

## AUK Gets Lesson in American Musical History

By Farah Al-Shamali

Distinguished singer-songwriter and guitarist, Ruth Wyand, performed, at the American University of Kuwait on April 4<sup>th</sup>, a collection of timeless songs that tell the story of the evolution of music in the United States from some of the most influential and chart-topping artists of their time. From the days of the American Civil War where the first inklings of music arose to the emergence of rhythm and blues all the way up to contemporary times when already cemented styles were reinterpreted, revamped and accessorized with hooks and poetic lyrics that appealed to the American sentiment, Ruth takes a listener down a lane of musical genres that exhibit originality. It can be said that American music has always had a message behind it save for recent times where anyone can walk into a recording studio, repeat a word forty times and call that a song. However, the list that Ruth sang her way through that night cannot simply be dismissed as shallow; there are those that are explicit in their implications. One must also look into the artists themselves and the time period in which they were making their music. Some of the African-American artists I will mention later on were not always praised for having a command on their vocals and playing their respective instruments flawlessly. Racism took a toll of on their widespread acceptance but



Singer-songwriter, Ruth Wyand, samples a song of WC Handy accompanied by her acoustic guitar

their praises are sung nowadays and they are given titles that set them apart from their contemporaries for being able to branch out and create fresh, new sounds that live on.

Stephen Foster, renowned American songwriter, was the first artist she sampled; his name might not ring a bell to anyone in Kuwait but his songs have been

immortalized in many of the cartoons we used to watch as children (and still watch in my case) and many tributes have gone out to Foster over the years. Songs like 'Oh! Susanna' and 'Camping Races' can be heard being sung by Bugs Bunny and Granny, respectively, from Looney Tunes because of their catchy melodies. There is simplicity embedded in

his songs and they truly evoke the American spirit so much so that they remain popular after so many years of their composition. Dubbed the 'Father of American Music', Foster wrote his songs at a time when the nation was divided among warring states; his songs were able to bring people together. It is probably then when the power of music was felt

among and moved the masses and which propelled the music industry in the United States.

Moving on to the Deep South, there transpired a musical form initiated by African-American communities known as the blues in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hail-

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## Major "Minor" Problem

By Fatima Ibraheem

It was one jinxed morning when I woke up, logged onto my AUK email and read the email that declared the, excuse me, disappointing, decision made by the Private Universities Council. It has been suddenly decided, after almost six years since AUK was established, that all minors without majors such as Arabic, Business Administration, Gulf Studies, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Public Relations and Advertising, Psychology, and Visual and Performing Arts are considered to be "unapproved" minors and will be dropped. To translate this in simpler terms, a decision such as this one does not merely mean the disapproval of official minors, but also, unofficially, neglecting and oppressing the interests of AUK students.

With a mission statement that explicitly states: "The American University of Kuwait is a liberal arts institution...", one should consider that the very fact that AUK is a liberal arts educational college makes it distinct amongst other universities in Kuwait. Therefore, the misconception and misunderstanding of such a term will result in a decision such as the PUC's, showing their "unappreciation" and disapproval of such institutions. Having minors dropped will just make AUK a vocational college just like any other university in Kuwait, which is in fact, a decision that defeats the purpose of a "Liberal Arts institution." If the PUC would only understand what type of college AUK is and what kind of mission statement it holds, then this will not only force them to retract such a decision but also, for the future, will apply decisions to AUK that shouldn't be compared to other universities in Kuwait. If a decision such as this one meant applying general decisions to all universities, whether vocational, private, liberal arts or public, then it is completely unfair, because the basis is different to begin with.

Besides, what harm would it do if AUK students decided to officially minor in their fields of interest? Don't we always say that the youth are the building blocks of our future? Then, striving to encourage our youth to practice their interests in addition to their bachelor degrees is something every country wishes to have.

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## Impact of PUC Refusal to License 8 Minors

By Nur Soliman

The PUC, or the Private Universities Council of the Ministry of Higher Education, announced late last academic year that they decided not to approve licensing for 8 minors AUK had appealed for, explaining that these specific minors were not housed within licensed majors.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2010, the students affected by this decision were called to a meeting with President Tim Sullivan, Dean Carol Ross, Associate Dean John Russell, and other administrators to address the impacted students' concerns. Many students turned out at the meeting, as did a number of interested faculty and many staff members from various departments.

The minors that were impacted included Arabic, Business Administration,

Gulf Studies, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, PR & Advertising, Psychology, and Visual & Performing Arts. The list originally included History, but due to the fact that History was originally a licensed major (later dropped to become a concentration under International Studies), this decision was lifted from this specific minor. If AUK were to appeal for these minors to be licensed, the PUC would require AUK to first appeal for majors in these disciplines. This left a good percentage of the student population without a minor, and so the AUK administration called a meeting and invited each impacted student to attend the session.

The floor was open to questions, and so student after student reached the microphone and addressed the panel with their various questions, concerns, and complaints. Many

of the students who attended the session seemed to have lost their Arabic or Psychology minors. A frequent concern voiced by some of the students was that all their efforts in earning their minor was all for naught.

President Tim Sullivan, aided by his fellow panelists and a few professors who also put in their opinions, explained that by way of compensation, an addendum would be attached to each student's transcript, informing whoever it may concern that the student had in fact earned said minor, but due to circumstances beyond their control, said minor was no longer licensed in their university. AUK alumni who have already graduated with any of the withdrawn minors on their transcripts were able to retain them. He also added the important point that the academic or character refer-

ences and recommendations given students by their professors would make a more lasting impression on potential graduate school programs or future employers, as they already clarify the student's interests and qualities.

One professor noted, "Knowledge is not a waste," also adding that employers or program boards would also be able to see the type of classes the student enrolled in. Despite this advice and the practical compensation of the transcript addendum, the atmosphere was one of some discontent and frustration, as it undermined the students' efforts as well as undermining the importance of multi-disciplinary learning in a liberal arts environment such as AUK is striving to create.

President Sullivan also repeated, "I am firmly, specifically, urgently asking that faculty be as flexible as

# Unbelievable Night at the Graduates Association

By Shaimaa Bouyabes

I received an invitation from a friend to attend a theater show called "We Won't Write on a Blackboard" performed by a band called "Anthropology." I actually went there to meet up and spend some time with my friend because I haven't seen him in a very long time. It was located in the Graduates Association on the Gulf Road near Sharq.

I arrived a few minutes before the show and took a few minutes to say hello to my friend, and then he showed me the way to the theater. The whole place was dark which took me by surprise. Actually the whole event was a surprise; the place was prepared so well as though you were attend-

ing a show in France or at least a good theater in Lebanon. The decorations and lights were amazing; even the bands costumes were indescribable. I took a seat and grabbed a copy of the bands' flyer that was placed on my seat. It was actually the first time I ever heard about this band but I knew from the flyer that they had been around for some time.

The main singer, who is also the band leader, Emma, had a wonderful deep and sensitive voice and she was really awesome. All the songs that she sang were chosen from very famous poets such as: Gabran Khaled Gabran, Mahmoud Darweesh, Elia Abi Madhi, Enrique Macias plus a few songs written by Emma her-

self and others.

Emma sang in Arabic, English and French. We were not listening to love songs in this show. Actually, they chose some deep poets talking about emotions that might have affected their lives, also they sang about politics and war.

There were a few dances between every few songs but the one I liked the most was the salsa dancer. They also had some kind of a puppet show that represented characters they were talking about in their songs.

The instruments that were used were a guitar, drums and a piano. The whole show included 27 performances and it took about an hour and a half.

The whole event was



A view of the performance.

very well organized and so entertaining and the entire crew was made up of professionals who really loved what they were doing. I admired what they were doing; it made me realize that there is much more to life than working and studying. The biggest surprise was at

the end of the show when the crew member's names were announced. Most of them were Kuwaitis!!! Even the salsa dancer. Of course, there were people from other countries such as Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia. They didn't have any formal support or contribution; they

did all this on their own. The band started only two or three years ago which is really amazing because they look so professional and experienced. This really taught me that if you believe in something you can do it no matter what, and nothing will stop you.



Ahmad Al-Kandari on guitar during the performance



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The Voice of AUK is a student-run, monthly newspaper that seeks to foster active communication among the entire campus community and keep it abreast of diverse and relevant issues by providing high-quality news and information in an academic context. Through this, The Voice also strives to heighten awareness of rights and responsibilities of membership in the AUK community. The Voice also espouses a commitment to philanthropy.

The Voice of AUK welcomes contributions from all registered students, faculty and staff members of the American University of Kuwait. Submissions should be emailed to [voice@auk.edu.kw](mailto:voice@auk.edu.kw).

All submissions must be approved by the Editorial Board, in accordance with the Editorial Policy. The Voice of AUK offers no guarantee that any submission will be published.

To be considered for publication in the Voice, submissions for a given issue must be received on or before the published deadline for that issue.

The views expressed in opinion columns represent strictly the views of the author, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Voice of AUK, nor those of the American University of Kuwait.

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The Voice of AUK is published in ten monthly issues from September through Oc-

tober, and in a single issue for the months of July and August. Special non-news supplements may be published from time to time.

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## Discussing Minors, from page 1

as a problem so they could "make substitutions that would work for graduation." Professor Shoma Munshi, Division Head of the Social Sciences, also contributed to this discussion and mentioned that her department was conducting a study to prove the need and demand for a potential Psychology major. When asked by a few students whether a petition run by students might help, President Sullivan was careful to say that this endeavor might very well strengthen AUK's case if by a fraction, if it were entirely run by students and submitted to the PUC by the same channel, independent of AUK's official efforts.

"I think this was a bad decision," President Sullivan told the audience, affirming that the Council had to license said minors; "they ought to realise that minors are the first step towards a major," saying that gradual

developments in each department were obviously crucial in the eventual creation of a major. He informed the students that the AUK administration was doing everything in its power to request the PUC repeal their decision and go ahead to license these minors. "I hope to start the appeal paperwork within one week. I have also scheduled a meeting with the head of the PUC, President Sullivan updated the students. When asked when he hoped the issue would be resolved, the President hoped it would be resolved "by June" so as to also include the Spring seniors who would be graduating by that month, although even if it were not resolved conclusively by that date, he "would continue to fight this, no matter how long it takes." Students and faculty later commented that they were duly impressed by the determination and perseverance of the interim President in this

regards, as he seemed committed to developing AUK as a liberal arts institution that sought to offer its students a wide variety of disciplines to learn, which would in turn develop them as valuable members of the local and national community.

In the meantime, the AUK administration will have submitted their paperwork to appeal for the minors to be licensed, and will be meeting with the head of the PUC to discuss future developments in this issue. A number of dedicated, enthusiastic students have also formed a group who have written out a petition form addressed to the Head of the Board of the PUC confirming the request of the administration to license the lost minors. They have collected signatures and at the time in which this article is being written, are in the process of preparing an appointment with the Council to present their case.



Dr. Aseel Al-Awadhi and AUK students.

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## MP Al-Awadhi Chats with Students

### PR/Marketing

The American University of Kuwait's Division of Student Affairs celebrated International Women's Day by inviting one of Kuwait's first fe-

male Parliamentarians for a mid-morning chat with students, staff and faculty. The discussion took place on Thursday, March 11 at 10 am in AUK's Multipurpose room in front of a full

audience. MP Al-Awadhi took questions from the crowd regarding some of the challenges she faces as a female in Parliament, the future of education in Kuwait and the

current state of politics and policy-making in the country. In the spirit of International Women's Day, MP Al-Awadhi advised young females to have confidence in themselves and in their abilities, and to be persistent in whatever it is they try to attain in life. She encouraged them to raise society's standards of women and to formulate their own identity.

MP Al-Awadhi ended the lively discussion by thanking the audience and AUK for inviting her and for creating a venue whereby such discussions can take place.

## The Importance of Spanish



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### By Florence Gillier-Pagenaud

On the 6th of April, the Spanish Ambassador, His Excellency Don Manuel Gómez de Valenzuela, gave a lecture in English at AUK about "The Importance of Spanish Language in the World." A large number of students, faculty members and guests were present. The Ambassador, an experienced linguist, explained the hierarchy of languages in the world where Spanish occupies a pre-

ponderant rank. Spanish is the official language in 21 countries. This is the second most used language in international communication, and an official language of the UN and its organizations. The Ambassador spoke about how the Spanish language is a powerful communication tool across America, Europe, Asia and Africa, increasingly important in business as well as career matters and that over time the need to learn Spanish will continue to

be on the rise.

After the lecture, His Excellency, in conjunction with the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, kindly donated for the second time a good collection of Spanish books to the AUK library to encourage the growing interest in the language and culture of Spain and the Spanish-speaking world.

This is an auspicious start for AUK's Foreign Languages program!



Director of the AUK Library, Ms. Amna Al-Omare, receives the second collection of books from His Excellency.

## Hungarian Students Visit AUK

By Farah Al-Shamali

A delegation of 10 senior students from Hungary majoring in Media and International Studies visited the AUK campus on April 4<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am to 1:00 pm and were shown around by various staff members. This visit was organized by the Ministry of Information, more specifically, the Foreigner Media Department. It was put together to have the students study Kuwait's culture, civilization, and economic and political issues that concern the country at the moment. The visit started with a campus tour by Mr. Ayman Shouman, the program's organizer. Their day comprised of taking a tour of the AUK Library by Ms. Amna Al-Omare, sitting through a presentation by Mr. Damian Medina on the Office of Student Life's role and responsibility to AUK students, meeting Ms. Joanna Hands, Director of the Student Success Center, to hear a brief overview of the department, attending a discussion panel entitled 'Media and International Studies in the Context of Kuwait' lead by President Tim Sullivan, Dean Nizar Hamzeh, Dr. Craig Loomis, Dr. Mohammad Akbar, Dr. Ildiko Kaposi, and Dr. Ebrahim Merza, en-

joying a presentation by Dr. Lisa Urkevich, Director of the Arabian Heritage Project, on the music of the Arabian Gulf, Kuwait in particular, getting some background information on traditional Kuwaiti songs and watching/listening to video clips that demonstrate the former.

After Dr. Urkevich's presentation came to a close, the Hungarian students were given the opportunity to converse with AUK students by way of having representatives of leading clubs/organizations there. MUNAUK, the Voice of AUK, and SGA each spoke of their histories at AUK, roles, mission statements, present and future endeavors, and achievements. MUNAUK mentioned its longstanding legacy at AUK being an accomplished club/organization having obtained several accolades both in Kuwait and abroad due to their skill set in diplomacy and conflict resolution, the Voice of AUK passed around the most recent issue and explained how student/faculty/staff contributions have helped the newspaper evolve over the years and the introduction of

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## Facebook: Is It Really a Worldwide Social Nightmare?

By Tasneem Rashwan

What is Facebook? When I came back from summer break during my middle school years, I would see everyone gossiping and saying phrases such as: “Did you see my profile picture?” “Add me on Facebook,” “Are you in a relationship?” “Did you see who added me?” “Oh my God, you looked fabulous in your Facebook photo album,” or “You will not believe who I found on Facebook!” All these phrases just made me curious to get familiar with Facebook. Throughout high school and university, Facebook was the most popular subject for students. It was the most common means of communication between students. If a student asked you to add them on Facebook and you didn’t even have an account, their jaw would drop. Although some people consider Facebook a blessing, others consider it damaging and useless. In the article “Facebook-

ing Our Way Through Life” published by Farah Al-Shamali, Al-Shamali persuasively focuses on how Facebook can be a center of distraction in our lives; in addition, she argues the negative side of Facebook and how it’s unhelpful and merely a waste of time and energy. I believe that the author was looking at her personal experience with Facebook. In my opinion, the author brings up some good points in the article; however, her argument would have been stronger if she compared the pros and cons of Facebook.

I believe that the author seems to be emotional in her description of Facebook and does admit that towards the end of the article. What does the author mean when she states “I detected the symptoms of this chronic disease way back and tried everything in my power to keep a physical and mental distance from this vile creation?” Well didn’t the

author notice that this “vile creation” that caused her “chronic disease” made her reconnect with her old buddies? Not only that but Facebook helps you get updated with your friends activities such as where they live, where they study and how they are feeling! Sometimes you meet people for a short time and make friends and you browse Facebook and wow, there they are again. Imagine the smile that you would have on your face when you meet your childhood friend randomly on Facebook. This wouldn’t happen through other means because you might know your friends’ email addresses. With Facebook, no email address is needed. Through Facebook, you can provide whatever information you feel comfortable sharing, and it can be viewed without you having to send or share anything! The same applies for web addresses, which is great for promoting businesses or

spreading the word about a great cause. You have to be careful, of course, because this can be a double-edged sword. The entire internet is risky so all you have to do is be careful with what you post out there. It is probably not wise to post your personal address on Facebook if you don’t want people to start stalking you. Not only that but through Facebook your friends could have the chance to take a look at how you have grown the past couple of years or the new car that you just got for your birthday! Why does the author feel like Facebook is a deadly virus that is spreading out rapidly? Yes, I agree that it could lead to addiction and distraction but I believe that Facebook shouldn’t be blamed. Rather the whole innovation of a computer should carry the burden.

How about we leave Facebook aside? Wouldn’t people find another way just to kill time? Before Facebook

was invented, people used other excuses. For example “I was chatting on MSN and I didn’t have time to finish my paper” or “Remember the show I was telling you about? It came up yesterday on TV so I didn’t have any time to do my homework.” So, according to the author, any technology that could waste time and create distractions needs to be eliminated. Let’s eliminate cell phones, television, play stations and computers. Aren’t these also a center of distraction? It’s human nature to find excuses in order to run away from work and problems. However, in my point view, I believe that Facebook or any other technology can be looked at as a form of therapy for a person. I believe that a person needs time for relaxation because no one can work consistently without at least a fifteen minute break between every couple of hours. For example, after a really hard day you go back

home and get on Facebook and take a brainless quiz that makes you smile due to the fact that you might find many of your friends commenting and making jokes out of it. Isn’t it really nice to have some relief after a really hard day?

All in all, I do find Facebook to be a great site. Like anything in this world it has its ups and downs, and some people will abuse it, while others make the most of it. It is up to the individual to determine whether or not Facebook will be a distraction. I believe that Facebook is a blessing once you know how to make use of it. It doesn’t obligate an individual to stay on it for hours wasting their time and energy. It is merely a source of entertainment that one turns to when they need some time off work. Finally, it is a way of connecting people to their loved ones all over the world. Isn’t that the best blessing you could ever have?

## Simply Marwa

By Alia Mustafa Aref

Note from the editor: This article is a continuation of the article ‘Who Was Mawa Sherbini, Anyway?’ from the March issue of the Voice, page 5.

Marwa El-Sherbini did not want to die. She was in court trying to make a man pay for insulting her. Marwa wanted this man to respect women, to respect Muslim women. Although many Egyptians have now labeled her the ‘headscarf martyr’ a martyr is a person willing to die or willing to sacrifice. I believe that she did not want to die. She had her whole life ahead of her. Her husband who was in the intensive care unit for weeks after the vicious attack did not want her or their unborn child to die. Her killer has since been sentenced to life in prison. Her husband had testified in court despite the fact that he was on crutches.

Marwa was simply Marwa. She was not a martyr, a terrorist or superwoman. She was a woman, a mother, a wife, a sister, a daughter, an Egyptian woman. Her only crime was her being Muslim and wearing the headscarf that is common in most if not all Muslim nations. She did not want to cause trouble but when this odious man confronted her, she did not falter and was not intimidated. She did the rational thing and that was suing him for slander. Marwa is a role model for women everywhere of every religion. She did not take it kindly that a man would not only defame her as a woman



but as a Muslim woman. Any woman would appreciate how she handled the situation with grace and intellect. The coward that took her life kept stabbing her even as she lay on the floor according to Elwy’s testimony. Her attacker had to cover his face and be shielded behind bullet proof glass in his court appearances for Marwa’s murder. Marwa was taken from us by a man who was not human nor will he ever be. Here’s wishing he rots in jail and is denied parole for what he did to Marwa.

The media has a responsibility to the public. I blame not only international mediums but also local ones. We are so affected by the West that we exclude news that is important to us as a Muslim, Arab nation. Marwa was murdered in July of last year and I bet many of you reading this have never heard of her. Why is that? Why did we hear of Michael Jackson’s death? Why did we hear of Casey Johnson, the Johnson heiress, and Brittany Murphy, the actresses’, deaths? Why is it that whenever somebody that is not related to us neither by culture nor religion or even

region dies, we hear about it the very next day if not the same instance? Why did it take so long for us to learn about Marwa? Do we really leave everything up to the West to decide on what news we can know of and what we can’t? Sure the names I mentioned are celebrity names but I bet you can tell me their life stories and not even know what time the Morning Prayer is. Do we really put that much importance into what some moron at a network deems to be popular news? Seriously what has happened to our nation if the murder of an innocent Muslim woman is not reported! What next? A war breaking out in Palestine that is not covered? Iran being invaded? Afghanistan or Iraq being annihilated? What else are they planning? What news is out there that will never get to us as we lie sleeping on our ears?! Get off your Blackberry’s and Facebook and wake up to what is happening in your world. Think! Would the media have ignored her death if she was a pregnant Jewish woman who was stabbed by a Muslim man? Think about it.

## American Music, from page 1

ing from backgrounds fraught with images of slavery, African-American artists almost always projected their own abject pasts (or those of their predecessors) in their voices as blues music had sprung out of the sheer depressive mood that befell slaves working on ‘white’ plantations in the form of work songs and field hollers. Ruth sang an array of songs from a handful of these songsters such as W.C. Handy, Billy Holiday, and Robert Johnson. Known as the ‘Father of Blues’, W. C. Handy loved infusing folk elements into his material. He also acknowledged his origins as much of his blues music found its roots in black folk songs. Because their music expressed sadness, the term *blues* was quite appropriate. The genre itself developed greatly and was accentuated by several instruments.

Ruth then sang songs from musical giants such as Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, and Bob Dylan. When Elvis’s picture came onto the projector’s screen, the crowd oohed and aahed because it’s difficult not to – it’s Elvis! He was famously known as the ‘King of Rock and Roll’ but she made an interesting comment about his

musical background that many may not have known up until then. He was in the rock and roll business but he also combined it with gospel singing and would probably like to be remembered as a gospel/blues entertainer than as a rock and roller. Ruth ended the night with one of her own compositions called ‘Greetings from Your Faraway Girl’ and I could not help but hear a resonance in her music of everything else I heard earlier.

With both her acoustic and electric guitar on hand, Ruth sang away the night and the story of America and it was enchanting to listen to. Her singing greatly complemented the melodies she played but I sometimes enjoyed the music a lot more like when she sang ‘Wind Cries Mary’ by Jimi Hendrix. I absolutely loved the guitar arrangement and thought she did quite a fine job of imitating Hendrix’s mad skills (not that I’m an authority on the subject but she gave us an incredible performance). Definitely the most amusing part of the concert was the *scat* song, at least in my opinion. Ruth had us, the audience, imitate her scat and I have to say that it was very entertain-

ing to (attempt) to do. I’ve always heard and come to acknowledge it but I didn’t know it had a fan base and was that documented. Scat singing is basically a vocal improvisation in which a singer would utter random nonsense syllables and vocables that go along with the melody or rhythm of a particular tune. Louis Armstrong was the first to pioneer this jazzy style of singing and it has been around for almost a century now.

In these songs, one could hear the struggle of a nation and just how much it has progressed in as little as two centuries. The singers Ruth talked about and sang songs of were of so many different origins but there was something ‘American’ about their execution of music. I like to believe that artists such as these defined the very identity of Americans because they sang more than just lyrics but empowered their songs with soul, class, and individuality. I really didn’t know what to expect from this event because I didn’t recognize a lot of the names on the list and was obliged to be there for a class but I ended up enjoying it so much and I wish I would take a journey down that musical highway again.

## Hungarian Students, from page 3

several initiatives that have helped solidify it as a credible source of information related to the AUK community, and the SGA articulated its position at AUK and how far it has come since its early beginnings such as ratifying a constitution. The Hungarian students were very eager to follow-up on all of this and directed questions to the AUK students and the discussion quickly became casual and more personal. They

commended clubs/organizations at AUK for their liveliness and stated, interestingly enough, that the campus environments of their universities are not as energetic. As a student here in Kuwait who sat with them and got some insight on their educational careers, I was happy to find that we all shared many commonalities. Even if it was only for a day, the Hungarian students thoroughly enjoyed their visit to AUK and I, for

one, appreciated this effort on the part of the Ministry of Information a lot more after having sat with them. As students of a rapidly changing world with entirely new outlooks on foreign societies, such visits should be regularly planned and executed because they do have a lasting effect and help students see with their own eyes what countless mediums fail to get across about our respective cultures and lifestyles.

# Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Cullenism...wait, what?

By *Nada El-Badry*

Everyone knows about Twilight in some shape, way or form. Whether you've read the series of books or seen the movies or simply heard about it from a friend or sibling, you have heard about it. You may also know the impact it has had on teenage girls worldwide. Suddenly Twilight became the biggest thing since the Blackberry. It wasn't long after that that girls were sighing dreamily over Edward Cullen and how amazing he is. Completely ignoring the fact that he's 1: a fictional character and 2: a neurotic, controlling, abusive vampire boyfriend. But I digress. I am here to discuss the fact that some girls take the term "fan" to a whole new level. How? Well, readers, it seems as if they've made a religion out of the Twilight series. No, I kid you not! Although, they aren't officially calling themselves a religion or a cult, however, this is what their site says: "Cullenism is a mass group of people, referred to as Cullenites, who have come together to appreciate the values and ideals represented by the Twilight series. We are not a religion (or a cult, lol) but we will be comparing and discussing Twilight with religion." They also have something called "Twichurch" which is held every Sunday and in which they discuss Twilight. I am sorry, but this sounds very much like a religion to me and Twilight is their bible. It sounds to me that a bunch of silly teenage girls have nothing better to do than to worship a character from a



book. This is causing my faith in teenagers to decrease at an alarming rate. Although, once again, they seem to think differently: "We are simply fans who cherish the values of Twilight (not just how cute Edward is!)" Yes, because fans worship the subject of their passion and turn it into a religion. That happens all the time.

All right, I don't mean to sound judgmental or to bash the book, but what values can a book like Twilight possibly have? Vampires and Were-

wolves exist? Girls should go for the boy who can probably murder them? Girls should obsess over said boy and try to commit suicide when said boy leaves? I will not go on since I might spoil the book for those of you who haven't read it – oh the horror – but come on. I am not saying it's not an interesting read, but I think the fans are taking it a bit too far – especially when they begin comparing Cullenism to Christianity. Once again, I am not joking. They say that there

are some "Cullenites" who are completely dedicated to Cullenism and the books, just as there are Christians dedicated to Christianity and the bible. Then there are some who simply watch the movies and somehow this does not make them a true Twilight fanatic – sorry, I mean Cullenite. I think if there was a line to this ridiculousness, they definitely crossed it when they began comparing this "cult" they made up to a real religion like Christianity.

How many people have taken part in this absurdity, you might wonder? The site statistics say two hundred and forty eight. That's almost two hundred and fifty. Two hundred and fifty people believe in this! And there might possibly be more who are so disturbingly obsessed with the series! You don't see Harry Potter fans making a shrine or religion dedicated to J.K. Rowling or Harry Potter, do you? Perhaps I am speaking too harshly, since I am not exactly a Twilight fan myself, although I have skimmed through the books and I was not impressed. But I think any rational human being can see that obsessing over a book this way simply cannot be healthy. I could go on and on about how Twilight just is not worth all the trouble, but I will let you form your own opinion. If you would like to read more about this fascinating "group" then you can visit their site at [www.twifans.com/group/cullenism](http://www.twifans.com/group/cullenism). I sincerely hope that what I have said will put you off from joining if you are, in fact, a Twilight fan.

## Wearing the Abaya

By *Salma S. Tayeh*

Kuwait enjoys intense diversity of nationalities, culture, interests and population segments. This goes to the various nationalities migrating to Kuwait and sharing cultural facets within the country. Yet, the majority of people seen in shopping malls and Kuwait's most common places are found to have similar dress codes. For example, people would be likely seen wearing jeans, pants, blouses, t-shirts, dresses and skirts. Among these similarities, some ladies would be seen wearing abayas. Lately I have wondered why abayas are worn, which led me to investigate the matter.

The *abaya* has many different names and types such as Jilbab, Burqa, Chador, etc. They all have the same meaning in terms of dress code or Islamic dressing. An *abaya* is a full body garment worn in public places. It has no face veil. It is a common dress among Muslim women. The traditional color of an *abaya* is black; still there are colorful abayas provided in the Kuwaiti market. <sup>1</sup> They usually have a light cut and are made out of flowing fabrics; such as crepe, georgette, and chiffon. The expensive ones would include Swarovski, diamonds, gemstones, and various other types of precious stones. Also, there are casual abayas that are currently seen worn by young Muslim ladies to cope with the modern life. <sup>2</sup> The Jilbab is a long, flowing, loose, over garment, worn by some Muslim women. There is a modern Jilbab which covers the entire body except for hands, feet, face and head. The head is then usually covered by a scarf. <sup>3</sup> The Burqa is an opaque, black and long veil that is up to ankle length or longer. It includes two holes for the arms with the front open and it is layered over one another to be held together with the hands. In some cases, the burqa may cover the whole face with a see-through veil over it. <sup>4</sup>

Some Muslim women tend to wear abayas for religious reasons instead of cultural reasons. These women usually wear 'abayas based upon the

"Quraan versus in Surah XXXIII. It states "O Prophet! Tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks close around them. That will be better, so that they may be recognized and not annoyed. Allah is ever forgiving, merciful..." In addition to that, Bukhari states, "My Lord agreed with me ('Umar) in three things... (2) And as regards the veiling of women, I said 'O Allah's Apostle! I wish you ordered your wives to cover themselves from the men because good and bad ones talk to them.' So the verse of the veiling of the women was revealed" (Bukhari, v1, bk 8, sunnah 395).<sup>5</sup> Since the abayas are a long garment, likely to be loose, and covers the whole body, it is mostly required by some Muslim women.

In Kuwait, there are several perspectives of abayas. Some women wear abayas for cultural reasons and others for religious reasons. In addition, some women would wear a *abaya* as they find it more comfortable and simple to dress in. They tend to wear it in quick occasions such as shopping, running errands, walking etc. Hence, abayas are either worn for cultural or religious reasons.

### Notes

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By *Shaimaa Bouyabes*

Six years ago, during one of our family gatherings, my cousins and I agreed to have a mother's day surprise party. Each one of us would bring a gift for their mom, adding to this their contribution in that party's expenses and preparations. We already decided that we were going to have it at my aunt's house on the regular gathering day, so that all the moms would not suspect anything. Actually the hardest part of the preparations was choosing the gift itself.

I wanted to bring her a new watch, gold, a piece of jewelry, maybe a bottle of perfume maybe but I decided not to. I didn't want to bring her something that might be forgotten somewhere in her wardrobe or any drawer in her room. I wanted to bring her something that she would use in her daily life, and she could remember me every time she used it. Something she really needed. So I thought about it for months trying to remember her discussions with my dad. I remembered that she asked him to bring her a water kettle because she was getting bored from her old golden kettle. She had to wait a long time to get some hot water while the electric kettle takes a few minutes and saves a lot of wasted energy used on the stove. So I decided to bring her that kettle.

My contribution to the party was to bring the cake. I had total control over it: whatever I liked, the color, shape, size, flavor and shop. I decided to go with a custom-made cake that would have a personal picture printed on it. I decided on a picture that was so surprising even to my cousins.

On the party day, my cousins were blowing balloons and hanging them on the wall with some party decorations. We



asked our moms to enter the room and they were surprised. After lots of kisses and hugs, I announced that we are going to start the party by cutting the party cake.

My mom is not the type of mother that is active in parties; she isn't a party person after all. When I revealed the cake, every body was shocked and looked at her and she felt that it was a little weird. She decided to get up and look at the cake and the moment she saw the picture, she started searching for me with her eyes and I went to her with a big smile on my face and she hugged me so tight and cried on my shoulder. I bet that you are all wondering: what was the photo that I had put on the cake?

It was a photo of me and my mom. I didn't mention before that I am the eldest child in my family. In that photo, I was only two months old and my mom was holding me and looking at me lovingly; I was smiling as well. That photo reminded her of the first time she

became a mother; a time when her whole life had changed from being a young girl to becoming a mother. And that was the trigger that started the flow of tears.

It has been four years since my mom passed away; she was and still is on my mind. Now I celebrate mother's day with my grandmother who tries to fill my mother's place in my life. I know that she is doing a great job but no matter what, I am really grateful for her efforts.

I hope that this memory is always happy for all of us and I wish that each one of us appreciates their mothers and what she does for the family. I know that a lot of us realize that but I hope that those who don't try to make it up as soon as possible so that they don't regret any moment they lost after she is gone. I think that what makes that memory less painful for me is remembering her last words to me before she passed away. She said: "Daughter, I really love

you and I am really happy that I had you in my life." If there was any love that I can give with all my strength, I would give it to my mom; I swore that I would never cry over anything after crying over losing her. I always think that she is still looking after me and I will try my best to be what she wanted me to be.

Mothers are the only ones in this world who will forgive your biggest and stupidest mistakes and never hold a grudge against you. Mothers are the only ones who will try to cover up for you. Mothers are the only ones who love us more than they love themselves. Mothers are the only ones who will stay awake if you were sick, to take care of you. Mothers are the only ones who will protect you from any danger and work so hard to provide a proper living for her kids. She will do that and much more without asking for anything in return. I wish that I could tell my mom one more time that I love her and I always will.

## Learning to Love Higher Education

By Hashim Al-Sughayer

First of all, I want to apologize for not posting or writing any new topics. The reason is that I had a lot of things to do and haven't had time to finish them all. I've been busy for a while now, but I promise that I will try to post at least once a week. Note to self: it is not a good idea to take two economic classes in one course!!

I never imagined my life to be the way it is right now.

I never thought that I would love education or even love writing essays but after joining AUK I fell in love with the whole system. The American system or the American way of teaching. They have a way that makes you focus all the time and you never get bored. They make learning fun and believe me when I say that I never had fun studying! When I first started here, I was still in the IEP (Intensive English Program) and I had fun all

the time; I don't mean having fun as in not caring and not attending classes. I actually had fun in class. I enjoyed my time and did all my assignments on time and got a solid "A" in the class. And now, I'm an undergraduate student and I'm always busy, the good kind of busy. The kind every workaholic wants. Even when I'm at home, I miss college. I never thought that I would feel this way about studying. Spending time in the library

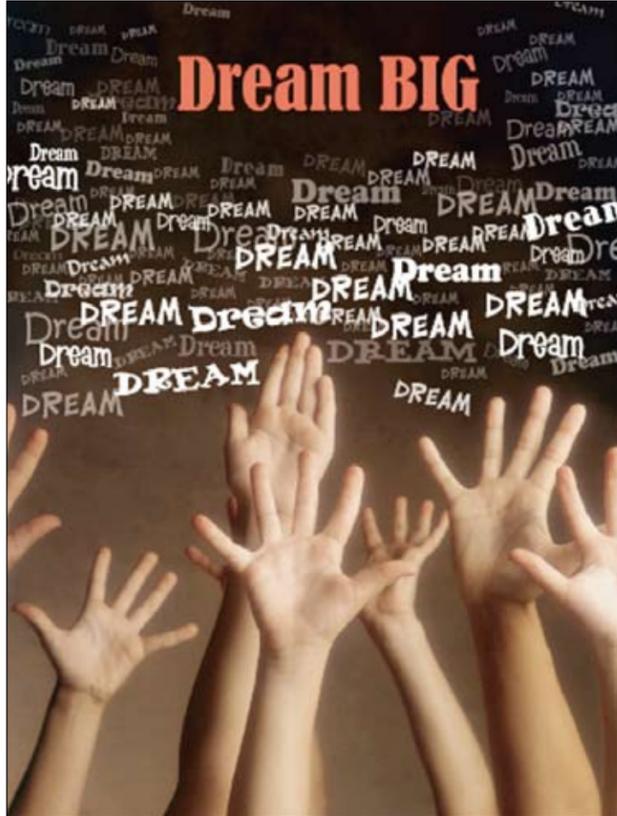
was a ridiculous idea but now, I'm always there. Even if I didn't have anything to do, I love sitting there just to read a book or write a post maybe. This feeling can't be felt if the university that you are in doesn't have a cool library; I thank God that AUK has the coolest library.

Now, this wasn't always the case for me. I didn't want to continue at AUK. During my first week here, I felt that I wasn't good enough and was

in no mood to study! I just could not wait for the IEP course to end so that I can withdraw. However, after the horrible first week, I started feeling that it wasn't that bad and I can make it. So I decided to continue and thank God I did. After seeing what I can achieve and how I achieved it, it made the idea of quitting very dumb.

I asked myself, why did I want to quit?! Education is the most important part of life. I know I didn't realize that early on but now I do! Education is the first step of success. I didn't know what I wanted from life but now I know that I want to finish what I started. I know that I love studying. Even when I have a lot to do, I'm

enjoying every minute of it. One of the best things that I have discovered about myself is that I love public speaking. I love doing presentations. Sometimes I get nervous but I love challenging myself! I don't know what will happen in the future and I don't want to know but what I do know for sure is that I'm living the most important years of my life. I have to enjoy my life even if I have to study or write an essay. You won't get bored or exhausted when you are having fun studying. I'm a proud AUK student now and I thank God for this opportunity. Working hard and doing your work is all the fun I need now! I even wrote this article in the library!



### Minors, from page 1

Encouragement is the essence of successful education. Again, a decision such as this one does not merely mean the disapproval of official minors only, but also, unofficially, neglecting and oppressing the interests of AUK students. It decreases the incentive of having students taking courses they enjoy rather than just finishing up electives for the sake of satisfying graduation requirements. This, on the other hand, does not only discourage students, but also faculty. Many professors who teach general requirement courses are more than eager to offer upper division courses. The evidence is that a minor could not be satisfied unless a student takes at least three courses that are upper divisions with levels of 300 and above. So by the disapproval of minors, professors will not feel encouraged about offering interesting courses that, I guarantee, will foster students' interests. Therefore, the decision of dropping minors is like a knife in the back since it harms students in oppressing their interests, professors in offering rare courses and the country itself for halting progress necessary to ready the youth for future careers and workplaces.

If we want to look back at the reason, the excuse for disapproving minors was that because these fields do not have majors, thus do not possess enough "validity" to become official minors. Honestly, this seems to be the worst form of misconception. Actually, minors demonstrate a good start in opening doors for future majors. If minors have the appropriate capacity of offering enough upper division courses and employing enough credible professors, I do not see how these minors are considered "less valid" from the majors at AUK. The very fact that these are "only minors" does not mean that they are incapable. AUK's professors and students with minors have proven that minors can be as credible as majors at AUK. Or else, we would not have a large percentage of AUK stu-

dents minoring in different fields. In fact, a discipline in a university that starts off with "merely" a minor suggests that it has a very strong base if it is developed into being a major. This is because it climbed up the stairs step by step without losing breath by the end of the staircase; as opposed to racing and jumping from step one to step nine and running out of oxygen by the end. Plus, if minors aren't "valid" then how come great, prestigious graduate schools consider them and pay much attention to them as they do the GPA, transcript and recommendation letters?

Yes, alternatives such as attaching an addendum to the transcript or changing the term "minor" into concentration does seem to be good option, but the problem here does not only lie with the "minor" issue but more than that. A decision such as this one infers a lot in regards to the PUC towards AUK. It shows that there is a lot that the PUC does not understand about the foundation, mission statement and type of college AUK is; which is not just a major "minor" problem but also a major AUK-PUC crisis! The minors issue seems to be a gift to us in a way, since it is an indication for us that there is a lot for the PUC to work on in regards to its understanding of AUK. And yes, there is no waste in knowledge, but there is waste in discouraging knowledge. Disapproving official knowledge on a transcript will, in return, disapprove unofficial knowledge in one's interests and talents. It is not unilateral damage, but a chain of damages.

Minors are an official portrayal of the different interests students possess, since remember, "LEARNING doesn't begin or end within the classroom walls" (Dr. Carol, Student Handbook 2010). Similarly, what AUK graduates will apply later in future careers is not restricted to workplaces. Thus hindering learning learnt outside classroom walls means suppressing talents practiced inside and outside workplaces in the future for students.

### AUK's 6th Annual Career Fair Tuesday, May 11th

10am-3pm  
AUK's Auditorium

Looking for a full-time job, summer job, internship, or information about careers in Kuwait?

This is a perfect opportunity for students to meet local and international employers. Some of the companies that have registered for the fair include:

- Gulf Bank
- International Financial Advisors (IFA)
- Al Sayer Group
- Wataniya Telecom
- Kuwait Energy Company
- National Bank of Kuwait (NBK)
- Al Bazie & Company
- Ernst & Young
- Bank of Bahrain & Kuwait (BBK)
- AAIM International for Training & Development
- KPMG Safi Al-Mutawa & Partners
- Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK)
- Kuwait United Company
- Grant Thornton -Al-Qatami, Al-Aiban & Partners
- National Takaful Insurance
- Alghanim Industries
- ...and more!

Remember to have your CV ready, bring several copies of it, and come professionally dressed.

For more information and help in preparing for the career fair  
Stop by the Student Success Center

# Celebrating Diversity during International Week

## Office of Student Life

The Office of Student Life at The American University of Kuwait had organized its 5th Annual International Week from March 7th through March 11th, 2010. The International Week was a collaborative undertaking which contained numerous and diverse events, such as informational booths represented by various countries' embassies, the Global Warming Forum, cultural foods, traditional arts and clothing. These events support the mission of the Office of Student Life by celebrating cultural diversity to reflect current issues in the world and by providing more personal development opportunities for students.

The program was executed in association with AUK clubs and organizations such as the Diplomatic Club, MUNAUK, Al Akhdar Environmental Club, and the Entrepreneurship and Business Club. A number of volunteer students joined forces with the Office of Student Life on the diverse events that the week offered.

The first day, Sunday, March 7th, 2010, was designated



as Africa and Arab World day. The day saw a variety of African and Arab countries' embassies partake in the Country Resource Fair. Representatives from countries like Niger, Sudan, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were all present on campus. In addition, AUK students represented Qatar and Lebanon.

The second day, Monday, March 8th, 2010, was designated as Europe day. This day saw a variety of European countries' embassies partake in the Country Re-



source Fair. Representatives from countries like France, Germany, the Kingdom of Netherlands, Czech, Poland and Azerbaijan were all present on campus. Furthermore, AUK students represented Belgium, Spain, Italy and Armenia.

The third day, Tuesday, March 9th, was designated as North and South America Day. The day witnessed representatives from the embassies of the United States of America, Canada and Argentina take part in the Country Resource Fair. In addition to these countries, Amideast organization was also present on campus.



The same day was host to The Global Warming Forum. This event involved a fruitful discussions presented by Dr. Lulwa Ali an Environmental Research Scientist from Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, Ms. Sandra Al-Saleh managing partner of Equilibrium, Prof. Ralph Palliam - Associate Professor of Business Administration, Prof. Ahlam Alaki -Assistant Professor of English Language and Literature of the American University of Kuwait, and MUNAUK and Al Akhdar Environmental Club representatives. The discussion panel oversaw the effects of global warming and climate change from a scientific, social and economic standpoint. The discussion panel also tried to offer some possible solutions to the problems caused by Global Warming.

Wednesday March 11th, which was designated as Asia day, saw representatives from a variety of countries' embassies in Kuwait partake in the Country resources fair; countries included Russia, Paki-

**Continued on pg. 10**

# Interview with the Cast of *Blind*

By Sarah Khalaf

On the 25th of March, the Drama Club hosted a play called the 'Blind' at the AUK Auditorium that explored and raised a concern that the cast and crew felt needed to be shared. It was directed by Yousef Nayef and is about a blind boy who becomes jealous of his friend who is in love with Susan. I had a chance to sit down and meet the cast of the play and asked them a few questions about their opinions on their characters.

To begin with, I asked some questions to the director regarding his inspiration behind the storyline and how he came about developing it. When it came to what inspired him to direct the play, he said that he liked writing poetry and thought of a bigger and better way to expand his work. I was interested to find out that this wasn't his directional debut as he had directed a play called, "Face of Reality." It was about raising awareness in order to deliver people from hunger and poverty. His overarching message with directing this play is one of love and being able to genuinely care about others.

Moving on to the cast that gave life to the theatrical production, I began with the central character, Smith, who is the blind boy portrayed by Abdulrahman Al-

Bastaki. When asked about how it felt portraying a character with this disability, he said that it was fun seeing, ironically enough, and feeling how a blind man really feels. It was a little difficult. I had to learn the moves of how a blind person should walk and how he's supposed to hold the cane. Sam, portrayed by Syad Ammar Hussain, felt that playing the blind boy's friend was a nice experience. Syad said that having Susan as his love interest was a good addition but it did present some challenges. We didn't get to act together too much because of the segregation. Also, Syad had had experience acting before in Yousef's production, 'Face of Reality.'

Onto Susan, her character is nicknamed Bright Angel and is played by Dana Abu Mejdad. Dana enjoyed playing the part and found her character to be funny. Dana was very flexible right from the beginning about playing any part in the play. The blind boy's friend, Joseph, portrayed by Nigel D'Souza, had a great time preparing for and performing the play. When asked about how he felt about his character being given the role of bringing two friends back together, he called it a great experience. Zaid Al-Kazemi took on the roles of being the first host and a

bodyguard and Ahmed Al-Kassar was the second host and as well as the character of an innocent man. They both responded very well overall to being the hosts and really liked entertaining the audience but Zaid found it a bit frustrating at times. The entire cast thoroughly enjoyed working with Yousef as a colleague and director.

One of the challenges that the cast met during the play was the ending. We didn't have time to extend it. We had to rush everything. Another issue was segregation on stage which did not help the relationship between the characters of Syad and Dana. On a general note, the 'Blind' was, in the end, a completely student effort and they should be commended on their ability to stage

a full performance for viewers. The AUK community hopes to witness many more of these plays as the Drama Club grows in the next few years and provides us all with theatrical projects to be proud of such as the 'Blind.'



Zaid Al-Kazemi



Abdulrahman Al-Bastaki



Dana Abu Mejdad



Syad Ammar Hussain



Nigel D'Souza



Manal Adra



Ahmed

# Dartmouth

Nicholas Robert Knezek is a sophomore at Dartmouth College from the small town of Sanger, Texas. Before coming to Dartmouth, he achieved the status of Valedictorian of his high school, National Merit Scholar, and National Qualifier in the National Ocean Sciences Bowl. At Dartmouth, he is majoring in Engineering Physics with a minor in Math. Outside of classes, he is a member of

the Dartmouth College Glee Club, the a capella singing group X.ado, works in a lab performing Physics research and is involved with building houses for Habitat for Humanity. In his free time, Nick enjoys hiking, skiing, soccer, singing, and reading. During his stay in Kuwait, he hopes to experience the culture and customs of Kuwait and the surrounding Middle Eastern region.

Larry L Bowman, Jr. is a member of the class of 2011 at Dartmouth College, where he is an English Language and Literature and Biological Sciences double major. Mr. Bowman hails from the small town of Marion, Virginia and is interested in the interface of the Sciences and the Humanities. While at Dartmouth, Mr. Bowman is a member of the Dartmouth College Chamber Singers, the Alternative Spring Break Community Service Program through the Tucker Foundation, and the Equestrian team. In the past, Mr. Bowman has served

as a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Intern, where he researched iron-uptake systems in soybeans. As a first-generation college student himself, Mr. Bowman is interested in the transition to tertiary education and eventually wants to hold professorship at an institution. Aside from the Middle East, Mr. Bowman's other interests include studying the French horn, linguistics and languages, plant genetics, marine ecology, and sailing. He plans to pursue work in the field of public health and poverty eradication in rural America.

# Interns

# 200 Years of Chopin

## Journal Intime - Alexander Tharaud

By Sara Soliman

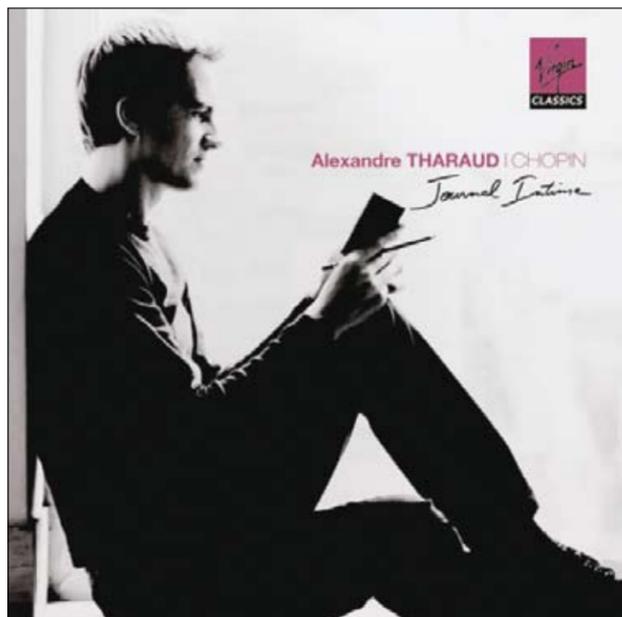
In honor of the great Frédéric Chopin's 200<sup>th</sup> year, Tharaud has devoted an album comprised of all the pieces by Chopin which he has a special affinity towards. It is an interesting compilation, as only three of the pieces are in a major key, the Eccosaise, the Contredanse, and the closing Nocturne in E Flat Major. The remainder, however, rather than presenting an album that is morbid or dark, present rather the energy and heavy beauty and elegance that is present in much of Chopin's work, reminiscent perhaps of the brooding artist rather than the talented socialite. Tharaud plays with great gentility, his fingers light and his pressure assured, intensely aware of the great grace and beauty that is present in Chopin's work.

Many pianists today play with perfect precision, never striking an off-chord or slipping a key, but one finds soon that their music is soulless, like the repeated practice of a student. Tharaud, however, is one of the few who plays with honest expression. The pieces, indeed, are well-

known, but Tharaud's voice shines radiantly through Chopin's poetic phrases, singing out the fluid, lyrical passages with great sensitivity, great perception.

The Ballade No. 1 hints Rubenstein's fresh, lyrical

whisper and warmth that is exclusive to Tharaud. It makes the mazurkas sound so light-hearted and strikingly jolly, as Tharaud is so versatile as to jump from key to key, mood to mood, without losing the color of



tone, but there is a singular balance between the hands, the fingers light and heavy in the right places, and demonstrating the story-telling voice of the piece with a

his tone in every piece.

This album is an honor to the great master, tenderly recreating the brilliance and warmth with humility and honesty.

## Argerich Plays Chopin - Martha Argerich

By Sara Soliman

To celebrate the Chopin year, Deutsche Grammophon is honored to present an album comprised of unreleased recordings of world-renowned Argentinian piano virtuoso, Martha Argerich. This elegant musician has been loved for the passion and gravity she channels into her music, and lovers of Chopin will now be delighted to hear these new, unheard-before recordings.

The album begins with a stunning rendition of the Ballade No. 1 in G Minor, a personal favorite, that is one of Chopin's most loved and most-frequently played by virtuoso performers, demonstrating a turbulent and dramatic passage of melody and mood. Argerich here plays with such unfamiliar rubato, very sensitively moving into an adagio before passing smoothly but effectively into and andante, presenting a truly honest, original rendition of the well-loved pieces. Technically, the piece is played magnificently, mordents and runs played with fluidity, the balance between the hands confident and assured. The final section, which is the "presto", truly proves Argerich's great technical finesse and her singular, fiery independence since she plays with a strange balance and a confused but stunning

speed, ending with a breathless, rallentando finale. A collection of etudes, mazurkas, and nocturnes follow, proving Argerich's great versatility and capability for gentility, all the while charged with her passion, sensitively demonstrating her ability to shine her personal light through

sively striking the chords and singing out the elegant, powerful phrases amidst the violent passages in the Finale. The rumbling left-hand line which gives great weight to the excited, impassioned melody, jumping octaves and striking dissonant chords, switching hurriedly between major and minor



the great master's music. Several pieces are in the minor key, presenting a darker, more exciting edge to the album.

The album closes with Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 3, and Argerich playing with thrilling emotion, aggres-

sively striking the chords and singing out the elegant, powerful phrases amidst the violent passages in the Finale. The rumbling left-hand line which gives great weight to the excited, impassioned melody, jumping octaves and striking dissonant chords, switching hurriedly between major and minor keys and cascading scales. Argerich performs with great skill, intensity and expression. Her astounding furor presents a truly singular album, revived from the artist's ascending career, and proving a fitting tribute to highly respected, greatly loved Chopin.

# Success is Blind

By Christopher Gottschalk

On the evening of Thursday, March 25, seven students of the Drama Club at AUK performed a play in the Liberal Arts Auditorium that had been written, directed, and produced by fellow students and Drama Club Vice-President Yousef Nayef. For the one hundred some odd viewers in the audience, the show may have appeared at times confusing, stagnant, and virtually without plot or developed characters, despite moments of genuine humor which a few actors managed to accidentally bump into. I know, I know, this is sounding like the beginning to a really horrific review, but I beg you to bear with me.

From a professional theater point of view, "Blind!" was a catastrophic train wreck that just barely managed to limp its way across the finish line,

but the Drama Club has never pretended to be producers of professional theater. The Drama Club (in this case the student actors and their courageous director) sets out to do student-run theater. Up until now, that meant Murder Mystery events and a whole lot of talking without much doing. Mr. Nayef's production of "Blind!" changed that. Despite its shortcomings, "Blind!" represents the first fully student produced theater at AUK, and I know this because I am their advisor and I did not help them with this show. Some would argue my "hands off" approach to advising is a bit harsh or lazy; however, I liken it more to teaching young hatchlings to fly—nudge them out of the nest and let them fly or fall, either way it is a learning experience. In this case, they flew, maybe not very high or very far, but their wings were

flapping and they told a story complete with lights, sound, costumes, and original words penned by one of their own. In the history of AUK's student organizations, never had an event that is so successful had been so without the trappings of big corporate sponsorship or the faint scent of behind-the-scenes faculty heavy lifting. This was simply an evening of very dedicated students coming together to tell a story Mr. Nayef felt compelled to tell. Love it or hate it, it WAS theater and STUDENT-theater at that. No matter what else "Blind!" may have been, it was a shining example of courage, commitment, and undaunted passion, which these students can pleasantly carry with them for the rest of their lives. As a theatre artist, teacher, and advisor, I could not wish for them any greater success than that.

## Sand Chronicles - A Review

By Amal Behbehani

Sand Chronicles is a manga by Hinako Ashihara about friendship, life and new beginnings. The story is told by a 12-year-old girl called Ann Uekusa whose life changed when her mother died after they moved to the country. She forms a bond with Daigo and two other kids, which will transpire into a completely emotional rollercoaster throughout her life. Ann's story of her childhood focuses on the several aspects of human relationships and the bittersweet memories of one's first love.

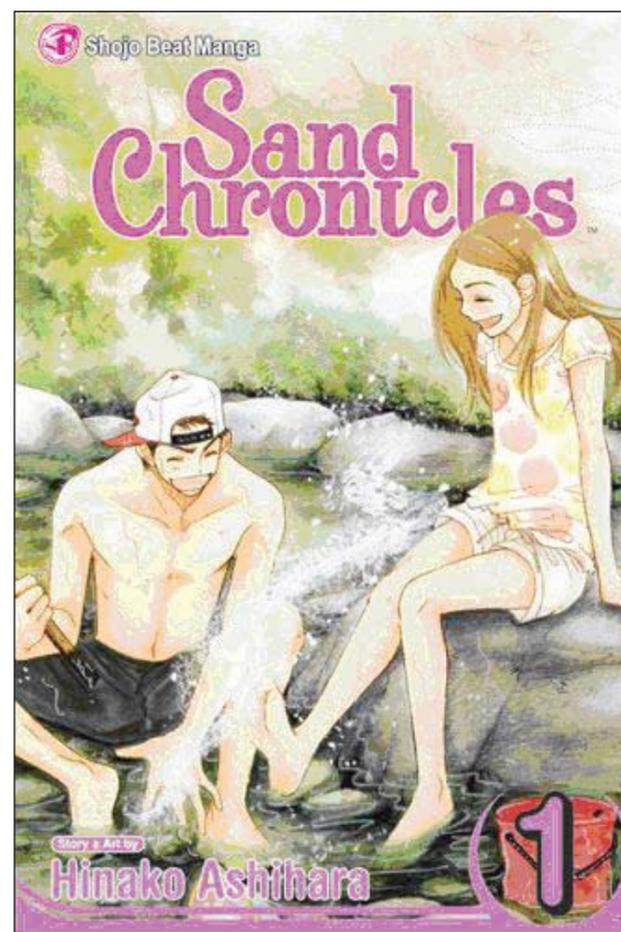
Sand Chronicles is a series, consisting of 10 volumes. It is a manga, which is the Japanese type of comic book, which means it is mostly cartoons with a dialogue of Ann's point of view. The style of drawing is beautiful, showing the characters emotions and thoughts. It is easy to follow up on what is going on in the story, since it includes a short summary as to what happened before. Though it is set in Japan, the reader can relate to the story or understand it because at some point in life, everyone has gone through what the narrator of the manga is going through. Love, friendship, pain, jealousy, endings and beginnings of relationships, happy childhood memories; basically actions and emotions that accompany one's life at the instance of forming a bond with someone.

Each volume carries out Ann's journey from childhood to adulthood, and the responsibilities and complications that come with it. Not to ruin it for the reader, but there is the on going, off going relationship between Ann and Daigo, with

its complexities and fate intervening occasionally to separate them from one another. Ann's constant fear of weakness is shown through the series, and how she tries to deal with the changes in her life. It is not all just about love and "he loves me, he loves me not" situations – well, it could be mostly described as that - but what is nice though is that the characters are shown to mature and develop throughout the series. Instead of just growing in age and staying the same, the characters grow in personality and character, developing conscious thoughts that are different from when they were only 12 years old. It is interesting

to see how the protagonist grows from being a kid to a person who deals with realistic problems. Even better is that instead of words to describe this transformation, you will see it in pictures, manga-style.

Now if this were your first discovery of manga, I would advise you to read this manga series. The drawing and plot are an ideal form of what a "shoujo" and slice of life manga would look like. The drawing itself is satisfactory, showing comical situations as well as beautiful depictions of scenery and human emotions. Discover the reality of the world through the eyes of a 12 year old in the "Sand Chronicles" volumes.



# The Ghostly Figures of Sahin Paksoy

By Nur Soliman

In keeping with showcasing the works of contemporary Middle Eastern artists who express something unique about their cultures, the Boushehri Gallery presented Turkish artist Sahin Paksoy last month.

The works consisted mostly of letter-sized works of parcel-tinted paper; the larger works were on white paper

or on larger oil canvases. Judging from the texture of the paint, Paksoy used thick, water-based colors that left a bright dusty impression concealing deftly drawn black ink lines. Paksoy's paintings almost exclusively portrayed female figures; there were perhaps less than five men in the collection.

These women were mostly occupied in cafes, the hair-

dresser's, or fragments of living rooms; some of them were cutting or washing other women's hair, others were sitting with coffee and cigarettes. One or two paintings displayed women dancing gracefully to drums, while two canvases depicted women performing in the theatre, strangely marionette-like. Most of the faces, hands, and legs of the women were a thick, chalky white, only occasionally relieved by a pinkish crayon tint on their cheeks, a bright dyed crimson on their nails, and dim smudges all around their wide, tired eyes that stare dully out into space or stare indolently straight at the viewer.

The women, dressed in alarmingly gaudy shades of mustard-yellow, deep green, and purple, are drawn with a sure hand, but they are very stiff and wooden in their movements and expressions. Most of them are rather plump, with graceful curves to their arms, breasts, hips, and legs, and the sport different hair colors and styles, even green-dyed bobs. One woman, standing with a man, seemed to be slimmer and more florid like her ruddy companion. Although they had more muted, natural tones in their varied dress, they looked as uncomfortable as the rest of the figures.

There is an uncanny, discomforting feeling about the alienated, bored gaze that emanates from these women. There is a boredom that recalls some of Pamuk's characters in "The Black Book or Other Colours," but it is taken to the extreme. One wonders where the source of this static boredom lies, where the women stiffly stand in rows of three in "dancing" motion, or where they indolently cross their legs while they sip coffee, smoke cigarettes, or let their hair be

washed by tired-looking, mustached men, sometimes equally pallid in tone, sometimes with a hint of rosininess in their face. At the same time, there was a certain animation about the figures, a puppet-like movement that reminded one of the vivid illustrations or frescoes of history. Paksoy, a graduate of Istanbul's State Academy of Fine Arts, is inspired by Ottoman miniatures and Byzantine icons, which might suggest a reason or an influence behind the brightly coloured, stiff

puppet-like figures that stand out against a mute ground.

The exhibition certainly presented a unique form of depiction, with Paksoy's pale, brightly coloured women silently negotiating their personal, intimate lives with the viewer who is already alienated by their wide, languorous dark eyes or their cynical, rouged smiles. This is also by the suggestion that they belong in a past that is not too distant from where we are, but is quite disappeared.



## Power of Letters - Ali Hassan at the Dar Al-Funoon

By Nur Soliman

In April, the Dar al-Funoon showcased the works of Ali Hassan, the famous Qatari artist. The entire exhibition centered around the Arabic letter "nun" or "ن", where there were over twenty canvases depicting the single letter in diverse ways.

Included as one of the great artists in Qatar by "Canvas" editor Lisa Ball-Lechgar in her article "Fresh Currents from the Gulf," Ali Hassan has been working for over thirty-five years on painting all 28 letters of the Arabic

alphabet. Some of his depictions bear the mark of a traditional calligrapher's touch, while other works extend that and experiment with the shape, the position, and the whole character of the letter. When explaining this series in particular focused exclusively on the letter "nun," Ali Hassan says that it is because of "the beauty, power, timelessness, and malleability of a single Arabic letter."

Abdul Kadir al-Rais, a pioneering Emirati artist based in Abu Dhabi, also written about by Ball-Lechgar, has

also followed the trend of exploring the Arabic alphabet, using traditional calligraphic forms of the letters, as the letter "waw" or "و" and infusing the whole canvas with bright, luminous colour. Hassan is different; he goes even further with experimenting with the very shape, meaning, and feel for the letter. In some paintings, for instance, he stretches out the bell-curve of the letter to become almost horizontal, with curves on either end, curling out like leaves. In other paintings, such as his ink-on-paper

works, his "nun" becomes almost like simple Chinese characters, the very broad brush sweeping a textured black ink impression. It once appears at the end of a word, with a graceful bell-curve, and once in the beginning of a word, now a simple, deft stroke of the brush with an angle at the beginning.

Hassan's techniques are creative; the works were mixed media, acrylic on canvas, excepting two ink works. He heavily applied his paint when drawing the letter, leaving a rich, textured

mark, while the rest of the background was sometimes palette-knifed in a muted colour like apricot or tan. Sometimes, this was washed over with spills of bright, colours like electric blue or violet. Otherwise, he kept his colours to blacks, blues, violets, browns, grays, as well as mineral green and ultramarine. Some of his paintings also had an element of "surprise" in them. One featured a deep, rich sienna-brown-and-crimson "nun," the dot and the curve in gold, over a tan background. On the right

edge of the canvas, there was a spot of luminous blue that changed the whole painting. Another feature of Hassan's paintings was his use of "prints," lace-like, undulating pattern of illegible letters. He had these printed or stenciled onto the canvas, showing through mysteriously on the "nun" itself or emerging through the canvas, almost like the secret potentiality and the beauty of articulated language. Hassan's work is a definite thing to be seen, and is inspiring just to look at, especially up close.



# “Landscapes” of Iraqi Artist Himat

By Nur Soliman

March’s exhibition at the Dar al-Funoon maintained something of the traditional while also inspiring something of the experimental. Himat’s artwork, in a collection entitled “Land-

scapes” or “Forest of Love,” combined the realms of painting and the book in a way that was truly poetic, and reflected much of the artist’s interests. Himat, an Iraqi artist born in Kirkuk in 1960, lives and works mainly in Paris. He has had numerous exhibitions around the Arab world, in Japan, France, the Netherlands, Austria, and Switzerland. He has worked with different poets, among them Adonis,

André Velter, Gotaro Tsunozumi, Mohammed Bennis, and Michel Butor, on over thirty various collaborative projects. Some of his verse-

mat wrote out Adonis’ verses in a graceful hand, using thin,



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Himat, an Iraqi artist born in Kirkuk in 1960, lives and works mainly in Paris. He has had numerous exhibitions around the Arab world, in Japan, France, the Netherlands, Austria, and Switzerland. He has worked with different poets, among them Adonis,

collaborations were displayed at the Dar al-Funoon, in addition to his much larger, epic, and vibrant panels and other works.

The verse collections were concertinaed letters of smooth, cream-coloured hand-woven paper. On every other page, Hi-

spidery black letters with very carefully drawn diametric and punctuation marks. On the alternate folios, Himat loaded the page with bright, saturated colours, a deep turquoise and sea green, warm reds and oranges, and gamboges yellow. He painted them with a swift brush that mixed some of the colours together dynamically. Over these, he painted strange, almost hieroglyphic patterns in charcoal-coloured paint. Another concertinaed book is painted mainly in a bright blue and red, with the patterns over the blotches of colour painted in a deeper blue.

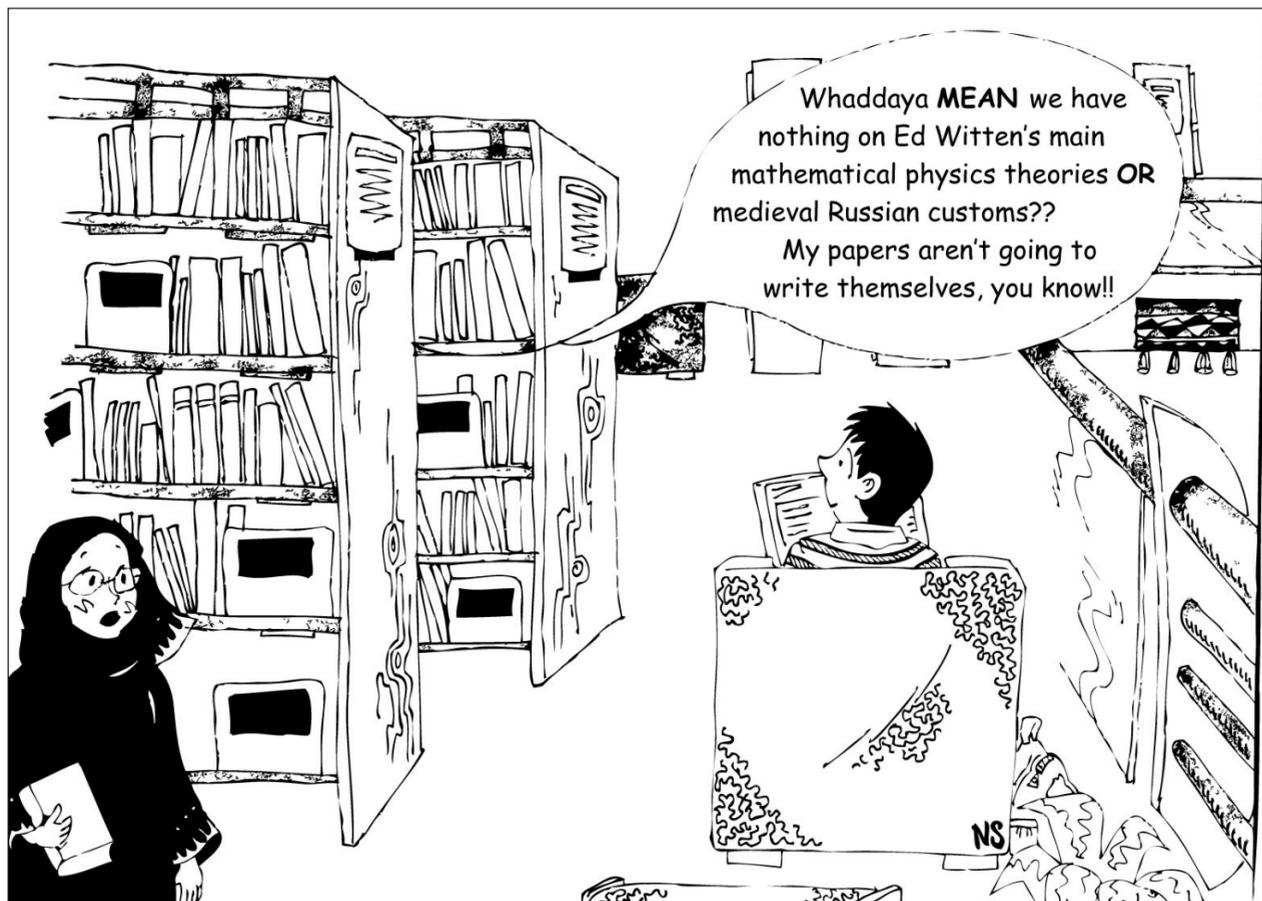
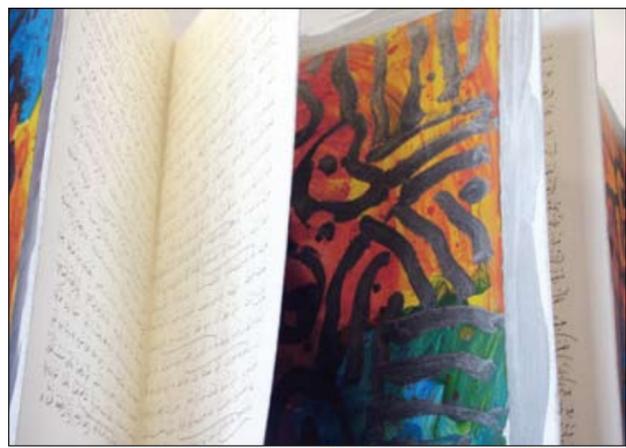
Except for an enormous folding canvas panel entitled “The Sea,” all his works were mixed media on largish sized hand-woven

white paper with worn edges. “The Sea” was mostly in deep blue, the colour deepening on the lower half of the panel, while there was an edge of white on the top. The deep blue paint hid – and also revealed – papier-mâché flower-like sand dollars and bright stars, as well as dried rose-petals that still showed their crimson and pink through the light blue paint. There were also printed circular shapes sprinkled over the panels to suggest the dynamism of a deep sea.

The other panels were similar in pattern, with deep color covering most of the paper, with

various shades of that color giving more animated texture to the composition, then alleviated by silver, gold, or thick white or black paint over it in the same patterns, almost a pictorial alphabet that wasn’t quite that yet. Many of them were in rich crimsons and red, one of them in bright vermilion, entitled “Temple,” while another offered rich crimson and bronze as a background over which a charcoal-and-bronze pattern was printed. Others, like the “Flowers” series also had collages; little squares of luminous blue or black over a soft, flowing Prussian blue or a lighter shade, relieved by squares

of woven white paper and slightly dried pink and red rose petals which gave the effect of snow. Many others, in electric blue, warm cotton-candy pink, red, or white, were entitled “Poetry in Blue II” or “Poetry in Red” and so on, suggesting once more the mysterious, poetic link between articulation in verse and the almost lyrical, rhythmic patterns in Himat’s paintings. This poetic rhythm and motion that characterizes his richly coloured works may very well explain his long collaborations with poets over the world, and indeed brings to discussion to what extent poetry is really about words.



## International Week from pg. 7

stan, Malaysia, and Japan.

On the last day, The Global Village Day, students were encouraged to celebrate cultural diversity. Students represented their culture through traditionally rich elements, such as food, music, and art. A competition was held for the best country representation where the best three student run groups were awarded prizes. The Global Village Day activities also included a traditional dress competition where the best three winners were awarded prizes.

During the Country Resources Fair, a variety of countries partook in this event. The countries had the opportunity to represent themselves to a diverse body of AUK students, faculty and staff. This AUK body had the opportunity to ask the representative

from the various embassies a large array of questions about the country. Questions related to the countries people, their history, and the tourism. Representatives also offered informational presentations.

The 5th Annual International Week provided various opportunities for students to interact and engage in meaningful experiential learning activities. This allowed them to deepen their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences. The week highlighted the important role these differences play in the human experience. It also cultivated a sense of social responsibility to others, fostered cultural collaboration, and communication, as well as offered civic, personal, and organizational leadership. Its Slogan was “Celebrating Diversity.”



Student Abdulsamad Marafie in traditional Kuwaiti dress

# Waxing Poetic

## and The Limitations in Academic Writing

By Sara Soliman

In Year 8 and 9, I remember sitting in those cold exam rooms hunched over my paper, hurriedly counting how many words I had used in my essay or creative writing to make sure I hadn't exceeded the limit. In Year 10 and 11, it was how many pages I had used; my handwriting was always small, so I got away with writing quite a lot and not crossing the border. For Year 12, word counts and page limits were not what restricted me, but after years of writing within the borderlines, I had by then known what the examiners far away in England were expecting.

When writing a paper for Literature class, or even English or History, we tend to have to write from a distance; that is, we have to restrict ourselves from putting too much of our personal voice into our paper, keeping the voice serious and formal. I remember how my Literature teacher in Year 11 used to try to "train" me into reduc-

ing how much I would write. I had too much to say and would write without the remembrance of word counts, page limits, paragraphs, or tone.

I learnt though, to use short sentences that seemed packed with meaning; not the way an essay by a philosopher or writer would, but in a way that seemed to pack several sentences into one. I had once received an email from a friend, who was talking about music, and which was around 15 to 20 lines long, and I responded with an email that almost exceeded a page. It embarrassed me somewhat, and I decided it would be best to change my ways. It takes time, though, to be able to not only write concise sentences instead of several which are more explanatory, but to be able to keep a whisper of your own voice and

not just write what you know is the better A grade, or what your teacher or professor wants.

It is not that academic writing is constraining, confining, or limiting to our creativity, but our voice does seem to change. It becomes like a Classical symphony with structure, form, and harmony, but an evident portrayal of personal feeling and expression, as opposed to a jazz jam session, where expression and feeling are portrayed through improvisation and impromptu arrangements. Like the flow and beauty within a sonata, academic writing portrays fluency and clarifies thought and articulation.

# "Good Writing"

## A Professor's Perspective

By Shahad Al-Rashidi

Last month, the Writing Center invited some faculty members to engage in a discussion about the importance of writing. The discussion included many interesting ideas and thoughts, which may not always cross the minds of students as they compose their essays. Although all professors agreed that grammar and punctuation make up the basic components of "good writing," they also agreed that perfecting those components does not always grant an essay substance.

"Good writing always begins with a strong argument," said Professor Christopher Ohan, History Department. Ohan also stated that students seldom challenge the arguments he presents in class and that they usually choose the "safe way" and simply present ideas that have already been put forth.

"It is much more interesting when I come across a paper that is able to communicate new opinions with solid arguments. That's when I know that a student has really thought about his or her work," added Ohan.

The panel also included

Professor Mary Queen and Professor Kathryn Kleypas from the English Literature Department, who shared similar opinions about the definition of "good writing." "Original thinking – that's what I like," Professor Kleypas said. Adding that an essay that stems from original thinking is one that brings joy to the reader and even makes a professor feel inclined to share it with the other colleagues. "It is through original thinking," Kleypas says, "that a writer enables his or her audience to engage with the presented text."

During the course of the discussion, it became apparent that the main element the professors search for in a written assignment is the ability of the student to build an intellectual relationship with the reader.

"A good essay is one that tries to make connections where those connections aren't explicit," said Professor Queen.

Another topic that the panel discussed was the role of the Writing Center and how the Consultants can enable the students to grasp the concept of "good writing."

All professors believed that the Writing Center is

somewhat an extension of their own roles. They perceive the Writing Consultants as educators just as much as them.

"Students may be intimidated to come to our offices but they wouldn't be intimidated to come to the Writing Center – so in a way the Center's role is kind of like my role," said Ohan.

Moreover, the panel also believed that students should be more educated about the ways in which the Writing Center could assist them in composing their assignments.

"It's not an editing studio and I always try to communicate that to my students," said Kleypas, when addressing the misconception some students have of the Center. The professors stated that the Center should be viewed as a place that helps students improve their essays through teaching them that writing is a profoundly intellectual activity and assisting them in thinking more critically about their work.

"Students ought to understand that the Writing Center is not a fixing place. It is a place to have conversations about reading and writing," said Queen.

# The Journey So Far

By Sarah Juma

It was one of those feelings, that you get, very rare, but once it's there, it tickles in your stomach and makes one of those somersaults. This was the feeling I used to get when I first answered my IGCSE boards exams back in high school. It was back again and this time was for the very first day I joined the Writing Center. It is definitely a part of AUK, but for me it was a total new place, new people, and

Science building. I had always heard about it but was finally go-

become confident writers.

Everybody likes a little pat on their shoulders and a little praise. We at the WC do not discourage students or penalize students for their writing, but in fact work with them to improve their writing and direct them. This was all so unknown to me until I became a part of the WC.

The other Consultants and Staff members at the writing center were so very helpful when I first joined, and were always there when it came to helping me out. It felt really strange a couple of weeks working, as it was a totally new atmosphere although, in AUK but with people I had not met before. Now, it is completely different, we are more like family and friends. With time, all of them have become special people in my life; they all play an important role as my superiors and friends.

The journey has been a fascinating one with its ups and downs; I have managed to improve with time. When I first started as a Writing Center Consultant, I was working with the Intensive English Program students and most of my time was spent guiding the students through their essays, but

starting from Spring 2010 semester, I now work with the Undergraduates. Through my vision, I have grown as a person; I have created a personal interest in reading and writing that came with time while working at the WC. This is something I would suggest everyone to do, reading books is a really good leisure pursuit which will only make us more knowledgeable and create an urge for looking at things from different point of views and analyzing things critically. All in all, the opportunity to be working at the Writing Center and assisting students is the finest emotion one could experience.

# HOCs and LOCs

By Nada Bedir

What concerns you the most when you start writing your essay? Is it the grammar? Is it the organization of the essay? Or is it the thesis statement? As a consultant at the Writing Center, I notice that most students are concerned mostly about fixing their grammar mistakes and disregard the importance of the central meaning and the organization of the paper.

It is essential for every student to know that the Higher Order Concerns are the most important elements in the paper. After addressing these elements, students can turn to the Lower Order Concerns.

The higher order concerns are the big picture aspects that deal with the main idea of the paper. HOCs include the thesis statement and the organization and the development of ideas. First of all, developing a clear thesis is very important to write

a good paper. The thesis statement should indicate the essence of the piece of writing. It should explore the main points discussed in the essay. Secondly, the organization of ideas is essential to assure a smooth flow of ideas throughout the essay. There are a lot of strategies that can help with organizing your paper, such as tree diagrams and outlining. These strategies help with organizing sentences in the order of main ideas, supporting points, and minor ideas. It assists in viewing the paper's structure clearly. Thirdly, the development of ideas is essential to add more depth to the topic discussed in the paper. Sometimes, it is difficult to come up with points that support your argument, so using external resources may help broaden your views.

On the other hand, the Lower Order Concerns have to do with the sentence structure level. It includes: spell-

ing, grammar, and punctuation. Problems of these kinds occur repeatedly with people who use English as a second language. To decrease such mistakes, it is helpful to read your paper aloud after you finish searching for grammar or spelling mistakes. You can also use different references to improve your sentence structure level. It is noticeable that most students repeat the same mistakes. So, if you focus on your grammar or spelling mistakes, you will definitely overcome these problems with time.

While you revise your paper, it is natural that you move between HOCs and LOCs. However, if you are not experienced with the revising process, it would be better for you to start with HOCs then proofread from LOCs. Remember that these elements will help develop your piece of writing and, hopefully, it will assist you in becoming a better writer!



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