Breakout Session 1: 
Masculinities

1) Asefeh SADEGHI
The formation of the domination of masculine images in the recent advertisements in Iran

Abstract
The sudden and rapid changes of urban space by all sorts of advertisements in Iran may not surprise foreign visitors who had not seen Iran during the war. But for the people who remember it, the unexpected emergence of images is still a novel experience. Especially when the new arrivals are rife with unfamiliar figures such that their meanings, forms and backgrounds can’t be easily identified according to the norms of the culture. The same situation is applied to TV adverts where the idiosyncratic images were first found, such as: close – up shots of an obviously handsome man, lying by a beach, touching his hair with an undoubtedly feminine gesture, all for advertising a brand of shampoo.

The dramatic increase of this sort of advertisements poses many questions such as: Why in the Iranian mass media a man is represented as an object of desire instead of a woman? If the Islamic rules ban public flirting, why the masculine flirting is tolerated and the feminine one is repressed? What are the functions of masculine images that have pervaded the social representations? How these representations have been formed? What are the social effects of turning a man into the only visible object of desire such that the whole society identify with him?

This essay sets out to examine the formation of the domination of masculine images in the recent advertisements in Iran. The analysis is based on the notion of subjectivity in the discourse theory by Laclau and Mouffe. It addresses a historical period that has started from the 1979’s revolution to present time. The first part of this essay considers the subject position in the revolutionary Islamic discourse in Iran according to the images of advertisements. In the next part the analysis concentrates on the disruption of the discursive structure and the failure of its existing identities to respond to emerging social demands. The fragmentation of the identities took place through the confrontation of the lack of discourse with the dislocating event of globalization. The clash resulted in the radical economical changes in the recent decades. The third part identifies the construction of political subjectivities which has led to the proliferation of social identities in the advertisements. Five categories of masculine images will be examined which are encoded with new representations of men.

In fact, this essay attempts to answer one of the crucial questions which the critics of IRI ostensibly put forward and that is how life can go on under the severe social suppression. It will be demonstrated through a discursive analysis of advertisements that the production of novel identities take place along the suppression and that is the key reason why the suppression is relatively successful.

In addition, the essay highlights the social consequences of the emergence of new identities. It illuminates how the proliferation of the new figures fulfils a number of psychical and social demands while engendering new type of lack. The lack mainly addresses the absence of feminine figures and impacts of pervading identifications with masculine pictures.

Biography
I was born in London, UK, 1980 and was raised both in the United Kingdom and Islamic Republic of Iran. With the passage of time I became interested in art and humanities which led me to study Persian Literature in Allameh Tabatabaie University in Tehran (2000-2004). The BA provided me with a broad knowledge of Iranian written culture and its main themes and tendencies. During the BA years I became interested in Critical Theory as it provides a unique perspective to the textual studies and the
relation between text, subjectivity, society, history and politics. Accordingly, I studied Critical Theory and Cultural Studies in the University of Nottingham (2006-2008) which engaged my writings with the issues such as discourse analysis, identity politics and globalization. In addition, my choice of text gradually shifted from the literary to the visual focusing primarily on the contemporary topics. This has led me to translate essays related to the current documentary cinema mainly published in www.Fakouhi.com. Currently, I teach literary criticism and courses related to textual analysis in the English Department of Azad University. In addition, I am in the process of translating a collection of articles edited by Stuart Hall entitled Who Needs Identity.

2) Mehri HONARBIN-HOLLIDAY

Masculinities in Urban Iran

Abstract
The aim of this paper is to examine the lives and perceptions of young men in Tehran reflecting on the notion of masculinity in Iran in the 21st century. This research builds on work conducted for my book, Becoming Visible in Iran; Women in Contemporary Iranian Society (2008). The aim here is to provide a fuller and multi-perspective picture of young men’s perceptions of themselves and a deeper understanding of what masculinity might mean according to their lived experiences and developing youth cultures in the urban space in Iran. Projecting their personal accounts regarding the increasing socio-economic pressures, and the memory of the war and catastrophic loss of lives in the aftermath of the Iran-Iraq war, the research analyses the meanings attached to masculinity and demonstrates that the lives and perceptions of young men need to be understood in terms of masculinities. Just as it is the case for young women’s femininities in Iran, the paper argues that the idea of masculinity in modern and Muslim Iran is neither monolithic nor particularly influenced by the State.

The paper will develop the importance of these understandings of masculinities within the framework of three trajectories. The first is the impact of the legacy of the Iran-Iraq war and the young men’s perceptions of themselves as men in a post-war Iran. The second trajectory is reflections on the existing powerful heritage of classical Persian literature, whether in relation to ‘bazm va razm’, chivalry and pleasure, as portrayed in Ferdowsi’s Epic of the Kings the Shahnameh, or the school of love in Rumi’s Divan-e Shams. These supreme literary works display profound male aesthetics, which it will be argued would meet with the sensibilities and sensualities displayed in cultural and artistic practices and expression of young men in the contemporary period. The third trajectory is the idea of an Iranian cosmopolitanism in urban Tehran, where ethnicities, belief systems and modernity intersect.

The paper draws on inter-disciplinary methodologies; it uses visual material, art DVD and images from Tehran, as well as extracts from interviews to reflect on the above and the position of Iranian youth in the globalised world. The paper thus contributes to existing bodies of research contradicting misplaced Western imagination about Muslim Iran, and the implications of being a man 30 years of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Biography
Dr. Mehri Honarbin-Holliday is an Iranian born academic who lives and works in England. She is a Senior Research Fellow in international education at Canterbury Christ Church University, and affiliated to the London Middle East Institute. She is also a practicing artist and works interdisciplinary exploring the intersections of gender, identity, and education. She is the author of Becoming Visible in Iran: Women in Contemporary Iranian Society (2008). Visual culture is integral to Mehri’s work; she has exhibited her video and fired clay installations in Iran, Britain, Mexico, and the United States and is the recipient of the 2007 national award from the Art and Culture Secretariat at Tehran Municipality. Her Current research projects include forms in masculinities and patriarchy in Iran for a new book, and EU-wide inter-university ESREA project for Canterbury Christ Church University.
3) Mamali SHAFAHI

Art and the representation of masculinity

Abstract

Biography