

## Behrouzan Settles into IMH

*In August 2010, the Institute welcomed Orkideh Behrouzan, MD, PhD, as an assistant professor. Last December, the Middle East Studies Association awarded Behrouzan's dissertation the 2011 Kerr Dissertation Award. She has spent parts of the last eighteen months converting this dissertation into a book. Below, the News and Views editor introduces Behrouzan to the UTMB community.*

For Orkideh Behrouzan, the narratives we construct to deal with pain, to share experiences, and to frame our lives are so important to our being. Thus, Behrouzan frames her narrative: "When I was in first grade, I wanted to become a writer. By the end of the eighth grade, I had decided to become a physician and to write in my spare time. Years later, I became a medical anthropologist, and suddenly all the juggling between two separate worlds found meaning beyond my dreams. None of these choices were short of passion, nor were they accidental. So many souls and minds have inspired and guided me along the way."

Behrouzan's orientation was influenced, in part, by her living in liminal spaces: physically as an émigré in three countries; conceptually as a former physician and later anthropologist moving across the two cultures; and linguistically as one whose writing inhabits in-between linguistic spaces. "Training across disciplines helps me listen with the third ear that anthropology relies upon, to hear the unsaid, to be patient with the narrative, and to go beyond the narrative and explore the quiet that precedes it. Such

liminal spaces become possible by turning one into an interpreter, a storyteller, a participant observer, and an observant participant."

Education was important to her family and she was fortunate enough to attend a secondary school that encouraged critical thinking. Under the guidance of



*Orkideh Behrouzan*

great mentors and teachers, Behrouzan completed medical school at Tehran University. Although the human encounters of clinical experience had an immense impact on her life and thinking, there was something missing and Behrouzan decided to leave clinical practice for research.

Going to Oxford for a PhD in molecular genetics opened new doors, yet in ways she never imagined possible. At Oxford, she was inspired to "test the waters" by experimenting with other disciplines. By her second year, Behrouzan began to shift gradually from being a scientist to a social scientist. During the day the lab coat and bench occupied her life, yet at night she attended talks and events that opened her eyes to a world that complemented science. "Similar to my clinical experience, my years studying science at Oxford were instrumental in determining the course of my academic life; for it was there that I became inspired to study history and anthropology of medicine. In my biomedical work, I began to appreciate some of the limitations of western biomedicine's treatment of culture as universal. I also became increasingly interested in how modern science and its life-worlds

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## IMH Faculty News

**Michele Carter** presented "A Proposed Ethical Framework for Developing a Data and Specimen Repository at UTMB" at the Public Responsibility in Medicine and Research (PRIM&R) Conference in National Harbor, MD on December 2-4.

**Mark Clark** presented "The Dynamic of Empathic Insight: Theodore Deppe's 'Admission, Children's Unit'" at the IMH Brown Bag on January 24th. His respondents were IMH Graduate Students, Sarah Baker and Nicki Piemonte.

**Jan Heller** presented "Ethical Issues in Personalized Medicine: Selection and Privacy" at UTMB's Research Coordinator's Monthly Education Series on January 19

**Laura Hermer's** paper, "Federal/State Tensions in Fulfilling Medicaid's Purpose," has been accepted for publication in Spring 2012 issue of the *Annals of Health Law*.

Hermer is also working with several other health law professors and Medicaid specialists on an amicus brief in *Florida v. HHS*, before the Supreme Court, in support of the constitutionality of the expansion of Medicaid eligibility in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

## IMH Faculty News (Continued)

**Rebecca Hester** spoke to first responders (police officers, health care and social workers, etc.) at a conference sponsored by the Frente Indigena de Organizaciones Binacionales, a binational organization that focuses on human rights for indigenous Mexicans, in Los Angeles, CA on January 26th. Her talk focused on ways first responders could be more culturally competent in their approaches with indigenous Mexican migrants.

Hester also presented, "Cultural Competency in the Context of Increased Immigration to Rural Communities" at UTMB's Rural Health Care Track Lecture series on January 11th.

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**Anne Hudson Jones** participated in the Galveston Reads "Professor's panel" along with Dr. John Gorman (UHCL), Dr. Stephen Curley (TAMUG), and Michael Berberich (Galveston College). Galveston Reads is a 'One City, One Book' project designed to promote the reading of the same book at the same time by their residents of high school age through senior citizens. This year's selection was *Still Alice*, a story of a woman and her family grappling with her diagnosis of early-onset Alzheimer's.

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shape, and are shaped by, historical and social contexts." Ironically, this transformation was furthered by her desire to continue clinical work. Wanting to "get to know the faces behind the DNA samples," Behrouzan took the Board exams in order to work directly with patients she was studying. This human contact reminded her that it was people she was interested in as much as the science; bringing her one step closer to becoming an anthropologist.

Three years into her lab work, Behrouzan chose to start a PhD at MIT in the History and Anthropology of Science, Technology and Society (HASTS) Program. Beyond working with her adviser, Michael Fischer, and other MIT scholars including Sherry Turkle, the HASTS program encouraged her studying with some of the world's top medical anthropologists, including Alan Young and Vinh-Kim Nguyen in Canada, and Byron Good and Mary Jo Good at Harvard. Also, as a Visiting Scholar at the London School of Economics, Behrouzan was able to work with Nikolas Rose at the BIOS Centre. These mentors and collaborators joined the ranks of the previous teachers and patients that influenced Behrouzan's life and thought.

Although Anthropology melded her "dual life" of poet and physician, it also provided a conduit between all that Behrouzan was engaged in academically. Because of a long-standing interest in psychoanalysis and psychiatry, she has gravitated towards Critical Psychological Anthropology, which examines one's inner life and outer experience and the making of individual and collective action. Behrouzan sees herself as a bridge maker in Anthropology between critical

anthropology that emphasizes the structural aspects of culture, interpretive anthropology that focuses on phenomenology and symbolics, and psychological anthropology that examines memory and experience. In this vein, she is interested in biomedicine and psychological disciplines as vectors of historical, political and social change. The fields of medical and psychological anthropology, she insists, are becoming increasingly instrumental to cultural analysis, by offering conceptual and analytical tools for exploring historical and cultural negotiations across disciplines and cultures.

Behrouzan's interest in "bridging" is the driving force behind her work at the IMH. Behrouzan sees it as cultural translation, where she provides a bridge between medicine and scholarship (both scientific and social/cultural). Medicine cannot be performed or taught in a vacuum or divorced from issues of human rights, justice or development; therefore scholarly work must be made accessible to physicians. She enjoys teaching the POM and HEP courses because they help bridge the distinct cultures of medicine and humanities and enable her to bring medical students into the conversation. She also enjoys teaching courses of her own design to graduate students in the IMH. Behrouzan is also an affiliated faculty member in the Anthropology Department at Rice University where she feels she is part of a larger conversation. Behrouzan calls for more intellectual exchange at UTMB. She attempts to keep the discussion alive through collaboration and by going to conferences in the U.S. and around the world. "Anthropology, and discourse in general, thrive on mobility, diversity, and exchange."

## Alumni News

**Jason Morrow** received the 2012 Hastings Center Cunniff-Dixon Physician Award for his advocacy in expanding palliative care services and his passion for educating medical students, residents, and other physicians in clinical practices and ethics. Morrow received his PhD from the IMH in 2004 and his medical degree from UTMB the same year. He is currently the Medical Director of Inpatient Palliative Care at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

## Visiting Professor Update

Former visiting professor, **Erma Lawson** gave her presentation titled "The Social Construction of Heart Transplantation: Key Race and Gender Insights" at the IMH Colloquium on January 10th.

## Upcoming Events

Walter Glannon, PhD, Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Calgary, will give a presentation titled "Consciousness and the Location of the Mind" at a Special IMH colloquium on Tuesday, February 7. Dr. Glannon is the author of *Brain, Body and Mind: Neuroethics with a Human Face* (2011). IMH professor, **William Winslade** will be Dr. Glannon's respondent.

Dr. Walter Glannon will also present the John P. McGovern, MD, Award Lecture in the Medical Humanities on Monday, February 6 at 5pm (please see below for details).

Six photographs made by **Eric Avery** will be on display in the Philadelphia Museum of Art's upcoming exhibit, "35mm: Photographs from the Collection" on display from February 11 to May 27, 2012 (<http://philamuseum.org/exhibitions/761.html>). The photographs were made in 1983 and published in the book *Visual Arts and Medical Education*. Avery has graciously shared two of the images for this newsletter (see right).



## John P. McGovern, MD, Award Lecture in the Medical Humanities



Sponsored by the Institute for the Medical Humanities

Monday, February 6, 2012

Lecture: 5:00-6:00 p.m.---Reception: 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Caduceus Room

# Neuroscience and Criminal Responsibility

Walter Glannon, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Calgary

Author: *Brain Body and Mind: Neuroethics with a Human Face* (2011)

To RSVP or obtain further information, contact Donna Vickers, [davicker@utmb.edu](mailto:davicker@utmb.edu)

