Abstract
Can we laugh at war in the Islamic Republic of Iran? The Iran-Iraq war (1980-1989) is probably one of the most important elements of the mythological grounding of the Islamic regime, maybe as important as the Revolution of 1979 and which perhaps tries to overshadow it. Mocking war (the Sacred Defence as we say in Iran) and even more the volunteers corps (basiji), means opening a breach within the strong hero-making representations that have been built since the beginning of the conflict and that are still at work in Iran. It is, however, what Iranian cinema will start to do from 1996 on. In the history of war cinema in the world, and even if a few countries made comedies very soon after the breaking out of the war (specially in the US during the First World War with films such as Shoulder Arms or Laurel & Hardy), the majority of them had to wait a very long time before being able to laugh at war and desanctify it or even dare to criticize it.

With the analysis of Leili ba man ast (Leili is with me) by Kamal Tabrizi (1996) and Ekhrajiha (the Expelled) by Ma'sud Dehnamaki (2007), this lecture explores the iconoclastic representations of war that were elaborated in Iran and which opened a critical distance regarding this event, and thus maybe criticized it at a time where any criticism of the Iran-Iraq war was still very timid in the Iranian public space. Before these two comedies, some films had already taken a critical distance from the official representations of war, but none of them were as direct as these two films or obtained such public success in a young generation that had grown up during the war, in the cult of martyrdom, and does not really know, still today, how to deal with such a heritage.

We venture the hypothesis that the recourse to comedy and the burlesque is a decisive element for the creation of a critical distance from the official representations of war. And maybe more than being a criticism of war (they are not anti-war films), these two films fight against the official representations of war itself. Thus, we will analyse how an "abnormal character", a body which resists the logic of the warfront is « mis en scène » in these two comedies, how these films hijack the cinematographic codes of war cinema elaborated in Iran, and point a finger at those warriors who were in fact profiteers for personal gain.

This lecture will screen film extracts.

Biography
Agnès Devictor is senior lecturer at Université d’Avignon et des pays de Vaucluse and member of the Laboratory of research « Culture and Communication ». She wrote her Phd. in comparative political science on « The Public policy of culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran, example of cinema (1979-1997) » and stayed 4 years in Iran (1994-1998) to study in the most important institutions of the Iranian cinema. She organized different programs on Iranian cinema in Europe, such as the first integral of Kiarostami’s films in Locarno in 1995, "Une modernité à l'iranienne" in Festival d'Automne à Paris, 2000, "The Iranian cinema go to war” in Fribourg International Film Festival (2006)…. Since 2006, she is in charge of the Program “Cinema – Images” of the French Institute of Research in Iran.

She wrote Politique du cinéma iranien, de l'ayatollah Khoméyni au président Khâtami, CNRS Editions, 2004 and participated to different books as a co-writer. Recently, she signed "Shahid Morteza Avini, cinéaste et martyr", in : C. Bromberger, L'Iran derrière le miroir, La Pensée de midi / Actes Sud, n°27 (2009), « Mariage of the Blessed. An overload of meaning and images in crisis», 
2) Taraneh DADAR
Chickpeas and the dialectic of cultural struggle: a reading of the TV series "The nights of Barareh"

Abstract
In the third decade of the Islamic Republic, television comedy has turned into one of the irreplaceable features of the evenings of Iranian households. As the politics of happiness and fun have changed enormously since the early years of the Islamic revolution, situation comedies have come to occupy a vital place in the prime time entertainment of IRIB.

‘The Nights of Barareh’ is a situation comedy directed by Iran’s established television comedy director, Mehran Modiri. Set in a fictional village sometime during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi, the series depicts the life and customs of a group of naïve villagers as a Tehrani outsider enters their community. The issues that each episode satirically deals with, all come from contemporary Iran; the fictional old setting seems to have helped in dissipating allegations that the program is directly criticizing the current regime. The series won huge popularity with the Iranian public; the lingo and customs of the fictional community were widely reproduced and evoked in people’s everyday conversations. Moreover, the series provoked heated debates in the media and even in the parliament.

This paper is interested in problematizing Iranian ‘popular culture’ by focusing on ‘The Nights of Barareh’ as a popular text. It situates ‘The Nights of Barareh’ within the (not so old) trend of sitcoms in Iranian television and postulates that the generic features of sitcom are essential to the ideological machinery of the series. Drawing on Stuart Hall, the paper will examine the terrain of popular culture, as the locus of continuing tension between the dominant and subordinate classes. In his influential study, ‘Notes on deconstructing the popular’ (1981), Hall encourages an understanding of popular culture in terms of a “dialectic of cultural struggle” and considers it to be a process where points of resistance and moments of suppression occur simultaneously. Popular culture, thus, becomes a site of negotiation of the relations of dominance and subordination. This paper posits that “The Nights of Barareh” clearly reflects such negotiation in its production and reception by the public.

The discussions surrounding the program are symptomatic of the anxieties of the public as well those of cultural policy makers about the nature of popular culture in post-revolutionary Iran. Relying on textual analysis of the series as well as close reading of the debates around it, the paper hopes to examine the “dialectic of cultural struggle” in Iranian popular culture.

Biography
After doing my undergraduate studies in Ferdowsi university, Mashad, I went to India to do a master’s degree in cultural studies in the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad. Later I joined the Tehran office of United Nation’s High Commissioner for Refugees to work with Iraqi refugees in Iran. I am currently doing my PhD in Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh. My PhD is on the construction of gender identity in popular cinema of post-revolutionary Iran.
3) Katja FOELLMER
Satire in the Iranian Media: Development and Diversity

Abstract
Despite, or perhaps rather because of the political circumstances and the new cultural orientation after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, satire in the Islamic Republic has undergone specific developments since 1984, when the satirical column “Do kalame harf-e hesab” was published in the newspaper Ettela’at for the first time. The more moderate political climate since 1990 resulted in a greater variety of print media, which played an important role in the development of Iranian political satire. Since then, a range of satirical magazines were published, the most important and popular of which was Gol Aqa.

Particularly after 1997, the various political factions used the press as their battlefield. A relatively wide range of political opinions could be reflected there. At this time many satirical publications appeared and at the end of the 90s satire reached its highest degree of criticism and directness in reform press. A range of various satirical expressions can be found in publications, such as Gol Aqa, the literary magazine Donya-ye sokhan, the reform newspaper Jame’e, and its successors.
From the beginning of the 21st century satire enjoyed immense popularity in other media, such as TV, cinema and particularly Internet, while for various reasons the print media seem to have lost much of its popularity and importance in particular in the field of satire.

This paper will analyze the relationship between politics, media and satire, and show the characteristics which official tolerated satire has in different media in Iran. Attention will be paid to the question as to why satire came to express itself mainly through images (caricatures), films and performances, rather than written texts.

Biography
Katja Foellmer is assistant professor at the Institute of Iranian Studies at Goettingen University, Germany. She (did her BA and MA in Iranian and Islamic Studies and Social Anthropology in Goettingen and Teheran and) has a doctorate in Iranian Studies. Her research and teaching are focused on Iranian culture in recent times, Iranian media communication and identity, gender issues, classical and modern Persian literature and satire. She took part in various national and international conferences with papers on Iranian film, literature and satire and published articles on that field. In 2008 she has published the following books: Satire in Iran von 1990-2000 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz) and Farid ud-Din Attar: Die Konferenz der Vögel (translated, Wiesbaden: Marix).

4) Naghmeh SAMINI
Illusion of objection in text message jokes

Abstract
Each citizen of big cities in Iran, may daily receive a lots of text messages that most of them don’t relate to his personal, professional or family relationships. In fact the text messages can be divided into the following groups: 1-jokes 2- congratulations or condolence 3- quotes or poems 4-advertisment or general informing 5-personal texts. Seems that the second, third and the fourth types are the most clear types of text messages due to their meaning or goal. The fifth type is also been neglected from general cultural analysis due to its personal area. But the first type- text message jokes- has a complicated situation in Iran society. These jokes usually contain a secondary meaning.
Text message jokes in Iran, most of the times shows an action of objection and the fact that these objections can’t be made in real type may vast the jokes spreading. Joking and scoffing naturally has a type of objection in itself. Adding the fact that the sender of the joke is hidden in cellular phones (text messages) and he is just forwarding another text message, resulted in the possibility and popularity of objective actions.

The objections are related to the strong taboos of Iranian society, that one of the strongest is sexual taboos. It is kind of objection without any fear for the objector. But the situation is more complicated for text message jokes: these objections never come to real world. These objections are made in illusive surrounding that the most important basis of objection, fear, responsibility and social transformation, have been omitted. This illusive situation most of the times gives a reverse output to these jokes. They only lead in illusion of objection and some times (mostly for sexual jokes) lead in stabilization of the dominant situation.

**Biography**

She is a Ph.D holder From Tarbiat modarress university in art studies (Mythology and dramatic literature). She got her M.A in Film studies and her B.A in Dramatic literature both from Tehran university. At the moment she works in the university of Tehran (the faculty of dramatic arts and music) as a lecturer professor.

She has written over 15 plays, which has been performed in Iran and abroad; including “Death and Poet”, “No farewell”, “Sleeping in the empty cup”, “Grimace” “Secrets and lies” “The sky horses rain ashes” and…most of these plays are about Love, Politics, and social problems. Also one of the main subjects of her plays may be the relation between past and contemporary time, ancient myths and new world.

Naghmeh has published 8 books, including some of her plays, plus a book about “Thousand and one nights.” Also she has delivered some speeches about Iranian Theatre and cinema in Iran and abroad.

She has won many awards from some festivals like International Fajr theatre festival and Fajr film festival as the best playwright and screen writer. She has participated in some work shops and writer’s residencies like 17th Royal court’s work shop (London -2005) and Sanskriti Kendra (Ashberg bursary – Delhi – 2003).