

*Second Generation Iranian-Americans and Other Immigrants:
Experience, Expectations, and Challenges*

PROCEEDINGS



**Report of a Conference Sponsored by
DĀNESH Institute**

**In cooperation with the St. Xavier University
School of Education and Middle East Studies Program
and the Indiana University School of Social Work**

**Chicago, Illinois
November 2, 2012**

DĀNESH Institute, Inc.

Purpose:

Established in 1994, the DĀNESH Institute is a nonpolitical, not-for-profit, independent, educational organization. As such, DĀNESH has a 501(c)(3) status. Its primary purpose is to sponsor and support scholarly studies and projects related to communities of Iranian heritage abroad, particularly in the United States.

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For further information, please contact:

DĀNESH Institute, Inc.

c/o Indiana University School of Social Work

902 West New York Street

Indianapolis, IN 46202-5156

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INTRODUCTION

Since the inception of the DĀNESH Institute in 1994, its annual conferences were held in Indianapolis. However, a couple of years ago, consistent with the DĀNESH mission, its Board of Directors agreed to consider other locations starting with Chicago. On behalf of the Board, **Dr. Mitra Fallahi** successfully negotiated with her St. Xavier University (SXU) to host the 2012 DĀNESH conference. In addition to her as the chair, other members of the Conference Planning Committee included **Dr. Yahya Kamalipour**, Purdue University Calumet; and **Dr. Reza Varjavand**, SXU. Serving as ad hoc members of the committee were **Dr. Irene Queiro-Tajalli** and myself. In addition to the SXU administration, the conference was cosponsored by its School of Education and the Middle East Studies program as well as the Indiana University School of Social Work.

The overall purpose of the conference was stated as follows:

This conference will focus on the experience of second generation Iranian-Americans as well as other immigrants. As such, the conference is to explore expectations and challenges confronting members of this generation at home, emphasizing their parents' native culture, and outside of home, representing American culture. In addition, it is hoped that emerged from the conference would be recommendations for dealing with issues identified.

For the first time for DĀNESH, the conference presenters included two from Canada. In addition, there were two panels. All conference sessions were superb with a number of prominent scholars as presenters. In addition to the papers in the Proceedings, the conference program included *Teaching the Good, the Bad and the Ugly of Iranian History and Its Long-Term Benefits*, presented by **Dr. Mato Farzaneh**. Position and affiliation of the presenters are stated in the Appendix.

We are grateful to the Conference Planning Committee, the conference co-sponsors, and all others who so diligently contributed to the conference success.

Cyrus S. Behroozi
Editor

The Early American-Iranian Encounter

By Franklin Lewis

I will talk today about some disparate individual cases of early, and I hope significant and interesting, cases of Iranian-American encounter. It is part of a larger project, of which this represents a preliminary outline sketch. I approach the topic as a literary historian of Persian who has become serendipitously aware of these cases, but am not by well-versed in the field or the literature of American Immigrant and Ethnicity studies, and admit to being an interloper – I hope not one who will track mud through the field. Despite my own outsider status, the topical category of the early encounter between Americans traveling to Iran and Iranians traveling to the United States has repeatedly piqued my curiosity in the course of teaching or researching other subjects that proved tangentially related. The aspects of my own research which are most directly related to the topic of this year's DĀNESH conference would be translation history from Persian to European languages – the early history, from the 17th through the end of the 19th century.

At somewhat less of a tangent, I have myself tried my hand at translating modern Iranian poets and authors,¹ becoming thereby complicit in a certain type of textual immigration, and have watched the emerging oeuvre of some Iranian authors who began their career as Persophone writers concerned with an Iranian audience, and morphed into Anglophone Iranian-Americans (Taghi Modarressi) with a largely American or Iranian-American audience, or others who began writing already as Iranian-Americans (Nahid Rachlin, Gina Barkhordar Nahai, Firouzeh Dumas, Abbas Milani, and many others) for an Anglophone audience, and yet others who continue writing in Persian as diaspora authors: Goli Taraqqi, 'Abbās Ma'rūfi, Mehri Yalfāni. The list of authors is long and growing longer, and there are also script-writers and film-makers, such as the prolific television director, the late Reza Badiyi – who came to the US in the 1950s and did not focus on things Iranian – in fact was iconically American (his credits include "Get Smart," "Mission Impossible," "Hawaii Five-O," "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," "The Rockford Files," "Baretta," "Mannix," "Starsky and Hutch," "The Six Million Dollar Man," "The Incredible Hulk," "Cagney & Lacey," "Falcon Crest," "In the Heat of the Night," "Baywatch" and "Buffy the Vampire Slayer"), to Chicago-born Ramin Serry's independent feature film "Maryam" (2002), which takes as its subject the Iranian immigrant experience in the U.S. during the Hostage Crisis, and Ramin Bahrani, another native-born American of Iranian heritage, who made "Man Push Cart" (2005) about the Pakistani immigrant experience, and of course Marjan Satrapi's graphic novel *Persepolis* (2000; film, 2007) about the Franco-Iranian experience, or Dorit Rabinyan's novels in Hebrew about the Israeli-Iranian experience. We are now veritably immersed in a flood of immigrant or exile novels and literary memoirs written by one kind or another of hyphenated Iranians in the aftermath of the 1978-79 Iranian revolution.

In 1990, there were only some 637,600 Iranians in diaspora, as counted in the official censuses of the USA, Canada, West Germany, Sweden, Great Britain, France, Norway, Australia, Israel

¹ Such as Zoya Pirzad's novel *Things We Left Unsaid* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2012), Mohammad-Ali Jamalzadeh's novella *Masumeh of Shiraz* (unpublished), the collection *In a Voice of Their Own, Stories by Iranian Women Written Since the Revolution of 1979*, ed. Franklin Lewis and Farzin Yazdanfar (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publications, 1996), as well as short stories by Simin Daneshvar, Hushang Golshiri, Mahdokht Kashkuli in various collections, including *Stories from Iran: A Chicago Anthology*, ed. Heshmat Moayyad. (Washington, D.C.: Mage Publishers, 1992); *A Walnut Sapling for Massih's Grave*, ed. by Farzin Yazdanfar and John Green (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993); and *Black Parrot, Green Crow: A Collection of Short Fiction by Houshang Golshiri*, ed. Heshmat Moayyad. Washington, D.C.: Mage Publishers. 2003).

and Japan – with nearly half of this total (45%) in the US, at 285,000.² Of these Iranians living in the US in 1990, more than 83% had come to the US since 1975, and less than 1% (or fewer than 2,800 persons) had come here prior to 1950.³ Indeed, the number of Iranians who came to the US would seem to have been miniscule in the 19th century; statistics suggest that only 130 Iranians are known to have set foot in the USA before 1900.⁴ And from 1925 to 1950, US immigration records attest to only 1816 Iranians having been cumulatively admitted to the US as permanent residents. Although the following decade saw a significant increase, with the number of Iranian immigrants living in the US nearly doubling in ten years, it was still an almost invisible minority, standing at 3,388.⁵

We may assume the population statistics of the Iranian diaspora to be an undercount, but it is undeniably a very small proportion of the population of Iran, representing perhaps one in 60 to 70 citizens. And yet, a much larger number of Iranian citizens residing in Iran had experienced travel or student life in one or more of these countries at one time or another (or indeed, had not been born in Iran, in the first place, as only 76% of the 285,000 Iranians living in the US in 1990 had been born in Iran, with 20% of them actually having been born in the US, and thus holding dual citizenship). There were 391,000 non-immigrants from Iran who entered the US during the years 1950-1977, in other words who came here as tourists, temporary visitors, or students. The latter group was quite significant, with some 82,000 Iranian students in the US during this period, before the 1978-79 Revolution.⁶ Many of these students returned to Iran either before or after completing their degrees. Of equal importance, there was a noticeable community of Americans in Iran, a presence which did not start, but did pick up during World War II, becoming even more noticeable after that, as the technical assistance provided by e.g., Syracuse University in the 1950s, and then with other University presences (Kent State, Penn) in to the 1960s and 70s. In terms of numbers, however, there were likely many more American government and military personnel, oil industry and other technical employees, and commercial enterprises, many of whom came with their families, for a time to Iran.

The extensive knowledge and networks created by this kind of population exchange – whether or not people who travel from one land to the other are permanent immigrants or temporary residents – makes the borders easier to traverse and the impediments more easily overcome. But try to imagine a period before there were such significant numbers of personal connections and institutional bridges – before there was an American embassy in Iran, before there were many Iranians who had ever set foot in the U.S. How much more difficult and dislocating the process of visiting, or the prospect of moving – for an American to Iran, or for an Iranian (or a Persian, as they would have been officially known before 1935) to the U.S. – must have been. When the other was terra incognita, my assumption is that people would be less likely to undertake such travel without strong religious motivation, or commercial prospects, or established personal connections. Of course during this period, Iranians were not strangers to the English language or to White Anglo-Saxon Protestant ways – In India, Britain, and in Iran, contact with British citizens had been long-standing, and this undoubtedly facilitated contact with Americans in some

² Mehdi Bozorgmehr, “From Iranian Studies to Studies of Iranians in the United States,” *Iranian Studies* 31, 1 (Winter 1998): 5-30, quoting p. 5.

³ Bozorgmehr, in *Iranian Studies*, op. cit., p. 9.

⁴ Bozorgmehr, *ibid*, p. 6, citing the *Harvard Encyclopaedia of American Ethnic Groups*, John Lorentz and John Wertime, “Iranians.”

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Bozorgmehr, p. 7.

cases, just as Britishers doubtless provided Americans their introductions to Iran and Iranians, or Persia and the Persians, in many cases.

The above of course measures citizenship or country of origin, not national or religious identity, which can be much more fragmented than the statistics would suggest. This has led Bozorgmehr to coin the term “internal ethnicity,” including Iranians who also identify as something other than the imagined default Iranians of Shi’ite Persian heritage, for example, as Armenians, Assyrians, Azeris, Baha’is, Baluchis, Jews, Kurds, Sunnis, Turcomans and Turks, Zoroastrians, etc.

This is a preliminary paper sketching out a project to recover as many case studies as possible of the Iranian-American experience before the second World War. Most of these early immigrants will not have been exiles, and I presume that a good many of them will have become American by affiliative (marriage) or commercial reasons, as well as by way of religion, education, or diplomacy. Time will not permit me today to get much further than third quarter of the 19th century, which is actually a fascinating period of interchange. However, it should be noted from the outset that the relationships built up by Americans in Persia or Afghanistan, or other parts of the Middle East, often established the networks and personal connections to facilitate early travel and immigration by Iranians to the U.S.

It would appear that an Armenian from Persia named Martin the Armeanean or Martin Ye Armenia, or John Martin the Persian, was one of the first Americans from the old world; he came to the Jamestown settlement in Virginia, probably as a servant of Governor George Yeardley in 1618 or 1619 – before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. He acquired British citizenship in 1623, while in America, enabling him to become a member of the standing committee of the Virginia Company of London, and thus a member of standing in the community. I have not been able to establish to what extent he spoke and read either Persian, or Armenian, but it is clear that he did know English, and seems likely that he was familiar with one of these languages of origin, or perhaps Turkish, to some extent. In any case, Martin left Virginia for Britain not long after acquiring citizenship, and when he arrived in England with a parcel of Virginia-grown tobacco, a customs fee double the usual amount was levied upon him because of his foreign birth. Once Martin was able to prove his naturalized status as a British citizen with the help of the Virginia London Company, the amount was reduced. After 1624, however, there is no more record of him – did he survive and return to Persia or Armenia?⁷

The presence of Martin the Armenian is obviously highly significant at this juncture of English colonial history in North America. There were only 104 men and boys, plus the crew of the three ships – Susan Constant, Goodspeed and Discovery – in the first Jamestown settlement of 1607. The First Supply mission in January 1608 brought a further 70 settlers, while the second Supply in October 1608 brought an additional 70 beyond that, including two women, and eight Dutchmen, Germans or Poles hired, presumably for their skills. Only 60 of the 214 colonists in Jamestown survived, but from a few hundred in 1618, the population of the settlement increased to 1400 by 1622, including black indentured servants. Thus, the presence of an Armenian / Persian is highly significant for the population of that era, and establishes an extremely early Perso-Armenian presence in colonial America.

In 1653, a further two Armenians, these from Turkey, were brought by Edward Diggs of the Colony of Virginia, apparently because of their skill with raising silk worms. In December 1656,

⁷ Robert Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands: Armenians in America, 1890 to World War I* (Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 1983), p. 35.

the Assembly of Virginia passed a resolution permitting one of these two to have two tons of tobacco as an enticement for him to stay “In the trade of silk and to stay in the country.” This is a likely reason for Martin the Persian’s inclusion in the relatively small group of settlers.

Meanwhile, as a result of the far-flung trade endeavors of the Dutch East-India Company, an outpost was established in New Julfa, Isfahan in 1611, which led to first-hand knowledge of certain western commercial and technical processes among the Iranian Armenians, especially the printing press. It led in 1666 to the printing of the Armenian Bible in Amsterdam in the Protestant Netherlands (the Vatican at Rome apparently did not wish to help in the printing of a non-Latin non-Catholic Bible).⁸ In 1813 American missionaries began establishing schools in Turkey and by 1834 Armenian students began coming to America.⁹ Khachadour Osnagyan, who had been a student in the American Missionary School in Istanbul, came to the US and settled in New York City, where he became a journalist and eventually president of the New York Press club, and attracted several Armenian students. In 1851 he published a book about Turkish oppression of minority groups, especially Armenian (*The Sultan and His Peoples*, 1851).

In the succeeding decades, several dozen Armenians came to America, some as students, some as craftsmen, many through the mediation of the American missionary Cyrus Hamlin¹⁰ (1811-1900) at the Robert College, which he founded in 1863 with the New York philanthropist Christopher Robert in Istanbul (this is the oldest American school founded outside the U.S., now incorporated into the campus of Boğaziçi University). By 1888 the first Armenian newspaper in America began publication in Jersey City, and several others soon followed,¹¹ though it is not yet clear to me whether any of these were run by or focused on the concerns of Iranian Armenians.

Naturally, however, Armenian-Americans began to adapt to customs of the New World, including use of an organ in the Saints Vartananz Armenian Church in Lowell, MA, whereas in the homeland church music had been exclusively *a capella*; and the inclusion of women and girls in the church choir, which had by custom been all male in Armenia. Both of these changes were affected controversially, by debate of the church leaders. The gender segregation of the congregation at church, with men on the left and women on the right aisle of the pews, ended gradually and without controversy during the 15 years after the end of the Second World War, as the second generation of Armenian children – who had been schooled in a gender-mixed setting in American public schools – began sitting together as families.¹² In a survey of eight Armenian Apostolic churches in New England, a precipitous increase in intermarriage over the quarter century from 1950, when 91% or 124 of 136 marriages were between an Armenian bride and an Armenian groom, to 1976, when only 19% or 12 of 62 of the marriages performed by the churches had both an Armenian bride and groom – this despite an official position on the part of the church that intermarriage is discouraged.

⁸ Barbara J. Merguerian, “The Impact of the Protestant West on the Nineteenth Century Armenian Enlightenment,” *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 52, 3-4 (2000): 221-249, citing p. 221.

⁹ Vladimir Wertsman, p. 57 from Rev. Kafafian Thompshon’s 1920 article in *Outlook Magazine*.

¹⁰ Author of *Among the Turks* (1878) and *My Life and Times in Turkey* (1893). He was a missionary in Turkey from 1839 to 1876.

¹¹ Vladimir Wertsman, *Armenians in America, 1618-1976* (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publications, 1976), 1-3.

¹² Aharon G. Aharorian, *Intermarriage and the Armenian – American Community: A Socio-Religious Study of Intermarriage and the Armenian Apostolic Church in America* (Shrewsbury, MA: Aharon G. Aharonian, and printed in Pasadena, CA: Maral Press, 1983 though the title page crosses out the 3 and replaces it with 4 = 1984).

The older churches (the oldest founded in 1891) had the highest rate of intermarriage, leading to the conclusion that Armenian-Americans were then “experiencing a process of mass assimilation in New England.”¹³ Furthermore, “the overwhelming majority of mixed marriages that take place in the Armenian Church end up with these couples and their children not being affiliated with the Armenian Church.” This conclusion is based on observation by the author of the study, and is not reflected in the statistics gathered from the Church records. What the author does not state is whether this falling away from the church is motivated primarily by intermarriage and therefore affiliation to another church, or rather by the general secularizing trend in society in the 1950s to 1970s which unchurched many parishioners of most denominations.¹⁴

The Board of Foreign Missions of the American Presbyterian Church, meanwhile, established the first permanent Protestant Christian mission to Persia, at least the first one led from North America. This was called the Mission of the Nestorians, and inaugurated in 1834 or 1835 in the Lake Urumiah area, by the Reverend Justin Perkins, who left important first-hand records of its operations, and Dr. Isahel Grant.¹⁵

Meanwhile, in 1883, the American Legation in Persia was established. Up to that point, the interchange between the U.S. and Persia was not significant. Of course, the United States was not a particularly important player in British or Russian foreign affairs, and did not have extensive interests in the Middle East, except insofar as the Protestant Missionary Board was concerned – it was thus religious objectives of conversion to Christianity, and not political interests that drove Perso-American relations, or at least person-to-person interactions, in the 19th century. At this point in time, the picture of Persia as received in America was largely one which highlighted an imperiled Christian minority, discerned a population of Muslim majority that might be ripe for some conversions, especially via education, and a land of extreme poverty (James Bassett, American Presbyterian missionary reported encountering during his 1872 journey through Persia, published in New York in 1886),¹⁶ indeed with famine so severe that some resorted to cannibalism.

The American Protestant College, later Alborz College, was founded as a grade school in 1873 in Tehran, a few years after a Christian mission was extended to Tehran in 1870. This school was established in the Armenian quarter, which led to objections from the Armenian bishop, who doubtless suspected the American Presbyterians of hoping to poach members from the Armenian creed – the first five students to matriculate were two Jews and three Armenians.¹⁷ The bishop suggested to the Shah, that he too should worry about these conversion efforts: “the Americans had come to turn the Armenians and Mohammadans from the faith of their fathers.” But when the government inspector found no Muslims among the pupils, the effort at fear-mongering lost traction.¹⁸ However, the school changed its venue and began teaching in Persian, and accepting

¹³ Aharonian, pp. 25, 37, 40.

¹⁴ Sociologists of Religion in the late 1960s, such as Peter Berger, sometimes predicted the eventual ebbing away of religious affiliations – see his *Sacred Canopy* (1967) and *A Rumour of Angels* (1969).

¹⁵ Yeselson, *United States-Persian Diplomatic Relations*, p. 8.

¹⁶ James Bassett, *Persia, The Land of the Imams* (NY: Scribener’s, 1886), pp 4-7, as reported in Abraham Yeselson, *United States-Persian Diplomatic Relations, 1883-1921* (New Brunswick, NY: Rutgers University Press, 1956), p 4.

¹⁷ The EIr article on Alborz suggests the first elementary class graduated in 1891, but if the school was founded in 1873, this would seem unlikely.

¹⁸ *A Century of Mission Work in Iran, 1834-1934*, Beirut, p. 54; A. Boyce, “Alborz College of Tehran and Dr. Samuel Martin Jordan,” in A. P. Saleh, ed., *Cultural Ties Between Iran and The United States* (Tehran, 1976), p. 176, all cited in EIr article, “Alborz College” by Y. Armajani.

Muslim students, so that by 1891, of its 135 students, at least half were Muslim.¹⁹ This college moved to a new location in 1923, established a library and began issuing college degrees, in conjunction with the State University of New York (1928), until it was closed down in 1940.²⁰

The College was run by Samuel Jordan with his wife Mary from 1898. Mary used to have her students memorize a suffragette sentiment: “No country rises higher than the level of the women of that country,” and Mrs. Boyce, the wife of the vice-president, helped to found the first women’s magazine in Iran, *Âlam-e nesvân*.²¹ This early American-Iranian contact doubtless helped to shape the students of the college about the expectations and attitudes of American women, before any of them ever reached America. Although the missionary motivations might have given pause, Americans were neither British nor Russian, and were perceived as a non-imperialist power, and the schools attracted more students than those of European powers. A 1907 piece in *Habl al-matin*, the Persian periodical published in Calcutta, claimed that:

Ninety percent of Japanese progress has been caused by employing Americans. America is a republic, which means that individual Americans are not agents of their government. They are rich and do not need our wealth. They are progressive and helpful. (Microfilms, vol. 190, no. 45).²²

But before we come to the twentieth century, there are several important American travelers to Persia or the Middle East, and a few Iranians (Persians) who came to the shores of the New World whose circumstances should be reviewed. That will, however, have to wait for another occasion.

¹⁹ EIr, “Alborz College,” op. cit.

²⁰ EIr, *ibid*.

²¹ EIr, *ibid*.

²² Cited in EIr.

A Narrative of Return: Tara Bahrapour's Memoir *To See and See Again*

By Rivanne Sandler

There are numerous memoirs written in the English language by Iranian women; and by now we have two generations of diaspora memoirists. To an extent in our modern age, we are all in an immigrant situation. That said, the challenges faced in the process of emigrating from a homeland to a host country are unique. And the challenges faced by the children of immigrants are as compelling in their own way, as the experiences of the first generation immigrant. *To See & See Again* is the story of two generations; it is the story of its author, Tara Bahrapour; and it is the story of her parents.

A study of immigrant literature, *Translating Pain*, speaks about the concealed sadness and suffering of immigrants, and the profound feelings that lie beneath the surface of their writing. The story of immigration is a story of loss; a loss that is not always expressed. Tara misses her home. She mourns her past. But she writes the word 'loss' only once, at the end of her memoir. And only once does she admit to a feeling of profound sadness. Yet her memoir is suffused with loss and sadness.

Tara Bahrapour does not identify herself as an immigrant. She mentions this term only once, in the concluding pages of her memoir. She is in New York and has arranged to meet a school pal Clara, from the Community School which she attended in Iran. Clara refers to herself as an expat and this causes Tara to reflect on the terminology for those who live away from home. "The word [expat] evokes ...people to whom the place they live in remains foreign no matter how long they stay. It is the opposite of "immigrant," which implies large families crammed into small apartments, perhaps not legal, hampered by their foreign accents and their dark skin ...Immigrants miss their own country-maybe they didn't want to leave it in the first place: expats love the adventure of being away. 'Expat' can always go home again. "Immigrant" is close to "refugee" (354). In Iran, Tara's family were not expats. Iran was their home. "And yet," Tara tells us, "When we finally left, we were not immigrants to America either. Three of us had been born there; four of us spoke perfect American English. Landing in America, we went straight to Grandma and Grandpa's backyard swimming pool in the hills..." (355). But neither did the family totally belong in America. "We had a sense of being untethered in the world...With no model to follow, we could imagine ourselves anywhere in the world..." (355).

While *To See and See Again* is a factual work, it does what literature does most compellingly: it tells us about people; it elucidates the human experience and in the case of Tara's memoir, reveals family relationships in a time of trouble. The most touching passages of this memoir are those that deal with Tara's complicated relationship with her beloved Iranian father. Tara's father closely resembles the portrait of the immigrant which we read about in *Translating Pain*. Immigration is a cumulative series of traumatic events resulting from the process of changing homes. Immigration is a story of profound cultural differences in the host country. People who leave home, no matter what they label themselves or are labeled, exile, or émigré, or immigrant, all experience an uncomfortable split between past and present and between home and host country. But for a complexity of reasons, the immigrant is not always willing or even able to express the range of deep emotions engendered by immigration.

Were it not for events far beyond their control, it is highly unlikely that Tara's mother and father would have emigrated from Iran to the United States. They had no reason to leave Iran; and every reason to stay. Tara's mother and father are disinclined to discuss their experience of

immigration or express their feelings to Tara. Only at the end of the memoir and many years after the family had moved from Iran to America, does Tara tell us about her parent's true feelings. Both stories involve unpleasant memories which her parents had never revealed. Her mother shielded Tara from the truth of why, prior to their final move to America, the family left Tehran to move to her father's boyhood village. There had been a threat against her father's life. "For a year or two after finding these things out I would break into tears when I read stories about lost fathers; sometimes when Baba was just going to work, I would get scared that he might not come home, that something might still happen to him while he was apart from us" (115). This memory frightens Tara, but another incident which had been kept from Tara disturbs her deeply. "Years later Mama told me that when he arrived in Los Angeles, on that first night, Baba had cried [bitterly] for all he had left behind" (117). Tara tells us her father never cried again. Tara's memoir gives voice of her father's grief.

Tara was born in Los Angeles. The family returned to Iran and Tara grew up in Tehran although she made frequent trips back to America with her mother. In Iran, Tara's mother settled into the life of her husband's family. Her mother liked Iran. She did not worry unduly about where she belonged. Her father set up a new office with three other architects. There are plans for a comfortable home designed by her father in an upcoming suburb of Tehran. Tara and her brother and sister are speaking better Persian and their cousins are speaking better English, and they play together nicely. The future is bright for Tara's family.

Gunshots disturb the peace from time to time. The university does not open on schedule. Tara's Community School closes and then opens and then closes. One by one, stores, cinemas and restaurants shut down.

Tara was eleven years old when the family, threatened by events leading up to the 1979 revolution, left Iran. The leaving was abrupt. The exit was tumultuous and calamitous for Tara. In her words: "On the day we left Iran, I did not know this would be the last week of things the way we knew them" (115). Her mother left first with the children. Tara's father stayed behind to settle his affairs. Three days later, one day before the Shah left and the airport closed, her father took a plane out of Iran. Just before getting on the plane to leave for the journey to the United States, Tara looked back and realized she was leaving home: "It was in trouble and I was leaving it" (116).

Home for Tara is Iran. Tara frequently expresses the wish to be back in Iran, "back in a household of Iranian relatives...As long as I sat with them, drinking tea and playing backgammon, I would be protected-in full view of everyone, and safe from the world" (174). As a child growing up in Iran, Tara was surrounded by a loving family. In the stories her father told her, Iran was a land of fairy tales and heroes where good always triumphs over evil. Tara's life in Tehran was comfortable and filled with friends and activities; she was happy. Her father was happy. She and her father visited the village where he grew up. "The way Baba told it, nothing in the world today could ever be as good as those early days" (14). As the youngest child he was "adored and indulged" (16). Her father is deeply rooted in Iran. Tara does not, and cannot have the same sense as her father, of belonging to the land.

Tara's father had the prospect of a promising career and a comfortable life in the years just prior to the 1979 revolution. The clearest symbol of the hope he had for himself and his family is the home he had plans to build in Shahrak-e Gharb, which in 1978 was a newly developing suburb in the north of Tehran, far from the tumult of the central city. However, in America, he is unable to translate his profession as an architect into a professional job. He interviews at a few architects'

offices and finally finds a job as a draftsman. Her handsome, smiling father, who used to take Tara on outings to interesting places, is transformed into a disappointed man, and an irritable father. Tara loses patience with this man. She yells at him and they do not speak. "As far as I can see, if we do not fit into this life, our Iranian father is the one to blame" (137). A Persian bookstore in Los Angeles becomes her father's surrogate home. He spends hours in the bookstore, talking to the men behind the counter and buying books.

While Tara's family eventually settles into life in America, on their arrival in America, the family is demoralized, and disoriented. The family frantically wishes the world would change in Iran and they all could go home. In the beginning, her father moved the family from place to place as if he does not want to admit that he is in America to stay. Sometimes Tara's father "just sits there and looks tired, the way he did when we picked him up at the L.A airport last January" (135). Tara senses her once vibrant father is running out of energy from the strain of the journey. "I knew that since we had left Iran something in him had become fragile. And I knew that people could be mean to him; I knew this because I had been mean myself." Tara is afraid to let her father out of her sight because he might not be able to look after himself (156). Tara misses what the family left behind in the rush of leaving. Her father "usually does not talk about what we have lost" (152). In these and other glimpses Tara provides of her father, we meet a figure much diminished in his new setting. As the memoir progresses, Tara's father fades into the shadows of the memoir, no longer vibrant, happy, hopeful.

In America, Tara dresses like other girls, and behaves like other girls. But she tells us that she is not and never will be thoroughly American. She feels half American and half-Iranian. But "people are always trying to make [her] one thing or another" (61). As Tara settled into life in America, in Portland Oregon, she misses Iran. She compares America and Iran, and America is invariably on the losing side of the equation. Tara holds on tightly to memories of Iran. There is nothing to disturb her idyllic memories of a happy childhood in her father's world. Tara is afraid of forgetting Iran. She delights in telling her classmates stories of Iran, "desperate to save myself from forgetting" (125). "I miss my life there" (140). Tara tells us about half way through her memoir. "When I look back on how we spent three whole months on this boring little street [in Portland Oregon] when we could have been living our old life in Iran, it all seems like a thoughtless mistake" (150).

Tara's memories of Iran develop from personal memories, of school and visits with her father to the family village to thoughts of her father's family of strong women and men. Her Iranian relatives are all secure in their place; not at all like the weakened family Tara experiences in America. Tara is in exile from the family circle that offered her protection for the last time before the flight from Iran took her to a world of confusion and dislocation and trauma and sadness. Halfway through the memoir, Tara plants the idea in the reader's mind that she may return to Iran. She is a teenager chatting with her young friends. They all dream of leaving home as young people do. Tara floats the idea of going back to Iran. In response to a friend's look of alarm, Tara reassures her: "It's not as bad as you think...I could just stay with my grandmother. It would be fine" (159).

The theme of fear of forgetting Iran, the fear of losing Iran, resurfaces some years later:

In Iran your place becomes empty when you leave and stays empty as long as you are away. But what if the one who leaves forgets about his empty place? What if, by living so long in America or England or France, he starts to become part of those countries and no longer remembers his original home? (194)

The desire to return to Iran is a constant strand in Tara's memoir. There are several components in her desire to see Iran. But in my reading of this memoir, the catalyst for her return is her 'missing' father. Her relationship with her father is complex and goes through different phases. Tara discovers she likes Persian food. She says she is finding a side of herself that her family lost. Tara wishes she could see all the things that were left behind in their closets. She wants to learn more about Iran, and wishes there were people around who could teach her "beyond what Baba taught me of Iran" (184). She discusses her idea of returning with her mother and father. Her father greets her news with mildness. Her mother says with bitterness in her voice that Tara has never heard before. "What are you looking for? Your childhood? You can't get that back" (201).

Tara returns to Tehran, to a city she left as a child fifteen years previously. She stays with relatives. While she feels confined by their concern, she is warmed by their love. She has a personal history in Iran. Her Iranian family knew her as a little girl. They remember her brother, they remember her mother and father. This moves her "in deeper ways than our different tastes and lifestyles" (292). At first, her mastery of Persian is not good enough to save her from getting into trouble; she has her American passport taken away at the Tehran airport. But when her relatives hug her she "feels a rush of gladness to feel so connected" (223). Her relatives allow her to go out but beg her to be careful. She is feeling stronger because of her growing language skills and because she feels braver each day. She wants to find out what people think about the government that followed the Shah. She begins to know her way around. She visits the bazaar where someone asks her "where is your country." She does not know since "the life I once had here is gone" (255). She calls herself *avazi*, which she translates as *out of whack, unnatural, switched*. "Or Iran is switched," she asks. "Once we fit together; now I am always either straining to burst out or drowning in its largeness" (255).

She seeks out the home her father was building when the family left Iran. She feels that this place is "a solid testament to our old life" (276). All of her father's dreams for a beautiful life in Tehran were encapsulated in his plans for a new home for the family in Sharak-e Gharb. The family never lived in the home and yet Tara feels she has returned home. She wanders through the rooms, "the world of my empty places" (251). She is happy. But the way people live in Tehran, the way boys and girls socialize, and the *komitehs* are all new features of present-day life in Iran. Tara does not actually say this but we sense that she finds life intolerably strange.

It is only in Iran that Tara finally lets herself feel deeply and profoundly the loss that her family was not willing to talk about. When Tara does not find a photograph of herself in a 1979 Community School yearbook, the year the family left Iran, she is devastated. "My name was crossed off the roster...I did not find a trace of myself on those pages" (250). She is twenty four and there is no documented proof that she once had a life in Iran.

The most meaningful event of Tara's return is her visit to the family village she used to go to with her father. She stays in the home of her paternal uncle, her father's oldest brother. In this section of the memoir, Tara lets the characters speak for themselves, in their own way and in their own words. Tara is not an intermediary, translating the experiences of others. Tara contemplates staying in the village for at least a year, learning to conform to the slow pace of life and find pleasure in the daily round of duties. She wants to find what she calls, *the village side of herself*. She wants to be part of a life of sewing chadors, gathering roses, and waving rue to chase away the evil eye (323). Her paternal uncle is the last member of her family still in the village; all the others have scattered to the four winds of the earth and may or likely will not come back to visit (340).

On her return to the United States, Tara thinks of how in Iran, she felt she was in a place that protected her. Perhaps it was home. She reads essays and short stories about first trips back to Iran and finds many expressions of displacement which are strongest in Iranians her own age. This is the generation, she says, that was too young to decide to stay or leave and who have “the most difficulty choosing their cultural allegiances.” The writings of Tara’s generation are filled with melodramatic, yet sincere and poignant “expressions of nostalgia” (347). When Tara said good-bye to her father in Iran, as she was leaving with her mother and brother and sister, her father promised her that he would see her again very soon. Her father did follow the family to America. But Tara never saw the same man again. She wonders if “that is how it is with loss--- that you never really let go of the thing you are missing” (356). Tara has entwined her father’s loss and her own loss in her memoir, a gift of return, to her father.

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Panel I: Second Generation Immigrants: Experience, Expectations, and Challenges

By Alberta Gatti

Five young panelists participated in the conversation (see short bios at the end of this document.) The panelists were all second-generation Americans as defined by the conference. Three of the panelists were Iranian-Americans, two were Mexican-Americans and one was Nigerian-American. I had the pleasure of moderating the panel.

During the panel discussion, it was evident that there were commonalities in the panelists' experiences as second-generation Americans, while there were also individual differences.

Topics discussed included:

1. Role of different US neighborhoods/cities/states in shaping experiences for young second-generation Americans
 2. Role of the parents' countries of origin in shaping experiences for young second-generation Americans
 3. Role of the native language of parents in the experiences of a young second generation American
 4. Role of political events in the country of parents in shaping ideas on politics and policies of young second-generation Americans
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1. Panelists agreed that those neighborhoods/cities/states that are more diverse in terms of their cultural/national/linguistic/racial composition, presented less challenges for them than did less diverse ones. Some panelists grew up in neighborhoods that had high percentage of immigrant families and were only exposed to the need of negotiating their identity when they left those neighborhoods. For others, the "negotiation" was part of their everyday life.
 2. For some of the panelists the country of origin of their parents had a very prominent, concrete, presence in their lives. Some panelists were able to establish a physical connection with that country by visiting it with regularity and engaging with its people. For others, the parents' country of origin was associated with the parents' feelings toward the place in question, and the relationship with the country was constructed through the verbal images provided by the parents. For some of the panelists, a visit to the place of origin of their parent aided in understanding some of the parents' points of views that had no direct correlates within the US society.
 3. Although panelists differed in the level of skill they had in their parents' native languages from no knowledge to complete fluency, all of them expressed the opinion that that language was a very important tool for accessing the worldview of their parents' societies. Those who don't speak their parents' language expressed the desire of having learned it as children. Those who have different levels of fluency, commented on the concrete access to communication with family members who don't speak English as well as the role of language as a medium for accessing shared experiences.

4. Some panelists remarked on the high level of interest and involvement in politics demonstrated by those who share their parents' national background. Some panelists commented on the need to justify their parents' country of origin when those countries are regularly viewed in a negative light within the US political discourse.

Panelists' Bios

Alejandra Rico

Alejandra Rico is the daughter of Mexican parents. She was born and raised in Blue Island, one of Chicago's South Side suburbs, and graduated from Saint Xavier University in 2011 with a B.A. in Communication Sciences and Disorders and a minor in Spanish. She currently devotes her time teaching at El Valor, a non-profit organization servicing Chicago's underrepresented urban children and families.

Aldo Quiñones

Aldo Quiñones was born in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. His mother was a “maquiladora” worker who was ready to make her second resettlement in 1984; her first had been in 1970 from a small town in Durango to Ciudad Juarez. Aldo started his elementary education in the Mexican education system and completed middle and high school in the United States. He lived in the Little Village neighborhood during his teenage years. He has lived most of his adult life in the southwest suburbs of Chicago, where he is currently raising two daughters.

Lailaw Taherzadeh

Lailaw Taherzadeh was born in Dallas, Texas in 1978. Her parents moved from Ahwaz, Iran in 1973. In search of like-minded compassion, she, at age 26, relocated from Dallas to Chicago in pursuit of the arts. Lailaw is an active participant in Chicago's art community, and works as an arts educator for *Changing Worlds*, an organization that advances the use of personal stories and the arts to foster greater appreciation and respect of cultural differences to Chicago's underserved youth.

Osasuyi Tongo

Osasuyi Tongo is the son of Nigerian parents who emigrated from Nigeria in late 70's to pursue college degrees. His parents met in the Northwest, US and since have moved to Naperville, IL where Osasuyi was born and raised with his two older brothers. He recently graduated from Washington University in St. Louis. He studied Biomedical Engineering and has an interest in pursuing a career in public health and medicine.

Mahsa Motlagh

Mahsa Motlagh was born in Shiraz, Iran during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980's. Mahsa and her family left the war torn region and came to the U.S. in time for her to begin the first grade. Mahsa Motlagh is now an immigration attorney practicing in Oak Brook, Illinois.

Kian Kameli

Kian Kameli's mother is Italian and her father is Persian. She is originally from a small suburb town in Minnesota. Kian moved to Chicago one year ago for college and now attends Harold Washington College. She is planning on transferring to the University of Illinois at Chicago in January. Her major is pre-medicine with a possible psychology minor.

Panel II: Parents of Second Generation Immigrants: Experience, Expectations, and Challenges

By Hamid Akbari

The three panelists in this session included Arezoo Dahi, of Iranian origin; Tamara Korenman, of Russian origin; and Olga Vilella, of Puerto Rican origin. In addition, I was pleased to serve as the panel moderator. Short bios of the panelists will appear at the end of this article.

The main goal of this panel presentation was to learn from the panelists and the audience about their experiences in the form of challenges they faced as new immigrants in raising their children in the United States. Each panelist was given a few minutes to provide her comments about her experiences. These are highlights of some of the challenges mentioned by the panelists:

Ms. Dahi: “How to overcome horrible media coverage of Iran and teach my kids to be proud of their heritage?” and “How to teach them the best of Iranian and American culture?”

Professor Vilella: “As with so many other parents of second generation children, my biggest challenge was feeling comfortable, on the personal level, when social practices in the U.S. differed from the way I was brought up in a more conservative, culturally homogenous society. In addition, as a parent committed to raising bilingual daughters, I found the prevalence of English in daily life, as is to be expected, and worldwide, posed a very difficult challenge. Even when my daughters visited their cousins every summer, conversations would sometimes switch to English!”

Professor Korenman related interesting stories, including how there is a lack of accurate historical and cultural information and knowledge in the media as well as among most people about Russia. For example, the critical role of Russia in defeating Nazi Germany in world war two is generally neglected and unknown.

In general, the panelists’ experiences can be summed up as follows:

- A smoother than expected child rearing experience in the United States.
- The challenge of children’s balanced immersion in both their parental culture as well as the American culture
- The successful raising of children as evidenced by the educational and career progress of their children.
- The opportunity for children to pay visit to their parental homeland as a positive contribution to their upbringing.
- Preserving bilingualism in their children as a challenge.
- The challenge of media coverage – particularly of negative type - of the parents’ homeland.

The highlights and the presentation of this panel should be moderated by the following observations: The panelists are all from highly educated professionals and have been employed

in high level positions in the United States. Their socio-economic class can be categorized as middle to lower upper class. It will be interesting to contrast the experiences and challenges of these successful professional white color families with that of the blue color working class families.

Readers are cautioned in generalizing the highlights and other points of this panel as reported here. It is best to treat the presentations of panelists as rich anecdotal information and stories which may be helpful for the purposes of comparison and contrasts with other such presentations. Yet some of the challenges mentioned by the panelists, such as the impact of negative media coverage on immigrant children and their upbringing, are quite critical as areas that warrant further in depth studies.

Panelists' Bios

Arezoo Dahi

Ms. Dahi is the Software Engineering Manager at Nokia Siemens Networks, and mother of two children, a 19 year old daughter and a 16 year old son.

Tamara Korenman

Dr. Korenman is Professor of Education at St. Xavier, and mother of two daughters.

Olga Vilella

Dr. Vilella is Professor of Foreign Languages and Latino/Latin-American Studies at St. Xavier University, and mother of two daughters, ages 24 and 28.

Negotiating a Home within a Home: Second Generation Iranian-Canadians in Richmond Hill, Ontario

By Shirin Abdmolaei

Abstract

The town of Richmond Hill, Canada, located in a region outside of Toronto, is home to one of the largest expatriate Iranian communities in Canada. Through qualitative research, the aim of this paper is to grasp how Richmond Hill, as a locale to which Iranians have increasingly come to live. The first aim of this study is to examine the ways in which the larger Iranian community, peers and family affect how the second generation responds to, as well as experiences, Iranian culture and ethnic affiliation. In contrast, the second aim seeks to recognize the complications, challenges and intergenerational conflicts which arise as members of the second generation negotiate and balance their parents' cultural norms with that of Canadian society.

This paper is a working anthropological study of second-generation Iranian-Canadians in Richmond Hill. Its findings are presented in two parts.

Part A:

The first part examines how the second generation responded to ethnic affiliation by exploring the role of family, peers and the larger Iranian community situated in Richmond Hill. Findings showed that participants of this study were avid about the role of the greater Iranian community in helping retain, although to different extents, Iranian culture. Due to the large number of co-ethnics living in the same locality, the accessibility of local Iranian stores, restaurants and cultural events were suggested by respondents as offering them important means in which to experience Iranian culture. Consequently, many of the participants noted to have closer friendships with Iranians as opposed to non-Iranians. Those interviewees showed to have a greater interest and connection with Iranian heritage as opposed to respondents who had more non-Iranian friends. For some of these participants, their problems with Iranian affiliation began at an earlier age. Especially in a post-9/11 era, growing up bombarded with ill media depictions of the Middle East and Iran contributed to their downplaying of ethnic identity. Although this has changed, as the participants grew older, they noted that, in their adolescence, they were less comfortable to express Iranian culture to their friends.

However, family, especially parents, was considered by all participants as being the main reason for retaining Iranian culture. While the transmission of the Farsi language (which all of the participants spoke) by parents was regarded as important to their reception of ethnic identity, interviewees suggested that their parents further instilled Iranian values through particular expected behaviors of their children, requiring and enforcing good mannerisms, instilling a drive to succeed academically and professionally, and emphasizing the importance of family, for which all the participants were grateful. Additionally, the second-generation stated that they enjoyed Iranian traditions and holidays celebrated with their families and the larger Iranian community, and hoped to pass on such values and customs to their own children.

Findings of this study show that living in culturally rich environments can greatly affect the retention of ethnic heritage, and the role of peers additionally demonstrates how they affect youths' engagement with ethnic affiliation. Family, however, was the ultimate and initial factor in instilling Iranian values, where the pride in Iranian culture of the second-generation has been

suggested to originate from. As positive as such a retention of Iranian culture may be, however, it has also led to the problematics of growing up in Canada.

Part B:

The second part of this paper examines Iranian parental and cultural expectations with a focus on gender behavior and opposite-sex relationships, aesthetic appearance and leisure activities, in addition to educational attainment. Considering the socialization of parents in Iran, gender was an underlying subject to the matters of this part of the study. Male respondents suggested that their parents were less strict about their relationships with girls and the leisure activities in which they engaged in. On the other hand, all female participants stated that their parents, especially their fathers, enforced more regulations on such matters, and most answers suggested to issues pertaining to sex and improper behavior which parents associated male-female relations with, whether romantic relationships or friendships. Participants answers showed that such relations did not imply that they were acting inappropriately, and male-female relations in Canada were considered 'normal.' Moreover, while male participants also discussed this, female participants stated that their non-Iranian friends tended to have less parental restrictions which often put them at odds with their parents' rules.

Certain articles of clothing were considered problematic by parents, noted by a majority of the female participants. The examination of clothing was a vital aspect of this study as it offered a means in which to consider the mediation of parental cultural norms with that of the host society, which also regarded pressures sparked from the media and the peer context. For many of the female participants, their choice of clothing had to be negotiated. On one hand, they wanted to respect their parents, while on the other, they wanted to dress their bodies to not only fit in with peers and the larger Canadian society, but to assert their Canadian identities as well.

Education was stressed by all the parents of the participants and was considered important by many of the interviewees. Aware of the educational and professional achievements of Iranians in North America, both male and female respondents stated the pressures of having to live up to Iranian definitions of success, especially growing up in Richmond Hill where they felt that competition was high amongst the Iranian community. From issues of appearance and behavior, to the matter of success, participants suggested that they had felt restricted living not only with parental expectations, but the judgments of the wider Iranian community as well. Respondents stated that certain professions were favored by Iranians, and for some, they claimed that their parents demands had affected their choice of study in university when they had initially planned to undertake differing majors.

All the participants, with the exception of one, stated the importance of retaining their Iranian identity. Although parents of the second-generation have felt the necessity for their children to maintain a close association with Iranian cultural values, the findings of this paper conclude that, no matter how much their children speak Farsi, engage in Persian festivities and events, or associate with other Iranians, they are also Canadian, and they are faced to situate themselves in both cultures.

Conclusion

As this paper shows, second generation Iranian-Canadians in Richmond Hill face a number of factors requiring them to negotiate not only with their parents' cultural expectations, but that of Canadian society as well. Thus, Iranian parents should recognize the complexities which accompany their children's hyphenated identities.

Summary and Conclusion

Yahya R. Kamalipour

Greetings! We certainly had an informative and content rich conference today, and together explored the *Second Generation Iranian-Americans and Other Immigrants: Experience, Expectations, and Challenges*. As most of you know, the DĀNESH Institute has been acting as a conduit for communication, information, collaboration, and sharing of knowledge in various venues, including conferences aimed at exploring a myriad of timely issues related to the Iranian-American community in the United States.

We certainly had a very productive day with excellent presentations and dialogue among the first and second generation of Iranian immigrants in the US and Canada. On your behalf, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the organizers and supporter of the conference, including Dr. Mitra Fallahi, Dr. Cyrus Behrouzi, Dr. Irene Queiro-Tajalli, and the administration of Saint Xavier University. It goes without saying that without your participation, as presenters or panelists or audience, this event could not have been successful. You all deserve a special thank you!

Those of you in attendance this morning heard a historical presentation, by Dr. Franklin Lewis, entitled *The Early Iranian-American Encounters*, in which he has researched and documented the immigration of a small number of Iranians to the Chicago region through cultural, educational, and religious exchanges between Iranians and Americans from 1810 until about 1920. His presentation illustrates the fact that the connection between Iran and the United States, through immigration, is not a new phenomenon. Although his research covers intercultural contacts through not only Iranians coming to the U.S., but also Americans working in Iran or Afghanistan, as missionaries, or as merchants or diplomats. Interestingly enough, his research has revealed that the first single woman from Iran to attend college abroad, came to study in Chicago in 1911. I personally find his research quite interesting and encourage him to consider expanding its scope and publishing it in a book format.

Dr. Rivanne Sandler's paper, *A Narrative of Return: Tara Bahrapour's Memoir To See and See Again*, is a welcome analysis of one of the many memoirs written by the first and second generation Iranian expatriates, particularly women, in which they are dominated by a sense of loss and suffused with nostalgia for a life left behind and a longing for returning to the homeland or at least remaining connected with its people and culture. Such memoirs often point to the immigrants' emotional and mental feelings toward the motherland and the new homeland, which are not necessarily confined to the Iranian immigrants and are quite prominent challenges in our contemporary global environment.

The first panel presentation, *Second Generation Immigrants: Experience, Expectations, and Challenges*, moderated by Dr. Alberta Gatti, brought together a group of young and successful second generation Iranians and others who shared their personal perspectives and experiences vis-à-vis growing up in America with traditional parents. We saw a glimpse of cultural clashes, worldviews, and expectation of the parents who were mentally bounded to the cultural norms of the homeland. Nonetheless, often compromises were made and both generations, especially the young, adjusted quite nicely with the customs and norms of the new homeland and have become successful professionals. It was indeed a fascinating and engaging discussion.

The second panel presentation, *Parents of Second Generation Immigrants: Experience, Expectations, and Challenges*, moderated by Dr. Hamid Akbari, presented the parental side of immigrating to a new land and learning to adjust to a new set of cultural norms and expectations. Through their interactive and frank dialogue, it became quite clear that parents, regardless of their nationalities, face some daunting challenges, ranging from learning a new language, coping with a new culture, encountering discrimination, and speaking with an accent. This and the earlier panel were quite complementary and successfully presented two perspectives by two generations, the parents and children.

Shirin Abdmolaei's paper, *Negotiating a Home within a Home? Second Generation Iranian-Canadians in Richmond Hills, Canada*, was based on an extensive research project with some interesting results. On one hand, her research results illustrate that retention of ethnic identity poses unique challenges to the Iranian immigrant communities and, on the other hand, it reveals that the interaction with the larger Iranian community affect the ways in which the second generation Iranian-Canadians respond to, experience, and relate to the Iranian culture and ethnicity. One could surmise that, in communities in which a sizable immigrant population lives, retention of the native land's norms and culture is easier than in those that a small and scattered population lives. I encourage Ms. Abdmolaei to consider publishing the results of her study and perhaps expanding its scope to include bigger cities, such as Toronto (a.k.a., Tehranto).

And finally, Dr. Mateo M. Farzaneh's presentation on *Teaching the Good, the Bad and the Ugly of Iranian History and Its Long Term Benefits*, provided a thought-provoking historical, religious, and cultural perspective. He suggests that the second generation Iranians in America can indeed integrate into the new homeland, become responsible and productive citizens and, at the same time, maintain their motherland's cultural norms by studying its history and contributions to the world at large. He argues that one has to go beyond the customary cultural rituals, such as Norouz (Persian New Year), and learn their histories and the reasons for their perpetuation and survival through thousands of years. Furthermore, in doing so, we have to take into account all aspects of a given history and culture: The good, the bad, and the ugly. Such a balanced approach often results in a balanced perspective about one's perspective about self and others.

All in all, I truly enjoyed the papers and presentations and would like to, once again, congratulate you all for a highly engaging, interactive, and informative conference. Hope to see you at the next year's DĀNESH conference.

CONFERENCE PRESENTERS

Shirin Abdmolaei, Master of Arts Candidate, Social and Cultural Anthropology, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

Dr. Hamid Akbari, Distinguished Professor of Management, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago

Dr. Mateo M. Farzaneh, Assistant Professor of Islamic World, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago

Dr. Alberta Gatti, Associate Professor of Spanish and Director of the Center for Creating Engaged Learning Environment, Title III, St. Xavier University, Chicago

Dr. Yahya Kamalipour, Professor and Head, Department of Communication and Creative Arts, and Director of the Center for Global Studies, Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, Indiana

Dr. Franklin Lewis, Associate Professor of Persian Language and Culture and Deputy Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago

Dr. Rivanne Sandler, Associate Professor Emerita, University of Toronto, Canada, and Executive Director of the International Society for Iranian Studies