3rd.

Esther Raizen, Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, has a new book, Modern Hebrew for Intermediate Students, for which she was awarded a University Cooperative Society Subvention Grant. It was published by the University of Texas Press in November 2001. The book is part of a multi-media program which includes Modern Hebrew for Beginners and an accompanying Website <http://www.lanc.utexas.edu/hebrew>. Raizen’s Foreign Language Teachers’ Toolbox, created in collaboration with Professor Jane Lippmann from the French and Italian department and supported by a FASTTe award and a Liberal Arts Instructional Technology Services award, is now also available on the Web at <http://www.lanc.utexas.edu/hebrew/personal/toolbox/toolbox.shtml>. Additional units on the Hebrew language and music are linked to the sites listed above. Dr. Raizen spent time in Israel in the summer of 2001 collecting materials for her next book on environmental concerns in Hebrew literature. The book manuscript will be completed in the summer of 2002.

Christopher Rose, Outreach Coordinator for the Center, has been elected to the Board of Directors for the Middle East Outreach Council (MEOC) and is now editing the newsletter for that organization.

Denise Schmandt-Besserat, Professor of Art History, spent spring 2001 at the American Center for Oriental Studies in Aqron, Jordan studying plaster skulls from the Neolithic site of Ain Ghazal, ca. 7000-6500 BC. Recent publications include “Feasting in the Ancient Near East” in Feasts, Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power (Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden, eds., Smithsonian Institution Press) and “Registrazioni proto-storiche” in Storia della Scienza, Enciclopedia Italiana (Rome). Her book How Writing Came about is now available on the web at <http://www.netlibrary.com> (part of the University of Texas eBook collection), where it can be read online. Dr. Schmandt-Besserat is beginning a phased retirement program at UT, and will be teaching only part-time as of the fall 2002.

Yaron Shemer, Lecture in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, was keynote speaker last August for “La Semana de Cine Israelí” (A Week of Israeli Cinema) in Mexico City. He was interviewed by reporters and film critics of Mexican newspapers and magazines, including, Reforma, Excélsior and La Jornada. TV and radio interviews included Canal 22, Canal 11, Cita Con La Cultura, Radio Centro, and Antena Radio. Shemer was also a guest speaker at three press conferences in conjunction with the festival. This event was organized and sponsored by Cineteca Nacional and the Israeli Embassy in Mexico City.

Keith Walters, Associate Professor in Linguistics and Associate Director of the Center, gave two conference papers this spring. In mid-march, he presented a talk entitled “Tunisian Women’s Access to Literacy and the Languages of Literacy” on a panel on “New Frontiers in Research and Gender and Literacy” at the Annual Conference on College Composition and Communication in Chicago, Illinois. In April, he presented a paper on “Gendering French in Tunisia” at IGALA2, the second meeting of the International Gender and Language Association, at the University of Lancaster in the United Kingdom.

Robert W. Hamilton Award

Dr. Mounira Charrad (Sociology) was awarded the top honor of $10,000 at the spring 2002 Robert W. Hamilton Awards Dinner. Her book, States and Women’s Rights, the Making of Post-colonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, published by the University of California Press, won the prize for best book. The Hamilton Book Awards, sponsored by the University Co-op, recognizes outstanding works by academics at the University. Forty-seven authors from across the campus were nominated this year.

Professor Charrad said of the award, “This kind of recognition takes us out of the boundaries of our own discipline to make us feel part of the rich and stimulating intellectual community of UT.” Her book, focusing on the development of states, considers why women’s rights were expanded in Tunisia, but not in Algeria or Morocco.

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Kamran Aghaie presented a paper entitled “Muslim and European Perspectives on the Crusades.”


Elizabeth Fernea chaired a panel on “Strategies of Women’s Mobilization in the 20th Century” and participated in a Roundtable discussion called “Forces of Contemporary Change in Egypt.”

Robert Fernea was honored at a reception sponsored by the Center and the University of Texas Press for his 25 years of service as Editor of the Modern Middle East Series.

M.R. Ghanoonparvar, professor in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, gave a paper on “Kasravi’s Concept of Pakdini and His Rationalist Approach to Religion.”

Clement Henry chaired a panel “Islamic Capital and Islamist Politics,” where he gave a paper called “Islamic Banking and Globalization in the Middle East and North Africa.”

Deborah Kapchan gave a paper on “Marketing Trance: Music, Money and the Spirit in Three Moroccan Gnawa.”

Christopher Rose chaired a panel on “Issues in teaching about the Middle East at the Precollegiate Level,” where he gave a paper entitled “When the Mummies Ruled Egypt: Presentations and Perceptions of Egypt in the Precollegiate Classroom.”

Jonathan Shannon, formerly a Visiting Lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Texas at Austin and now an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Hunter College in New York, received the 2001 Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award for his innovative work on music in Syria.

Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, known to colleagues and friends, was presented with the 2001 MESA Mentoring Award. Established in 1996, the award recognizes the contributions of individuals to MESA and the profession of Middle Eastern Studies. Service is “defined broadly to include work in diverse areas,” and in BJ’s case, she was cited for introducing the Middle East to students and the general public through teaching, writing, translation and filmmaking. She was also cited for her efforts to forge links with Middle Eastern scholars.

At MESA, BJ served on the board and as president from 1985-86. She was a member of the committee to choose the first awardee for the Albert Hourani Prize for Best Book in Middle Eastern Studies, and for many years has been a member of the Filmfest Committee for the annual MESA meetings.

Her long and distinguished career, BJ has written or edited nearly a dozen books and written and produced seven documentary films. Her most recent book, Remembering Childhood in the Middle East: Memoirs from a Century of Change, is a collection of personal “growing-up” narratives of 36 different men and women, representing 14 countries. It will be published in the fall of 2002 with the University of Texas Press.

BJ’s latest film, Living With the Past: Historic Cairo, premiered at MESA 2001, and was then shown again at the University of Texas on January 29, 2002 to an audience of approximately 150. It will be shown in Germany in September at the First World Congress of Middle Eastern Studies. The film is a portrait of Darb al-Ahmar, the historic neighborhood in Cairo that is currently undergoing radical change. Medieval monuments are being restored and a massive social and economic project is underway, funded by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, to improve the lives of the people who live daily with the monuments. The film is accompanied by a study guide, and an interactive CD-ROM focused on Darb al-Ahmar is in process.

BJ graduated from Reed College in Portland, Oregon where she received her undergraduate degree and did graduate work in English at Mount Holyoke College. She was awarded an honorary LL.D. (Doctor of Letters) by the State University of New York in 1993. She began teaching at UT in 1975, and retired in 2000 as professor emeritus of English and Middle Eastern Studies. She continues to work in the areas of her major interest: women and the family in the Middle East; literary translation of Middle Eastern literatures; and the continuing struggle for a workable Palestinian-Israeli peace process.
Genieve Abdo, BA 1982, in Government is currently Nieman Fellow at Harvard University.

Elizabeth N. Bouri, PhD 1993, in Library and Information Science, is working with the United Nations Development Program under whose auspices she gave a paper at MESA entitled “E-Government in the Making.” Dr. Bouri worked at the Center in 1994-1995 and helped to set up the MENIC website.

Maria Curtis, PhD 2002, received research funds from AIMS (American Institute for Maghrib Studies) for her work on “The Fes Festival of World Sacred Music.”

Persis Karim, MA in Middle Eastern Studies 1993 and PhD in Comparative Literature 1999, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at San Jose State University in California. She was married September 16, 2001 to Craig Strang in San Francisco.

Roberta Micallef, MA in Middle Eastern Studies 1990 and PhD in Comparative Literature 1997, is now at the University of Utah as an Assistant Professor of Turkish Languages and Literature and is also currently serving as the Undergraduate Advisor for the Middle East Center.

Michael Penn, MA in Middle Eastern Studies (1996), is lecturer in the University of Kitakyushu in Japan and is engaged in research on Ottoman-Japanese relations.

William Rowe, MA in Middle Eastern Studies 1996, offered a course through the Department of Geography entitled “Cultural Crossroads in Afghanistan and Central Asia” in the spring 2002.

John Schaefer, PhD candidate, received research funds from AIMS (American Institute for Maghrib Studies) for his work on “Gnawa Musicians and Moroccan World Music.”

Pamela Stafford, MA in Middle Eastern Studies in 1995, is teaching history at Santa Teresa High School in San Jose, CA. She has been giving regular talks on the Arab-Israeli conflict at Santa Teresa High School, where she teaches history, and is putting together a panel discussion at the high school on the Middle East and Islam.

### Student and Alumni News

#### Awards and Scholarships

**Academic Year FLAS**

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Level</th>
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<td>Afra Al-Mussawir</td>
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<td>2nd-3rd</td>
<td>PhD candidate</td>
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<td>Mark Westmoreland</td>
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**Summer FLAS**

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<td>Nidal Daraiseh</td>
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<td>Bahji Sumpter</td>
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**Ann Grabhorn Friday Scholarship**

Andrea Allen

**Turkish Studies Scholarship**

Bahji Sumpter

**Iranian Studies Scholarship**

Hanan H. Hammad

**Marshall Scholarship**

Jack Tannous

**Presidential Management Internship**

Steve Berkowitz, Saba Ghori, Sarah Fox Ozkan, Daniel Stein

**University Continuing Fellowship**

Sahar Aziz
Colloquium Series

As usual, the fall and spring brought a variety of lectures, films and other events sponsored by the Center. Below is a brief list of titles, presenters, and dates.

Banafsheh Madaninejad, graduate student in Middle Eastern Studies

“Ahmød Køsrøoi’s Critique of Europism (Ururugarayi) and Orientalism,” a lecture by Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi (November 13, 2001).


“Gender and Diaspora in Islam,” a panel discussion chaired by Elizabeth Fernea (January 24, 2002).

“Living with the Past: Historic Cairo,” a film by Elizabeth Fernea (January 29, 2002).

“The Changing (?) Situation of Women in Algeria since Independence,” a lecture by Fatih Hamitouche (February 14, 2002).

“La place des immigrants maghrébins dans la société française,” a lecture by Rabia Bekkar (February 22, 2002).


Saba Gohri, graduate student in Middle Eastern Studies and Public Affairs


“Stories of the Arabian Nights,” performed by storyteller Elida Guardia Bonet (April 17, 2002).


“Rethinking the Middle East Field: The Problematic Integration of Gender Studies,” a lecture by Martina Reiker (April 25, 2002).

“Privatization by Franchising: A Case Study from Turkey,” a lecture by Mehrnet E. Karanlan (April 30, 2002).


Conferences

Three major conference were held in spring 2002. They are as follows:

Diversity in Islam: A Panel Discussion

On January 24, 2002 faculty affiliated with the UT Women’s Studies and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies sponsored a “teach-in” on the diversity surrounding Muslim women from Morocco to Indonesia. Moderated by Elizabeth Fernea, the panel included Denise Spellberg on “Gender in the Hadith and Qur’an;” Mounia Charrad on “Women’s Rights in Tunisia;” Kamran Aghaie on “Modern Iran—Women in Shi’a Muslim Rituals;” Gail Minault on “Muslim Women in South Asia;” Kamran Ali on “The Self and Reproductive Choice in Egypt;” and Keith Walters on “Changing Islamic Discourse of Gender.” Well over 100 people attended this event.

Presenting & Re-presenting Islam

In response to the increased interest in Islam following the September 11 tragedy, the University of Texas provided an opportunity for discussion of contemporary issues related to Islam. In an effort to provide a deeper understanding of Islam and Muslims around the world, the conference addressed issues of interest to teachers, students, the general public, and especially the challenge of teaching about Islam in American public schools. Issues on the representation of gender, pluralism and diversity, political implications of Islam, and the long-term effect of the terrorist attacks of September 11 were also addressed. A special session for K-12 educators was held on the first morning of the conference.

The conference was made possible by the generous support of the Dean of Liberal Arts, and was convened jointly by the Centers for Asian Studies, Middle Eastern Studies and Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies on March 21-22, 2002. In addi-
tion to the speakers from the faculty at the University of Texas, several speakers came from outside organizations (in alphabetical order): Salam al-Marayati, Muslim Public Affairs Council, Patrice Brodeur, Connecticut College, Farad Esack, College of William and Mary, Peter Gottschalk, Southwestern University, Sohail Hashmi, Mount Holyoke College, Sherman Jackson, The University of Michigan, Kathleen Moore, University of Connecticut, Shirin Sinnar, Stanford University Law School, and Nargis Virani, Washington University (St. Louis). Approximately 500 people attended one or more sessions at this conference.

Afghanistan: Cultural Loss and Reconstruction

A one-day symposium was held on April 26, 2002 to focus on the cultural upheavals in Afghanistan that have accompanied a period of tumultuous political change. For millions of Afghans, the experiences of war, exile, and suppression have profoundly altered the possibilities for cultural expression. Since the fall of the Taliban, Afghanistan has begun to re-define itself as a nation-state. Five distinguished specialists addressed the issues associated with this changed political landscape. The morning session focused on specific cultural forms the changes might take, with historian Catherine Asher of the University of Minnesota, ethnomusicologist Lorraine Sakata of UCLA, and folklorist Margaret Mills of Ohio State University, all specialists who have been to Afghanistan and conducted research there. In the afternoon, Alicia Luckstead described the educational activities of RAWA (Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan), an NGO working with women and children. Political scientist Mansour Farhang concluded the proceedings with a discussion of the inter-relationships between religion, culture and U.S. foreign policy in Central Asia.

Visiting Faculty

The Center has been privileged to host a Fulbright-Hays scholar from Afghanistan during the spring 2002 semester. Fatiha Hamitouche received her Masters and PhD in Linguistics at Essex University in England. Since then, she has been teaching linguistics at the University of Algiers. She came to UT to do research in sociolinguistics, looking at the field of language variation and comparing the American and Algerian contexts. She is working with Keith Walters in this field. During the spring semester, she gave talks to faculty and students on language variation in Algeria at the Anthropology department, and lectures on the changing status of women in Algeria at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, the Center for Women Studies, and the Department of Sociology.

Dr. Hamitouche is co-author of a textbook entitled Samples and Analysis of United States Literature aimed at university students, originally published in 1993 and again in 1997 in Algeria by the Office of Publication at the University of Algiers. She recently co-authored a new textbook that will appear in the fall 2002 called Introducing Linguistics: A Student-Friendly Approach. She also published articles on languages in Algeria, in 1999 in the Journal of Francophone Studies, Great Britain, “Juste Après la France” and “The Humanistic Approach in Language Teaching: Discussion of its Application,” published in Dialogue of Languages, CDELT, Cairo, Egypt in 1995.

Her research interests include sociolinguistic subjects, like language and identity, language and gender, language policy, languages and dialects, as well as women’s studies, culture, and various other issues on North Africa. She is currently working on a textbook on sociolinguistics for Algerian University students.

Major Slide Donation

The Center received a gift of about 3,000 slides on the Middle East, made by Mr. Peter Lillys of San Antonio. The slides come from the collection of his late brother William Lillys, an art historian and museum curator who made many visits to different parts of the Middle East over the years. The slides provide detailed photographic portraits of numerous historic sites and monuments, and represent a major addition to the Center’s slide collection, which is currently being digitized. The Center thanks Mr. Peter Lillys for his kind generosity.
Response to Events of September 11
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topics in which Professor Sut Jhally of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst spoke on teaching about the Palestinian situation in the context of the crisis.

Robert W. Hamilton Awards
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The faculty in Middle Eastern Studies was well represented among the remaining awards. Glenn Peers (Art History) won the $3,000 Hamilton Book Award for Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium, published by the University of California Press. Keith Walters (Linguistics and Middle Eastern Studies) won the $3,000 award for textbooks for Everything's on Argument, published by Bedford/St. Martin's Press and coauthored by John J. Ruszkiewicz (Rhetoric and Composition) and Andrea Lunsford (Stanford University).

Turkish Perspectives

Because of the events of September 11, the Mediterranean Crossroads Program 2002 was cancelled. The program was replaced with a two-week seminar based at Bogazici University in Istanbul entitled “Challenges of September 11: Turkish Perspectives.” Ten students were competitively selected for the program and departed May 29th for this intensive two-week seminar accompanied by Professors Abraham Marcus and Keith Walters. Students will have the opportunity to hear a variety of Turkish scholars lecture in English on how the events of September 11 changed the Turks’ perspective on themselves, their country, and its role in the Muslim world as well as the larger world community. Students will also have a chance to explore the city of Istanbul, a city of 14 million inhabitants and rich in cultural heritage.

The University of Texas at Austin
Center for Middle Eastern Studies
Austin, Texas 78712-1193 USA

Please take a moment to check your address as it appears above. If there are any changes, please make them on the label and return it to the Center for Middle Eastern Studies.