1. Reflections on Race in America
2. On Monday, March 23, 2015, the Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University in collaboration with Prince Al Waleed Center for American Studies and Research, The American University in Cairo, hosted an american studies seminar titled  “Reflections on Race in America.” The seminar was held from 10 am to 5 pm at Ain Shams University. The seminar consisted of keynote address followed by three panels. Professors and graduate students from different universities attended the seminar which provided an opportunity for emerging scholars in the field of american studies to share their research that was developed during the academic year 201 4 – 2015.
3. Both Mounira Soliman, associate director at the Center for American Studies and Research at AUC ,and Nadia Shalaby, Department of English, Faculty of Arts at Ain Shams University, made opening remarks and welcomed the Keynote speaker Khaled Mattawa.
4. The keynote address was delivered by professor Khaled Mattawa from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Mattawa shed light on the softening of the image of the black man in the media in his presentation titled "Thinking Race: Four Vagrant Thoughts Among Settled Tensions.” He referred to a number of commercials that were ridden with racial messages; Hyundai's advertisement, in which the black couple occupies the front seats while the white couple occupies the back ones, gives a message that the blacks are the ones who lead. Nevertheless, as the focus is on the white couple, the message is blurred. Unlike the images that appeal to the black audience in the media, the real life situations highlight racist practices against blacks people. Mattawa referred to Eric Garner, who was wrestled to the ground in a chokehold by a NYPD officer and  was heard gasping "I can't breathe" before he died, as a glaring example of racial discrimination against blacks, especially that a grand jury failed to indict the officer responsible. Mattawa recited his poem "Celebration of MENA."  The complexities of identity construction in the postcolonial world are highlighted in the poem; especially that MENA echoes the Arabic word for harbor.
5. The first panel was titled "Arab Americans and Racial Positioning" and consisted of four presentations. The first presentation was given by Somaya Sabry, Ain Shams University, titled "Arab-Americans, Muslim-Americans and the Limits of White Privilege."Dr Sabry tackled the issue of labeling a crime a hate crime which denotes violence with discrimination in her presentation. The second presentation was given by Zainab Magdy, Cairo University, titled "Performing War: A Study of the Works of Suheir Hammad and Heather Raffo." Zainab explored the works of two Arab American writers and performers, Suheir Hammad and Heather Raffo, in the light of Arab-American Feminist critical theory, critical race theory, performance studies, war studies and affect theory. The third presentation was given by Hala Yousry, Cairo University,titled "Arab American Poetry Coming of Age: A Reading in Khaled Mattawa’s Poetry." Yousry traced the development in Khaled Mattawa's poetry from nostalgia to critique. She argued that he returned the colonial gaze in his later collections of poetry.
6. The fourth presentation was given by Nehal Ashraf, Ain Shams, titled "Racism Post 9/11 and Arab-American Women's Writing." Nehal highlighted the shift of Arab-American women's writing from search for a promised land in America to racism against Arab-Americans, especially women, after 9/11.
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8. The second panel was titled "Racial Encounters in North and South America" and consisted of three presentations.The first was presented by Sonia Farid, Cairo University, titled "Re(Writing) the “Trujillato”: Collective Trauma, alternative history, and the nature of dictatorship." Farid shed light on the dictator novel as a genre developed in Latin America in response to the traumatic experience of dictatorial regimes. The second presentation was given by Suha Sharif, Helwan University, titled "'We came all the way from Cuba so you can dress like this?' Living on the Margins." Suha tackled the issue of Cuban diaspora in America through her discussion of a short story titled "We came all the way from Cuba so you can dress like this?" The third presentation was given by Rola Koraa, AUC, titled "Indian Women's Identity Crisis in America." Rola addressed the dilemma of Indian women's identity construction in America.
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10. The third panel was titled "Theorizing Race in Media, Politics, and Philosophy" and consisted of three presentations. The first presentation was given by Dr. Jose Cossa, AUC, titled "Reflections on a Theory of Justice: The American Media as a Learning Sphere." Cossa referred to an alternative belief system to Western beliefs of individualistic creativity— that a person is an individual because of others. Thus, no one hurts the other so not to violate one's own existence. Cossa argued that the negation of the inflated Western "I" is the core to justice. The second presentation was given by Mohamed Rauf, Cairo University, titled "Pragmatism and Contemporary African American Politics." Mohamed highlighted the duality inherent in American politics as regards democracy and slavery. The third presentation was given by Rehab Hassan, Alexandria University, titled "Homi Bhabha's Revision of Modernity through Theorizing Race." Rehab expounded Homi Bhabha's race theory; modernity has to be translated in terms of the colonialism and racism that accompanied it.
11. Each panel was followed by discussion questions and the seminar ended with the closing remarks.
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13. Written By: Rehab Hassan
14. Research Assistant, Prince Alwaleed Center for American Studies and Research
15. Hindawy, Hamza. ” Ahmed Fouad Negm: Poet whose revolutionary work inspired decades of leftist protest against Egypt's ruling elite.” Dec 2013. Web.
16. Khlifi, Roua. “Tunisian film documentaries thrive since revolution.”  May 2015. Web.
17. Rosen, Kamran. “5 Incredible Art Movements That Exploded After the Arab Spring.” Dec 2013. Web.
18. Sarabia, Jacob. "Art Is Resistance: The Role of The Artist In The Arab Spring and Other Uprisings." Web.
19. Simon, George A., "Poetry And The Arab Spring." 2015. All Dissertations, Theses, and Capstone Projects (2014-Present). Paper 624.
20. Sweden, Ted. “Egypt’s Music of Protest From Sayed Darwish to DJ Haha.” Web.
21. Wassim, Ashraf. “Biography: Ahmed Fouad Negm.” Web.
22. Geni, Joseph. Bahia Shehab: A Thousand Times No. TED. Sep. 2012. Web. 1 Dec. 2015.