

Nigerian students and risky business

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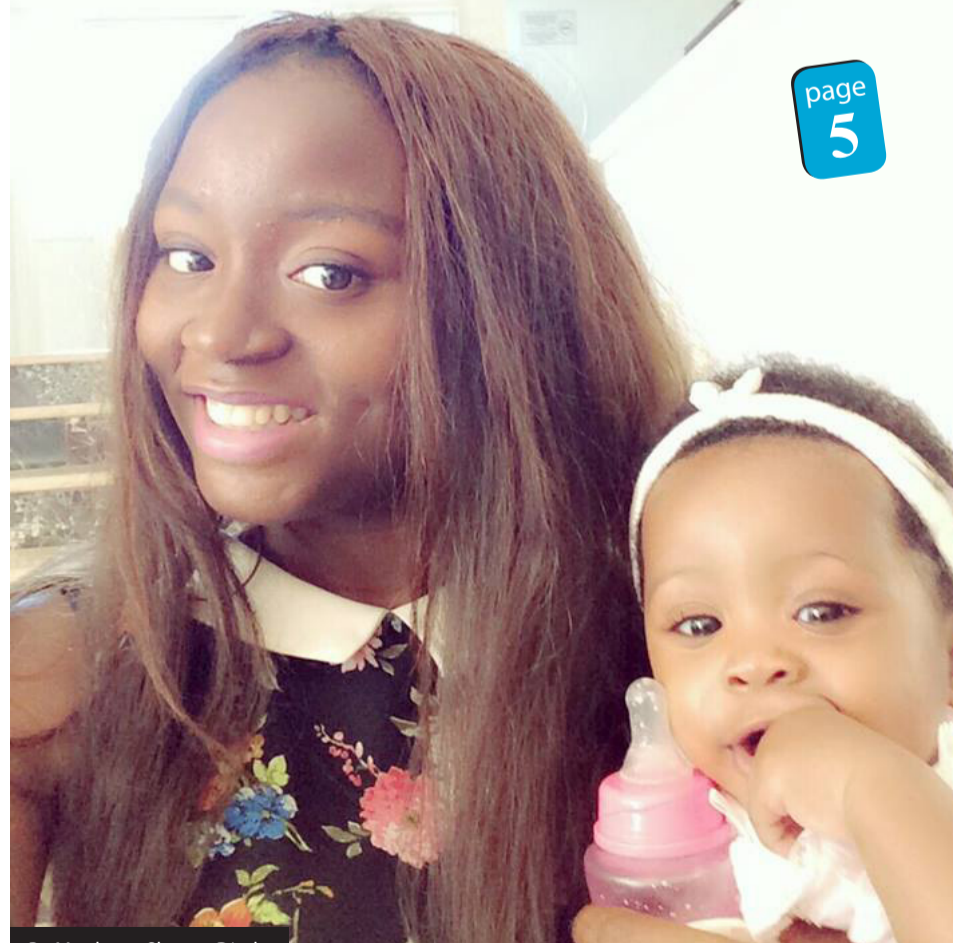
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Pursuing a degree as a student and a mother STUDENT MOTHERS in a foreign land

- I am highlighting here the courage and commitment of female students who are pursuing university degrees while also fulfilling the responsibilities and obligations they feel as mothers of children.
- These students have very often travelled long distances to grasp the opportunities higher education offers them – to improve their own life’s and ultimately, the lives of their children. Unfortunately, while pursuing their goals, they come into conflict with structural restrictions around them.



By Munbang Sheena Dimka

Motherhood is a great honor and privilege yet it is also synonymous with servant-hood. Every day, women are called upon to selflessly meet the needs of their families. The task of a student is challenging at the best of times! Study, attending classes and seminars, and do quizzes, homework, exams, term papers, and projects. When you add to this, a mother “workload” in caring for a child – feeding, bathing, carrying him/ her – and to this, add being in a foreign land and a different culture with different expectations and social norms! What a potentially overwhelming situation!

The number of “non-traditional” students – in this case, student mothers – is growing at EMU. On the one hand, this is great news: women with children are finding the courage and the energy to make the necessary commitment to transform their lives through education. On the other hand, it is important for the EMU community to recognize the huge toll that being both student and mother can take on a woman.

Some student mothers on campus are sharing their experiences and expressing the difficulties and demands they face although they are hesitant to speak ‘openly’. Concepts like “sacrifice” and “determination” come to mind when one listens to the stories of student mothers. Their courage is commendable and their struggles are an example to us all. Of course, being away from their extended families and their homes means that ‘traditional’ sources of support – psychological, cultural, and financial, are much more difficult, if not impossible, to receive. Students are thrown back on their own confidence and energy. When there is a problem, which of course will arise from time to time, it can affect attendance in class, student moral and perhaps place extraordinary stress on an individual.



Xenophobia and “300: The rise of an Empire”

By Jeiran Olyanasab



Ugliness, with a sense of beauty

Biutiful (2010)
Director : Alejandro González Iñárritu

Contains Spoilers

Erfan Siavashi

Gambling in Cyprus: Nigerian students and risky business

By Hope Ohimoren

In northern Cyprus there are many opportunities and possibilities available for students. First, there is the educational opportunity – to study with scholars from around the world and to meet with students from many different cultures, and countries. But there is a potential pitfall for the unsuspecting student, far from home for the first time, and experiencing that “free to be me” syndrome: Gambling is legal in Cyprus.

So many students have come from Nigeria where the stereotype is that gamblers are bad, hoodlums, thieves, and simply “social deviants”. This “stereotype” was taught to us in our communities and had the tendency to keep us from gambling or at least to make us suspicious of it. But here, in Cyprus not only are we free from the constraints of “back home” but we have to deal with the fact that gambling is legal here – and we do not have the social

support that local students probably have (whose parents probably tell them all of the negative pitfalls of gambling just as our parents did).

We need some ‘sensitivity seminars’ about the dangers associated with gambling – and we need to support each other in finding alternative ways of spending our precious time while in this country. As students, our goal should be to “empower” ourselves – not lose our power to an industry that is set up specifically to take our money away from us!

I am afraid that a large number of Nigerian students – mostly males – have succumbed to the temptation of the betting houses! In fact, they may be visiting the betting houses more often than they are visiting their Facebook pages! We could call this an “epidemic”.

What happens when a student spends the money that was intended for school fees, on gambling houses? What does it mean when



students spend more time studying how to be successful gamblers – how to “beat the house” – than they spend studying their subjects in the university – learning “how to be successful in life”? What does it say about our capacity to work in our own best interests?

A university like EMU has so much to offer the student when we think from the perspective of the “average” student or the “normal” student, but it is extremely important to start now and consider the student-in-deep-water and the student-who-got-stuck in a cycle of addiction. We really need to add to the infrastructure of EMU HELP STATIONS, offer seminars, and

educate students on the potential dangers that they need to approach responsibly as they take up their rightful positions as adult-students of higher education.

With freedom (from home) comes responsibility and that is not an easy transition to make. Perhaps the university can make the transition a little less difficult with self-help courses or lectures or seminars.

None of us started our journey with the goal of becoming trapped in a cycle of gambling addiction. Those who fell into the trap may well need some help getting out and back onto the road to success.

Xenophobia and “300: The rise of an Empire”



By Jeiran Olyanasab

When a movie includes socio-political message about other nations, the effects on movie-goers can be both subtle and pervasive. Actually, the unsophisticated layperson engaging with movies as mere ‘entertainment’ are not attuned to questions of history, society and politics as expressed in the films and therefore fail to scrutinize such content in movies.

Among all kinds of effects that movies can have on viewers, xenophobic effects have the most potential to induce racial hatred and ethnocentrism. One of these movies was “300” which was released on December 9, 2006 and was directed by Zack Snyder. The film was based on a comic series by Frank Miller. This movie is about the Thermopylae battle in (480 B.C) between the Persian and Spartan corps during the Achaemenid Empire. While a “story” that audiences watch for entertainment purposes, it is also an attempt to develop historical facts; it is inclined to convey vitriolic messages about Persia. Touraj Daryaee, Professor of history at University of California, Irvine, in his critical report on “300” said this movie upheld Samuel P. Huntington’s (1927- 2008) prominence approach “the clash of civilizations” (1993, 1996). According to this notion, the main roots for conflicting among nations

are religious and cultural differences. Also, he deeply considered the standardization and paternalization of culture in shaping public opinion. 8 years later, in 2014, the 300: The rise of Empire has been released. This latest film, directed by Noam Murro, revolves around the battle of Artemisium between Xerxes’s army (480 BC) commanded by Artemisia (Greek Queen), who gave service and advice to the Persian king Xerxes. In order to consider this film more deeply, we had an online interview with Mr. Farhang Jahaanbakhsh: Researcher in Historical-Political Psychology and an expert of the Achaemenid and Greek history.

What do you think as a historian about both “300” and the rise of Empire 300 movies?

Most of the historical scripts do not reflect detailed viewpoints of historians instead, it can be based on shared believes of historians that coherent to credible resources of history and archeological studies, albeit all information would be regulated with screenwriting techniques. A professional director endeavor to get advice from historian expertise and consultants in order to give realistic structure to a historical subject or adventure as much as possible. According to this introduction it is hard to attribute the movie in a documentary

historical framework because, on the one hand, it has no true historical documented content and, on the other hand, the dominance of political ideologies are stronger than other aspects. Also, haste and inaccuracy in preparing the movie indicates that this movie has more value as a political tool.

Please, tell a bit about inaccuracy! What do you mean about inaccuracy in the movie?

The basic inaccuracy in the movie pertains to its content which underlines the propagation of violence and offers paternalizing visual stereotypes.

Despite, many critical issues surrounding “300”, why did they produced 300: the rise of Empire again?

Good question, because this second one – 300: the rise of Empire – sought to improve and cover some errors in “300”, maybe in Obama’s Presidential time there have been some changes from radical Republican Party toward Democrats. Having said that, the dominant political goals in both movies has not changed.

You said 300: the rise of Empire, to some extent corrects errors of “300”, would you please explain more?

The female protagonist character Artemisia, in the rise of Empire, has the main role of agitating the battle between Persia and Greece. That is, without her incitement, Persia would never have invaded Athens. The war was due to her seeking revenge from Athenians. So, it seems that there is an effort in the movie to replace feminine love and hatred role with Iran’s political power role. However, there is no correspondence between the adventure in the movie and historical fact. Hence, Artemisia had no immense role in history. The movie represents her as more important than she actually was. Also this movie convicted the West and blamed Western woman. Then, the movie perhaps unconsciously or consciously, represented Iran’s greatness. It seems there is a paradox in the movie: on one hand it sought to overwhelm

Persians while on the other hand, it elated Persians indirectly. Both aspects depended on the central role of Artemisia.

In the part of the movie where Artemisia furiously said “... because my heart is Persian” and beheaded an Athenian soldier: is it possible to say that this phrase diminishes the movie’s paradox?

According to the movie, Artemisia’s heart is filled with hatred because of her childhood condition and the impact of Athenian violence against her family. That is why she tried to help Xerxes demolish Athenians. So, her vengeful heart became Persian but her amorous heart made love to Themistocles and absorbed him for sex to get the land of Athena. She wanted to kill two birds with one stone: Persia’s victory and Athena’s seizure.

In the final scenes of the movie, Artemisia tries to persuade Xerxes to avoid the battle of salamis because she predicts the Persians’ inevitable defeat. Does it mention Greek achievement of wisdom?

Unfortunately, there are no tokens to Greek achievements of wisdom and philosophy in the content of the movie. Hence, Artemisia’s forethought about the consequence of the battle of Salamis was because of her geopolitical knowledge as a commander.

Did both “300” and “300: The Rise of an Empire” propagate xenophobia?

Both movies used the concept of barbarian in the ancient Greek to create an “other” against a constructed identity of the West while some historians such as Xenophon, Herodotus(484-425 BC) and even Thucydides (460 - 395 BC) quite often had positive viewpoints on Persia. Having to say the concept of “other” and be worry about “other” originated in this concept of the “barbarian” which Greeks attributed to other nations and consequently evaluated the difference and conflict between the West and East. So, these movies develop a sense of xenophobia as if “others” are evil.

Lessons from Burkina Faso's "Black Spring"

By Femi Onifade

In December 2010, a young Tunisian Mohammed Bouazizi set himself ablaze in protest against government oppression, injustice and the poor quality of life in Tunisia. In December 2010, a young Tunisian Mohammed Bouazizi set himself ablaze in protest against government oppression, injustice and the poor quality of life in Tunisia. Bouazizi's self-immolation set the tone for what became known as the "Arab Spring" which led to the exit of five leaders in the Arab world and long-drawn civil wars in Libya and Syria. As Tunisians (most especially the family and friends of Mohammed Bouazizi) prepare to mark the fourth year of his death and the 'birth' of the Arab Spring, citizens of Burkina Faso (a landlocked and poor country in West Africa) have taken their destinies into their own hands and have risen to sack their president Blaise Compaoré. Their uprising has been termed "Black Spring" and "West African Spring" by commentators across the globe. Mr. Compaoré had ruled the country for twenty-seven years and his tenure was due to expire by 2015. However, he sought an amendment to the constitution which would have allowed him to stay in office indefinitely. His almost got the amendment which he sought because his political party had an overwhelming majority in the parliament. However, the people aborted the amendment by storming the parliament and burning the building; they also called for the resignation of Mr. Compaoré. Following the mass demonstrations and calls for his resignation, Blaise Compaoré dropped the tenure-extension plans but insisted on seeing out his tenure through 2015. The protesters insisted that he must step-down immediately. By the end of October, the former army officer stepped down and the army stepped in to "restore order" and oversee a democratic transition program. African politics and power relations often

defy logic. While most African countries are theoretically (constitutionally) democratic, the practice of governance on the continent cannot be more ironical. Democratic practices are alien to African societies. In most African societies, leaders rule like monarchs and they are treated as gods. The monarchical tendency of African politics is observable in the succession politics of Togo, Gabon, and Congo Democratic Republic where the current presidents were sworn in after the deaths of their fathers. In Equatorial Guinea, the president's son is one of the vice-presidents. This makes him almost certain to succeed his father when he retires or dies in office. Before Gadhafi was swept out by the Arab Spring, he had steadied his son Saif Al-Islam Gadhafi to take over. Sitting-tight in office or clinging to power at any cost is an albatross for most African leaders. The sudden ouster of Blaise Compaoré presents some valuable lessons for other veteran African leaders most of whom can be called "career presidents". These veteran presidents include: Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe), Paul Biya (Cameroon), and Teodoro Obiang Nguema (Equatorial Guinea). Others are: Jose Eduardo Dos Santos (Angola), Denis Sassou Nguesso (Republic of the Congo), Yoweri Museveni, (Uganda) and Omar Hassan al-Bashir, (Sudan). None of those presidents mentioned in this piece have spent less than 25 years as president. The African Union has given the military government in Burkina Faso an ultimatum to return the country to civil rule within two weeks or face economic sanctions. The presidents of Ghana (John Mahama), Nigeria (Goodluck Jonathan) and Senegal (MackySall) have visited Ouagadougou to assist a transitional civilian government. However, the interim military leader Lt. Col. Isaac Zida has called the bluff of the African Union claiming that the African Union had failed Burkina Faso in the past.



I find the terms of the African Union very interesting. A handful of African leaders came to power through popular uprisings and they have been in office since then. They seek to prevent military coups in their own countries in future by setting a precedent with the Burkina Faso uprising. If the AU succeeds in installing an interim civilian government, they would dissuade the military from shooting their ways to power on the continent. This would secure the powers of these rulers. The African Heads of State seem to be selectively oblivious of the fact that the Burkina Faso Army only stepped in after civil society groups and opposition politicians had mobilized the youth to sack president Compaoré. The manner in which the youth of Burkina Faso orchestrated the departure of their long-serving dictator should encourage those who are discerning among the veterans start to begin planning for retirement. If it could

happen in Burkina Faso, then it could happen anywhere in sub-Saharan Africa. With widespread poverty, illiteracy and unemployment (especially among the youth) it is obvious that most African leaders are sitting on kegs of gunpowder which could explode without prior notice. Youths in other African countries should also draw inspiration from the events in Burkina Faso. They should learn to stand up to injustice like the youths in Burkina Faso. However I find the peaceful social disobedience by students in Hong Kong more appealing. But I must admit that no two political scenarios are the same and a strategy that worked in Asia may not work in Africa. Irrespective of the pattern of protest they chose to take, youths in countries under the stranglehold of dictators must rise up to reclaim their futures and make the dictators realize that they are sitting on ticking time bombs.

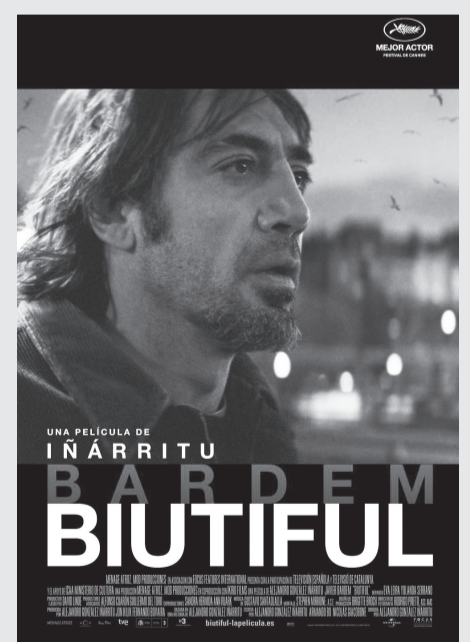
Ugliness, with a sense of beauty

By Erfan Siavashi

Uxbal works as a middle man who finds work for illegal immigrants from China and Africa. Uxbal tries to make a living for his two children while caught up in a back and forth with his bi-polar prostitute wife. He is also a spiritual medium who can talk with the recently deceased. When diagnosed with terminal cancer he has only a few months to live, which puts him in a desperate situation to provide proper care for his children after he's gone. Uxbal's Brother Tito is in the drug business and sleeps with Uxbal's wife Marambra. There is a Senegalese family Ekweme and Ige, and Ekweme is one of the illegal immigrants and the closest thing to a friend he has. As Uxbal's health deteriorates, he begs Ige (who now lives with Uxbal and his children following the arrest and deportation of Ekweme) to take care of his children after his death. *Biutiful* is about a man tangled in the turmoil, poverty and suffering that most of us would rather avoid. His life is saturated with misery: no permanent job and always one step away from homelessness (in one scene he looks out of his window just in time to see a homeless man in front of his house lying on the ground). Uxbal has two small children that

he cannot provide well for (they eat the same food every day), and a mentally unstable prostitute wife who he still loves. Uxbal's world is filled with sorrow and evil, and everywhere we look there's nothing but corruption and the degradation of humanity. There is not a single happy and fulfilled person in the whole world, and everyone we meet is on a continuum of decay – floating on an ocean of pain and darkness. While he is a flawed person, he does his best to keep his world together, to do right by others and not take advantage of their awful situations. Uxbal offers to start over with his wife and tries to get Ekweme out of jail. When that fails he brings Ige to his own home. He even bargains on behalf of street vendors and the Chinese illegal immigrants. He is trapped and the world is swallowing him into the abyss. In such a situation, what he does is admirable: he tries to balance the inevitable evil he has to deal with, and the flame inside him that burns with an urge to help others and do right by them. He has every reason in the world to be justifiably cruel, senseless and indifferent to others, but that is not who he is; maybe he is messed up on the surface, but he is also kind and elegant

on the inside (just like the way he spells *Biutiful*). He tries not to too hard on Ekwe (a street vendor) and ignores him selling drugs, which eventually leads to his arrest and deportation. He took pity on Chinese workers and provided them with heaters, which ended up being the cause of their death. It's like the world is so messed up that even when he tries to do good, it eventually leads to something even more tragic than the heartbreaking reality. This is a world that even a few good intentions turn out to be a detour to misery. Even though, he is resisting to all the pressures to blend in and let go of his moral codes, and everywhere he turns there's nothing but filth and darkness. He finally finds his redemption in his daughter when he lies down beside her and gives her the ring while the camera slowly moves to their reflection in the mirror. The shot in the mirror seems to imply a different dimension of spiritual connection between father and daughter and his kindness and purity now continues in his daughter. He then rejoins his dead father in a jungle-like location covered by heavy snow, which although pure and innocent, does not radiate a sense of security, warmth and relief: We cannot ignore the cold



Biutiful (2010)
Director : Alejandro González Iñárritu

and loneliness of the atmosphere there, which is a pit-stop to the other world of spirits. As the film's Director, Inárritu, has said, "Even if darkness seems to be everywhere, *Biutiful* offers many touches of hope. I'd even say it's my most optimistic film. Uxbal's character is full of light. He puts a lot into organizing his life, helping his children, loving other people."

Gordafarid, the first female Naghal

By Elnaz Nasehi

“... One of those within the fortress was a woman . . . named Gordafarid. When she learned that their leader had allowed himself to be taken, she found his behaviour so shameful that her rosy cheeks became as black as pitch with rage. With not a moment's delay she dressed herself in a knight's armour, gathered her hair beneath a helmet, and rode out from the fortress, a lion eager for battle. She roared at the enemy ranks, “Where are your heroes, your warriors, your tried and tested chieftains?” (Ferdowsi, Shāhnāmeḥ)

Shahnameh is the Persian epic poetic opus written by Ferdowsi in the eleventh century and is regarded as one of the most important pillars of ethnic cultural identity of modern Iran. Shahnameh's epic-mythical stories has been told and retold, and have survived through different forms of dramatic written and oral traditions. Each culture has its own unique storytelling traditions that revive its myths, epics, legends and folklore stories. One of the most important Iranian storytelling traditions, despite its declining popularity, is “Naghali/Naqqāli”, a solo performance in a form of dramatic story-telling of historical or fictitious narratives. Naghali inscribed on the “List of Intangible Cultural Heritage” by the Sixth Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO in 2011. Iranian Naghali's resource is Shahname and its epic-mythical stories.

Besides many epic-mythical heroes in Shahnameh, Gordafarid is an important epic heroine who fought against Sohrab to delay the enemy troops marching on Persia. For centuries, Gordafarid has been a symbol of bravery for Iranian women. Today, a contemporary Iranian Gordafarid emerged who articulates new meanings of wisdom and resistance with this epic symbolic heroine. This article is the outcome of an interview conducted with Gordafarid for Gündem.

The birth of the modern Gordafarid

Her name was Fateme Habibzad (born in 1976) before she has been titled Gordafarid by her masters for her bravery as the first women in the history of Naqqāli in Iran who dared enter the domain of Naghali which was previously male-dominated.

According to Unesco's report “Naqqāli is the oldest form of dramatic performance in Iran and has long played an important role in society, from the courts to the villages. The performer – the Naqqāl – recounts stories in verse or prose accompanied by gestures and movements, and sometimes instrumental music and painted scrolls. Naqqāls function both as entertainers and as bearers of Persian literature and culture, and need to be acquainted with local cultural expressions, languages and dialects, and traditional music”. For decades, men came together in public hangouts such as coffeehouses, tents of nomads, and ancient caravanserais to watch the performance of the Naghal (storyteller). One day, Fateme Habibzad decided to break this tradition and penetrate into the ex-

clusive domain of Naghali. Gordafarid, previously known as Fateme, mentions that her interest in historical-mythical stories is rooted in her childhood. She says that this is why she decided to study archaeology and cultural heritage. She says that she felt the necessity of reviving this form of stage art and was encouraged to step into the realm of Naghali, a traditional solo performance on the verge of extinction.

Breaking the male domination

Not only were the venues of Naghali male-dominated: the skills Naghali entails including exaggerated bodily movements, exclude women from participating actively in this form of performance. Gordafarid mentions that because of the individualistic nature of this performance, entering into the restricted circle of morsheds (Masters of Naghali) and winning their trust is not an easy task for a totally new male learner let alone a female. However, despite all suffering and tribulation, Fateme gained the trust and turns into a venerable respected apprentice of Naghali's morsheds as they generously share their experiences with her and bestow on her the title of Gordafarid after an epic heroine of Shahname.

She patiently followed the traditions and launched her 12 years of endeavor of becoming the apprentice of morshed Torabi, one of the most prestigious Naghal. Talking about her experiences, Gordafarid says that in order to watch morshed Torabi's performances, she had to accompany him through the most male-dominated coffeehouses, sports houses, and soufi houses of Iran. She says that her thirst for knowledge of the deep-rooted tradition of naghali provoked her to travel around different provinces of Iran from north to south and west to east in order to discover the field and her unique position within it. Gordafarid says that she was aware of the difference of her body and her voice as a woman. She practiced equitation and archery to become more familiar with the world of epic-athletic sports. She emphasizes that all these experiences go through the filter of her body and voice. She is then able to keep the main characteristics of Naghali as a form of stage epic art while simultaneously find her unique style in her performances in order to avoid blind imitation of traditional Naghal.

Gordafarid's contribution to the field, however, goes beyond her performance as a mere naghal but soon, based on her education and experiences, she has held classes

on naghali and turned into a researcher in the field of Naghali, Shahnameh, folklore culture, Iranology, cultural heritage and national traditions of storytelling.

The moment of international performances Despite all her success, Gordafarid complains about the ignorance and negligence of the Iranian theatre authorities who are careless about the importance of this cultural heritage. After her recognition by Naghali's morsheds, she was filled with creative ideas to improve the condition of naghali and to revive it as an important Iranian cultural heritage. However, while she was inside Iran she couldn't actualize any of her plans. Gordafarid, who has been performing in different cities and villages around Iran, now is following her dreams of improving Naghali by performing around the world. According to her experiences in international performances in Europe, Asia, and America she believes that despite the language barriers, Shahname and Naghali have the potential to touch the hearts of international audiences.

Gordafarid, as a modern Iranian woman shows that despite the systematic exclusion and limitation, there is still a possibility of making a change as she overcame all obstacles in order to transform a local declining tradition into an international growing art. Gordafarid's story is a combination of bravery, wisdom and resistance.

“Naqqāli requires considerable talent, a retentive memory and the ability to improvise with skill to captivate an audience. The Naqqāls wear simple costumes, but may also don ancient helmets or armoured jackets during performances to help recreate battle scenes Until recently, Naqqāls were deemed the most important guardians of folktales, ethnic epics and Iranian folk music. Naqqāli was formerly performed in coffeehouses, tents of nomads, houses, and historical venues such as ancient caravanserais. However, a decline in the popularity of coffeehouses, combined with new forms of entertainment, has resulted in diminishing interest in Naqqāli performance. The aging of master performers (morsheds) and the decreasing popularity among younger generations have caused a steep drop in the number of skilled Naqqāls, threatening the survival of this dramatic art”. (Report of the Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO, 2011)

Salim Hamza Ringim is the new NSS President

By Hope Ohiomoren and Edith Ifeoma Ajah

Nigerian Students' Society (EMU Chapter) has elected Salim Hamza Ringim as its new President. Ringim has defeated three other candidates to emerge as the new President in a keenly contested election held at Rauf Denktaş Hall on November 14, 2014.

The incoming President, an undergraduate student of the Department of Economics at the Faculty of Business and Economics, lost to the outgoing president in a keenly contested election last year.

Salim Ringim polled 340 votes to emerge the winner, defeating the incumbent president Samuel Omale and two others. Jubril Arogundade polled 197 votes to emerge second while Samuel Omale polled 110 votes and Philip Oshiohue trailed with 86 votes. In his acceptance speech, the President-elect thanked all Nigerian students for entrusting him with their mandate and promised not to fail them. He then called on all Nigerians in EMU to join hands with his administration in their quest to

reform the NSS. Meanwhile Philip Oshiohue has called on Nigerian students to support the new President. In a statement released by his campaign team, he thanked his supporters for their solidarity saying "We did our best as men but the will of God was made."

Salim Hamza Ringim has really shown today that he is a man of the people. I call on all Nigerian students to support his government. God bless us all."

The defeated president Samuel Omale commended all the presidential aspirants for their display of maturity and spirit of sportsmanship in the build-up to the elections. He promised to work in the interest of Nigerian students in his private capacity whenever the need arises.

Finally, he implored all Nigerian students at EMU to support the new administration by fully participating in all activities of the Nigerian Students' Society.



My pen is mightier than the sword

By Edith Ifeoma Ajah

Education "for all" is the most powerful tool you can use to change the world. But some developing countries consider female education not worthy of attention. This means everyday millions of girls miss their opportunity for a bright future made possible by a good education. The barriers to education facing girls are economic, cultural, religious, tradition and safety. It is important that we overcome these barriers and struggle against them if young

girls are to receive an education for life. Do you know educating girls is an effective tool for doing away with poverty? Educating young girls can end the cycle of illiteracy in just one generation. Educating girls can help in the building of healthier, wealthier and educated communities and it can reduce the significant inequalities in the world. All hands must be on deck to increase the chances of improving the educational opportunities for young girls. Working

together toward this goal will have a greater impact on the health and economy of future generations and also, more broadly, for our communities. "Educate a boy and you educate an individual. Educate a girl and you educate a community" My pen is mightier than a sword and so is yours – let us use our pens to tell new stories about the equal rights of young girls to receive the education that will prepare them for productive, successful and meaningful lives.

A student and a mother away from home

By Munbang Sheena Dimka

The 'non-traditional student' is a category that we should take seriously as such students are in need of the academic community's support as they seek to change the circumstances of their lives through the acquisition of knowledge. As the number of student mothers increases, it will be important to consider additional university services – services that, one day, we can hope will "go without saying" or be part of the normal fabric of university life.

Things like affordable childcare – so that mother and child are not negatively affected by heavy student workload. We have to remember that not all student mothers might afford the cost of private nannies for their children or the cost of a private crèche. We should expect that as the plight of student mothers and their children moves more into the consciousness of the university community, allocations for affordable childcare will become the norm. From the university point of view, this might even prove an attractive environment to attract more "non-traditional" students who have always thought about their desire for an education but were worried because they have a child or children. Let's remember that as a university – an intellectual community – it's our job to be one step ahead of the society. We need to recognize that being a mother has often been unfairly treated – it is the unpaid, unrecognized and often unnoticed work that women do. And let's not pretend that this is not work crucial to the continuation of society. We are studying to become the proud success stories as graduates of EMU. Surely we can also start working now to become proud of the way that our university treats the student-mothers with children? Perhaps this is the right time to begin developing a scheme for student mothers? EMU, one step ahead?

You and your cell phone

By Edith Ifeoma Ajah

Many of us have embraced our cell phones the way we do our friends – but without considering the possible consequences. Others have gone so far as to see their cell phone as their one-and-only friend – spending so much of their day in communication with the technology. What is the potential health effect of all this close connection with cell phone technology? The following are just some of the negative effects that cell phone have on our health.

Neurodegenerative disorder: the harmful radiation emitted by cell phone can damage DNA, which affects neurological functions; also causes sleep disorder, Alzheimer and Parkinson's disease.

Reduced fertility: the ringing of a cell phone in the pocket of a young male can damage sperm and decreases sperm concentration. The cell phone gets heated up when in use and increase the temperature in and around the crotch.

Heart risks: radiation from mobile phones can cause irregularities in normal functioning hearts. Cell phone radiation forces red blood cells to drip hemoglobin which results in heart disease.

Brain cancer: the brain slowly absorbs the radiation emitted by cell phones and this exposure to the radiation leaves the brain at risk of brain cancer.

Risks to the unborn: high usage of cell phones during pregnancy slows down the rate of brain development of the fetus or may lead to hyperactivity.

Increases risk of illnesses in your immune system: germs are not only contracted by lack of hand cleaning but also from the oily, greasy, residue you may see on your cell phone screen after daily usage.

Increases the risk of chronic pains: the part of your body that operates the cell phone is your hands: chatting, sending e-mails and text messages, which are usually fast and repetitive, can cause pain to your joints.

Increases the risk eye vision problem: mobile phone screens are smaller than computer screens. When using the phone frequently, your eyes are likely to be strained.

Increases stress levels: the frequent ringing, vibrating alerts and reminders can be a risk to your mental health.

Nomo phobia: Anxiety and negative physical symptoms overshadow you when you realize that you left your cell phone at home when you get to the university.

Impaired concentration: use of mobile phones reduces the ability to concentrate and therefore accidents are more likely to take place.

So now we know how dangerous cell phones can be to our health. While it is too much to expect that we can stop using them, we might consider minimizing our use of them.



Gündem

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COMMITTEE OF ADVISORS

Prof. Dr. Süleyman İrvan
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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Ayça Atay

ENGLISH SECTION EDITOR

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mashoed Bailie

DESIGN CONSULTANT

Engin Aluç

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Sertaç Özdemir

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Mert Yusuf Özlük

CONTRIBUTORS

Edith Ifeoma Ajah
Elnaz Nasehi
Erfan Siavashi
Femi Onifade
Hope Ohiomoren
Jeiran Olyanasab
Munbang Sheena Dimka

Eastern Mediterranean University, Faculty of
Communication and Media Studies

Tel : 0392 630 25 70

E-mail : gundem@emu.edu.tr

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