SHAKIR MUSTAFA

Shakir Mustafa is a teaching professor of Arabic, Arabic literature, and Arab culture at Northeastern University. Dr. Mustafa grew up in Iraq and taught at Mosul University in Northern Iraq for eleven years. He then taught at Indiana University and Boston University from 1999 to 2008. His book, *Contemporary Iraqi Fiction: An Anthology*, appeared this year in a paperback edition by Syracuse University Press. His other publications are in the areas of literary translation, Irish drama, and Jewish American fiction. He is a frequent lecturer and media commentator on Arab and Muslim cultures and politics.

MAHMOUD NOWARA

Mahmoud Nowara is a Palestinian literary artist and journalist born and raised in Damascus. He spent 12 years writing for news outlets across the Arab world. Writing under a pseudonym, Nowara reported on the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, which led to his forced disappearance at the hands of the Syrian intelligence services. After his release, he escaped to Lebanon, where he covered the Syrian refugee crisis for the Arabic- and English-language press. While in exile in Lebanon, he composed a monodrama based on his experiences of imprisonment and torture which was performed at Beirut’s Station Beirut Theater. Nowara subsequently fled Lebanon for France before relocating to the US; he was a visiting fellow at Harvard University in 2017. He is currently working on a novel and developing a film version of his monodrama with Boston’s Fort Point Theater Channel.

SAMAR YAZBEK

Samar Yazbek is a Syrian writer and journalist. Yazbek has been a prominent voice in support of human rights, particularly women’s rights, in Syria. In 2011, she took part in the popular uprising against the Assad regime and was forced into exile shortly after. In 2012 she launched Women Now for Development, an NGO based in France that aims to empower Syrian women economically and socially. Her book, *A Woman in the Crossfire: Diaries of the Syrian Revolution*, won the PEN/Pinter Prize International Writer of Courage Award from English PEN in 2012. She has also been awarded the Tucholsky Prize from Swedish PEN and the Oxfam Novib/PEN Award for Freedom of Expression. In 2016, her book *The Crossing*, a literary narrative of the transformation of the Syrian Revolution, was awarded the Best Foreign Book award in France.
OSAMA ALOMAR

Born in Damascus, Syria and now living Pittsburgh via Chicago, Osama Alomar is one of the most well-respected Arabic poets writing today and a prominent practitioner of the Arabic al-qisa al-qasira jiddan, or the “very short story.” He is the author of Fullblood Arabian (with a preface by Lydia Davis), three collections of short stories, and a volume of poetry in Arabic. His first full-length collection of stories, The Teeth of the Comb and Other Stories, was published by New Directions in 2017. His stories have been published in Noon, Conjunctions, The Coffin Factory, Electric Literature, and The Literary Review.

JACQUELINE Bhabha

Jacqueline Bhabha is the Director of Research at the Harvard FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Professor of the Practice of Health and Human Rights, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, Co-Chair, Harvard Scholars at Risk Committee.

OSAMA ALOMAR

Moderator
Riad Ismat
Syrian Writer, Critic, and Theatre Director

Opening Remarks
Jacqueline Bhabha
Professor of the Practice of Health and Human Rights, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health; Co-Chair, Harvard Scholars at Risk Committee

Participants
Osama Alomar
Syrian Short Story Writer, Poet, and Essayist

Mahmoud Nowara
Palestinian Literary Artist and Journalist

Samar Yazbek
Syrian Novelist and Journalist

Interpreter
Shakir Mustafa
Teaching Professor of Arabic, Northeastern University

Jacqueline Bhabha

Jacqueline Bhabha is the Director of Research at the Harvard FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Professor of the Practice of Health and Human Rights, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, the Jeremiah Smith Jr. Lecturer in Law at Harvard Law School, and an Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. From 1997 to 2001, Bhabha directed the Human Rights Program at the University of Chicago. Prior to 1997, she was a practicing human rights lawyer in London and at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. She has published extensively on issues of transnational child migration, refugee protection, children’s rights, and citizenship. She is the author of Can We Solve the Migration Crisis? (2018), Child Migration and Human Rights in a Global Age (2014), co-editor of the Research Handbook on Child Migration (2018), and editor of Human Rights and Adolescence (2014) and Children Without A State (2011). Bhabha co-chairs Harvard’s Scholars at Risk Program and is the former and founding chair of the Scholars at Risk Network. She serves on board of World Peace Foundation and the Journal of Refugee Studies, and is a frequent adviser to UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, and civil society organizations working on forced migration-related issues.

RIAD ISMAT

Riad Ismat is a prize-winning Syrian writer, director, and critic. Ismat was awarded the DW Literature Prize from Germany’s Deutsche Welle in 1993 and has been honored at several Arab theater festivals. He is noted for his adaptations of The Arabian Nights, Shahryar’s Nights, Sinbad, and The Game of Love and Revolution. He has written seven television serials, including award-winners Hulago and A Crown of Thorn. He served as Syria’s ambassador to Pakistan and Qatar and was Minister of Culture from 2010 to June 2012. He subsequently settled in the US and has taught screenwriting, performance, Arabic cinema, and Middle East and North African Studies at Northwestern University and other institutions.