

# Tales of Trickery Tales of Endurance

## Gender, Performance, and Politics in the Islamic World and Beyond

### A Conference in Honor of Margaret Mills

May 18-19, 2012

#### PROGRAM

##### Friday, May 18

9:00 Continental Breakfast

9:15 Welcome

**Dorothy Noyes**, Director of the Center for Folklore Studies, and  
**Sebastian Knowles**, Associate Dean for Faculty and Research,  
Division of Arts and Humanities

9:30 Finding and Shaping Performance

Performance in the Ottoman World: A Folkloric Approach to Historical  
Research

**Arzu Öztürkmen**, Bogaziçi University

Kinship & Borders: The Worlding of Genres in the Writings of a Telugu  
Folklorist in Colonial India

**Leela Prasad**, Duke University

In Search of Islamic Feminist Poets: Memoir, Ethnography and Storytelling  
**Deborah Kapchan**, New York University

Chair: **Morgan Liu**, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

11:00 Break

**11:15 Tricksters and Goddesses**

Abu Zayd Al-Hilali: Hero, Trickster, Sufi, Poet  
**Dwight Reynolds**, University of California, Santa Barbara

“Dancing with Chains” and the Ambiguity of Power: Women Tricksters in the Hebrew Bible  
**Susan Niditch**, Amherst College

“We have *shakti* and she [the goddess] has *shakti*, so, we’re not afraid; but men—they don’t have *shakti* and so they’re afraid.” Gender Debates in a South Indian Goddess Narrative Repertoire  
**Joyce Burkhalter Flueckiger**, Emory University

Chair: **Bruce Fudge**, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

**12:45 Buffet Lunch**

**2:00 Expressive Agendas and Audience Design**

Likhiya: Painting Stories in the Mithila Region  
**Susan Wadley**, Syracuse University

Satire Under the Conditions of an Islamic Republic  
**Ulrich Marzolph**, *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* and University of Göttingen

Guru Bawa’s Funny Philadelphia Family  
**Frank Korom**, Boston University

Chair: **Dick Davis**, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

**3:30 Break**

**3:45 Old Forms, New Politics**

Algerian Women’s *Buqalah* Poems: Cultural Politics, Oral Literature and Anti-Colonial Resistance  
**Susan Slyomovics**, University of California, Los Angeles

Revisiting the Headscarf Issue after a Decade: Changing Forms and Images at the Intersection of Religion, Politics and Economics in Turkey  
**Derya Keskin**, Kocaeli University

Folk Hagiography and Islamic Revivalism in Tajikistan  
**Benjamin Gatling**, The Ohio State University

Chair: **Sabra Webber**, Departments of Comparative Studies and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

**5:30 Reception, Dinner, and Roast in honor of Margaret Mills**  
Master of Ceremonies: **Ulrich Marzolph**

**Saturday, May 19**

**9:15 Continental Breakfast**

**9:30 Re-forming Place**

Of Argonauts and Afghans, Rowing to Lesbos  
**Bill Westerman**, American Folklife Center

Multivocality in the Construction of Place in Şile, Turkey: Experiments  
with Photo-Elicitation  
**Meltem Türköz**, Işık University

Mosque Architecture as Conflict Transformation: The Cases of Göztepe  
Park, Taksim Square and Şakirin Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey  
**Yücel Demirer**, Kocaeli University

Chair: **Amy Shuman**, Department of English

**11:00 Break**

**11:15 Pedagogies at Cultural Boundaries**

Work Stories, Gossip, and the Ethnicization of Pedagogy among Ghanaian Immigrant Parents  
**Cati Coe**, Rutgers University, Camden

Learning about Survivance: A Critical Approach to Teaching Native American Culture  
**Ruth Olson**, Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Chair: **Katey Borland**, Department of Comparative Studies

**12:30 Lunch Buffet**

## ABSTRACTS

**Cati Coe**

*Work Stories, Gossip, and the Ethnicization of Pedagogy among Ghanaian Immigrant Parents*

Like other immigrants in the United States, Ghanaians are challenged in raising their children as they wish, to be obedient and respectful. In navigating these challenges, they begin to treat cultural differences as cultural borders, in which they not only see the cultural differences as hard and fast, but also use them as the basis of moral evaluations and social affiliation. Two aspects of their lives encourage them to think of pedagogy as a cultural border between “America” and “Ghana.” One is gossip within the Ghanaian community, which evaluates parents’ and children’s behavior. The second is stories told about and at work. Many Ghanaians work in the social service fields, in which they regularly encounter angry, confused, and deviant behavior. Particularly in the healthcare field, Ghanaian women tend to work with other immigrant and African-American women and learn of their co-workers’ home lives through conversations on their breaks or when working together. Interactions with co-workers provide opportunities for intercultural exchange about parenting styles, creating new possibilities for all involved, but they can also be interpreted through the lens of cultural difference. This paper examines Ghanaians’ interpretations of why their pedagogies are under stress in the U.S., interpretations which rely on notions of cultural difference along ethno-national lines.

**Yücel Demirer**

*Mosque Architecture as Conflict Transformation: The Cases of Göztepe Park, Taksim Square and Şakirin Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey*

The emergence of religious conservatism in contemporary Turkey is simultaneous with the development of a new form of religiosity and the desire to redefine the role of religion in social life. While it is irrefutable that the most significant architectural constructions have been born as part of a religious commitment, they also created additional meanings throughout history. Focusing on the materiality of religion through three different mosque projects in Istanbul, Turkey, and looking beyond form, function, and meaning, which are known as the principal characteristics of architectural design, this paper analyzes the escalation and de-escalation of an internal conflict in Turkey. What is suggested here is the interaction between different components of the Turkish society seeking to define new tone for the future of the social life through the controversial construction processes of three mosque projects. Considering the public space as a contested territory, by the secular and the religious sections, the paper elaborates the ways in which these negotiations are realized. However, neither of these positions can be understood without reference to the Turkish nation building process and the “thick description” underneath it. Considering the shifting and multiplicity of meanings of the text and closely reviewing the architectural characteristics of these projects, the paper intends to elaborate the ways in which the designs were received by the people of

the various levels of religiosity and shed light on the major controversies that influence religious discourses in Turkey. The work especially focuses on how the ideas, concepts and architectural styles are tied together to respond to the contemporary tension between the religious and secular sectors and how mosque architecture became a venue for negotiating the limits of modern Muslim identity in Turkey.

### Joyce Flueckiger

*"We have shakti and she [the goddess] has shakti, so, we're not afraid; but men—they don't have shakti and so they're afraid." Gender Debates in a South Indian Goddess Narrative Repertoire*

The village goddess Gangamma is often characterized, by both men and women, as too *ugra* (excessive, with excessive needs) to be kept in domestic shrines. However, gendered experience and narrative performances of this *ugram* vary widely. Men seem to be afraid of the *ugram* and powerful *shakti* of the goddess; they cannot "bear" it; whereas women who identify with this *shakti* are not afraid, but say that they simply do not have the time on a daily basis in domestic contexts to fulfill the needs of the goddess. This paper analyzes performances of the two primary narratives associated with Gangamma as sites of debates about female power/*shakti*, which when it becomes excessive is characterized as *ugram*. I emphasize the importance of ritual and narrative *repertoire* as an interpretive lens through which to understand the gendered experience and debates over female *shakti/ugram* as it is performed in the two primary narratives of the goddess.

The two primary narratives are a local legend and a cosmic myth. Both narratives address the issue of female power (*shakti*) and desire, but their narrative trajectories are very different. The legend starts with the goddess as a little baby found in a paddy field and ends with her revelation as the goddess "who stretches from earth to sky." She ultimately beheads a sexually aggressive chieftain who threatens all the beautiful virgins in his realm—and is left full of excessive *shakti*, holding the blood-dripping head in her hand, wandering through the village. While the excessive *shakti/ugram* of the goddess is needed to protect the women in the chieftain's realm, once it has been called forth and intensified through the beheading, it now threatens the village. The myth starts with the goddess as ultimate reality, alone in the world. When she reaches puberty, she creates the three gods, one by one, to satisfy her sexual desire. None of them is willing; the first two use the excuse that she has created them and is their mother. The third god says he's unable to bear her *shakti* and asks for some of that power; however, he recants his offer once the goddess gives him a portion of her *shakti* in the forms of her third eye and trident. The resulting fury of the goddess threatens the very existence of her creation. In some variants, the male gods suggest and in others it is the goddess's own idea that she should distribute her excessive *shakti/ugram* through hundreds of less *ugra* village goddesses in order to be accessible to those who worship her; and all variants of the myth end with the bold ritual resolution that her sexual desire can and will be fulfilled only through the animal sacrifices of her festival. Either narrative taken alone would suggest a singular vision of female *shakti*; but together, they perform a debate of gender—of the very nature of female *shakti*—a debate about which male and female narrators often perform distinctly gendered commentaries.

## **Benjamin Gatling**

### *Folk Hagiography and Islamic Revivalism in Tajikistan*

Since the fall of the Soviet Union and the independence of the former Soviet Central Asian republics, there has been a revival of the public practices of Islamic devotion and ritual. Sufi circles of adepts, or *halqa*, are key producers of nascent religious discourse within this Islamic revival. This paper discusses the uses of saints' tales and folk hagiography within Sufi pedagogical routines in post-Soviet Tajikistan. I trace the generic and genealogical relationships between traditional Persian hagiography as manifested in classical Persian Sufi poetry and oral tradition, the contemporary didactical performance repertoires of Tajik Sufi sheikhs, and related recent chapbook publications in post-Soviet Tajikistan as well as these bodies of texts' interrelated performance contexts. I demonstrate how in the tabula rasa post-Soviet religious environment the narrative performance of items of religious folklore works to provide discursive legitimation to relatively new projects of Islamic piety.

## **Deborah Kapchan**

### *In Search of Islamic Feminist Poets: Memoir, Ethnography and Storytelling*

In *Rhetoric and Politics in Afghan Traditional Storytelling*, Margaret Mills elucidates not only the Afghan storytelling repertoire, but how storytellers tactically use stories to comment upon and change political relations in everyday life. Mills provides her readers with the narrative and the meta-narrative, demonstrating that the act of storytelling is, as Michel De Certeau notes, not only a practice, but a self-conscious and thus political intervention. Taking inspiration from Mills' method-as-theory, I recount a story told to me by Islamic feminist poet, Rachida Madani, as we drove along the coast in Tangerang. It is my reading of her reading of a Quranic story that she later re-framed in her novel, but that she also recounted to me for particular pedagogical reasons. All in all, this layering of stories and intentions leads me to reflect on the dialogism present in the genres of ethnographic realism, memoir and parable, and to once again demonstrate that storytelling is not only the "least injurious" form of representing the "other" (Abu-Lughod 1993), but that, as both a mode of knowledge and a way of being, the interventionist potential of storytelling has not been exhausted.

## **Derya Keskin**

### *Revisiting the Headscarf Issue after a Decade: Changing Forms and Images at the Intersection of Religion, Politics and Economics in Turkey*

Turkish society is an ever-changing one, and the headscarf issue is certainly not immune to changes. In fact, it seems to symbolize a different transformation process for every decade within the last few; the struggle of newly veiled women students in universities in the 1980s, the parliament debates related to the elected women with headscarves in the 1990s and, to some extent, the

replacement of the secular bourgeoisie by the rising Islamic bourgeoisie, in the 2000s. Currently, the debates go on, though at ease, since university students were recently allowed to enter universities and classrooms with their heads covered.

The last decade has introduced different dynamics than the previous two in terms of women's covering in Turkey. Pro-Islamic party AKP came to power in 2002, thus changing the power relations at various levels, which directly and/or indirectly affected the issues related to women's covering. As the Islamist bourgeoisie flourished during the AKP era, so did the "fashion for veiling." While the concept of "modern Muslim" became quite widely used, the covering came forward as one of the symbols of a new "hybrid" life style and the form and object of consumption.

This presentation aims to trace the changes in the meanings and forms of women's covering especially in the last decade, and show how they have been the reflections of the political, social, and economic landscapes in Turkey.

### **Frank Korom**

#### *Guru Bawa's Funny Philadelphia Family*

My presentation will focus on Guru Bawa Muhaiyaddeen, a Tamil Sufi folk preacher from Sri Lanka who relocated to Philadelphia in 1971. The presentation will focus on his life and teachings as well as the aftermath of his presence in the City of Brotherly Love, where he founded a Fellowship in his name, which he used to refer to as his "funny family."

### **Ulrich Marzolph**

#### *Satire Under the Conditions of an Islamic Republic*

After a short introduction into the genre of satire in the Islamic Republic of Iran, my presentation will discuss in detail the 2004 Iranian movie *Marmulak* [*The Lizard*], a hilariously funny story about an escaped convict posing as priest (somewhat in the vein of Neil Jordan's *We're no Angels*). Special attention will be given to the various modes in which different audiences might read this film, leading to general conclusions for the genre of satire in present-day Iran.

### **Susan Niditch**

#### *"Dancing with Chains" and the Ambiguity of Power: Women Tricksters in the Hebrew Bible*

Framed by the work of Margaret Mills, Margaret Beissinger, and other students of women, folklore, and culture, this study explores portrayals of women tricksters in the biblical book of Genesis and approaches questions about gendered voices behind the stories. The contributions of colleagues in folklore deeply enrich our understanding of important threads in ancient Israelite culture and worldview.

## Ruth Olson

### *Learning about Survivance: A Critical Approach to Teaching Native American Culture*

A hallmark of the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Culture's outreach work with K-12 teachers is the "Here at Home" cultural tour, which models interdisciplinary learning for teachers to encourage them to incorporate local culture into their classrooms. This talk will assess the challenges involved in getting teachers to see Wisconsin Native cultures more clearly and in turn to integrate the study of Native cultures more meaningfully in their own curriculum (rather than resorting to stereotypes and regionally-inappropriate depictions). Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) writer Gerald Vizenor—a great appreciator of tricksters—has coined the term "survivance" to describe Native efforts to survive and thrive despite overwhelming economic and social challenges. Why is it so difficult for some teachers to hear these stories of survivance? Why do some persist in teaching about "dead Indians" after meeting traditional artists and tribal members who amaze, amuse and inspire them? Yet other teachers, meeting the same artists, have transformed their teaching into more immediate and vital experiences for their students. What helps them honor the ambiguities and complexities involved in stories of survivance?

## Arzu Öztürkmen

### *Performance in the Ottoman World: A Folkloric Approach to Historical Research*

This essay is an attempt at laying out possible channels of research in applying folklore and performance theory in the study of Ottoman history, at two levels. First, it proposes that the boundaries of the concept of 'history of performing arts' in the Ottoman world can be expanded from 'cultural performances' like imperial festivals, ceremonies, dance and music, towards a much broader approach to include 'verbal art as performance,' where the text is analyzed vis-à-vis its relation to its production and performance frame. In that regard, literary texts like *menakıpnames*, *gazavetnames*, or *divan* poetry, for instance, can be rethought within the context of storytelling, recitation, and reading aloud practices. The second premise of the essay is that the analysis of Ottoman society at large, and its diverse cultural forms in particular, can benefit from a performance-centered approach to historical thinking. Like all empires, Ottomans also had a complex demographic structure, in which many local, ethnic, religious cultural forms emerged and circulated. The essay hopes that rethinking these cultural forms, in their performance contexts, will bring us a better understanding of their historical significance.

## Leela Prasad

### *Kinship & Borders: The Worlding of Genres in the Writings of a Telugu Folklorist in Colonial India*

My presentation will be based on my book in progress on collections of oral narrative published between 1860 and 1920 in colonial India. I will focus on the writings of M. N. Venkataswami (1865-1929), folklorist, essayist and historian who prolifically documented, translated, and analyzed Telugu oral narrative from the then Central Provinces and the Madras Presidency. I hope to trace the sinuous ways in

which M. N. Venkataswami wove autobiography, biography, folktale, and history in his collections to produce richly textured narrative worlds as well as nuanced ethnography. Reading these texts intertextually through the prism of the extraordinary biography he wrote of his pioneering hotelier-father, I will argue that the imaginary of Venkataswami's narrative collections is shaped by the particular and deep kinship he had with women in his family (wife, mother, aunts) and his experience and rendering of borders. These moving borders were produced by his location in the so-called lower caste of bamboo weavers, his scholarly independence from colonial societies, his migration through Central and South India, and his engagement with multiple languages. Looking at particular junctures in his collections and drawing on my interactions with Venkataswami's family in Hyderabad (who I discovered after a decade of searching), I will also reflect on how a living family renegotiates its memory of a close relative after encountering an unknown "archive," how acts of translation presuppose many crisscrossing voices and presences, and finally, how ethics and aesthetics of writing about the past and present of these collections is altered by perceptions of genres. This analysis will be indebted to Margaret's scholarship on ethnographic representation, translation and poetics, migration and borderlands, story-worlds, women narrators, and all-round questioning of how knowledge is made and experienced in everyday life—and elsewhere.

### **Dwight Reynolds**

*Abu Zayd Al-Hilali: Hero, Trickster, Sufi, Poet*

Most of the late medieval Arab folk epics focus on the deeds of a single hero or heroine, such as 'Antar ibn Shaddad, Sayf ibn Dhi Yazin, Dhat al-himma, or al-Zahir Baybars. In stark contrast to these other narratives, *Sirat Bani Hilal* stands out in its portrayal of the complex personal relations among a constellation of main figures. In this it is more akin to narratives such as the *Iliad*, the *Nibelungenlied*, or King Arthur, than to single-hero tales such as *Beowulf*, *Roland*, or the *Odyssey*. Over the past century scholars have noted that in different regions of the Arab world different heroes are emphasized in the story. In North Africa, for example, Diyab ibn Ghanim is in many ways the most popular character, whereas in Egypt it is Abu Zayd al-Hilali who is usually center stage. This presentation analyses the remarkably multi-faceted portrayal of the character of Abu Zayd in Egyptian oral performances of *Sirat Bani Hilal* based on audience reactions during live performances. At times a chivalrous warrior, at times a cunning trickster, at times a Sufi dervish, and at times an epic poet, Abu Zayd represents a fascinating representation of manhood and heroism in the context of Egyptian rural society.

### **Susan Slyomovics**

*Algerian Women's Buqalah Poems: Cultural Politics, Oral Literature and Anti-Colonial Resistance*

*Buqalah* refers both to a ceramic pitcher as well as the poems ritually embedded in the traditional, favorite divinatory pastime associated with Algerian women city dwellers. What were the ways in which a ritual and game, linked to orality, the divinatory, women's poesis, and the Algerian Arabic dialect, began to carry political

meanings during the war of independence and in post-1962 independent Algeria? In addition, Algerian radio, television, Internet postings, and the publication of a published francophone poem that contributed to the circulation and creation of new *buqalah* poetry are discussed.

## **Meltem Türköz**

### *Multivocality in the Construction of Place in Şile, Turkey: Experiments with Photo-Elicitation*

This paper explores place attachment and the social construction of place through data from an ethnographic photo-elicitation project conducted in Şile, a Black Sea seaside town outside of Istanbul. The data is drawn from a two-tier project covering a) perceptions of sites that are considered locally significant or, advertised as tourism worthy, and b) photographic and written data obtained through collaboration with a local high school classroom about places to which local students feel attached, where they spend most of their time, and places they would like to go. I argue that photo-elicitation can be a successful tool for accessing articulation of what Margaret Rodman called “multivocality and multi-locality” in studying place.

Şile is a small seaside town on the Black Sea coast, an hour away from Istanbul's city center; since the 1940s it has functioned as a summer resort town for Istanbul's inhabitants, many of whom have second homes there. Recently it became part of the Istanbul metropolitan municipality. Before 1923 Greek Orthodox (Rum) and Turkish residents coexisted in the town but this was interrupted in 1923 when the population exchange between Greece and Turkey after the Treaty of Lausanne stipulated that the Orthodox population in Turkey be exchanged with the Muslim population in Greece. While the town's Greek (Rum) past is not part of any official historical narrative, some locals claim that the remains of Greek Orthodox sites can be utilized to diversify the tourist draw.

The once standing Greek graveyard, (Maşatlık) today lies on the slope of a park where children hop over grass and swing on jungle gyms. Grave stones and grave contents have been pillaged by treasure hunters. The remains of a church have been filled with soil, in order to build a road down to the pier.

Drawing on the literature on sense of place and visual anthropology, students in a community involvement class performed a two-stage ethnography of place with photo elicitation. The first project involved extended observation of a particular site followed by interviews with various residents' attachment to, and memories of the site. The second stage of the semester project brought university students together with high school students for a photographic exploration of place attachment. Since Collier's work in the 1960s photography has been used to elicit perceptions on a range of issues including place attachment, perceptions of tourism, health and income disparities, consumer research, and for the documentation of the lives of children and youth. In oral history, photographic images have been used to trigger memory and elicit further material.

**Susan Wadley**

*Likhiya: Painting Stories in the Mithila Region*

For several hundred years, at least, women in the Mithila region of India and southern Nepal have adorned the walls of their houses with auspicious paintings of gods and goddesses, lotus plants, fish, and other images, often used to adorn a bridal chamber. With government interventions, by the 1970s these images were being made on paper for a commercial market. In the 1980s, one of the most renowned painters, Ganga Devi, created a style of narrative painting, telling stories through her images. This paper examines the work of a current painter, Vinita Jha, who often uses her paintbrush to tell stories, whether mythological, folk or around current issues. This paper examines three of Vinita's stories as well as several of her daughter's and those of the younger generation to explore the relationship between art and story telling in rural Bihar, India.

**William Westerman**

*Of Argonauts and Afghans, Rowing to Lesbos*

This paper is about selective memory, about the choices we make in the retelling of myth and the drawing of borders as a political imaginary. Looking at the central metaphor of young men sailing in a ship on the Aegean Sea—both the Argonauts of ancient Greece and Afghan refugees of recent times—reveals to us double-standards of rights and citizenship and the hypocrisy of asylum policy in contemporary Europe. The myths of the great singer and Argonaut, Orpheus, in all their different manifestations and variants become a lens through which we can see how Greeks, and subsequently other Westerners, value and even glamorize mythic behavior among their own forbears while finding equivalent behavior reprehensible among actual Others, humans outside of their territory or their community, whether defined by ethnicity, religion, or geography. In short this research becomes an investigation into the social concept of hypocrisy, which has been seldom theorized in international relations or anthropology. What does it say about contemporary political culture that it depends on a tacit acceptance of hypocrisy in order for the state to function? While theorists have considered national myths and invented traditions, we also need to examine what myths or parts of sacred myths are conveniently forgotten, overlooked, or untold and how that can serve the aims of some over others.

Myth, by definition, is sacred narrative, but “sacred” in this context is not limited to the divine and supernatural. This paper demonstrates empirically that sacred narratives can also be political, and deal with worldly power in addition to divine power. An analysis of the versions and mercurial retellings of the Orpheus myth—not just his pursuit of Eurydice into the underworld, but his music, his time as an Argonaut, his violent death, and the arrival of his severed head on the island of Lesbos—allows us to have insight into the selection of evidence in the construction of personal and national ideologies. In other words, the sparks caused as mythic, personal, and political narratives rub against each other illuminate and provide us with an x-ray of the xenophobic condition.

## PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

### Cati Coe

Dr. Cati Coe is an associate professor of anthropology at Rutgers University, Camden. She is the author of numerous publications on children and youth in Ghana, including *The Dilemmas of Culture in African Schools: Nationalism, Youth, and the Transformation of Knowledge* (Chicago, 2005) and the edited volume, *Everyday Ruptures: Children, Youth, and Migration in Global Perspective* (Vanderbilt, 2011) with Rachel R. Reynolds, Deborah Boehm, Julia Meredith Hess, and Heather Rae Espinoza. She currently is working on a book manuscript entitled *The Scattered Family*, about Ghanaian migrants to the United States and the children they leave in the care of family members, friends, or boarding schools in Ghana.

### Yücel Demirer

Yücel Demirer is currently an associate professor of Political Science at Kocaeli University where he teaches courses on political performances, general ethnicity and minority issues, representation, identity creation and political Islam. He received his Ph.D. in Folklore and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at The Ohio State University in 2004. His dissertation was on the controversial traditional new year festivals in Turkey. His current research interests are primarily in the area of political aspects of tradition, ritual, and religion; religion and politics, ethnic/regional/national/religious identity and minority issues.

### Joyce Flueckiger

Joyce Flueckiger grew up in India until the age of eighteen, as the daughter of Mennonite missionaries. She earned her Ph.D. in South Asian Language and Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She specializes in performance studies and anthropology of religion, with a particular interest in gender. She has carried out extensive fieldwork in India, working with both Hindu and Muslim popular traditions. Flueckiger's latest book is titled *In Amma's Healing Room: Gender & Vernacular Islam in South India* (Indiana University Press, 2006). The book analyzes religious and gender identities and boundaries in a healing practice of female Muslim folk healers in the South Indian city of Hyderabad. She currently is writing a book on the goddess tradition and jatara/festival of Gangamma (one of seven village-goddess sisters), based on fieldwork conducted in Tirupati, South India. Her forthcoming book is titled *When the World Becomes Female: Possibilities of a South Indian Goddess*. She is also the author of *Gender and Genre in the Folklore of Middle India* (Cornell, 1996), has published numerous articles on South Asian folklore, and is co-editor of and contributor to *Oral Epics in India* (1989) and *Boundaries of the Text: Epic Performances in South and Southeast Asia* (1991).

### **Benjamin Gatling**

Benjamin Gatling is a Ph.D. candidate and Presidential Fellow in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at The Ohio State University. He recently returned from fieldwork in Tajikistan, where he was a Fulbright-Hays Fellow, researching the performance of Sufi ritual, Islamic textualities, and Persian poetry. In the fall, he will take up a position as Lecturing Fellow in the Thompson Writing Program at Duke University. He has published articles on narrative performance in Afghanistan and educational access for students with special needs in Tajikistan.

### **Deborah Kapchan**

Deborah Kapchan, associate professor of Performance Studies at New York University, writes on aesthetics, music, narrative and religion in North Africa and the North African diaspora. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, she is the author of *Gender on the Market: Moroccan Women and the Revoicing of Tradition* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), *Traveling Spirit Masters: Moroccan Trance and Music in the Global Marketplace* (Wesleyan University Press, 2007) as well as recent articles including, "Learning to Listen: The Sound of Sufism in France" (*World of Music*, 2011) and "The Promise of Sonic Translation: Performing the Festive Sacred in Morocco" (*American Anthropologist*, 2008). She currently is translating Moroccan poetry for a volume entitled *Poetic Justice: An Anthology of Moroccan Contemporary Poetry* (contracted, University of Texas Press), and is editing two volumes: *Intangible Rights: Cultural Heritage and Human Rights in Transit* (under review, University of Pennsylvania Press) and *Theorizing Sound Writing* (in progress). A fluent speaker of Moroccan Arabic, French and English, she has been a Guggenheim Fellow, a Fulbright-Hays recipient, a grantee of the American Institute of Maghreb Studies, a grantee of the Social Science Research Council, and most recently a Wenner-Gren Fellow.

### **Derya Keskin**

Derya Keskin Demirer, assistant professor of Labor Economics and Industrial Relations, Kocaeli University. Derya received her B.A. at Istanbul University, and M.A. in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at The Ohio State University in 2003. She completed her Ph.D. in Development Studies at Marmara University, in Istanbul, after returning to Turkey. Her interest areas include gender related issues, education, and political economy.

### **Frank J. Korom**

Frank J. Korom is professor of Religion and Anthropology at Boston University, and author or editor of *Constructing Tibetan Culture: Contemporary Perspectives* (World Heritage Press, 1997), *Village of Painters: Narrative Scrolls from West Bengal* (Museum of New Mexico Press, 2006), and *Hosay Trinidad: Muharram Performances in an Indo-Caribbean Diaspora* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002). Most recently, he has been a resident fellow of the Clark Art Institute, where he has been writing a book tentatively titled *Visualizing Modernity*. His interests focus on South Asia and Tibet. He is also currently editing a performance studies reader for Wiley-Blackwell and serves as co-editor of the journal *Asian Ethnology*.

### **Ulrich Marzolph**

Ulrich Marzolph is a senior member of the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* [*Encyclopedia of Folk and Fairy Tales*] and a professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Göttingen, Germany. His major field of interest is the narrative culture of the Muslim world. He has published extensively on folk and fairy tales, jokes and anecdotes, and other genres of popular literature in Persian, Arabic, and Turkish, both classical and modern.

### **Susan Niditch**

Susan Niditch is Samuel Green Professor of Religion at Amherst College. Her teaching interests closely parallel and interweave with her research. She teaches a range of courses on the classical texts and religion of ancient and early Judaism, on folklore and popular religion, and on women and the body in Judaism. She is the author of *The Symbolic Vision in Biblical Tradition* (Scholars Press, 1980), *Underdogs and Tricksters: A Prelude to Biblical Folklore* (Harper & Row, 1987) and *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (Oxford University Press, 1993).

### **Ruth Olson**

Ruth Olson is associate director of the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures and member of the Folklore Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has published most recently in *Western Folklore*, and with her Wisconsin Teachers of Local Culture collaborators has a chapter in *Through the Schoolhouse Door* (Utah State University Press, 2011). With Mark Wagler and Anne Pryor, she co-authored *Kids' Field Guide to Local Culture* (2004).

### **Arzu Öztürkmen**

Trained in folklore at the University of Pennsylvania, Arzu Öztürkmen is currently a professor in the Department of History at Bogazici University in Istanbul. She is the author of *Türkiye'de Folklor ve Milliyetçilik* [*Folklore and Nationalism in Turkey*] (1998) and has published articles on the history and iconography of dance and national holidays. Her areas of research also include oral history and history of performance in the Eastern Mediterranean world.

### **Leela Prasad**

Leela Prasad is associate professor of Ethics and South Asian Studies in the Department of Religion at Duke University and also the first faculty director of the Duke Center for Civic Engagement. Leela received her Ph.D. in Folklore and Folklife from the University of Pennsylvania, where she worked with Margaret A. Mills as her advisor. Leela's interests are in ethics and its lived, expressive dimensions, particularly in Indic contexts. She also works in the areas of colonial and postcolonial anthropology of India, gender, performance, media, material culture, the Indian diaspora, and Gandhi. Leela's book, *Poetics of Conduct: Narrative and Moral Being in a South Indian Town* (Columbia

University Press, 2007), was awarded the “Best First Book in the History of Religions Prize” by the American Academy of Religion in 2007. In progress is her second book titled *Annotating Pastimes: Cultures of Narration in Colonial India*. She is co-directing a documentary film called *Moved by Gandhi* that explores how “ordinary” people imagine Gandhi and practice Gandhian ways. She has been directing (2011-12) a Duke pilot global program in “immersive learning” based in Hyderabad where undergraduates learn about India intensively through courses, field research, travel and civic engagement. At Duke, Leela also serves on the boards of the Center for Documentary Studies and the Kenan Institute Ethics Certificate Program.

### **Dwight Reynolds**

Dwight Reynolds is professor of Arabic Language and Literature in the Department of Religious Studies at UC Santa Barbara. He was author and section editor [Part IV, “Popular Prose”] for *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: the Post-Classical Period* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), co-authored and edited *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (University of California Press, 2001), and authored *Heroic Poets, Poetic Heroes: The Ethnography of Performance in an Arabic Oral Epic Tradition* (Cornell University Press, 1995).

### **Susan Slyomovics**

Susan Slyomovics is professor of Anthropology and director of the Center for Near Eastern Studies at UCLA. Her current research focuses on human rights in the context of Morocco and Algeria’s reparations commissions and the French colonial infrastructure in North Africa. She previously taught at Brown, New York University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she also chaired the Anthropology Department. Recent publications include *Clifford Geertz in Morocco* (ed., 2010); *Waging War, Making Peace: Reparations and Human Rights* (ed., 2008), and *The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco* (2005). She is the editor of *The Walled Arab City in Literature, Architecture and History: The Living Medina in the Maghrib* (2001) and, with Suad Joseph, of *Women and Power in the Middle East* (2001). Slyomovics was the recipient of the Middle East Studies Association’s Albert Hourani Book Award and the Chicago Folklore Prize in 1999 for her book, *The Object of Memory: Arab and Jew Narrate the Palestinian Village*. She has also been honored by the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Philosophical Society, and the Guggenheim, Mellon, and Ford Foundations.

### **Meltem Türköz**

Meltem Türköz currently works in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Işık University, located on the Black Sea coast just outside of Istanbul. At The University of Pennsylvania, where she studied with Margaret Mills, she wrote a dissertation on narratives and documents about the Turkish Surname Law of 1934. Her current research topics include festivals, civil servanthship in property and population offices, and Turkish educational theater of the 1930s. She also has a longstanding interest in community involvement.

**Susan Wadley**

Susan Wadley is Ford Maxwell Professor of South Asian Studies and director of the Gender and Globalization Initiative at Syracuse University. She is author of *Wife, Mother, Widow: Exploring Women's Lives in Northern India* (2008) and *Raja Nal and the Goddess: The North Indian Oral Epic Dhola in Performance* (2005). Her current research focuses on culture change in rural India as it responds to "globalization," particularly as this affects patterns of women's education, fertility, marital patterns, and status more generally. More recently, she has turned to exploring women's roles in upstate New York at the end of the 19th century.

**William Westerman**

William Westerman is a 2011-2012 Archie Green Fellow of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Prior to that he taught courses on immigration and human rights at Princeton University, and served as Director of the Cambodian American Heritage Museum and Killing Fields Memorial in Chicago. A longtime advocate of refugee and migrant rights, he is at work on a book about folk arts and political protest in the U.S. over the past thirty years.

