

Lebanese Masculinities

■ Samira Aghacy

Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, LAU

Dominant discourses surrounding gender tend to promote the view that the human race is naturally divided into male and female, where masculinity is fixed, stable and timeless, and where the natural difference between men and women is sharply emphasized. Nevertheless, gender studies are shifting from exclusive focus on women to a new interest in men, not as a monolithic group with fixed boundaries but rather as men whose masculinity is molded in particular times and settings. There are no significant studies that treat Arab males as gendered subjects, or products of "social conditioning."¹ Indeed, masculinity in the Arab world is generally treated as timeless and universal. In *Theorizing Masculinity*, Harry Brod and Micheal Kaufman assert that "we cannot study masculinity in the singular, as if the stuff of man were a homogeneous and unchanging thing. Rather, we wish to emphasize the plurality and diversity of men's experiences, attitudes, beliefs, situations, practices, and institutions, along lines of race, class, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, age, region, physical appearance, able-bodiedness, mental ability, and various other categories with which we describe our lives and experiences."² Indeed the history of Arab masculinity in the past forty years or so is composed of a number of elements that reveal the volatile nature of the culture's sense of masculinity and makes a study of male representation especially compelling and informative. As the older village and rural structures were being systematically destroyed and new urban values were taking precedence, men found themselves faced with disorienting challenges to masculine prerogatives. In a highly politicized and emotionally charged atmosphere there is the need to take on board the religiously diverse and ideologically divided nature of such societies and the forms of masculinity produced. Furthermore, the family, educational institutions, the state, all contribute to and are shaped by cultural constructions of gender. Since the Arab world is a region of diverse religious, sectarian, and ethnic groups with a plurality of experiences, one cannot look at it as a coherent whole. Accordingly, my focus will be post-war Lebanese society and the situation of men at this juncture. At a time in Lebanese history when men are becoming increasingly concerned over the feminization of culture and women are

beginning to make inroads into traditionally male territories, masculine identities are changing in complicated ways. This involves a radical questioning or redefinition of the meaning of masculinity in post-war Lebanon where there have been great ideological and political upheavals precipitating changes in social values, including greater freedoms for women. This complex gender dynamics has brought about a shift in the notions of masculinity within the Lebanese society. Today in Lebanon, women are still seen as bastions of traditional values. Their identities continue to center around the importance of virginity and on their achievements as wives and mothers. In other words, men are still in control of women's sexual behavior. Despite that, the ideology of patriarchal structure has undergone change in response to the complexities and transformations of the contemporary world. Indeed, if there are forces within the Lebanese society that insist on maintaining conventional ideals of manhood by stabilizing the idea of masculinity, and upholding the authentic ways, there are others who under the influence of modernity flout and contest these ideals. Masculinity is being reinvented and reinterpreted to meet the specific exigencies and complexities of current conditions. The Western cultural assault has penetrated an extensive range of institutions and socio-cultural realms making it impossible for many to resist an inevitable modernization. Indeed, many men see the need to embrace modernity to remain in touch with civilization. Accordingly, for a large section of the middle class urban sector of society, the meanings of masculinity and femininity are becoming increasingly blurred, varied, and problematic. For others, change is seen as a potential betrayal of one's culture, values, and language. As a result, regression towards original mythology appears to be the only way to preserve one's identity. Since the Islamic world has been unable to compete with the West at the scientific, technological, economic, and educational levels, Muslims present an alternative in the one area in which they take pride and feel secure, namely the realm of religion and culture. This perspective, however, demands that men adhere to essentialist definitions of masculinity, and ensure that women remain in their places since they are seen as the major symbols of stability.

Nevertheless, despite resistance by supporters of traditional masculinity, Lebanese culture is becoming more feminized where men belonging to the urban middle classes have started to adopt habits and embrace acts formerly reserved for women. Earlier on, it was women who cared about their physical appearance, while men's indifference over their own image was the male norm. Today, if one casts a look at urban areas inhabited and frequented by the upper middle classes, one notes that, in many cases, gender has become blurred. The clothes that are worn by young people in these places such as T-Shirts, sweaters and pants are predominantly unisex. Furthermore, androgynous fashion which presumably emasculates the male wearer is seemingly everywhere. The opening of our culture onto Western patterns and standards has created a breed of men who are very much concerned about body image. Captivated by new ideals of male fashion, style and beauty, these men polish their nails, wear earrings, diet, exercise, and undergo plastic surgery to improve their appearance. Young men wear trendy clothes, sport body piercing and tattoos, grow their hair long, wear ponytails, color their hair, apply styling gel, and pluck their eyebrows. Other older men, worried about hair loss, spend a lot of money on shampoos and chemical creams or go as far as undergoing hair transplants. Men's beauty salons have replaced the old barber shops while special cosmetics for men such as hydrating creams, anti-wrinkle creams, all kinds of face masks and many other kinds of cosmetics are readily available. Indeed many men are spending increasing amounts of money and time to improve their physical appearance.

Satellite TV channels are broadcasting programs that run counter to our culture and tradition. Despite reservations at various levels, reality TV has thousands of viewers. Star Academy aired on The Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation has attracted a huge audience and fans. Even though the idea of young, unmarried men and women living together runs counter to our customs and traditions, the program was a great success. The young men and women who participated competed on equal basis without discrimination between male and female and won the love of the masses all over the Arab world. Furthermore, if the organization of Mr. Lebanon contest is not as popular as Miss Lebanon, young men are taking a chance that would put them in the limelight and ensure a better future for them. These young men do not seem to worry about the fact that they are becoming objects of the (female) gaze. Indeed, middle-class, educated women are beginning to look at men more boldly and valuing them according to their appearance.

Indeed, Middle class educated men have a whole range of other sources of identity open to them, through their work, through fathering, through the way they treat their working wives and through friendship networks. Men are increasingly sharing responsibility with their wives at home and with the children, where they are learning that they too can be nurturing, caring and emotionally expressive. They are more in touch with a feminine side that they thought did not exist.

Since women are working with men and competing with them, men feel the need to appear attractive in the way the women had to be. Indeed surveys conducted in the West found that the more financially secure the woman is, the more important a man's looks were to her.

As the new age of globalization, free market capitalism and consumer culture takes over, men who have been associated with power, dominance and strength because of the type of work and jobs that they have held traditionally, are taking jobs that no longer require physical fitness and where an increasing number of women compete with them. Men are more present in the fields traditionally reserved for women and women are getting more positions in social, and business life that used to belong to men. The growth of the service economy has removed physical strength and fitness as a requirement and thus has accommodated women, in addition to men, in the workplace. In an age where consumerism is the main vehicle of expression, men who have nothing to measure their achievements against, have increasingly sought approval not for their actions and feats, but for the commodities that they possess such as expensive cars, houses and their physical appearance. The growth of service economy worldwide has changed the way men do business. For many, work value rests solely in one's ability to earn money and capital to buy such commodities in order to influence the perceptions and views of those around them. The rise of the male fashion industry epitomizes the importance of male appearance in a world where the image and spectacle predominates.

Because masculinities are stretched by the exigencies of change, the process of accommodating old definitions to new conditions have driven men to reexamine their experiences and reinvent their masculinity. In Lebanon, one could say that masculinity imported from the West has a precarious existence. For some it is seen as a threat, while for others it is a blessing. The definition of manhood is changing and many men are searching for a new understanding of manhood suited to the modern age. Owing to changes precipitated by modernity and by the empowerment of women, the Lebanese culture is becoming more feminized causing men to adopt habits and embrace acts formerly reserved for women. Nevertheless, opposing forces of modernity and counter-modernity stretch and strain the country's social fabric, and cherished ideals of masculinity are being challenged and interrogated. At the same time, traditional masculinity continues to rattle its arms to ensure that the field is still under male control.

End Notes

1. See Scott, J.W., "Gender: A useful category of historical analysis," *The American Historical Review*, vol. 91, No. 5 (Dec., 1986), 1053-1075.
2. See Brod, H., and Kaufman, M. (1994). *Theorizing masculinities*, 5-6. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Working towards the Globalization of Peace

■ Nadine Saliba

Human Rights Activist

I want to speak about women under occupation in Palestine and Iraq. As we are caught in the clutches of war, speaking about ending violence against women means combating violence not only at the local and national level but also at the global level. Global forms of violence range from capitalist globalization to occupation, wars and militarization, and women in the 'third world are the primary victims of these forms of violence.

If we as women claim to care about violence affecting women, then I would expect us to have some sort of agreement on what defines violence and what qualifies as a threat to women. Can we agree that economic globalization is a form of violence against women? Do we think that the preemptive war, which the United States of America - residing over the largest military arsenal in history - waged against Iraq, in violation of international law, was a form of aggression against Iraqi women? And finally, can we agree that the Israeli occupation of Palestine - the only colonialist occupation that still exists in this day and age - constitutes a form of violence against Palestinian women?

Let's consider some of the effects of military conflicts, continued occupation, chaos and absence of security on

the daily lives of women. Today, under the US occupation in the "liberated" Iraq, women are afraid to go out. Iraqi women suffered tremendously and for decades under the previous regime, but according to a senior UN official they are worse off now, if that is possible to imagine. The poor security situation presents a direct threat to their personal safety. Young women cannot walk the streets without male relatives accompanying them because of the increase in instances of rape, attacks and kidnapping.

Scariest still is the rise of religious forces in Iraq under US occupation. While not all religious forces are reactionary, those that are, advocate traditional attitudes about women's role in society. The American appointed Iraqi Governing Council - obviously not an elected body - recently passed what is known as resolution 137, designed to install religious laws in place of the Iraqi civil code dealing with personal status laws. The Iraqi Governing Council, an interim entity appointed by the occupation authority, has no legitimate powers to change Iraqi civil law, a culmination of 50 years of struggle by Iraqi women and progressive forces in Iraq, not the product of Saddam Hussein's regime. Resolution 137 amounts to a direct attack on Iraqi women's rights. In response to this resolution, a large number of Iraqi women took to

the streets protesting it. Consequently it was repealed, at least for the time being.

Shifting to the occupation of Palestine, let's ask ourselves, what is life like for Palestinian women living under the Israeli occupation? It would indeed be stating the obvious to say that the Israeli occupation and aggression have a very negative impact on the lives of Palestinian women who have been the victims of massacres, rape, ethnic cleansing, economic blockade, torture, confinement, curfews and school closures. Countless numbers of Palestinian mothers have been forced to deliver still born babies at Israeli checkpoints because Palestinian ambulances aren't allowed to pass through to nearby hospitals. And this is routine procedure. The rights of Palestinian women and their families are impossible to realize under these circumstances. These women are only able to exercise the full range of their rights when they live in free communities and in a society free from military conflicts and occupation.

Palestinian women have always been politically active on the nationalist front and the gender equality front. They have been aware of the link between homegrown patriarchy and the Israeli occupation in the sense that both are instances of dominance of one group over another. Seeing the close link between their feminist and nationalist struggles, they have organized, mobilized and have been very active in the national liberation movement and in women's rights organizations.

The Palestinian resistance against the Israeli occupation has been sustained to a large degree by the resourcefulness of Palestinian women. During the first Intifada in the late 1980's and early 1990's, Palestinian women took

a pioneering role in the campaign to boycott Israeli products in the occupied territories. With no pre-existing indigenous industry to fall back on, Palestinian women took it upon themselves to provide alternative sources of income and products. They began establishing their own manufacturing industries from cheese and jam making to bread baking and cultivating community gardens. In doing so, not only did they enable the boycott campaign and made it possible to succeed, but actually developed a nucleus for the infrastructure of a Palestinian economy.

International women's organizations interested in playing a role in combating the oppression facing Palestinian women as women have to recognize the connection between patriarchy and occupation that manifests itself in the daily lives of women and integrate this connection in the theory, practice and agenda of the international women's movement.

It is important at this moment in our history to be politically informed and to be aware of what's going on in the world and of the role governments play in world events affecting women. Critical political knowledge is central to developing oppositional spaces and cultures of resistance where critical thinking can function at a time when policing mechanisms are tightened and a demagogical discourse of national security and terrorism is sweeping our public space.

Finally, being politically aware and being committed to issues of social justice is of essence. The women of Palestine and Iraq need us to stay informed, committed and to make people aware of the oppression they face. They need our solidarity in their effort to end the occupation so they can live in free communities.

Forthcoming:
Young Arab Women

Recent Publications

Adams, R., and Savran, D. (Eds.). (2002). *The masculinity studies reader*. Malden, Mass: Blackwell.

Hatty, S. (2000). *Masculinities, violence and culture*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Noble, J. (2003). *Masculinities without men?: Female masculinity in twentieth-century*. Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press.

Silverman, E.K. (2001). *Masculinity, motherhood, and mockery: Psychoanalyzing culture and the latmul Naven rite in New Guinea*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Announcement

From H-Gender-MidEast

Michigan State University's Women and International Development (WID) Publication Series publishes peer-reviewed manuscripts that examine the relationships between gender and global transformation, and which illuminate processes of change, in the broadest sense. Through empirical studies, theoretical analyses, and policy discussions, individual papers in the series address a range of topics, including women's historical and contemporary participation in economic and political spheres, globalization, intra- and inter-family roles and relationships, gender identity, women's health and healthcare, and the gender division of labor. We particularly encourage manuscripts that bridge the gap between research, policy, and practice.

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F i l m s

And Along Came a Spider

This documentary exposes the shocking portrait of the world of a recently captured serial killer, who believes that murdering prostitutes is in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Over the span of a year, 16 women were murdered in the Iranian city of Mashad. Because the victims were lured into the killer's traps, the press soon called these the "spider killings". The film visits the family of the victims, the perpetrator and his family, as well as prostitutes of this holy city.

Season Of Men

Eighteen year old Aisha who lives in Djerba, marries Said who works and lives in Tunis eleven months of the year. On her wedding night, Aisha announces to Said her desire to break with tradition by moving with him to Tunis. Said agrees provided she bears him a son. Aisha while awaiting the birth of her son lives with her tyrannical mother-in-law, away from her husband, who visits her once a year only.

All About my Mother

A single mother in Madrid sees her only son die on his 17th birthday as he runs to seek an actress's autograph. She goes to Barcelona to find the lad's father, a transvestite named Lola who does not know he has a child. She wants to tell him that their son's last written words were directed to him, even though he never knew his father.

As soon as soft hair began to thicken above my lips, whenever I looked in a mirror I began to imagine myself with a complete and perfect moustache. What I envisaged was a model moustache of the kind that I would have liked to have had, not as it would actually have been. I was handsome in that moustache which I added to my face like one adds a pair of sun-glasses, though I didn't acquire a pair of those until I was past forty. Nevertheless, a moustache and sun glasses, together with a pipe: the image was never far from my mind, though when I did adopt the pipe I only used it for about ten days. Pipe, moustache, sun glasses, and also the overcoat which we used to imagine as the dress of secret policemen, all this combined to make up the complete man who lacked nothing. (Hassan Daoud, *Imagined Masculinities: Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East*, p. 273).

It would help to sort out from the usual clichés about "men-and-sex vs. women-and-love" the genuine intuition about what makes male sexuality distinctly male. Everyone has heard the clichés that say, when it comes to sexual relationships, women focus on the intimacy part and men focus on the physical part. But what really makes male sexuality distinctly male? Maybe it can be stated like this. Female sexuality is specific. Women rarely want sex-in-general: their passion is focused on one with whom the sex is desired. Commitment is inherent in female sexuality, no doubt in large part for biological reasons. The question for women is who the lucky winner will be. And the problem is avoiding bad or too early or serial commitments. But male sexuality isn't like that, perhaps again for biological reasons. It is naturally unfocused and amorphous. It is a challenge for men to focus desire onto one person, one woman, one life partner. Herein the culmination of sexual adulthood for men is found. If men engage in too-early-sex or pre-wife promiscuity, not only is true sexual adulthood subverted, but a crucial challenge to the man — an essential test of his masculinity — is lost or failed, all too often in the supposed pursuit of masculinity itself. Promiscuity undermines masculinity. Fatherhood perfects it. (Sarah E. Hinlicky, *Subversive Masculinity* <<http://www.boundless.org/2000/features/a0000195.html>>

Arab masculinity (rujulah) is acquired, verified and played out in the brave deed, in risk-taking, and in expressions of fearlessness and assertiveness. It is attained by constant vigilance and willingness to defend honour

(sharaf), face (wajh), kin and community from external aggression and to uphold and protect cultural definitions of gender-specific propriety. In the Palestinian context, the occupation has seriously diminished those realms of practice that allow men to engage in, display and affirm masculinity by means of autonomous actions. Frequent witnesses to their father's beatings by soldiers or settlers, children are acutely aware of their fathers' inability to protect themselves and their children." (Julie Peteet, *Imagined Masculinities: Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East*, p.107).

Men's clothing has been repeatedly restyled in the past, and contemporary trends suggest that it is still undergoing transformation. Some, for instance, have observed a 'feminization' and 'emasculinization' of men's fashion, particularly in the realm of haute couture. Recent designer fashions play on gender reversal in male fashion ... Apart from this gender swapping, there is also an air of androgyny surrounding modern fashion in general. 'On Catwalks and even in showrooms,' it appears, 'gender has become blurred beyond all recognition..' (Alejandro Diaz, *Fashioning Masculinity: Change and Paradox in Men's Fashion*, p.3. <<http://www.stanford.edu/~amd/download/masculinity.pdf>>

Although patriarchy has certainly changed in form over the last century or more, especially through the growth of the state, men's power still resides at least in part in the family and the institution of fatherhood. Historically, fatherhood is both a means of possession of and care for young people, and an arrangement between men. It has also been and still is a way for some men of living with, being with, being violent to, sexually abusing, caring for and loving particular young people (those that called 'your own'), and a way of avoiding connection, care and contact with other young people more generally. Even nice fathers can switch to become nasty ones. Fatherhood has often involved getting something for nothing, an assumption of rights and authority over others, principally women and children, rather than responsibilities for them. The problems of both father absence and father distance are now recognised more than ever (Williams, 1998). For some men, becoming fathers can and obviously does involve major changes in responsibilities and more work.

(Jeff Hearn, *A Crisis in Masculinity or New Agendas for Men*, p.7). <http://www.europrofem.org/02.info/22contri/2.04.en/2en.masc/01en_mas.htm>

From France

Restoring the Clitoris

(...) A tall, elegant Somalian woman in her late twenties slips nervously into the reception area of the Louise XIV hospital in Saint Germain-en-Laye outside Paris. Elham Farah has been booked in for a two-hour operation to be carried out by a man who has become a savior to thousands of victims of female genital mutilation (FGM). Dr Pierre Foldes is the only surgeon and urologist to have developed a surgical technique which restores the clitoris.

Elham is unable to give the exact details of what happened to her 20 years ago when she was led to a house outside her village in Somalia and was held down by a number of women including her grandmother and two aunts. Her legs were prised apart by two other women. She passed out when one of the women applied a knife to her genitals. When she came round she remembers an excruciating pain between her legs, which had been tied together. It was not until several weeks later that she discovered that her genitalia had been sliced away.

Elham is just one of 130 million women worldwide who are estimated to have undergone FGM, with an additional two million girls and women undergoing the procedure every year. In some cultures it is seen as a female rite of passage preventing promiscuity, and is mainly performed on girls aged between four and 12 years. The practice is prevalent in 28 African countries, with figures varying widely. About 5 per cent of females in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) and Uganda undergo the procedure; that figure rises to 98 per cent in Somalia.

There are three types of FGM: the removal of the clitoris only; the excision of the clitoris and surrounding labia; and, most radical of all, the removal of clitoris, inner and outer labia and the sewing-up of the vagina, where only a small opening is left for urine and menstrual blood. It is estimated that 15 per cent of women who experience FGM have undergone this most severe mutilation, known as infibulation.

In France she came across articles and programmes on sex and female anatomy. "I realised what had been taken from me and how much I suffered physically and emotionally because of it. I became very angry. My womanhood has been cut away. I have never known what it's like to have normal sexual feelings. I am not a real woman. I always feel ashamed and dirty."

Every year Dr Fordes, 51, operates on 200 women like Elham, including at least six from the UK. Most of his

patients are Africans aged between 18 and 45 living in France. His doctor wife, Beatrice, and five children hardly see him; he performs the operations in addition to his full-time hospital work. He refuses to charge for the operations because he considers his patients to be victims of one of the biggest crimes against humanity. "Victims shouldn't pay for the crimes against the them. These women have already paid a huge price," he says.

He explains the reasons for his determination to continue with his work: "Excision is worse than rape because the family are involved. And it is much worse in terms of the clinical aftermath," he says in his heavily accented English. Short-term complications include severe pain and a risk of haemorrhage; there is also a high risk of infections such as gangrene. Long-term complications include urine retention and infections, obstruction of menstrual flow causing internal infections and infertility, and prolonged and obstructed labour. (...)

When, 15 years ago, Dr Fordes embarked on his mission to develop surgical techniques to restore the clitoris he was shocked to find that the only organ in the human body devoted to pleasure had been metaphorically excised by the male-dominated medical fraternity. "It was invisible," he says indignantly. "It was shocking for me to discover in my research that there was nothing, absolutely nothing on this organ, although there are hundreds of books on the penis, and several surgical techniques to lengthen it, enlarge it or repair it. Nobody was studying the clitoris because it is associated with female pleasure. There was very little anatomical detail on it. It was as if it didn't exist. I had to start from scratch."

What Dr. Fordes discovered was that the organ, which Sigmund Freud, father of psychoanalysis, once likened to kindling wood, is much larger than originally thought, with nerves surrounding the vagina and extending down the thighs. "It's about ten or 11 centimetres long, like a penis, and changes shape when erect," he explains.

To reconstruct a clitoris, Dr Fordes removes all scar tissue that has grown over the excised tip and snips the ligaments that support it, hence allowing more of the clitoral body to slip down so that it is exposed as a small tip like the original. The ligaments are then repaired. "After six weeks the area starts to look normal, but my patients tell me that it takes four to six months for them to feel anything," he says. Whether his patients are later able to experience orgasm is something he is not willing to guarantee. (...)

Sexism and Women's Rights: Bulletin 2004 - 10
<http://news.scotsman.com/features.cfm?id=516832004>

The European Project for Interreligious Learning (EPIL)

The European Project for Interreligious Learning (EPIL) held in cooperation with the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) at the Lebanese American University was the last module of an adult education program for women which took place from February 4-12, 2004. This program explores problems of living together as Christians and Moslems. It should be mentioned that the program consists of five modules that were held respectively in Switzerland, Spain, Germany, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Lebanon.

Twenty seven participants from these countries attended the module. Emphasis was placed on various ways through which national reconciliation took place in Lebanon, and this through a series of lectures given by prominent Lebanese speakers. In addition visits were organized to various religious groups during which Lebanese women gave testimonies about how they lived the war.



IWSAW director Mona Khalaf, IWSAW program officer Anita Nassar with participants in the EPIL workshop

Governor of New South Wales Marie Bashir Visits IWSAW



From left to right: Dr. Abdallah Sfeir, H.E Dr. Marie Bashir, Mrs. Mona Khalaf, Dr. Riyad Nassar and H.E. Stephanie Shwabsky

On March 23, 2004 the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) in collaboration with the Australian Embassy in Beirut hosted Her Excellency Professor Dr. Marie Bashir, Governor of New South Wales. Professor Dr. Bashir gave a talk on "Challenges for Women in a Changing World." The talk was attended by Ambassador of Australia in Lebanon, Her Excellency Stephanie Shwabsky, friends, Australian nationals, Professors, and students.

IWSAW Celebrates International Women's Day

On the occasion of the International Women's Day, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) at the Lebanese American University held, an exhibition "Women and War: Photos and Facts" on March 9, 2004. The exhibit highlighted the various roles women play in times of war namely as active participants, passive bearers or forceful agents for peace.



From left to right: Dr. Samira Aghacy, Dr. Abdallah Sfeir, Mrs. Mona Khalaf, and Dr. Tarek Naawas



What About Masculinity?

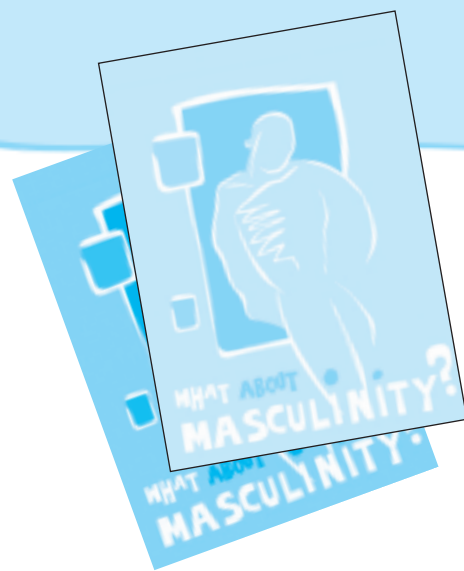
There is less focus on 'being a man' than on 'being good at being a man.'
Michel Herzfeld, *The Poetics of Manhood*.

Scholarly attention to gender issues in the Middle East has been focused almost exclusively on a quest to understand femininity. There are as yet no significant studies that make Muslim men visible as gendered subjects, and masculinity in Arab Islamic cultures has so far remained an unrecognized and unacknowledged category viewed in essentialist terms and perceived as natural, and self-evident. Indeed, men have been seen exclusively as oppressors of women, and the stereotype of domination and subordination remains dominant. Nevertheless, studies in the 1980's began shifting from women's studies to gender studies which are changing from an exclusive focus on women to a new interest in Middle Eastern men. Indeed, the aim is not to distract attention from women's issues, but rather to underline masculinity and femininity as relational constructs. The rigid demarcation of gender roles is gradually changing, and masculinity is increasingly being seen as an unstable sign which has changed with modernity and the various political, social and economic changes that have affected the Middle East, forcing men to look at themselves and the world around them with different eyes. This indeed is a historic turning point where ideas about what it means to be a man have been under maximum pressure at all levels. While men are the real beneficiaries of power in their societies it is interesting to note that men's dominance is not restricted to women but also to other men who are considered inferior. In other words, many men, like women, continue to be under the tight control of a limited number of men who actually possess the power. Patriarchy is being reinterpreted, and reinvented to meet the specific exigencies of current conditions, and gender relations are being seen as variable, shifting and changing in diverse socioeconomic and cultural contexts. In reaction to the monolithic view of men who were viewed as the uncomplicated agents of oppression, the articulation of masculinity at this particular historical moment is more complex and more complicated where there is a great disparity between inherited masculine values and the patterns of actual behavior by men. For many men, masculinity is a goal to be achieved and experienced in particular times and settings creating a great deal of anxiety and trepidation. Furthermore, in the Arab world, it is clear that both men and women are subjected to oppression in an atmosphere of war and under regimes that continue to subject men as well as women to social and economic oppression as well as political control and violence. Indeed as Deniz Kandiyoti puts it, "the denunciation of men [by Feminists] as the main enemy could easily go against the cultural grain in societies where both men and women are tightly enmeshed in familialistic networks of mutual rights and obligations, where

both sexes may be laboring under much harsher forms of economic and political oppression". (Gendering the Middle East: Emerging Perspectives. London: I.B. Taurius Publishers, 1996, 15).

This issue of AL-Raida attempts to show how various masculinities are defined and redefined in particular times and settings and the plurality and diversity of men's experiences, attitudes, beliefs, practices along lines of class, sexual orientation, religion, region, and various other categories. The file in this issue includes several articles dealing with different forms of masculinity in the Middle East, from the early Twentieth Century until the present. "The Turban, the Tarbush and the Top Hat" underlines the interconnectedness between masculinity, modernity and national identity in interwar Egypt where the tarbush was seen as a sign of the modern and the traditional, the national and the foreign, and the masculine and feminine helping to define Egyptian masculinity at the time. Another article "Male Infertility: Masculinity and New Reproductive Technologies in the Arab World" reveals changing views among Lebanese men to male infertility and the belief by educated middle-class men that infertility has nothing to do with virility. Cathie Lloyd's article studies the crisis of masculinity in Algeria through the press, feature films and literature. "Female Genital Mutilation and Constructions of Masculinity in Twentieth Century Egypt" deals with entrenched as well as changing attitudes among Egyptian men to Female Genital Mutilation. Nadia Zibani and Martha Brady's article deals with adolescent boy's responses to gender differentiation in rural upper Egyptian villages. "Humiliation and Masculine Crisis in Iraq" studies the impact of targeting men in Iraq on Iraqi masculinity and self-image. Azzah Shararah Baydoun presents a field study on the ways Lebanese university students perceive their preferred partners. "Masculinity in Morocco" is based on a field study that focuses on views of sexuality and masculinity in Moroccan ministerial administrations. Elisa Perkin's article focuses on the effects of the 2004 Mudawwana Reforms on Moroccan masculinity. The file contains an intriguing interview with Mosbah Baalbaki, the only Lebanese male belly dancer in Lebanon. The last three articles deal with masculinity in modern Arabic fiction and film. The file is completed with a review of Mai Ghousoub's and Emma Sinclair-Webb Imagined Masculinities (London: Saqi Books, 2000).

Samira Aghacy



Seeking Masculinities in the Middle East:

An Anthropology of Power and Absence

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In the current state of the world, there can hardly be a more pressing object of analysis than the Middle East. As the birthplace of Islam as well as Judaism and Christianity, this area is rife with patriarchal approaches to spirituality. As one of the most dangerous parts of the planet, currently engaged in the second of recent hot wars between the U.S. and so-called terrorists, it is also an area that has until recently been quite low on the priorities for study and analysis. This means that we are abundantly cursed with stereotypical representations of the peoples of this area, with half-informed punditry about such ideas as the "Muslim mind," and with many self-serving portraits of the Islamic faith. Also, and most seriously, in my opinion, there have been quite a few truly insulting predictions made by purported scholars of the Middle East about the nature of a great clash of civilizations; the clash seems to me to stem from misunderstandings by the West rather than from some eternal quality of a fantasized "Islam." In a manner similar to the creation of the dangerous sex-obsessed Negro male in the post-emancipation American south, we have now constructed a fantastic and beastly figure out of the swarthy Muslim male, once again dangerous to the propriety of the Euro-American, to the propriety of the Christian, and to the ostensibly civilized Western world.

Does everything have to occur at least twice, the first time as tragedy, the second as farce?

Islam as a faith and a practice has been repeatedly and increasingly linked to terrorism, and terror is almost exclusively the work of men. What then is the connection between the religion, political acts of violence, and masculinity? To start off on the right foot, we need to clarify the relationship between Islam and what is so frequently called fundamentalism in Western media sources. I argue, as do many others, that it is inappropriate and inaccurate to use the term fundamentalism to describe political movements in Islam. My preference is "Islamist" for the following reasons.

Fundamentalism appeared first in the United States between 1910 and 1919, through publications and conferences of the World Christian Fundamentals Association. In the 1920s the movement moved beyond its millenarian origins and took of the characteristics that we use to define fundamentalism today. Hawley and Proudfoot (1994) describe it as

a form of militant religion that opposes the modernist, liberal forces unleashed in Western society since the

Enlightenment, in favor of a return to a notional past in which people are held to have experienced no tension between secular and religious loyalties, and in which the authority of scripture defined a community where truth was undiluted by the relativity of knowledge (p. 16-7).

This return to basics is hence a response to the conditions that arise from modernity and its dislocations. This has held true in each subsequent appearance of the phenomenon of religious neo-orthodoxy, whether fundamentalist or Islamist. For example, Hawley and Proudfoot (1994) further argue that "[i]n Khomeini's Iranian revolution, many of the principal traits of American fundamentalism were visible: antimodernism¹, antiliberalism, the intent to return to a religious golden age when scripture held sway, and a social base composed of people who felt alienated and displaced by the groups they deemed responsible for the Western-style secular reconstruction of society" (p. 17). Such claims are but half-right, since Khomeini claimed many of the principles of modernism, but distinctly opposed its consumerist, secular qualities. But an examination of Iran's 1979 constitution does not find a document that would satisfy only religious fundamentalists – it is, as Humphries (1999) says, a mixture of theocratic piety and a democratic welfare state (p. 36). It is in many ways, quintessentially postmodern.

Fundamentalists are deeply concerned with boundary definition, needing to clarify differences from others external to the group as well as those inside the group who stray through mistakes or through deliberate apostasy. These internal error-makers are some of the major enemies perceived by fundamentalists. Yet, Karen McCarthy Brown (1994) has argued, there always remains another internal enemy --

the ever available yet ever alien "opposite sex". . . women's behavior is regarded not only as being symptomatic of cosmic dislocation but as being its cause. Embodying the other that is at once intimate and ubiquitous, women serve as a fine canvas on which to project feelings of general besetment. They are close enough to serve as targets, yet pervasive enough to symbolize the cosmic dimensions of the challenge (Hawley and Proudfoot [discussing Brown's work] p.27).

This parallels arguments I have made elsewhere about the gender revanchist directions of men worldwide who perceive themselves as losing control in an increasingly confusing world. So many then blame women, who have often benefited in some very public ways from incursions of Western-oriented modernity, and seek to regain the control they believe they have lost to those women. This phenomenon has become a cross-cultural patriarchal response in this [post]modern period to the

unfulfilled promises of Western Enlightenment modernity. Brown (1994) describes it in the following way:

Gender roles are the most basic building blocks of social organization. Gender roles, along with the important distinction between child and adult, are the social categories that the child learns first and that loom largest in the child's world. Firming up the boundaries by stressing the differences between these social domains thus recreates the security and manageability of a child's world. Keeping women, about whom we have such deeply ambivalent feelings, clearly under the control of men makes the world seem more orderly and more comprehensible. With men at the helm, the power of the flesh is kept in its place. The clean, daylight powers of reason and spirit are in charge, and we -- men and women alike -- at some level, feel safer (p. 189).

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While the phenomenon is hardly unique to the Arab-Muslim world, it is a good basis for understanding the conditions there, where post-colonial idealism once had produced high hopes for change. But the promises were not kept, and social transformations did not take place as expected or predicted. In fact, things seemed to go worse and worse. Independence segued into economic neo-colonialism, and cultural pride was squelched by cultural imperialism from the continually dominant Western Europe and United States. It is owing to such circumstances that Olivier Roy attributes The Failure of Political Islam (1994), to those who wonder about the turn toward Islamist solutions to the problems of North Africa and the Middle East.

Roy (1994) argues that the emergence of Islamist movements is a rational response to modernity. Far from "being a strange irruption of an irrational, archaic phenomenon," he believes that the call to follow sharia is "as old as Islam itself, yet still new because it has never been fulfilled" (p. 4), and still remains a primary focus of Islamist discourses. The other focus emerges as a more recent phenomenon, described by Roy as rooted in the anti-imperialist perspectives of those who led the fight against colonialism. This opposition was eventually transformed by circumstance and time into a more virulent,

over-arching anti-Westernism (as distinct from anti-modernism), at least for a vocal few. Nevertheless it turned out that struggle against the imperialist order was insufficient in the aftermath of independence since the capitalist West found more insidious ways to keep the ex-colonies still within its grasp, just under a different hierarchical order, though one disguised by a titular freedom from direct control.

But Islamists are not anachronistic, rural folk (with the exception of the Taliban, and possibly some of their remnants in Northwestern Pakistan). Roy correctly sees them as urban, and quintessentially modern, in spite of their anti-Western views. He calls their ideology "militant rationalism" (p. 21), demonstrating that the modern, rationalist, urban mode has pervaded Islam. "Modernity," Roy says (1994), "creeps into Muslim countries regardless of Islam, and the Islamists themselves play a part in this secularization of the religion" (p. 22). He makes a good case for Islamist movements being modernist as well as being a response to modernity itself.

Modernization occurred, but outside any conceptual framework: it happened through rural exodus, emigration, consumption, the change in family behavior (a lower birthrate), but also through the cinema, music, clothing, satellite antennas, that is, through the globalization of culture. It also occurred through the establishment of states, that, fragile, corrupt, and clientele oriented though

they may be, are nonetheless profoundly new in their method of legitimization, their social base, and their division into territories frozen by international agreements. Protest against the West, which includes contesting the existing states, is on the same order as Western ecology or anti-immigrant arguments: they are arguments one propounds when it is too late (p. 23).

I would argue, in fact, following Hinnells (1995), that the entire Islamist enterprise

smacks of post-modernity, as a nostalgic reclamation of a mythic past, utilizing the most modern of tools (media, electronic technology, computers), in the most modern of locations (urban centers, universities). Advocates of Islamist movements use images out of reconstructed memories of a mythic past to cope with the difficulties of the hyper-alienated present. I would also argue that patriarchy, as both an individual expression and as a social phenomenon, is being reinterpreted, reinvented to meet

the specific exigencies of current conditions. Mervat Hatem (1998), examining the Egyptian case of the Muslim Brotherhood (the 'original' political Islamist movement), argues that they

have their own interpretation of modernity. Conservative modern views of gender sit well with conservative Islamist views. . . . In their discussion of an Islamic society, Islamists are unequivocal in declaring the importance of science, reason, professional education, and technology in the building of the new society. Since the Islamist groups and their discourses have been part of the historical development of modern society in Egypt, it is not surprising that the Islamist, oppositional, discourse is very modernist. It accepts the nuclear family and the modern systems of education and training as the basis of its alternative Islamic society (p. 97).

Essentially, Islamist discourses are concerned with the reconstruction of the relation of the religious human being to a complex social, economic and political order often devoid of the spiritual. Part of this reconstruction is the relationship between women and men, which has elements in all three - the social, the economic and the political. Let us turn now to one writer's attempt to delineate the process of this reconstruction in North Africa.

On Neopatriarchy as a Conceptual Tool

One of the questions that requires examination is how patriarchy is changing over time. How is the ideology of patriarchal structure responding to the complexities and transformations of the contemporary world? This is addressed by Hisham Sharabi in *Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society* (1988). In this work, Sharabi builds on a tradition of theorists of colonialism and its aftermath, many of whom wrote about the French experience in North Africa (see Fanon 1961, 1967; Memmi 1965). These earlier theorists studied the relationship between the colonized individual's identity and his/her subjugation to colonial authority. Writing before the advent of gender studies, when 'man' was still a generic term, Fanon and Memmi stepped around the edges of the implications of being conquered had for gendered identity². In the forefront were racial/ethnic, even national forms of identity; racism crushed 'men' without a real sense of how that process affected men and women differently. Eldridge Cleaver in *Soul on Ice* (1968) had also delved into this realm, making the masculinity of the black male in the United States the concrete issue; women, black or white, were tools for Cleaver to displace the power of the white male. Sex and sexuality, and rape, were features of the struggles among skin colors, classes and ethnicities. Cleaver's work approached the ways some view the colonial experience today, where self, identity, sex and sexuality, gender and

ideology are all intertwined (see Nandy 1983; Stoler 1991; Jolly and MacIntyre 1989; Ahmed 1992; Kandiyoti 1994).

Sharabi (1988) focuses on the ways in which patriarchal structures of family and society have metamorphosed in response to the complex pressures of the modern world. He argues correctly that the pristine form of patriarchy, associated with nomadic tribes, is long since gone, having undergone several transformations (p. 26ff). Its current form is a deformed "modern" consequence of the colonial experience. Indeed, the search for meaning, the attempt to make sense of their condition in the world leads toward a retrenchment of the patriarchal structure. As Sharabi puts it, the neopatriarchal society's "most pervasive characteristic is a kind of generalized, persistent, and seemingly insurmountable impotence: it is incapable of performing as an integrated social or political system, as an economy, or as a military structure" (p. 6-7).

Sharabi's idea of impotence is central to my sense of the attitude and overall feeling among Middle Eastern citizens I have encountered in fieldwork and after. The linkage, following Cleaver, between social power and sexual power is clear in this terminology, while the term 'powerlessness' in society, in the economy, or in politics simply would not express the connection to masculinity as well. Impotence: the inability to be strong, to keep it up, to stand; according to the OED, it is the "want [as in lack] of strength or power to perform, utter inability or weakness, helplessness"; and, of course, "complete absence of sexual power, usually said of the male."

It is a sense of gendered helplessness that so pervades the self-perception of many Arab/Muslim men. Their inability to be men, to be powerful, to be appropriately gendered as masculine beings is a general preoccupation. It is this that leads to the constant 'revanchist' theme of regaining control over women, who have broken the bonds of tradition, and who are perceived to have been threatening men even beyond the levels of the social, economic and political world. The last refuge from the impotence of the macro level of society is, it seems, a return to a fantasy of traditional patriarchal control within one's own family; however that 'traditional' control has been reinterpreted, as it necessarily must have been. Central to all forms of neo-orthodoxy has been an attempt to reestablish patriarchal power, keeping in mind that the definition of such power has been modified for each historical moment (Hinnells 1995). We are incapable of recreating what is past in toto, however much we try; that is the reasoning behind Sharabi's neopatriarchy, a changed, even 'deformed' contemporary manifestation of an older social form (p. 4).

Roy and Sharabi work well together to portray the historical development of post-colonial disappointment with the

Western orientation that stayed behind as the colonizers were packed off. Sharabi, writing in the eighties before the crisis in Algeria of the nineties, the rise (and more recent tempering) of the anti-Western, anti-government activity of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, and before the rise and fall of the Afghani Taliban, still saw Islamist movements as "absolutist," as "oppressive," and as "authoritarian" (1988:11). He did not see much here of the modernist response that Roy takes as central to his argument. But Roy wrote later, and his ideas are in some sense more respectful of this creative, challenging, and indigenous response to modernity. On the other hand, Sharabi is aware of the patriarchal nature of the movement, which Roy overlooks, taking the structures of economy and politics as key. But underneath Roy's arguments, there is still a current that shows a consciousness of the disruptive effects of these structural changes on the sex and gender order. Examining the following quotations from Roy (1994), one finds many of the themes I find most salient, particularly his full awareness of the importance of youth, education and sexuality in the overall picture.

The Islamists ... transform what was previously a reflection of one's degraded self-image into a source of dignity.

One minor but important aspect of the success of Islamism is precisely that it offers frustrated youth a justification for their frustration. Western acculturation has not freed up mores, or else has made pleasure financially inaccessible. Value is still attached to a girl's virginity, but age at marriage is rising, and the young are more promiscuous than they ever were in traditional society: everything is coed, from schools and universities to housing and transportation; temptation is reinforced by the model of sexual freedom conveyed through television, films, magazines, but also by experiences of and stories about life in the West. Impoverishment and overpopulation make it difficult for young people to have independent lives. Pleasure is only for the rich. The Islamists present a defense of chastity and virtue, a defense that is in fact widely divergent from a certain art de vivre inherent in Muslim civilization. They transform what was previously a reflection of one's degraded self-image into a source of dignity (p. 56).

This is exactly what appears to be going on throughout the Muslim/Arab world of North Africa, the Middle East, now Central Asia and reaching into Southeast Asia. All the themes are there: unemployment for the educated,

the impossibility of attaining dreams offered by Western media and advertisement, the discontent with a distorted sex/gender order, anger at the West, the Zionists, the Americans, the rich and powerful, and a deep-seated pull toward their religion as the one last possible source of validity and rightness. The people most affected, and men in particular, hope to become the future elite, maybe even the leaders of their countries. As Karen Brown (1994) puts it:

Fundamentalism is not primarily a religion of the marginalized, as some have argued. Its more salient feature is that it develops among people caught off balance. Hence, fundamentalist groups often arise in situations where social, cultural, and economic power is up for grabs. . . far from being essentially marginal to the societies in which they exist, fundamentalists are often directly involved in the political and economic issues of their time and place. And they often have a significant, if precarious, stake in them (Brown 1994:190).

The question, then, is about whether the citizens of the Arab-Muslim world are caught off balance. Let us then turn to examine the conditions of gendered lives in some of the leading nations of the area.

Gender, Social Change, and Middle Eastern Economy and Politics

Years hence, if my suspicion is correct, we will look back on the latter half of the 20th century as a time of change as profound for the Muslim world as the Protestant Reformation was for Christendom. Like the printing press in the sixteenth century, the combination of mass education and mass communications is transforming this world, a broad geographical crescent stretching from North Africa through Central Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, and across the Indonesian archipelago. In unprecedentedly large numbers, the faithful -- whether in the vast cosmopolitan city of Istanbul or in Oman's tiny, remote al-Hamra oasis -- are examining and debating the fundamentals of Muslim belief and practice in ways that their less self-conscious predecessors would never have imagined. This highly deliberate examination of the faith is what constitutes the Islamic Reformation (Eickelman 1998, p. 82).

One part of this Reformation includes the re-examination of gender ideologies in light of pressures from the West, transformations in a changing economy, new sources of knowledge from global information technology, new desires for consumables due to cultural imperialism that has reached a stunning level. All of these are producing movement, if not movements, inside the nations that seek to protect their very essence from the transforma-

tions Eickelman describes. The forces are unrelenting, powerfully shaping new ideas and manipulating old ones, generating creative responses in reaction to the great change, responses that slavishly mimic new styles, as well as others that are more interested in selective intermingling of the new and the old. And the relations between women and men are at the heart of the debate. While largely couched in terms of what women should be and not be, the debate is really about a reformation of the gender order, because what women are doing now is a powerfully influential factor of what men will be called upon to do next. That is one reason so many discourses on gender seem to concentrate on women. But often, the discussion is not really about women, but about the system of gendered power in which men maintain a sense of identity conceived in opposition to women. But since the discourse is primarily about women, that is where we must begin.

Yvonne Haddad (1983) has described some of the factors that constitute the discourse on women in the Islamic world, arguing a dialectic between internal and external factors. The internal factors are the economic, political and cultural policies of the state, the legislation concerning personal status law, the kind of opportunities in education and employment that exist for women, and the "dominant belief that national liberation should take precedence over liberation of women, since the latter would lead both to subservience to the West through consumerism and to the degradation of women." The external factors, Haddad argues, are the perception by Muslims of Western judgment of Islamic family institutions, the pressures from Western dominated transnational institutions (such as the UN and the IMF), the changing lives of Western women, and the backlash against Western feminism (p. 3). In her discussion of these factors, she gives the clear impression that, while there are of course variations among Islamic nations, these factors are shared across the board. I agree. The growth of a global system has made it possible, even necessary, to think in such wide-ranging generalities that display little respect for national—and cultural—borders. The global system of corporate power, alongside the spread of information technologies, has changed all that. In their introduction to a collection on gender in Southeast Asia (effectively the 'other end' of the Muslim world from Morocco), Aihwa Ong and Michael Peletz (1995) make comparable assertions:

We argue that indigenous notions bearing on masculinity and femininity, on gender equality and complementarity, and on various criteria of prestige and stigma are being reworked in dynamic postcolonial contexts . . . Postcolonial forces of dislocation, ethnic heterogeneity, nation-building, and international business have blurred,

confused, and made problematic cultural understandings of what it means to be male or female in local societies, the more general point being that consent to gender meanings increasingly gives way to contestation . . . Processes of state and nation formation, global economic restructuring, and overseas labor migration have created fluid geographies of gender, race, and class that cut across national boundaries. As a consequence, just as postcolonial subjects are increasingly hard put to balance the decentering and recentering forces of cultural and national upheavals, so too are cultural understandings of what it means to be male and female increasingly blurred, varied, and problematic (pp. 2, 4-5, 8).

These are exactly the conditions that produce tensions between "tradition," that is, local meanings, and "modernity," that is, the transnational, cross-cultural socio-economic environment that brings similar problems to so many diverse peoples. The increasing power of the transnational provides the intense pressures that force the hand of those who perceive themselves as carrying the burden of local meanings and values. These people, often spiritual leaders, sometimes politicians, share a perception that the forces of global capital are invading and inappropriately transforming their cultural heritage, and hence, their very identity. And they are absolutely correct in that perception. Increasingly, the elites in each urban center across the planet are living more and more like the elites of New York, Paris, and London, while those who inhabit the realms of national cultural traditions are finding themselves isolated and alienated from the rewards of a global economy, while in need of protection from the insidious effects of its cultural values (Athanasios 1996, p. 220). As has been discussed earlier, the escape valve for such a powerful contradiction lies in the basic "family values" that are being touted in so many political circumstances. The carriers of those values are usually seen as being women, in charge of the transmission of culture to the young (Hijab 1988, p. 13; Jaber 1997, p. 118). Ultimately, it is perceived that women can be, in fact must be the saviors of cultural heritage³.

Since the 1970s and the Islamic resurgence, Islamists have insisted that in contrast to the tendency to modernize (equated with westernizing and secularizing) society and Islam, the real task at hand is, or should be, the Islamization or re-Islamization of society. For Islamists, the primary threat of the West is cultural rather than political or economic (though there are definitely problems in both these areas as well). Cultural dependency robs one of faith and identity and thus destroys Islam and the Islamic community (*umma*) far more effectively than political rule. Women and the family have been identified as pivotal in this contest. Women, therefore, are regarded as the primary culture bearers, "as the main-

tainers of the tradition, relegated to the task of being the last bastion against foreign penetration" (Haddad and Esposito 1998, p. xvi. The quotation is the authors quoting themselves from their introduction, p.21).

That is what Brown was talking about when she said that safeguarding women makes us all "at some level, feel safer." The battle, as Haddad and Esposito suggest, is between economic modernization and cultural secularization; many want the first without the second. This quite effectively would lead to the reconstruction of the public/private dichotomy between the sexes, thereby modernizing the public through links to global economy while protecting the private world where our 'real' cultural identity is nurtured and passed on. Historical continuity and cultural heritage are preserved in the latter, providing the basis for an oppositional stance to total Westernization (Jaber 1997, p. 110).

The result is a doubled tension over the very real transformations in women's lives, doubled, that is, over and above the 'normal' dislocations and uncertainties that are affecting men. Hence, there is a gendered response to the life-changing events that crop up on the path to this modern world. Men, while not necessarily happy about it all, can take it; they're men, after all and that's what men do. Great changes have happened before, and men have weathered them all. But this time, the change is reaching into the private realm. Anita Weiss (1994) puts it this way:

The combination of the new international division of labour and the global telecommunications revolution is having a more penetrating effect on social norms within Muslim society than any external force ever had. Earlier political and economic upheavals such as the Crusades and the dawn of imperialism and colonialism had greater effects on men in Muslim societies with little reverberations on women and the domestic sphere (p. 128).

Since the defining characteristic of masculinity is seen in its oppositional status relative to women, that difference must be preserved. Women must be protected. The family must be protected.

But that is not what is happening, wherever one looks

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across the globe. For even in the Muslim world, as Yvonne Haddad (1998) points out:

modernization in fact has had a serious impact on women's lives and their relation in the family. Since the 1970s, several new factors intensified the process of change. These include the dramatic economic fluctuations of the 1970s and 1980s; the increase in labor migration (especially of young males); women's participation in salaried work, state ideology, and politics; the growth of the popularity of the Islamist movement; and international input such as the UN studies and recommendations and Western feminist demands (p.7).

Here we find many of the themes in the discourses of Arab/Muslim men. Their awareness of and concern over these transformations of their society is quite undeniable. The changes already have had an impact upon them, and will continue to do so for some time to come. The task for many of these men is to work out some sort of arrangement that could preserve their position; the resulting negotiations over cultural preservation take many forms. Weiss (1994), speaking about the Muslim world in general, argues that a "reallocation of obligations is occurring" between men and women, which

"result[s] in a redistribution of gender-based rights and obligations" (p. 127-8).

Yvonne Haddad (1998), reflecting on the work in Arabic of Lebanese writer Mustafa Hijazi, discusses some of the ways in which men and women are working out a system of interconnected opposition. Hijazi points out that there are class based differences in roles for women: working class people carve a sharp differentiation, exaggerating man's status, strength,

and aggressiveness, which necessitates that the woman be weak and oppressed: "She is transformed into a utensil for his self-pleasure with no regard for her wishes and desires. She dies in her psyche that he may gain the illusion of life; she is crushed that he may gain the mirage of self-fulfillment" (p. 11, quoting Hijazi). Hijazi may be exaggerating for effect here, but the struggle he describes is clear. One sees it quite distinctly in Unni Wikan's portrait (1996) of working class women in Cairo. Her protagonist, the resilient Umm 'Ali, demonstrates for us the struggles of a Cairene mother holding her family together in a situation in which her husband is unemployed,

rather ineffectual, yet violent. Wikan details the intricacies of a matrifocal family structure in which women, moving "from weakness to strength," gain a positive self-worth "that lends them an assurance and strength" that Hijazi seems not to perceive (p. 286,285). In many ways, Umm 'Ali is the savior of her family; working women are the last refuge for their families when men either cannot cope with the transformations in the economy, or simply are not there to provide the support for their family that their role requires of them.

In the middle class, Hijazi argues there is more flexibility and openness to change, and both the male and the female are pulled in two directions by the clash between progress and tradition, between modern transformations and defined roles. Haddad (1998) says that "while the woman longs to be free and to realize her rights, and the man wants her to be free, both are bound by internal chains:

the woman is prisoner of chronic conditioning that pushes her to play a subservient role, one of an instrument. She is comfortable in that role because she is psychologically prepared for it. However, consciously she is dissatisfied with it and is aware of her rights. The man talks about equality and the liberation of women but is incapable of giving up his privileges" (p. 12, the indented section of the quote is Hijazi).

Hijazi, says Haddad, portrays the middle-class man as a "hostage of traditional rules," yet one who claims the ideals of liberation for women and equality between the sexes. But he does not fully embody his ideals; in fact, "[i]n many cases he fears that he will lose control of the woman. His masculinity is contingent on his ability to control rather than his capacity to achieve" (p. 12). This is a key issue, in which masculine privilege and personal control become imbricated with enlightened views of social progress, creating a confusing brew of internal contradictions that are quite difficult to sort out. It is especially difficult because the masculine privilege and personal control issues are rarely addressed as real; instead, they are left deep in the psyche, as a backstage frame for the more accessible level of class-appropriate belief and behavior.

It is among the working and middle classes, where education and work possibilities for women have been growing for some time, that one finds the most interesting forms of these contradictions between gendered identity and class identity. Anita Weiss (1994), discussing a working class area of Lahore, Pakistan, argues that:

The renegotiation of gender images and expectations appears to fall into three categories: first: women are

allowed -- and in some cases, encouraged -- to study beyond the stage of simple literacy; second, expanding labour opportunities for women resulting in changes in the perception of gendered work; and third, the renegotiation of personal power and mobility within the family. The first two of these areas are direct outcomes of what it is that women are doing differently from the past, resulting in men relinquishing some of the powerful control they have held over women and also expecting women to hold different roles. The last category, the renegotiation of personal power and mobility within the family, is a direct result of the first two. Because of women's increased competencies, men are also realizing that women do not need them as much as in the past, and that it is possible for women to now be self-reliant. Needless to say, this creates ample confusion in a society where social norms still revolve around honour and respect as there is a discernible increase in men's fears of what uncontrolled, qualified women might do (p. 135).

Uncontrolled, qualified women, indeed. What Weiss leaves to our imagination is the psychic effect this all has on men. She speaks of men's fears, and of husbands' desires to control their wives. She tells us of a reduced level of trust among men, even among biological and fictive kin, due to increased corruption. She even tells us that men are beginning to abandon their families, through divorce, labor emigration, or drugs. But since the article is about women, the analysis of men ceases at that point. I read between the lines of a profound dissociative failure of an old trusted gender ideology; masculinity is in tatters, manhood is in flight. Once again, women seem to bear the burden of survival, even in the face of strong social mores demanding limits to their self-actualization. There has of course been a strong conservative reaction to social changes in Pakistan, even as Benazir Bhutto served as prime minister, and as head of one of the largest political parties. But we can see in Bhutto's own changes over the years, during which she took to wearing 'modest dress' and tempering her Westernized demeanor, the effect of conservative opinion on even the most powerful of Pakistani women. Bhutto, as is true of so many other women in the Muslim world, has become the "new Islamic woman" (Zuhur 1992).

Elite Muslim women have combined elements of the public and private realms into a new synthesis, but one that produces a certain amount of identity conflict. As Nabila Jaber (1997) describes it, "[t]he outcome of this legal polarization implies two modes of being, which are likened to the (illusionary) separation between domestic and public spheres. This polarization translates . . . into an identity crisis for women" (p. 114). I suggest this can be considered another form of the double burden—

women carry two worlds (public and private), as well as work at two jobs (public and domestic). But this synthesis still fits into modern Islamist conservatism: "[t]he Islamist stance on women allows their members to escape social and economic limitations in a hierarchical society through a visible leveling process and the wearing of a uniform, and by verbally emphasizing social equality" (Zuhur 1992, p. 11). In a complex era in which much of traditional structure is breaking down, men and women can still be equal within Islam if the sexual segregation is maintained, minimally by the hijab, at most (best?) by the true separation of spheres. But the separate spheres do not hold in the modern economy; so the minimal distinction is maintained through the curtaining off of the woman's body from the gaze of men, permitting men and women to meet in the public space of work and economy. However, the responsibility for the two conceptual spheres is supposed to remain. Men have responsibility over the public world (and ultimately over women), women over the world of family, children and home. But this fanciful theory of separation is no longer expedient in practice. Accepting the necessity of education for one's daughters opens the door to their employment, which opens the door to a shift in the division of labor within the family, which opens the door to a reduction in the control by men over the entire package.

Even in revolutionary Iran, women are not following the path decreed by the most conservative clerics. While women were part of the support that initially brought Khomeini to power, it was also their votes that brought moderate Mohammed Khatami into office as President nearly twenty years later (Afshar 1998). It was Khatami's call for women to participate at higher levels in the politics of Iran that contributed to victories for moderate forces, and for many women, in the March 1999 elections, for example. Even in this still conservative Islamic Republic, the legacy of Ayatollahs Khomeini and Mottahari is beginning, in some ways, to change (see Paidar 1995; Esfandiari 1997). Their advocates have been in greater difficulty continuing to impose their interpretation of 'traditional' sex/gender arrangements upon a restive and politicized population. As Haideh Moghissi put it in 1994, women's activities and activism in Iran "signify only one thing: women's determination and their

Men have responsibility over the public world ... women over the world of family, children and home.

enormous efforts to escape the prisons of femininity and sex-roles defined and guarded by the guardians of sharia. The Islamic regime has not opened the gates. Women are jumping over the fences" (quoted in Najmabadi 1998, p. 59).

In one of the great ironies of unintended consequences, it appears that the Islamic Revolution in Iran has freed women from some of the restrictions of the past. The imposition of modest dress notwithstanding, the Islamic regime has brought about an expansion of the appeal of advanced education and employment from women from middle classes to working class women who are observant

Muslims. Segregation of men and women has increased the need for professional women to serve the female population (Esfandiari 1997). Again, as in Pakistan, the "new Islamic woman" has carried the day. Ex-President Rafsanjani's daughter Faizeh Hashemi has even been quoted as saying, "What I want to know is, what prevents a woman from becoming the President of the Islamic Republic?" (Afshar 1998, p. 63).

And if the Iranian women interviewed by Haleh Esfandiari (1997) are any indication, there has been a great reduction in women's respect for men as the Islamic Revolution unfolded.

In general, if the comments of these women are any guide, respect for men--their competence, good sense, fairness--has sharply declined. The idea of men as "natural" leaders in politics, business, and public affairs has been discredited. Women are much more likely to see men as full of swagger and bravado, but empty shells when it comes to displaying real courage and backbone in crises. Women feel far more independent than before the revolution, and married women far less dependent on their husbands (p. 172).

It seems as if this particular façade of Sharia-based 'revolutionary' masculinity has been truly pierced by women's intelligence and drive. And it seems that this has happened regardless of the policies of individual governments. I wonder what the ultimate Islamic Reformation will consist of—perhaps 'it' (though there are likely to be multiple forms) will be a reformation of the sex/gender order within a modernized Islamic frame. We shall see.

So we're back once again where we began. Each path we take into the literature on gender relations in the Middle East and North Africa leads us to extensive material on what has been happening to women in families, schools, and workplaces. Each scholar or analyst finds plenty of material to explicate the ways men and women see this process; in other words, women are present in the writing and theorizing about these transformations, and men are present primarily one step removed. What exactly is the problem here? Where are the men as an actively engaged gender, and not just as the generic standard from which women differ?

Finding the Voices of Men

In the search for information about how the global forces of change in the gender order are affecting Muslims, the voices we find in most literature on gender are those of women. It is in politics and economy that we find the voices of men, as party leaders, revolutionaries, autocrats, military figures, and businessmen. This means that much of our sense of what men think must be found through a double process of translation, so to speak. Men talk about the economy, the family, politics, about the requirements of their religion, about the pressures of unemployment and political disempowerment, but infrequently about the ways they think and feel concerning masculinity and (gendered) power. Discussions about patriarchy deal with what men say about women (Khalifa 1996). Similarly, most articles on gender and social change in Muslim countries are focused on women's lives, struggles and achievements (Haddad and Esposito 1998; Göçek and Balaghi 1994; Sabbagh 1996). The paradigm in which 'gender' means 'women' still has a powerful hold on anthropological scholarship. When Muslim men are written about, it is rarely in terms of their masculinity, their struggles in the realm of gender, or their 'public' lives as structured patterns of gendered behavior. One must approach the internal struggles of men about the gender order through a kind of double bind: either through what women say about men, or what men say about the world of society, economy and politics. When men do talk of private life, it is all too frequently in terms of the family and of women's roles within it, with the focus on men's roles as protector and provider. This is what I found in fieldwork with men in several Moroccan cities in the early nineties (Conway-Long 2000, Conway-Long 2002).

But in the end, even though anthropological fieldwork on Middle Eastern men as men is just beginning to appear, we still do not have much material in which men speak directly and clearly about the ways they perceive themselves as men, as masculine constructions, as participants in any sort of ongoing negotiation and recreation of the differences between the sexes and genders. Deniz

Kandiyoti has made one attempt to gather some of the ways men actually talk about these issues, in her 1994 piece "The Paradoxes of Masculinity: Some Thoughts on Segregated Societies." As she struggled with her concept of patriarchy in another work on women and the state, she discovered throughout the modern period a continued presence of male reformers who supported women's liberation in what appeared to be honest ways, not merely, as she first suspected, to cloak their deeper, essentially patriarchal values. In the process of puzzling over this, she discovered the work of Bob Connell (1987), whose work in hegemonic masculinity is the standard framework for identifying the multiplicity of masculinities in any given socio-cultural system. Kandiyoti was forced to return to the data about men's upbringing in the classic Arab household for clues to the puzzle of such variations. Examining Bouhdiba's work *Sexuality in Islam* (1985), the novels of Egyptian Najib Mahfouz, a series of recent interviews from Turkey, and a study of one homosexual subculture in Istanbul, she came to an interesting conclusion:

I was also intending to make a strong case for situating masculinities -- however fragmented and variegated they may appear -- in historically and culturally specific contexts which delimit and to some extent constrain the range of discourses and choices available to social actors. . . . I learned in the process that behind the enduring facade of male privilege lie profound ambiguities which

may give rise to both defensive masculinist discourse and a genuine desire for contestation and change (p. 212).

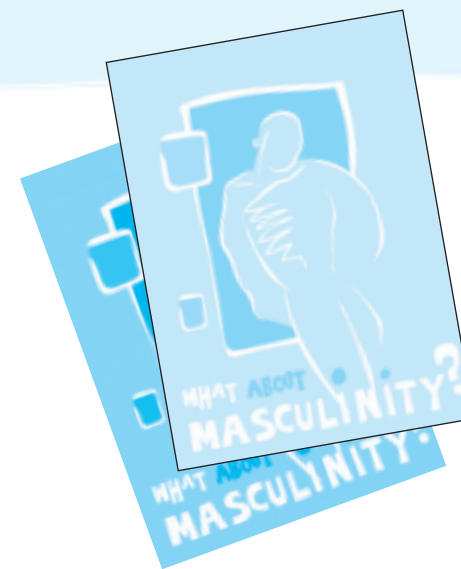
Kandiyoti provides for us a model of moving beyond the expected, where male is equated with patriarchal and masculine and seen as uniform, to a method in which the particular historical and cultural conditions of a gender construction are examined, in which men are expected to demonstrate variations even in a unique historical and cultural situation. It is the direction we need to go to do much more work, and I am hoping many more anthropologists are waiting in the wings to study this obviously needed area. The state of the world seems to hang in the balance. While I would argue it is equally essential to study the Texas-Kennebunkport-Washington neocon connection, it is going to take a great deal of effort to show the wider public (particularly in the U. S.) that Muslim males are not the new danger, tortuously re-constructed as an ahistorical reflection of the African-American male of the post-slavery South. For men in the Muslim Middle East are facing the same crises and dislocations as other males worldwide, and, while their religious and other cultural heritage may lead them to some unique solutions, it is singularly inappropriate to construct an elaborate false image of a unitary Muslim male, designed to cloak our own aggressiveness, our own insecurities, and our own collective denial and disregard for the impact of our nation's actions upon the world.

End Notes

1. This term, as used by Hawley and Proudfoot, is easily challenged. As is argued below, fundamentalism has become a creative response to the modern world that is only "antimodern" in certain very delimited ways, especially as modern is seen as a subset of Western. As a whole, fundamentalist movements are rather a function of modernity itself. In that sense, all non-Euro-American versions have gone a step beyond the original US-based movement.
2. See Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism* (1965) in a chapter entitled "The Algerian Family." While aware of the impact of colonialism and the war for liberation on family relationships, he remains pre-gender, so to speak, by leaving masculine and feminine in the realm of what is natural.
3. As often true, there is nothing specifically 'Islamic' about this interlinkage of women and cultural values; it can be argued as a near universal.
4. Matthew Guttman (1997), in "Trafficking in Men: The Anthropology of Masculinity," had this to say: "Insufficient attention has been paid to men-as-men in anthropology . . . , and much of what anthropologists have written about masculinity must be inferred from research on women and by extrapolation from studies on other topics" (386).

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The Turban, The Tarbush, and The Top Hat:

Masculinity, Modernity, and National Identity in Interwar Egypt¹

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On October 29, 1932 a major celebration was organized at Ankara Palace in honor of Turkish Republic Day. The Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal had invited foreign dignitaries and the local elite to the evening festivities. Among the distinguished invitees was the Egyptian ambassador, Abd al-Malik Hamza Bey. He arrived dressed in his formal regalia topped off by the symbol of Egyptian (and up to 1925, Turkish) officialdom—the *tarbush*.²

Ataturk coldly greeted the Egyptian representative and ordered him to remove the tarbush while in his presence. When Hamza Bey hesitated, Mustafa Kemal barked an order to one of his servants to demand from the guest his tarbush. In order to avoid a diplomatic incident, Hamza Bey acceded to the will of “the Ghazi.”

In spite of the Egyptian diplomat's effort to avoid controversy, the event did escalate into an incident through, it seems, the provocation of the British press. Two weeks after the fact, the *Daily Herald* carried a report detailing the affront faced by the Egyptian ambassador in Ankara. It was only with the publication of that article that the Egyptian press and public came to learn about “the tarbush incident.” Suddenly there appeared calls for action including the severing of all relations with Turkey. The

incident was immediately framed as a question of national honor.

The prominent Egyptian historian Yunan Labib Rizk has recently surveyed the coverage of “the tarbush incident” as it was reported by Egypt's leading newspaper *al-ahram*.³ Although he suggests that there were different “sectors of opinion in Egypt”—i.e., pro- and anti-tarbush—the possible meanings of these positions are subsumed by the larger, ostensibly more significant, story of Egyptian-Turkish relations since World War I. In this essay, I too will situate the positions staked out in the tarbush incident within a larger narrative, but the beginning and end are less clear and the main themes are internally incoherent. I will take debates about dress as a lens through which to view the shifting, contradictory, and contested nature of notions of national identity, modernity, and masculinity in the making of Egypt.⁴

Since the tarbush incident was instigated by him, one possible beginning would look to the figure of Ataturk. Mustafa Kemal's efforts to forcefully westernize Turkey are well known; among his most famous dictates are the banning of the veil and the codification of a secular state. Perhaps less well known is his banning of the tarbush in

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November 1925.⁵ In Egypt, however, this act touched off a flurry of often heated discussion on the (de)merits of the tarbush that lasted well over a decade.

The monumental decisions of Mustafa Kemal which continue to animate cultural and political life in contemporary Turkey came on the heels of other monumental and world-historical events, the aftermath of which, the region and the world in general continue to endure. At the end of World War I, France and Britain had divided up between themselves the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire that they had not previously colonized: Syria and Lebanon went to France while Palestine and Iraq went to Britain.⁶ The Treaty of Sèvres in 1920 had severely undermined the sovereignty of the defeated Ottoman state. Meanwhile, a national army of resistance was being assembled in the Anatolian heartland by Mustafa Kemal. Over the course of the next three years, through an exercise of military will and through diplomatic negotiations, the dissident faction led by Mustafa Kemal successfully procured the Treaty of Lausanne (July 24, 1923), which affirmed Turkey's national sovereignty and control of most of the territory that had been lost in 1920.

The events that unfolded in the international theater from 1914 into the 1920s, particularly those involving the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the Turkish Republic, had far-reaching but conflicted implications for the political and cultural spheres of life in Egypt. The British war effort had placed unprecedented strain on the vast majority of Egypt's peasant population. The imposition

of martial law and the stationing of imperial troops in Egyptian cities also had material and psychological repercussions on the middle and upper classes.

By the end of the War there was a unified political opposition to the continuation of the British occupation in Egypt. However, also by the end of the War the process of re-orienting Egypt's elite cultural identity away from the Ottoman sphere—that had begun, one could argue, with the emergence of a Western-educated middle class and a new landed Egyptian elite in the mid-nineteenth century—was finally complete.

Or, so it would seem as the Egyptian nationalist movement led by the Wafd staked out its claims to indepen-

dence at the Paris Peace Conference.⁷ Following on the heels of a thoroughly unexpected mass uprising against occupation in 1919—forever emblazoned in nationalist historiography and still remembered in the Egyptian collective consciousness as the nationalist revolution of 1919—Egyptian leaders forged a national party that engaged in negotiations for three years. The British strategically and unilaterally declared Egypt independent in 1922, while reserving four areas in which it would continue to maintain control.⁸ In the following years, Egyptian political life was marked by the promulgation of a constitution, which restricted some of the traditional prerogatives of the monarch and the British, and the ensuing struggle to establish a regularized form of parliamentary political life. As these struggles over the political sphere oscillated among the three poles - the Wafd, the King, and the British - other struggles were waged in the seemingly separate cultural sphere about seemingly trivial matters like the proper headdress for men.⁹

Within these debates, the tarbush was simultaneously a sign of the modern and the traditional, the national and the foreign, the masculine and the effeminate. As the form of headdress worn mainly by a certain class of men—the *effendiyya*—the tarbush was the signifier of a problematic bourgeois masculinity.¹⁰ In the 1930s, it became invested with the additional signification of being a consumer item supporting the nationalist cause.¹¹ I argue here that the tarbush was a contested site for the production of new cultural meaning and a site through, or against, which new masculine desires and anxieties were expressed. In the contests over the tarbush, concepts such as the nation and the modern were invested with new and sometimes contradictory signification while simultaneously constituting new masculine subjectivities.¹²

Here the re-definition of the relationship between Egypt and its once imperial overlord Turkey was necessarily freighted with the different outcomes of their international and local struggles for national sovereignty. In the other version of the event with which we began this chapter, the Egyptian ambassador Abd al-Malik Hamza Bey was "given permission" by Mustafa Kemal to remove his tarbush for his own comfort. This eventually became the official line that formally closed the tarbush incident. Apparently it was very hot in the palace halls that evening, and Mustafa Kemal was simply being a gracious and thoughtful host, who knew that Egyptian diplomatic protocol required the wearer to retain the tarbush on his head until invited to remove it.

After the initial outcry, in which there were voices calling for the severing of all ties with Turkey, representations of the tarbush incident largely reflected the views of the two camps that had emerged in the preceding years: the pro-

and anti-tarbush camps.¹³ Admirers of the Turkish model of modernization, who were also generally anti-tarbush, were willing to wait for another explanation of the incident. Supporters of the tarbush, which had become re-coded during the World War I period as a particularly Egyptian nationalist symbol through its public expression of opposition to the British, read the incident as yet another example of Egypt's Turkish-blooded leaders compromising its national honor.¹⁴

Dress and National Honor: Prelude to an Argument¹⁵

The question of national honor and dress in the Egyptian context is usually associated with the debates around veiling and the condition of women, which were set off by the publication of Qasim Amin's *Tahrir al-Mar'a* (Women's Liberation) in 1899. I argue that situating the question of dress in the broader contexts of colonialism, modernity, and subject formation, which requires one to consider both men's and women's fashions, will give us a better understanding of how the early debates about the veil were initiated by masculine anxieties about power and self-rule (or the lack thereof). By the latter I do not mean simply the right to self-determination in a geopolitical sense. I intend the added signification of governing one's individual self according to a particular understanding of enlightened principles. Implicit within this rubric of self is also a certain sense of having the right to fashion an individual identity. This right, however, was often perceived and construed as a force pushing against the collective will and collective identity.

It was perhaps among the new Arabic-speaking officer corps that was expanded during Sa'id's reign (1854-1863) that the first signs of an Egyptian sartorial refashioning were most evident. Although Egyptian peasants had been conscripted in large numbers in Muhammad Ali's efforts to create a modern army in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, it was only under Sa'id that Arabic-speaking Egyptians were allowed to rise to the rank of colonel.¹⁶ It was also during this period that the dress of both officers and soldiers, which had followed the patterns set by the Ottoman imperial tradition, began to change.

In Ehud Toledano's work on this neglected period of Egyptian history (the reigns of Abbas and Sa'id), which he terms the "forgotten years," he hints at how the relationship between the opening of new opportunities for the sons of Egypt's rural notables in government and military service and the change of dress this required, spoke to a transformation of self and cultural identity.¹⁷ Although he does not put it in these terms, Toledano's argument suggests that while the change in notions of personhood, as enacted through dress, was not viewed as a threat by the Ottoman-Egyptian elite nor as a basis

for opposition by the aspirants to elite membership during the middle years, it did condition the grounds for thinking in terms of national identities. He concludes his chapter on how the social divide between the elite and non-elite was produced and represented through language, dress, etiquette, and modes of using and moving through space with a note on how the desire to cross that divide eventually gave rise to an oppositional consciousness. About the newly promoted and newly dressed, he writes:

The tensions that existed between them [Arabic speaking officers] and the other more senior officers constituted one of the main factors behind the events of the 1880s that led to the 'Urabi Revolt. At mid-century, however, they were still making their first steps up the steep ladder towards becoming full-fledged members of the Ottoman-Egyptian elite.¹⁸

So at mid-century a movement was clearly afoot, and it began with the symbolic crossing of the threshold of elite culture.

A powerful image of this transformation of self that a change of fashion effected is given in the memoirs of Ali Mubarak. In this particular recollection, Mubarak recounts the story of his return home to his village of Birinbal after fourteen years of absence.¹⁹ He had arrived wearing his "French" military dress uniform complete with sash and sword at his side. The momentary lack of recognition by his mother due to his changed appearance serves to reaffirm for Mubarak that he really had transcended his peasant roots.

Another episode again reaffirms that the movement out of peasant garb to European-style military dress was one of personal transformation and, furthermore, a change that was viewed as positive. In an audience with Abbas Pasha (r. 1848-1854), in which Ali Mubarak was given the commission of schools' inspector, the latter was also informed of the punishment for the failure to carry out his duties honestly. Along with being stripped of one's rank and benefits was a form of public shaming. The guilty official would be forced to wear peasant's clothing and to live like a peasant.²⁰ After swearing to carry out his commission, Mubarak was accorded his new rank and decorated with the appropriate medals: a silver half-crescent moon and a gold star encrusted with three diamond stones. He closes this scene by telling the reader that he left feeling happy and content.²¹

After the British occupation of Egypt, cultural issues such as dress and manners became politically charged sites in which it was often thought that the very essence of Egyptian identity were being contested. The expanding

domain of print culture-books, newspapers, and magazines-was a primary locus for the public representations of different viewpoints on matters of clothing and comportment. A general fear in the 1890s-before the veil became the seemingly all-consuming focus of cultural debate-was of the younger generation, who had come of age knowing nothing other than colonial rule, adopting Western styles of dress and self-carriage without fully processing the lessons of European superiority.

In the July 3, 1897 issue of *al-Ajyal* [The Generations], an article titled "Blind Imitation" featured an illustration with six picture boxes depicting an urban *flâneur* type (or more accurately a faux *flâneur* type). He mixes and matches the different parts of the only two suits he owns so that it would seem he is wearing a new outfit each day. Each box depicts the young effendi in various poses set against the backdrop of an urban geography that would be familiar to the properly bourgeois. In the first box, he is standing at a street corner dressed in his mix-matched suit and tarbush with his cane tucked under his right arm. He seems either to be contemplating crossing the street or just idly observing the goings on within the shopping arcade on the other side. In the second box he is seated at an outdoor café dressed in a different combination. His left arm is perched on the table into which he leans resting his head in the palm of his hand, while a small turbaned man busily shines his shoes; the expression on his face suggests he is lost in some private reverie. In the third illustration, he is juxtaposed to a man in a galabiyya and turban (it seems the same man from box two) who is attending a donkey while the effendi stands with his hands in his pockets with a cane slung over his right arm smoking a cigarette and staring into space indifferently. In box four he is paying off a carriage driver. In the fifth box he is having his picture taken. His pose is carefully drawn here: he is standing with his right arm raised and bent at the elbow which is supported by a stand (seemingly built for just that purpose) and in his hand are his gloves and cane; his left hand rests on the back of an armchair; his left leg is bent slightly and crosses his right in the front forming a forty-five degree angle. In the final box he is carrying one of his suits under his arm and preparing to enter a pawnshop.

The article offered the criticism that many young Egyptians "were under the illusion" that imitating the look and behavior of Westerners was tantamount to a genuine understanding of being modern and civilized. In fact, bankruptcy could be the only end to this superficial appropriation of Western styles of dress and life. Ostensibly, an Egyptian living within middle class means could not sustain the patterns of consumption that participation in the new urban culture demanded.

Another dimension emerges when the illustration is read slightly apart from the accompanying text. Through the striking of certain poses the body of the mimic man is made to represent a new masculinity. The different picture boxes illustrate the repertoire a man must acquire to inhabit this new subjectivity, which, it is important to note, is not being rejected. Rather, the author enjoins a cautious mediation of this new performative space of masculinity. His objective is to encourage the reader to examine the reasons for European cultural, political, and economic hegemony. Missing from the boxes are scenes of productivity on the part of the exemplar of Egypt's future. Although the man in the galabiyya is in fact working, he is figured here as a representation of the past and in a sense as unrepresentative. In other words, the nation and modernity can only be achieved through this new figure of masculinity. However, an unexamined adoption of the signs of modernity not only signals a "blind imitation"-i.e., an unsuccessful attempt at being modern-but poses grave risks for the imitator, like financial ruin.

A few months later, *al-Ajyal* (and as far as I can tell the same author) delved further into the topic of dress and mimicry and its implications for Egyptian society.²² In a style that might be characterized as misogynistic, the author depicted men's imitation of European dress as harmful to himself; whereas, women's unbridled consumption of Western fashions-the focus of the second article-is drawn out as having apocalyptic consequences for the whole of Egyptian society. Men are admonished for affecting a Western style when they do so from a class position that cannot sustain such a habit and when that habit is not grounded in a deeper understanding of Western culture. What that deeper understanding might consist of becomes evident later in the author's analysis of women's consumption. But first, the material and meta-physical costs of being overly attentive to the adorning of the body is underscored with a poetic injunction from a "wise Arab poet":

Oh servant of the body how you suffer in its service
Do you demand gain from what is a loss?
Attend to the soul and the perfection of the virtues
For you are by the soul not by the body human²³

The poet contrasts the baseness of submitting to corporeal desires with an ethical praxis that elevates man from the state of nature to a higher plane of existence. The author deploys the poem more as part of a strategic intervention into the present state of the Egyptian political economy in which cultural practices were deemed central to Egypt's subjugation and conversely its liberation.

The author goes on to offer a relatively sophisticated critique of evolving consumption patterns among women,

specifically in the realm of fashion, that threaten to undo the whole fabric of Egyptian society. An act as simple as wearing the corset could be "...a major cause leading to the ruin of many households, the fall of honorable families, the affliction of disastrous calamities on the majority of humanity."²⁴ In fact, "the danger exceeds the limits of the imagination."²⁵ As with the men who mimic the West, the problem is most germane to women of the "*tabaqa al-wusta*" (middle class).

The author's critique operates on three levels: the individual, the family, and the nation-colony. He does this by making explicit the connection between household, national, and international economies. The author links the potential ruin of families that results from the desire of the wife or daughter(s) to imitate Western women with the continued subordination and exploitation of the Egyptian and Eastern economies by Europeans.

He faults the new generation of girls and women whose desire for fashionable European styles of dress lead them to make unreasonable demands on their fathers and husbands. He argues that the contemporary middle class woman is still under the impression that clothes make the individual special and set her above others of her sex. "She does not realize that it is the rational woman (*al-mar'a al-'aqila*) who is made beautiful through her virtue and made whole through knowledge and refinement."²⁶ Ostensibly, education would erode the competition for passion among women by exposing envy as a driving force of the competition and by teaching women to engage in more productive activities. The proof of this is found in the lives of their Western counterparts who are rational women and who are like Egyptian women in most respects except that "not a single one of them lives beyond her means."²⁷

Many scholars have now studied the social and political implications of this re-scripting of women's domestic roles in nationalist discourses of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.²⁸ Few, however, have paid attention to how this redefinition of femininity was constitutive of a new national manhood-the discursive field I have labeled *effendi* masculinity.²⁹ Critiquing the sartorial excesses of Egyptian women was only one of the many sites through which nationalist men-and women-sought to produce the "new woman" necessary to populate the newly-imagined national spaces, in which the lines between private and public were redrawn through political engagements with colonialism.³⁰ The masculinist performance of this condition of colonial modernity is illustrated by this text, especially as the critique moves from the individual to the family.

Here the author cites the strain that women's excessive

consumption has on marital relations. The inability of a husband to meet his wife's (and daughters') material desires calls his masculinity into question. Furthermore, the mother's desire for expensive clothes is evidence of her irrational approach to household management and a sign of her inability to provide her children with proper guidance. This can affect her daughters (if she has any) when the time comes for them to marry. If they exhibit the same desire to consume, it will scare off the few eligible bachelors there are, most already having spurned marriage because of its cost and the dearth of rational brides.

His next move makes it clear that it is not just consumption as such that is being critiqued. Women's purchase of expensive clothes, even if it were beyond their means, would not be so negative-in fact, it would be a positive action-if "textile factories were spread throughout the length and breadth of Eastern countries."³¹ Of course, then Eastern capital would remain in Eastern hands.

The draining of Eastern capital in this way has gendered consequences. Men, who are the public face of Egypt, pay the price of women's unthinking consumption of fashion. The continued economic exploitation of the nation daily reinforces the impotence of its men in resisting foreign penetration:

This money that we spend randomly doubtlessly winds up in the hands of Europeans who are laughing at us, who look down upon our intellect and who drain us of our wealth through strange tricks like these.³² (emphasis added)

The "strange tricks" the author speaks of refers to the Western capitalist production of a consumerist desire that can override rational self and national interests.³³ This magic is so powerful that it is even capable of getting Eastern women to endanger their physical well-being for the sake of fashion. He argues that most Western dress is unsuitable for Easterners, but this is especially true of the corset. He marshals scientific testimony to underscore the insalubrious nature of the corset.

It is thus the nationalist male's duty to demystify these crafty strategies intended to exploit, humiliate, and sub-

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ordinate his people. These public textual interventions into matters of dress, with men and women participating, would continue through the following decades. Public debates about dress, however, became almost exclusively focused on the place of the veil in modern Egyptian society. As the number of men wearing European-style clothing grew steadily during that period and the suit became a commonplace in the urban landscape by the 1920s, men's imitation of Western dress seemed to become a non-issue. One might argue that

the disappearance of contention around the suit took place simultaneously with the growing recognition of the validity of the claims of a particular class to represent, or speak for, the Egyptian nation. Although the 1919 revolution to a certain extent galvanized this claim and was embodied by Sa'd Zaghlul and the Wafd party, the achievement of only a nominal independence in 1922 generated the conditions for a renewed cultural criticism centered on dress.³⁴ It would appear that it was Mustafa Kemal's radical modernization policies in fully independent Turkey that sparked off a new wave of public debate about men's attire that re-engaged questions of modernity, gender, and national identity.

erated the conditions for a renewed cultural criticism centered on dress.³⁴ It would appear that it was Mustafa Kemal's radical modernization policies in fully independent Turkey that sparked off a new wave of public debate about men's attire that re-engaged questions of modernity, gender, and national identity.

The Perfection of Masculinity: Picking a Proper Hat for the Nation

In 1925 Fikri Abaza, the owner and editor of the cultural magazine *al-Musawwar*, explained that his decision to evaluate the implications of Mustafa Kemal's social policies was because they were highly relevant to Egyptians. Since "Egypt is still tied to Turkey in many ways: in terms of religion, kinship, and Eastern traditions,"³⁵ his criticism of Atatürk's prohibition of the veil and the tarbush and legislation of European dress echoes the turn of the century critics in his call for a deeper understanding of what it means to be modern. In his opinion, national renaissance required a commitment to mass education and other unstated "fundamental" social reforms. Addressing "leaders" and "intellectuals," he concludes:

Reforming the basic conditions of life is what is important. Outward accoutrements that do not develop or retard are best left on heads and bodies as an eternal marker of the nascent nation that has retained its traditional image, its special character. Then, the crucial factor becomes what is inside the head and chest, not what covers the head and chest.³⁶

In other words, becoming modern was a much more complicated process not achieved simply through the imitation of foreign dress or the rejection of local traditions.

Fikri Abaza's problem with the Turkish model of reaching modernity (as he saw it) was explicitly gendered. Although Abaza objected to Mustafa Kemal's decree of European dress for both men and women, his reasons for each were quite different. While he does not voice so explicitly, as a wearer of the suit himself, his objection to the Kemalist reforms of men's dress was registered in terms of the antidemocratic measures underlying them as opposed to some strong commitment to the preservation of traditional male costumes. In the case of women and the *hijab*,³⁷ his argument assumes a different trajectory. He says about himself, "I used to be an 'extreme conservative,' but the fierce attacks of the 'fairer sex' have gradually weakened my passionate attachment to the venerable past."³⁸ (His following remarks make one wonder what he thought about women when he was in his extreme conservative phase!)

Abaza's first salvo against the Kemalist program for women's emancipation was personal. He attacks Mustafa Kemal's hypocrisy by pointing to his failed relationship with his wife, Latifa Hanim—a model of European-ness. He posits that despite Kemal's public proclamations, it was his wife's unveiling and her appearance in mixed company that led to the collapse of their marriage.

His next move assembles a list of European luminaries who also had cautioned against "permissive freedom for women." Some would find it interesting that Oscar Wilde appears alongside Bernard Shaw and Schopenhauer. Abaza emphasizes the import of their warnings of disastrous consequences by underlining the geographical and cultural specificity of their utterance. In other words, if social failure was feared in western Europe as a result of giving women more freedoms, then imagine what was in store for eastern Turkey.³⁹

Fikri Abaza's views on the Turkish course towards modernity were denounced by the editor of *al-Nil al-Musawwar* as reactionary and shortsighted.⁴⁰ (As far as I could tell, *al-Nil al-Musawwar* was a palace-oriented magazine; it used its pages to illustrate through regular photo the glory of a modern cosmopolitan world.) Interestingly, the editor of *al-Nil* did not raise the question of women's dress explicitly; possibly because it reflects the Palace's desire to remain neutral on such issues. On the other hand, given the content of Abaza's article, the criticism was directed implicitly at the latter's claims about women and the *hijab*.

The editor of *al-Nil* endorsed the Turkish project on the grounds that Turkish reformers grasped the nature of

the changed world in which they lived. They understood the need to dress for the times: new clothes to meet the new fast-paced lifestyle. In addition to the efficiency and productivity enabled by Western dress, the author also pointed to their suitability for the weather. Apparently the suit and brimmed hat could shield the wearer from Egypt's climate better than the galabiyya and tarbush.

The author tries to shame Egyptian reformers (*mujaddidun*) further by highlighting the fact that Egypt, which was actually a part of Europe, should have preceded the Turks in instituting cultural changes. Then somewhat contradictorily, or through a geographical re-inscription, he declares, "Alas, the East ambles along in its same old way." Taking a step away from the Turkish model, though, he concludes by framing the question of dress as a matter of having the freedom to choose.

In a final postscript addressed personally to Mr. Abaza, the editor of *al-Nil* points out that the cost of a "*baladi*" costume was more than double one of his European suits; he ends by asking Mr. Abaza: "So why do you want to block the way of others to economy?"⁴¹ The latter was probably a gesture aimed at (not) addressing Abaza's call for reformers to deal with basic social problems as opposed to debating superficial cultural matters. Of course, what the editor of *al-Nil* failed to point out and what Abaza himself did not recognize in his own argument as contradictory was that the question of women's dress was articulated as a deeply political issue with dire social consequences.

The fact that men's dress could also assume political significance was evinced in the *Dar al-'Ulum* controversy which was unfolding as Fikri Abaza and the editor of *al-Nil* verbally sparred on the pages of their respective magazines. In February 1926, the students from *Dar al-'Ulum* went on strike demanding the right to substitute the tarbush and suit for the turban and robe. The Ministry of Education rejected their demand and ordered the students to return to their classes or face expulsion. The students ultimately complied.⁴²

That the students at the Arabic teacher's training college sought to alter their dress code is not terribly significant in its own right. This incident was perhaps the last time that the turban would feature as a site of public contestation. The dispute between the *Dar al-'Ulum* students and the Ministry of Ali Maher managed to retain public attention for the entire year. The discussions quickly fanned outwards to include the general question of national identity, which repositioned the debates around the tarbush and the hat. The extinction of the turban, or at least its relegation to the sphere

now understood as religious, seemed a foregone conclusion—even for the self-designated Islamic press.

A magazine of the latter camp, *al-Fath*, opposed the move to remove the turban but sided with the pro-tarbush camp against the proponents of Western-style hats. It enlisted the likes of Shakib Arsalan, Ahmad Zaghlul, and Ahmad Taymur in its efforts. By yoking the turban and the tarbush into one seamless Islamic history, *al-Fath* was insisting on a national identity that embraced Egypt's Arab and Ottoman past simultaneously. The choice of headgear became a nodal point for the articulation of national and masculine subjectivity.

Arsalan's article uses the visit by the Moroccan prince Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Karim al-Khitabi to Europe as a lesson for Egyptians on the value of customary dress.⁴³ He situates the shame/pride in one's traditional fashion in the context of colonial penetration. The domination by European powers and the submission of Arab elites to European fashions is rendered as a form of emasculation.

However, as Arsalan demonstrates through Prince Muhammad, the loss of one's masculinity is often self-inflicted. He maintains that, contrary to some people's expectations, the Prince and his entourage were celebrated and honored in Europe for preserving the Islamic fashion of the Moroccan Rif: the turban and the hooded cloak. "They do not see themselves as less than Europeans nor do they recognize the hat and pants as signs of authority or markers of superiority."⁴⁴ Their pride in themselves and their culture were recognized and respected. Furthermore, Arsalan argued, their dress was not an obstacle to progress or to functioning in the modern world. In fact, the will to adapt to the modern world (adaptation is defined here as the acquisition of knowledge) without renouncing one's sartorial heritage is the equation for a possible reclamation of masculinity:

The perfection of masculinity (*kamal al-muruwwa*) is through obtaining knowledge by whatever means and acquiring wisdom from whichever direction, while retaining national character and native dress (*al-mushakhkhisat al-qawmiyya wa al-aziya' al-asliyya*) so that we are not like slaves in love with imitating their masters.⁴⁵

He also registers the possibility of achieving a more physical, or martial, masculinity enabled by the respect for Islamic traditions—in this case expressed in dress. He cites the valor of the Rif Moroccans on the battlefield, where dress was not an impediment in their destruction of the mighty armies of Spain and France.⁴⁶

Where Shakib Arsalan's intervention took a broad regional and colonial perspective, Ahmad Zaghlul's contribution to

al-Fath published a month later emphasized the local and the national. The latter's response also came on the heels of another development in Egyptian sartorial politics. After the *Dar al-'Ulum* incident, a club named the Eastern League (*al-Rabita al-Sharqiyya*) addressed a letter to the Egyptian Medical Association in the form of a questionnaire seeking a scientific ruling on matters of dress.⁴⁷ The EMA's reply caused a furor in the pro-tarbush camp.

The first question was about the health implications of wearing the tarbush and other options; the second was about the suitability of Western clothes for Egypt's climate; and the last was regarding proper footwear.⁴⁸ In all three instances, the EMA ruled that Western styles were superior to local ones. The tarbush was the major victim of the ruling as it was designated completely unsuitable for Egypt's heat. In its stead, the pith helmet and brimmed hat were recommended as healthy alternatives:

We would like to point out on this occasion that the foreigners who have settled in hot countries conducted numerous medical and scientific experiments before they arrived at the clothes that they wear now, which are the most appropriate in terms of health for regions like these. This [conclusion] is also supported by several experiments carried out by respected members of this association.⁴⁹

In short, the Egyptian Medical Association categorically endorsed what could be called colonial fashion because it was a product of scientific testing.

This decision by an official but non-governmental body blurred the lines between cultural representation and political representation in interesting ways. Ahmad Zaghlul, the brother of the nationalist hero Sa'd Zaghlul, sharply denounced the EMA's decision as well as its presumption to officiate in the matter in the first place.⁵⁰ He begins his criticism by revisiting the events of that year and relating them to the present controversy as a series of destabilizing moves for the nation. He recounts the *Dar al-'Ulum* incident and how it ended with the students returning to class humiliated after the Ministry of Education threatened them with expulsion. However, inspired by the *Dar al-'Ulum* students, another group of students from government secondary schools began to clamor for the right to wear the hat instead of the tarbush. Apparently in this instance, Sa'd Zaghlul himself gave advice to students:

The question of dress is an issue of authentic national identity (*qawmiyya mahda*). If we changed our own [style] of dress, we would change our national identity, and a people without a national identity are a people without life.⁵¹

The author adds that there were also *fatwas* issued by some religious leaders warning the students of "evil consequences" if they changed completely to European dress.

So in that environment, Ahmad Zaghlul suggests, he was shocked by the irresponsible decision of the Egyptian doctors to endorse Western dress. That "environment" was ostensibly one in which the nationalist symbolic value of the tarbush was being undermined by unthinking youth who were playing into the hands of those who would deny to Egypt a developed national identity—and "a people without a national identity are a people without life." Ahmad Zaghlul's incredulity at the action taken by the Egyptian Medical Association then was justified since, in a sense, the very existence of Egypt was at stake.

He continues his criticism by attacking the organization's unrepresentative status especially when it came to such a weighty matter as changing the traditional dress of the "Islamic community."⁵² He contrasts the Egyptian Medical Association's place in Egyptian society with the "actual representatives" of the country—the *nuwwab* (s. na'ib, parliamentary delegate):

The *nuwwab* are the spokespersons of the nation, expressing its hopes and its pains. They know what is in its best interest and endeavor to satisfy it. At their head is the great leader Sa'd Pasha Zaghlul.⁵³

So if there was in fact a public health concern around the tarbush, argues Zaghlul, it would have been the responsibility of the parliamentary Health Committee to research the matter and render a decision. But it is obvious, he continues, that this question of dress is not a salient public issue except for a tiny minority of Westernized youth who lacked "national manhood" (*al-muruwwa al-qawmiyya*) or any ambition to become productive citizens. Their voices were thus negligible, and the "nation has rejected them, recognizing them as a burden on her; it has left them to play and be merry."⁵⁴

Then he turns again to censure and shame the doctors for humoring the trivial fantasies of this insufficiently masculine constituency while there were more pressing national health concerns to address:

You did not think about your wretched peasant who suffers under the oppressive weight of sickness. You considered fashion but did not consider the condition of the villages, their filth, and rampant illness. ... It is better for you to put aside this nonsense and [work to] uplift your nation....⁵⁵

Ahmad Zaghlul's article was not just an attack on the advocates of the brimmed hat, it was a move by him to accomplish a number of tasks. The first move, in which he locates

the EMA's decision within a series of contests by youth around the proper headgear, was made to highlight the juvenile nature of this constituency and their demands. By playing to these demands, the EMA not only devalued itself as an official body, but it also overstepped its bounds. Here is where Zaghlul makes his most significant intervention. The delimitation of a problem as "national" was the exclusive domain of the new parliamentary representatives, the *nuwwab* and the civic life of associations was thus confined to a consideration of questions deemed relevant by the one truly national body. This appropriation of territoriality was especially significant at the time since control of the state was contested by political parties, the monarch, and the British.

On this embattled political terrain, it is noteworthy that Zaghlul based his criticism of the hat proponents on a gendered concept of representation. The proper representatives of the nation and those deserving of representation were joined in forming a field of national manhood—united in this instance around the symbol of the tarbush. Conversely, the detractors were rendered as lacking in nationalism and masculinity, and consequently, they were outside of representation as rejects of the nation.⁵⁶

Shakib Arsalan also responded to the Egyptian Medical Association's decision.⁵⁷ He begins by summarizing the deconstruction of the health angle of the tarbush-hat dispute that had been presented alongside the EMA arguments in the August issue of *al-Muqtataf*.⁵⁸ In short, the former had concluded that it did not really matter what was on one's head since human adaptation to heat varied depending on numerous factors: most importantly geography and class. Nonetheless, Arsalan suggests, if one were to accept the EMA's conclusion about dress and climate, then clearly the turban was far superior to both the tarbush and the brimmed hat, from the perspective of health (better at shielding against the sun or blows to the head) and in terms of practicality (can double as a pillow).

In a harsher tone, Arsalan dismisses the freedom-to-choose argument as essentially ignorant and superficial.⁵⁹ He says that those who maintain this position are in fact the least conscious of the meaning of life. If it meant to them the emulation of Westerners, then they should do so in all ways:

...in their seriousness and perseverance, in their love for their nations, in learning, in research, in economizing, in cleanliness, in exercise, in taking risks, in their interest in industry and art and the incorporation of these into [everyday] life, and in the ordering of their homes and their countries—none of which is dependent on the hat [they wear].⁶⁰

By questioning their motivation and casting them as poor copies of the Westerner, Arsalan, like Zaghlul, attempts to locate the desire for the hat as outside a national economy of desire and thus as untenable. The latter was especially true, in Arsalan's opinion, since Egypt already had a diverse array of headaddress, to which if another were added would mean total "chaos" for Eastern fashion. In other words, if the Western hat too became a fixture of Egypt's fashion landscape, then how would Egypt be recognized as distinctly Eastern? Arsalan contends that outsiders would see an "amorphous society" (*hayya' ijtima'iyya khunfashariyya*). Despite the gravity of the problem, Arsalan is ultimately ambivalent about the best course towards the unification of a national style of dress. He finds enforcement by the sword, like in Turkey, an undesirable model.

Interestingly, the article in the August issue of *al-Muqtataf*, which Arsalan cites above in dismissing the health benefits of wearing the brimmed hat, had also offered its own reading of difference, recognition, and the East-West divide that diverged markedly from Arsalan's position.⁶¹ The author of "*The Tarbush*" or "*The Hat*" makes an argument about power and the institution of difference that intuitively understands of the East as being on some levels a cultural construct—one with political ramifications. He suggests quite plainly that all of the present anxiety around the question of dress emanates from a sense of powerlessness:

If it had been that we were in the position of power and prosperity and that the people of Europe and America imitated us in our food, drink, dress, and home furnishings, then it wouldn't have bothered us if we were walking around barefoot or wearing the *balgha*⁶² on our feet and black rags on our heads. But we are connected to peoples who have surpassed us in everything and who want to retain their distinction from us and do not want us to resemble them in our dress. It is like the master of a house who does not want his servants to dress like he dresses.⁶³

So here, it is the maintenance of cultural difference through the preservation of Eastern fashion that becomes an act complicit with imperialist politics. The author points to the efforts in other aspects of life to erase the distinctions between East and West—in knowledge, wealth, transportation, household management and home furnishings. Even in terms of dress, the tops of heads are given as the last remaining frontier of the (male) body that separates "us from them." Or so it would seem.

This author actually manages to extricate himself from the narrow confines of the cultural politics of headaddress to partially see the wider social world in which those debates were largely meaningless. Although he spins out

the implications of his argument and suggests that switching to the hat would be logically the final move to achieve identity with the European male, a large social and demographic fact is allowed to intrude and to complicate his cultural discourse. Essentially, in a country in which nine-tenths of the population, according to the author, had never made the switch to pants, jackets, and tarbush, it was folly to expect a major change of fashion in a year or even several years. Furthermore, he is pessimistic about tarbush-wearers switching to the hat in large numbers without the leadership of the king.

Ultimately, for this critic, cultural adaptation was a historical process from which there was no escape for a nation that did not wish to be enslaved by another. Dress was an important surface on which cultural dependence and independence were simultaneously expressed; likewise, holding on to an inviolable and unchanging notion of Eastern fashion, which evinced a more basic attitude that was out of sync with the times, was tantamount to dependence and domination without end. Of course, how simply a shift in attitude could bring about social or political emancipation for the vast majority of Egyptians still wearing the galabiyya and the turban and working the fields is never addressed.

(Ad)Dressing Desire

The problem of the tarbush and the hat was deemed such a significant national question by some that even the intimate engagements of prominent figures with fashion and identity were shared with the public. For example, Ali Abd al-Raziq contributed a poignant analysis, to *al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya* of the Egyptian clothing debates from Paris.⁶⁴ He begins the article titled, "Farewell to the Turban," with the claim that for most people in the world dress was an issue of importance on par with food and drink, and possibly of even more importance. In any case, he believes that only a minority see in the issue of dress no significance whatsoever. By including the detractors, he makes clear from the start that it is not only in terms of meeting basic needs that dress commands attention but also as a contested cultural terrain.

Abd al-Raziq continues by making explicit some of the ways in which dress assumes social, economic, and political significance in modern times. He argues that "the institutions of modern life" presuppose the importance of different styles of dress. In other words, each social context commands its own sartorial image, and conversely that image reflects a particular social context. This, he suggests, would come as no surprise to anyone who knows of the fashion houses ("*buyut al-moda*") in the world's capitals and of "their influence on our economic life, our character, and our customs."⁶⁵ Of course,

all women, with "no difference between ages, colors, or classes," are members of this "madhhab" which accords fashion a central place in their lives. Men are slightly more differentiated in that there is a small minority, who are neither old nor young, who believe that clothes have absolutely no signifying value.

This group, according to Abd al-Raziq, rejects all the previous social and political claims made on dress, and deny the transformative power that some like to accord to it. Essentially, ugly is ugly, violent is violent, ignorant is ignorant, and there is nothing that dress can do about it. They also oppose the connections made between nationalism and dress; since, the latter is ephemeral, a form that fluctuates with the fluctuation of time, the nation is beautiful and stable eternally. Finally, they find the ascription of religious significance to dress objectionable and misguided.

Abd al-Raziq seems to be using this unnamed group of middle-aged men and their views on dress metaphorically, signifying a political position that is disconnected from its social and cultural bases. He suggests that the truth can be found between these extreme two positions, and that that truth should be acceptable to both. The middle position-between those who view dress as an issue of primary importance and those who deny it any importance - is to insist that men should not be allowed to discuss, act on, or even think about the question of dress. In the name of mediation, Abd al-Raziq is in fact staking out his own political and moral ground here. He argues that even if dress is considered by most to be of great significance, men should concern themselves with other issues - ones that were ostensibly more pressing. He does not elaborate on how or by whom those other issues would be determined.

The rest of the article is a personal testimony through which he bids farewell to the turban. He admits that this is a reversal of his own position and that the turban's extinction might in fact be a positive development; nevertheless, due to its special position among dress and its "beloved status in spirit," it was deserving of a formal elegy. "Even if the departed Shaykh Muhammad Abduh hated the turban and disparaged it," wrote Abd al-Raziq, there was a time when it signified a kind of social and religious virtue.⁶⁶ Furthermore, it held a "special place" in the life of the author and his family.

The "noble tradition" *turath karim* of the Abd al-Raziq family is then briefly narrated to illustrate the grand heritage of which the turban was an important symbol. Although he is nostalgic for that past time and sad that he would not be able to pass on the turban to his sons as his ancestors had done before him, he acknowledges that the time had come for its retirement. This was true

in part because the changing times had rendered the noble tradition of the turban obsolete, and the turban had been taken up by a class he alludes to as being composed of ignorant and violent types. So in a wistful tone, he brings his narrative to a close, literally bidding farewell to "the beloved turban."

Sheikh Ali Abd al-Raziq's article on dress and the extinction of the turban expresses a number of different concerns or anxieties about his society and the place of people like himself in it. Before turning to an analysis of these issues, it might be instructive to consider another personal testimony from a different perspective. Mahmud Azmi's story of switching from the tarbush to the hat appeared in *al-Hilal* a year after Abd al-Raziq's article in *al-Siyasa al-Usbu'iyya*. Azmi informs the reader that he was invited by the magazine to recount his personal narrative, of how he came to the decision to wear the bowler hat. Interestingly, in this narration he presents a version of the history of the tarbush/hat controversy that takes the reader from the turn of the century to the author's present, 1927.

Azmi writes that the social and political significance of dress first occurred to him during his boyhood years as a student in secondary school. He remembers it as the time when everyone was talking about Qasim Amin's recently published books on women and the veil. After listening to numerous opinions on the books and then reading them for himself, he became a staunch opponent of the veil. He recalls that he was mainly opposed to the veil because of its foreign origins and its introduction to Egypt through conquest. His thinking on the issue was guided by two questions: What constitutes modest dress and what dress is Egyptian in material and make.

Early in the century the same sort of concern for properly national attire turned some against the tarbush. According to Azmi, some declared the tarbush foreign and unhealthy and called for a return to the ancient Egyptian headdress. He remembers himself being driven by similar reasons to reject the veil and the tarbush and feeling a powerful nationalist sentiment in doing so. However, as his understanding of nationalism changed while studying in Paris, so too did his attitude towards dress.⁶⁸

In France, the author learned that nationalism was a "feeling of pride" that one should hold within oneself and not "spread on his surface."⁶⁹ Hence, the symbolic value of fashion was reconfigured for Azmi along an internationalist cultural axis. He was inspired at that time, he writes, by the prevailing concept of inclusion (*al-tadamun*), and he felt that dress was one of the most visible sites expressing this new attitude.

According to Azmi, this kind of cultural fusion was very

obvious in Egypt. Over time, Egyptians on a popular level had borrowed all manner of dress from different dominant cultures. There was, however, one item of foreign clothing that had been denied popular approval because it was the symbol of Ottoman tyranny - "the symbol of the power of Cairo and the autocratic Sultan."⁷⁰ This was the tarbush.

The tarbush was not to remain forever a despised symbol. According to Azmi, the tarbush was re-coded with the exact opposite signification through the course of the First World War. It was re-signified and re-politicized, Azmi argues, as the British imposed a protectorate on Egypt in 1914. The sudden declaration of Egypt as an unwilling supporter of the British war effort against the Ottomans had surprising ramifications on the popular level. Azmi does not mention the tremendous human suffering experienced by the majority of Egyptians during this time, but surely this was a major factor in radicalizing the political landscape and preparing the grounds for the re-appropriation of the symbol of Turkish despotism as a distinct sign of Egyptian nationalism.

Azmi does describe, however, an interesting relationship that emerged during World War I between the way Egyptians viewed the Ottoman-Circassian elite⁷¹ and the stigma attached to the hat. He suggests that those who switched from the tarbush to the hat were trying to "flee from 'Ottomanism' and get closer to the protector state, or avoid the hostility of Australian soldiers."⁷² He alludes to how this sartorial switching by the members of the ruling class was read by the masses as cowardice. This and their alignment with the Protectorate are given as the two main reasons that the tarbush then became the marker of those expressing the popular will. In other words, by continuing to wear the tarbush in public, the wearer was showing his willingness to defy openly the occupying forces and stand up to whatever "humiliation" he was subjected.

Azmi refers to the period following the war as a *nahda*. It was through this renaissance-ostensibly tied to the new nationalist consciousness embodied by the popular uprisings of 1919-that Egyptians came to see the tarbush itself as reborn with the nation. It was normalized as a symbol of being "Eastern and Egyptian." As the *nahda* became a regular feature of everyday life institutionalized in Egypt's new "constitution" and "representative" government, and as "freedom" became an important principle to all, as a sort of understanding was reached with the British, a new space for moderate public discourse emerged.

Within this space, Azmi continues, some began to revisit the question of modern culture, and thus the tarbush again became a contested symbol. He maintains that the climate in which these debates occurred was

markedly different from the past. The most telling example of how much the times had changed was in the absence of accusations of blasphemy. In fact, there was change everywhere. Azmi cites the progress of women as best evinced in their "liberation from the veil." He notes the advances made in Turkey and how there was no religious opposition, and throughout the Arab lands there was a *nahda* and movements for independence.

In the Arab world there was also a split emerging which Azmi classifies as a civilizational choice: between Arab and modern. Some had come to the conclusion that attempts at finding common ground were futile because of the deep rift that existed between the past and the present of Islamic societies. He does not elaborate this further. He mentions the speed with which modern society was moving forward. Perhaps he believed that with such a rapid pace of change, reconciling with the past was impossible. He writes that he himself had made the choice to draw on modern civilization; furthermore, he felt that it was a choice society as a whole needed to make.

After delineating the historical context and illustrating the social and political significance of dress, he finally narrates the actual moment of decision in which he switched from the tarbush to the top hat. This autobiographical section is rare for this period because it publicly presents the intimate thoughts of a private person as he self-consciously embarks on making a change in his physical appearance. It is also rare in that it gives the reader an exceptionally vivid picture of what an agonizing process a seemingly simple act like choosing between two hats could be in 1920s Cairo.

Azmi writes that he had resolved in the summer of 1925 to put his convictions about being modern to the test. He announced to his friends and family that he would be switching to the bowler hat on the first of July. He says that he gave this date so that they would have some time to adjust to the idea.

Then he describes in great detail the anxiety he was struck with when the day finally arrived for him to make the switch. As he approached the hat store on Qasr al-Nil Street, he noticed that his footsteps had gotten heavier and that moving forward was becoming increasingly difficult. When he finally reached the front of the store, he froze and found that he could not open the door much less enter. Eventually, he turned around and walked back in the direction he had come from. He writes: "I noticed that I had started to accuse myself under my breath of cowardice and of still being under the influence of *al-akhta' al-wirathiyya*."⁷³

Extirpating the latter from himself and from society is deemed a significant and necessary step towards becoming modern. For Mahmud Azmi, this project of overcoming the inertia of tradition and expunging the old took another full year. He admits that he was emboldened by the ruling on the tarbush issued by the Egyptian Medical Association in the summer of 1926: "I headed directly the next morning—the third Saturday in the month of July, 1926—to the hat salesman, and I bought a summer hat. ... And since that day I have been wearing the hat, alternating between different types depending on the season."⁷⁴

From the two reactions that Azmi relays here, it seems that his wearing of Western hats was received favorably, even lauded. One of his friends, whom he describes as a leading Arab writer and intellectual, said the following: 'Now the Easterners are beginning to think with their heads!'⁷⁵ Another friend was inspired to write to *al-Siyasa* with his own views on the headdress question. Azmi quotes from his article: 'The struggle is not between the turban, the tarbush, and the hat, but rather it is a struggle between different structures of thought and taste (*suvvar mukhtalifa min tafkir wa al-dhawq*) each of which wants to be dominant.'⁷⁶ With that said, this friend also sides with the Western hat and pronounces the turban and the tarbush as outmoded forms of headdress—and by extension, they symbolized obsolete forms of thought and taste.

The personal testimonies of Ali Abd al-Raziq and Mahmud Azmi richly illustrate the complicated negotiations of a certain class of individuals with their sartorial presence in an Egyptian public sphere of the 1920s. They attest to a very conscious engagement with and production of a conceptual landscape, underwriting a modern Egyptian masculine subjectivity. However much they differed in their positions on dress, both men were insistent on its significance to a culture in terms of its image but even more so in terms of its content. Abd al-Raziq accepted the passing of the turban because it no longer signified a virtuous life, and Azmi was ready to adopt the hat when it seemed to him that the tarbush no longer signified emancipation. While Abd al-Raziq's reasoning was grounded in an understanding of Islamic law and tradition, it is clear that Azmi was thinking through the principles of the Enlightenment.

Ali Abd al-Raziq's formal farewell to the turban inscribes the passing of a world in which men of religious learning had represented moral and mediated political authority. The cultural landscape that Abd al-Raziq surveys must necessarily foreclose a desire for the turban because its proper genealogy had been terminated by the social and political transformations of Egypt. Although he longs to pass on this symbol of a noble tradition to his heirs, the kind of masculine personhood metaphorized by the turban was no longer an ideal worthy of aspiration.

Mahmud Azmi's mapping of his decision to take up the Western hat illuminates a bourgeois understanding of the modern as a steady progression toward a future utopia. The past is inscribed in his personal narrative as part of a forward-moving trajectory and a teleology, not as a site of loss. The self-constituting individual is the desired subject position of Azmi's narration. It is a subject-position endorsed by science and resisted by an irrational Eastern mind. His courage in overcoming both the conservatism of his social milieu and his own internalized repression are publicly offered as testimony to the possibility of changing traditional tastes and frames of mind. Thus, the hat becomes the symbolic marker not only of modernity and the modern, but also of a possible future.

So when the tarbush incident came to the Egyptian pub-

lic's attention at the end of 1932, the cultural field had already been worked over to some extent and in a sense prepared for its reception. This might explain why a controversy that aroused loud outcries in late November became a dead issue by late December—both on the diplomatic level and in public discourse.⁷⁷ The cultural debates on the modernity and appropriateness of the tarbush for Egyptian men had already taken place. Its position as a nationalist icon had been secured against internal assault. The final chapter of the tarbush story would be written only two decades later.⁷⁸ Conversely, as Mahmud Azmi's testimony evinces, cultural space had been created for men to wear Western headgear without renouncing their masculinity or Egyptian-ness—so long as it was a private affair that did not impinge on the territory already staked out by the tarbush.

END NOTES

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1. The use of "top hat" here is only for the purpose of alliteration; the actual hats in question at the time were versions of the bowler hat. Since there is not an extensive theoretical section to this essay, I offer the following brief explanation of terms. Masculinity and national identity are understood as performative subject-positions as well as discursive fields with identifiable genealogies. Modernity marks the space in which the other two concepts obtain their particular content; therefore, it is/was paradoxically conceived as a global condition and local practices. The Arabic word *madaniyya* is translated here as modern when it is used to signify a temporal phenomenon and as civilization when it marks a spatial formation. (The literature on each of these terms is so vast now that even a partial bibliography cannot be provided here.)

2. The tarbush (pl. tarabish), as it is called in Egypt, is more commonly known as the fez, ostensibly signaling its Moroccan origins. It is a brim-less hat of red felted wool with a flat circular top and a tassel. Depending on the period, they came in varying heights, proportions, and styles of tassel. (The fez was mandated as official headgear for Muslim men—except the ulama—in the Ottoman Empire as part of broader clothing reforms decreed by Sultan Mahmud II in 1829. In Egypt, Muhammad 'Ali had already dressed his soldiers in a version of the North African fez.) For a comparison of the cultural significance of the 1829 decree mandating the fez and the 1925 decree banning it, see Patricia L. Baker, "The Fez in Turkey: A Symbol of Modernization?" *Costume* 20 (1986): 72-85. Baker's analysis situates the movement for and against the fez within the frameworks of modernization and nationalism and relies on religious/secular and East/West dichotomies to explain these two different moments in

Ottoman-Turkish history. In the Egyptian case that I analyze here, by looking at the gendered aspects of men's anxieties about dress, the tarbush makes visible a much more complex field of cultural signification. (Henceforth, tarbush will appear in normal font.)

3. "The Ambassador's Tarbush," *Al-Ahram Weekly Online* 650 (7-13 August 2003): <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/650/chroncls.htm>.

4. This paper has benefited from the collection of recent approaches to the historical study of clothing and textiles in a special issue of *Gender and History* 14/3 (November 2002) titled "Material Strategies."

5. In fact, while the fez was banned by law in Turkey, the veil was only restricted through administrative regulations—e.g., prohibiting them in government schools and other facilities.

6. For an excellent overview of the political and military history of this critical period, see "World War I and the End of the Ottoman Order," in William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000): 146-167.

7. A few years later (1926), another conference—of religious leaders from the Islamic world—was convened in Cairo under the patronage of King Fuad to ponder the future of the Caliphate. The meeting could be—and has been—seen as Fuad's bid for the office after Atatürk's abolition of the Caliphate after over four hundred years of Istanbul as its seat. Seen through the lens of sartorial politics, however, the conference assumes added significance as another site for the production of cultural meaning.

Unfortunately, I do not have the space here to elaborate on the conference.

8. Scholarly works on the history of nationalism in the Middle East has tended to cast Arab nationalism as the heir to Ottomanism, often missing out entirely the important early period of the emergence of nation-state nationalisms. Rashid Khalidi makes this critique in his review "Arab Nationalism: Historical Problems in the Literature," *American Historical Review*, 9/5 (December 1991): 1363-1373. James Gelvin offers the critique, which would include Khalidi, that argues for a non-elite approach to the study of nationalism in the region, in "The Social Origins of Popular Nationalism in Syria: Evidence for a New Framework," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 26/4 (November 1994): 645-661. For Egypt, the major work on nationalism remains Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Egypt*,

Islam, and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930 (New York, 1986) and *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, 1930-1945 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

9. The relegation of dress to the domain of the trivial is not simply a past bias. Historians of Europe have only recently begun to mine this area for historical meaning. See Philippe Perrot's critique in *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century* trans., Richard Bienvenu (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

10. This article is based on a chapter of my dissertation tentatively titled "Effendi Masculinity: Culturing the Body and Building the Nation in Modern Egypt, 1870-1940." The effendiyya were generally a class of men who occupied positions in the modern professions and in government service; upper-level students were often included in this category. It is a problematic synonym for middle class and can connote a certain kind of bourgeois identity. I argue in the larger project that during the interwar period this category was invested with new definitions of masculine subjectivity that were based on diverse sets of cultural translations, that included in their purview physical culture, dress, and sexuality.

11. Detailed information on the production, styles, and consumption of tarabish during this same period can be found in a recent dissertation by Nancy Reynolds, "Commodity Communities: Interweavings of Market Cultures, Consumption Practices, and Social Power in Egypt, 1907-1961" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 2003): 344-359. Unfortunately, I have only had the opportunity to read this dissertation while making revisions to this article. Although there is some overlap in our material and analyses, I believe that my focus on the tarbush as a contested site of gendered cultural signification nicely complements Reynolds' reading of the materiality of the tarbush in its circulation through relays of production and consumption.

12. I have written more in depth about the kind of masculinity constituted by turban wearers in a chapter of my dissertation on the re-making of the futuwwa; therefore, the tarbush and the "top hat" receive more attention in this article.

13. This formulation is obviously reductionist and should be read as an awkward shorthand used to designate a much more complex field of cultural debates. For example, the proponents of the Western style hat were not always anti-tarbush, and similarly defenders of the tarbush were not necessarily anti-hat; and the turban-wearers occupied a position that could be labeled rejectionist, uncertain, or simply disinterested.

14. Ironically, the tarbush was retired from active symbolic duty under accusations of embodying feudal, aristocratic, and anti-nationalist meanings after the 1952 revolution.

15. This section is mainly a background to the debates around the tarbush that emerged during the 1920s. My research on dress for this earlier period was much less extensive and therefore my remarks here are mostly preliminary and tentative.

16. The best work on Muhammad Ali's army is Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

17. Ehud Toledano, *State and Society in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 160-163.

18. Ibid., p. 178.

19. Ali Mubarak, *Hayati* (Cairo: Matba't al-Adaab, 1989): 21-22.

20. This form of punishment for government officials was apparently standard during the rule of the viceroys. Nassau William Senior, *Conversations and Journals in Egypt and Malta*, 2 vols. (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1882): vol. 2, p. 85. Cited in F. Robert Hunter, *Egypt under the Khedives, 1805-1879* (Cairo: AUC Press, 1999): p. 84, fn 10. Also mentioned in

Toledano, p.162.

21. Mubarak, p. 23.

22. Al-Ajyal (October 19, 1897): 242-244.

23. Ibid., p.242.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., p. 243.

27. Ibid.

28. For Egypt, see Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Clarissa Lee Pollard, "Nurturing the Nation: The Family Politics of the 1919 Egyptian Revolution" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, UC Berkeley, 1997); Mona Russell, "Creating the New Woman: Consumerism, Education, and National Identity in Egypt, 1863-1922" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Georgetown University, 1997); Omnia Shakry, "Schooled Mothers and Structured Play: Child-Rearing in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998). On representations of women in nationalist discourse, see Beth Baron, "Nationalist Iconography: Egypt as a Woman," in *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab World*, eds. James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997): 105-24. The literature on this subject for other geographical areas is too vast to cite here.

29. The only study I am aware of for Egypt is by Marilyn Booth, "Woman in Islam: Men and The 'Women's Press' in Turn-of-the-20th-Century Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33(2001): 171-201. For a general reference on masculinity in the Middle East, see *Imagined Masculinities: Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East*, eds. Mai Ghoussoub & Emma Sinclair-Webb (London: Saqi Books, 2000).

30. On this point, see Partha Chatterjee, "Nationalist Resolution of the Woman's Question," in *Recasting Women*, eds. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989): 233-253; and Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Difference-Deferral of a Colonial Modernity: Public Debates on Domesticity in British Bengal," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, eds. Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997): 373-405. Also, see Shakry's revision of Chatterjee's inner/outer formulation for Egypt in "Schooled Mothers."

31. Al-Ajyal (October 19, 1897): 243.

32. Ibid.

33. This early awareness of how Egyptian consumption of European fashion could be complicit with the foreign capitalist exploitation of the East continued to animate cultural criticism before the War. See Salih al-Tantawi, "Real Civilization or Harmful Imitation," *al-Irshad* (February 2, 1906): 2.

34. For the political history of this period, see Marius Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt: the Wafd and its Rivals, 1919-1939* (London: Ithaca Press, 1979); Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt's Liberal Experiment: 1922-1936* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); and for a history that includes the labor movement, Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman, *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam, and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882-1954* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

35. Fikri Abaza, "Mustafa Kemal: His Triumphs in the World of Fashion," *al-Musawwar* (September 11, 1925): 2.

36. Ibid.

37. By hijab here, the author means both the face veil and the seclusion of women.

38. Ibid.

39. The dichotomous geography that Abaza describes works by instituting a temporal difference in the relation to modernity occupied by East and West; such that, any hasty attempt to cover the gap could only result in a fall—in this case of Turkish society.

40. The Editor, "Between the Turban and the Tarbush," *al-Nil al-Mussawar* (February 25, 1926): 7. A seemingly neutral article covering the radical changes declared by Mustafa Kemal appeared in *al-Nil al-Mussawar*, (September 10, 1925): 24, a day before the *al-Musawwar* issue containing Fikri Abaza's article.

41. *Al-Nil al-Musawwar* (February 25, 1926): 7.

42. News of this "minor" incident made it as far as New York. "Western Dress in Egypt," *New York Times* (February 9, 1926): 8.

43. Shakib Arsalan, *al-Fath* (June 30, 1926): 14.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Arsalan underscores this accomplishment by situating the might of their opponents on a geopolitical scale: "[France and Spain] are not second-class states like Greece or Bulgaria." Ibid.

47. The letter was dated May 18, 1926. The letter and the EMA's response were published in the August 1926 issue of *al-Muqtataf* (pp. 147-148).

48. See chapter five of Reynolds' dissertation, "Commodity Communities," for an excellent study of the significance of footwear in nationalist discourse and the formation of a consumerist public in Egypt from the 1920s through the 1950s.

49. Ibid., *al-Muqtataf*, p.148.

50. Ahmad Zaghlul, "The Tarbush and the Hat," *al-Fath* (July 22, 1926): 12.

51. Ibid.

52. This slippage between Egypt and the Islamic community seems to be a rhetorical deployment aimed at emphasizing the breadth and gravity of the action taken while simultaneously highlighting the ridiculousness of any claims to representative-ness made by such minor bodies.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Women's exclusion from formal political participation (voting and standing for elections) had been decided by the 1923 electoral law, which, interestingly, violated the universal suffrage provision of the national constitution that had been promulgated only three weeks prior. Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); in particular, see the chapter on "Suffrage and Citizenship," pp. 207-219.

57. Shakib Arsalan, "Healthy Clothing," *al-Fath* (October 14, 1926): 10-11.

58. "The Tarbush or the Hat," *al-Muqtataf* (August 1926): 140-148.

59. For an example of the freedom of choice argument, see "The Turban and the Tarbush in Dar al-'Ulum," *al-Hawi* (March 9, 1926): 5. Also, see *Ruz al-Yusuf* (October 20, 1926): 1.

60. Arsalan, *al-Fath*, p.11.

61. It was well known during this period that the owners of al-Muqtataf, Faris Nimr and the Sarruf brothers, were huge proponents of the Kemalist project. See Wajih Kawtharani, *al-Dawla wa al-Khilafa fi al-Khitab al-Arabi aban al-Thawra al-Kamaliyya fi Turkiyya* [The State and the Caliphate in Arab Discourse in the Wake of the Kemalist Revolution in Turkey] (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'a, 1996): 33-34.

62. These are the leather slippers with curly toes that were—and are—often used to symbolize an exotic and medieval Islamic East in

the Orientalist imaginary. For its history as a material object in Cairo's shoe market, see Reynolds, "Commodity Communities," Chapter Five.

63. *Al-Muqtataf* (August 1926): 142.

64. Ali Abd al-Raziq, "Farewell to the Turban," *al-Siyasa al-Usubiyya* (November 13, 1926): 17. Ali Abd al-Raziq (1888-1966) was an al-Azhar trained shaykh who had also studied at Oxford. After his return to Egypt, he was appointed as a Shari'a Court judge in 1915. The publication of his book *Islam and the Principles of Government* in 1925 angered the king and resulted in the revocation of his degree from al-Azhar. He then practiced as a lawyer and went on to serve in the Majlis al-Nuwwab, followed by the Majlis al-Shuyukh. He also taught *fiqh* at the University of Cairo for twenty years.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid. He might have been referring to Abduh's Transvaal fatwa of 1903. Responding to a query from a Muslim in southern Africa about wearing European hats, Abduh answered that if the context—social or climactic—required it then it was not haram. M. Canard, "Coiffure européenne et Islam," *Annales d'Institut d'études orientales* (Algiers), VIII (1950): 205; cited in Baker, "The Fez in Turkey."

67. Mahmud Azmi, "Why I Wore the Hat," *al-Hilal* (11/1927): 52-56. An extract from this article was incorporated into another article published nearly a decade later titled, "The Hat as a Symbol of Culture: The Issue of the Tarbush and the Unity of Fashion," *al-Majalla al-Jadida* (November 1936): 17-20.

68. Of course it could very well have been the opposite—that his attitude towards nationalism changed as his understanding of fashion changed—but in a retrospective account justifying the controversial decision to switch to the Western hat it was important that the explanation be couched in terms of nationalism.

69. Ibid., Azmi, p. 53.

70. Ibid.

71. Azmi never explicitly names or categorizes this group, but from the context it would have been clear to the contemporary reader to which class he was referring.

72. Ibid., Azmi, p. 54.

73. Ibid., p. 56. Inherited flaws, weaknesses, but could also be interpreted in this context to mean backward traditions.

74. Ibid. The excerpt that appeared in al-Majalla al-Jadida in November 1936 ends here.

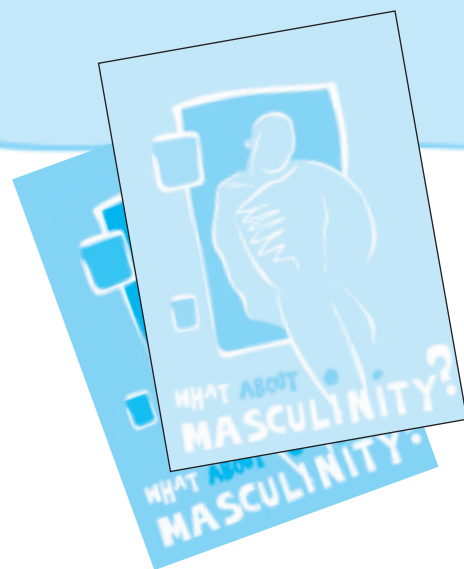
75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. After an exchange of secret notes between the Foreign Ministries in December, Ankara decided the affair over without any further response from Cairo.

78. For an interesting story of cultural life in Egypt that takes the tarbush as a central metaphor and is told from the perspective of one of its cosmopolitan communities, see Robert Solé, *Le Tarbouche* (Paris: Seuil, 1992).

79. Of course, since there was no apocalyptic climax this might beg the question of what these movements among the different styles of headdress meant for Egyptian masculinity during this period? In this article, I have been able only to hint at an answer by referring to masculinity as a performative practice. It is necessary to look at other sites of performativity and their interrelationships, as I do in the dissertation, in order to see the consolidation of an "effendi masculinity" that was legitimized through its claims on the nation and modernity and materialized through objects like the tarbush, practices like weightlifting, and ideologies like heteronormativity.



Male Infertility, Masculinity, and New Reproductive Technologies in the Arab World

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Introduction

What is the relationship between male infertility and masculinity among Arab men, particularly as new reproductive technologies become increasingly available to populations in the Arab world? In this essay, I attempt to answer this question by exploring the emerging theoretical literature on Middle Eastern masculinities, then turning to my own empirical research on male infertility among Arab men in three disparate settings. As I will argue here, male infertility may threaten Arab masculinities on numerous levels. Yet, in the age of powerful new reproductive technologies to overcome male infertility, the crisis of Arab manhood once posed by male infertility may be waning, in ways to be described in this article.

Infertility is classically defined as the inability to conceive after a year or more of trying, resulting in involuntary childlessness (Sciarrà, 1994). On a global level, approximately eight to fourteen percent of all couples experience infertility at some point in their reproductive lives (World Health Organization, 1991). Of this global population of infertile people, it is estimated that between 29.4 and 44.1 million, or more than half the world's infertile population, are Muslim (Serour, 1996). This is due to the large

number of Muslim couples living in the so-called infertility belt of sub-Saharan Africa (Leonard, 2002).

Among the world's infertile couples, male factors, involving primarily low sperm count (*oligospermia*), poor sperm motility (*asthenospermia*), defects of sperm morphology (*teratospermia*), and total absence of sperm in the ejaculate (*azoospermia*), contribute to more than half of all cases (Howards, 1995; Irvine, 1998). Yet, male infertility is a reproductive health and social problem that remains deeply hidden, including in the West. There, studies have shown male infertility to be among the most stigmatizing of all male health conditions (Becker, 2000, 2002; Greil, 1991; Van Balen, Verdurmen, and Ketting, 1995). Such stigmatization is clearly related to issues of sexuality. Male infertility is popularly, although usually mistakenly, conflated with impotency, as both disrupt a man's ability to impregnate a woman and to prove one's virility, paternity, and manhood (Webb and Daniluk, 1999).

Imagining Infertile Arab Masculinities

One of the major reasons that male infertility is important to manhood is that men often deem paternity an important achievement and a major source of their masculine identity (Bledsoe, Guyer, and Lerner, 2000; Guyer, 2000).

Thus, the inability to produce biological offspring may come as a striking blow to men's social identities, with far-reaching implications for the construction of masculinity.

The relatively small body of Western social scientific literature on men and reproduction suggests that male infertility can have these kinds of emasculating effects (Moynihan, 1998; Webb and Daniluk, 1999). Both infertility and its treatment have been reported in the West to result for some men in impaired sexual functioning and dissatisfaction, marital communication and adjustment problems, interpersonal relationship difficulties, and emotional and psychological distress (Abby, Andrews, and Halman, 1991; Daniluk, 1988; Greil, 1997; Greil, Porter, and Leitko, 1990; Nachtigall, Becker and Wozny, 1992; Van Balen and Trimpos-Kemper, 1994). Yet, it is very much an empirical question whether the effects of male infertility on men's sense of masculinity are culturally invariant; the topic has been even less researched in non-Western sites.

Little if any social scientific research has explicitly focused on the subject of male infertility among Arab men; however, there is evidence to suggest that male infertility may pose a crisis of masculinity for men in the Arab world. On the social structural level, men living in pronatalist Arab communities are expected to have children, as reflected in the relatively high marriage and fertility rates across the region (Population Reference Bureau, 2004). Arab men achieve social power in the classic patriarchal, patrilineal, patrilocal, endogamous extended family (Eickelman, 1998; Joseph, 1993, 1994, 2000; Kandiyoti, 1988; Moghadam, 1993) through the birth of children, especially sons, who will perpetuate patrilineal structures into the future (Delaney, 1991; Inhorn, 1996; Obermeyer, 1999; Ouzgane, 1997). "Intimate selving" in Arab families involves expectations of "patriarchal connectivity" (Joseph, 1993, 1994, 1999), whereby men assume patriarchal power in the family not only with advancing age and authority, but through the explicit production of offspring, who they love and nurture, but also dominate and control. Thus, in this region of the world, which "with some truth, is still regarded as one of the seats of patriarchy" (Ghoussoub and Sinclair-Webb, 2000, p. 8), men who do not become family patriarchs through physical and social reproduction may be deemed weak and ineffective (Lindisfarne, 1994), and may be encouraged to divorce or take additional wives in order to contribute to the patrilineage and to prove their masculine virility (Inhorn, 1996).

But what are the implications of male infertility for masculinity per se in the Arab world? As with male infertility, relatively little is known about the social construction of

Arab masculinity, which is partly why a recent volume dedicated to this subject has been entitled *Imagined Masculinities* (Ghoussoub and Sinclair-Webb, 2000). Although generations of male social scientists working in the Arab world have reported on this region by talking mainly to men, few of them have studied men as men, a problem that, according to Gutmann (1997), is endemic in social science disciplines such as anthropology. Since the late 1970s, but particularly during the past decade, Middle Eastern gender studies have flourished, as evident in the large number of major anthologies and influential volumes devoted to this subject (e.g., Ahmed, 1992; Beck and Keddie, 1978; Bowen and Early, 1993; Fernea, 1985; Fernea and Bezirgan, 1977; Gocek and Balaghi, 1994; Ilkkaracan, 2000; Joseph, 1999, 2000; Kandiyoti, 1996; Keddie and Baron, 1991; Malti-Douglas, 1991; Mernissi, 1985; Moghadam, 1993, 1994; Sabbah, 1984; Toubia, 1988; Tucker, 1993). However, as rightfully noted by a number of scholars (Ghoussoub and Sinclair-Webb, 2000; Ouzgane, 1997), Middle Eastern gender studies have focused almost exclusively, "sometimes obsessively" (Ouzgane, 1997, p. 1), on women, with men's presence in these accounts left implicit. As a result, "There are as yet no significant studies that make Muslim *men* visible as gendered subjects and that show that masculinities (like femininity) have a history and clear defining characteristics that are incomprehensible apart from the totality of gender relations in Muslim cultures" (Ouzgane, 1997, p. 1).

As seen in two recent volumes that devote attention to Arab masculinities (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994; Ghoussoub and Sinclair-Webb, 2000), many of those now working on issues of masculinity and male identity in the Middle East draw theoretical inspiration from the work of R.W. Connell (1987, 1995, 2000), and particularly from his concept of "hegemonic masculinities." Connell focuses on the fact that masculine identities develop through organized social relations and that hegemonic masculinities are produced through unequal power relations *between* men. As he argues, "We must also recognize the *relations* between different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, dominance and subordination. These relationships are constructed through practices that exclude and include, that intimidate, exploit, and so on. There is a gender politics within masculinity" (Connell, 1995, p. 37). Thus, for many Middle Eastern scholars—including Deniz Kandiyoti, one of the major theorists of Middle Eastern patriarchy (1988, 1991) and masculinity (1994, 1996)—Connell has opened up the possibility for examining both hegemonic and *subordinate* masculinities, including "the ways in which certain categories of men may experience stigmatization and marginalization" (Kandiyoti, 1994, p. 199).

Most of the social scientific literature to date has exam-

ined the ways in which Middle Eastern men are subordinated by economic impoverishment (Ali, 1996, 2000) or by the hierarchical and often humiliating relationships within all-male institutions such as the military (Kandiyoti, 1994; Peteet, 2000; Sinclair-Webb, 2000). Yet, a repeating theme in the small but growing literature on Arab masculinities is one of homosocial competition between men in the realms of virility and fertility, which are typically conflated (Ali, 1996, 2000, Lindisfarne, 1994; Ouzgane, 1997). According to Ouzgane, a scholar of contemporary Arabic literature, virility emerges as the "essence of Arab masculinity" in the novels of some of the region's most eminent writers (Ouzgane, 1997, p. 3), with men in these stories both distinguishing themselves, and being distinguished from other men, through the fathering of children, and especially sons. If this is, in fact, the case, as much of the literature from this region suggests, then the experience of male infertility for an Arab man can only be "imagined" as an extremely threatening and emasculating condition, particularly in a world where the performance of masculinity is homosocially competitive and men work hard to sustain their public images as "powerful, virile" patriarchs (Ouzgane, 1997, p. 4; see also Delaney, 1991).

Male Infertility in the Age of New Reproductive Technologies

Given this theoretical background, I became intrigued by the question of how male infertility relates to masculinity among Arab men, and I decided to explore the question on an empirical level. Over the past 20 years, I have studied infertility in the Middle East, primarily in Egypt and primarily among women seeking infertility therapy (Inhorn, 1994, 1996, 2003a). Viewing the consequences of male infertility almost exclusively through women's eyes, I have shown how wives suffer some of the consequences of their husbands' infertility, in terms of reproductive blame, expectations to seek treatment, conspiracies of silence over male infertility and sexual dysfunction, and marital disruption, including in some cases male-initiated divorce (Inhorn, 2002, 2003b). However, in 1996, I interviewed for the first time more than twenty-five infertile men who were presenting with their wives to Egyptian in vitro fertilization (IVF) centers (Inhorn, 2003a). Through these couple interviews, I was able to imagine for the first time how men *themselves* might feel about their infertility, particularly when long-term treatment had failed to improve their conditions. As I discovered through my conversations with a number of Egyptian husbands, many men had lived for years with knowledge that their sperm were "weak" and incapable of producing a child. "Weakness" was the cultural idiom with which they glossed their male infertility problems, and it seemed that many infertile Egyptian men had taken this idiom to heart, feeling that they were somehow weak,

defective, abnormal, and even unworthy as biological progenitors. Not surprisingly, few men in the study had told anyone, including their closest family members, that they suffered from male infertility. Male infertility was described variously as an "embarrassing," "sensitive," and "private" subject for the Egyptian male, who would necessarily feel *ana mish raagil*—"I am not a man"—if others were to know that he was the cause of a given infertility problem.

In addition, many of these infertile Egyptian men had suffered through multiple harrowing infertility therapies. Traditional biomedical therapies to overcome male infertility, which include surgeries for varicoceles (varicose-type dilations of the veins in the testicles) and estrogen-containing hormonal drugs, are widely prescribed by physicians who specialize in men's reproductive and sexual problems in the Arab world (Inhorn, 2003a). However, these therapies have been heavily criticized in the West for being largely unproven, ineffective, and rife with unpleasant side effects, including effeminizing hot flushes, breast enlargement, and fat deposition in the thighs and buttocks (Devroey et al., 1998; Howards, 1995; Kamischke and Nieschlag, 1998). In short, male infertility is often as intransigent to treatment in the Arab world as it is in the West, leading to a condition of irreversible sterility and unwanted side effects for most infertile men and their wives.

However, a new reproductive technology called intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI; pronounced "ik-see"), has promised to change all of this. First developed in Belgium in 1992, ICSI is a variant of IVF that has allowed thousands of severely infertile men to father children with their own sperm. As long as one spermatozoon can be retrieved from an infertile man's body—including through painful testicular biopsies or aspirations—this spermatozoon can be injected directly into the ovum with the aid of a micromanipulator and a high-powered microscope, thereby forcing fertilization to occur (Devroey et al., 1998). Despite its relatively low efficacy rates of less than 25 percent per cycle, ICSI has become widely available in IVF centers in the West, where it has now helped thousands of severely infertile men to father their own biological children.

By 1994, only two years after its discovery, ICSI had arrived in Middle Eastern IVF centers, which, by that time, were flourishing in many Arab countries. Curious about the implications of ICSI for male infertility and masculinity, I decided to return to the Middle East to initiate a new study on male infertility in the era of new reproductive technologies. Locating my study in two busy IVF clinics in Beirut, Lebanon, I spent eight months in 2003 interviewing 220 Lebanese, Syrian, and Lebanese-born Palestinian

men about their childlessness. Of these men, 120 were infertile (based on spermogram results and World Health Organization criteria for male infertility), and 100 were fertile but were married to infertile women. Each man who participated in the study completed a reproductive history interview, as well as a more open-ended ethnographic interview revolving around "the four M's": medical treatment seeking, marriage, morality, and masculinity. The study produced some fascinating findings, especially surrounding the effects of the Lebanese civil war on reproductive disruption (Inhorn, 2004).

In terms of masculinity, however, the findings were rather surprising and unexpected. Most of the men who agreed to participate in my study stated with conviction that male infertility "has nothing to do with manhood," insisting that they had never equated their own infertility with feelings of emasculation. Although some men explained that the general public might view male infertility in this way, they insisted that male infertility is a medical problem—"like any other medical condition"—and thus should not represent a crisis of masculinity, nor a conspiracy of silence.

Indeed, ICSI seems to have given infertile Lebanese men new hope that their male infertility problems can be overcome through technological means. In other words, the arrival of ICSI in Lebanon—and the aggressive advertising of ICSI by many Lebanese IVF clinics—has served to both medicalize and normalize male infertility, leading to increasing openness about this reproductive health problem. For infertile men who have reached Lebanese IVF clinics, many have adopted a medical model of infertility that serves to diminish feelings of impaired masculinity. As a result, many of these men have told their friends and family members that they are trying ICSI at an IVF center. Indeed, families—at least close relatives on both husbands' and wives' sides—are often heavily invested in infertile men's ICSI quests.

Although ICSI has served to diminish feelings of hopelessness, despair, and emasculation among at least a subset of treatment-seeking Arab men, it is important to point to wider societal views of male infertility that undoubtedly still affect many Arab men who are infertile. As one Lebanese man who was pursuing ICSI reminded me,

In Lebanon, yes, male infertility does affect manhood. Men don't want to admit they can't have children. They're not men any more. But this is not the view of people inside treatment. People who are "in" know it is a medical problem. So we don't feel this problem of manhood or womanhood.

In other words, because I was interviewing treatment-seeking men, many of whom had been infertile for years and

had accepted their infertility as a God-given medical condition, my sample was probably biased. Furthermore, the majority of Lebanese men in my study were highly educated, with at least a high school diploma and many with advanced degrees. Virtually all of them were literate, and many of them had spent considerable time outside of the country, including in the West. Many of these men had educated, working wives, and thus presented to IVF clinics as "career couples." Presumably higher levels of education and satisfaction with professional careers may have offset the potential effects of emasculation and contributed to men's acceptance of a medical model of male infertility.

Having said this about the men who did agree to speak with me, it is extremely important to say something about those men who did not. Indeed, a significant (although undetermined) percentage of men who were asked by their IVF physicians, clinic staff members, or by me directly to participate in my study refused, outright, to become my informants. On any given day, one, two, or even more men who were asked to participate in my study declined to be interviewed, even after careful description of the benefits of the study and its guarantees of confidentiality. Reasons for refusal, if given, were of three general types: "not in the mood to talk," "not enough time" (even though most men spent hours in the clinic waiting for their wives to complete ICSI procedures), and "this is something confidential" (i.e., a secret not to be shared even in a confidential interview).

This issue of male non-response, first noted by Lloyd (1996) among men in Western infertility studies, may mean many things in Lebanon. According to most of the Lebanese IVF physicians and clinic staff members, non-response in my study was probably due to masculinity issues—namely, the sensitivity and "shyness" of most Lebanese men to reveal their reproductive problems to anyone, including a Western researcher.¹ They argued that male infertility is, on some level for some Lebanese men, deeply humiliating—something to be hidden rather than revealed. In fact, when I first arrived at one of the Lebanese IVF centers and explained my study to the clinic staff members, a nurse predicted bluntly that my study would never succeed because of the stigma and secrecy surrounding this topic. She described how couples with an infertile husband tried to "hide from each other" in the recovery rooms, and would sometimes stay there for hours if they saw an acquaintance who might expose their secret to the outside world. Although her prediction about my study's inherent failure did not come to pass, her point was well taken. At least some men in Lebanese IVF clinics probably refused to speak to me out of feelings of stigma and emasculation. Those who did agree to participate were probably the ones who felt least diminished by their infertility for reasons of education,

supportive wives and family members, and idiosyncracies of personality and resilience. Even so, a number of men in my study did admit to feelings of emasculation and "differentness," and spoke of their "shock," "sadness," and "frustration" over being infertile. As one infertile man who was a pediatrician explained,

"Manhood. It's really an important factor in society. I know this as a pediatrician. The first thing people ask for at the first baby visit is to check the [male] baby's reproductive organs. They're worried from the first moment of life if [the child has] normal reproductive organs, and if he will have a normal sexual life. It's about his future manhood. It's a strong feeling. And it's a deficiency if you can't have children. I do think people feel this. I would assume they do, because it's a secret kind of thing, male infertility. In my own case, who knows about this [his male infertility problem]? My wife doesn't want anyone to know. So we come here [to the IVF clinic] in secrecy."

Future Directions for Research

Clearly, male infertility is a condition that rebounds on Arab masculinity in important ways. Because neither male infertility nor masculinity have been well studied around the globe, including in the Arab world, the potential for future research in this area is great. This is especially true in the era of the new reproductive technology called ICSI, which has spread around the globe and has reached the flourishing private IVF industry in the Middle East.

Because ICSI represents the first real solution to male infertility, it has the potential to overcome infertility among millions of Arab men, with effects on masculinity that are profound.

Already in Egypt, Lebanon, and in many other Middle Eastern countries, ICSI has helped thousands of men to overcome their male infertility, fathering healthy babies with their own unhealthy

sperm. As shown in my studies described above, the emasculation of male infertility evident in Egypt in the mid-1990s is giving way to improved feelings of technological confidence among Lebanese men who are accessing ICSI in the new millennium. In Lebanon, many infertile men in IVF clinics have begun to view male infertility as a simple medical condition that can be overcome through technological means. Thus, the effects of male infertility on manhood are no longer considered as important in light of this new medical-technological solution.

Having said this, it is extremely important to point out that ICSI will remain out of reach of many infertile men in Arab countries. Not only is the technology expensive - between U.S. \$2,000-\$5,000 for one trial of ICSI in most Middle Eastern IVF centers - but the globalization of ICSI has been uneven in the Arab world. For example, whereas Lebanon has approximately 15 IVF centers for a population of 3 to 4 million, neighboring Syria has only a handful of IVF centers, leading hundreds of infertile Syrian men to cross the border each year in pursuit of ICSI in Lebanon.

Similarly, Arab men in the Western diaspora often choose to return to the Middle East to search for affordable ICSI. In the U.S., a single cycle of ICSI can cost between \$10,000-\$20,000, and is usually not covered by health insurance. In my ongoing study of male infertility in the Arab-American community of southeastern Michigan - home to the second largest diasporic population (estimated at 200,000 to 300,000) of Arabs outside of the Middle Eastern region (Hassoun, 1999; Hudson et al., 1999) - I am finding that many infertile Arab immigrant men are poor political and economic refugees from Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen. Almost all of them have come to the U.S. over the past ten years, have variable English-speaking skills, and are employed in working-class service jobs (mostly in restaurants and gas stations) without health insurance benefits. As a result, they have few economic resources to pursue diagnosis and treatment for male infertility, and particularly ICSI, which is usually presented as the "only hope" to overcome their infertility. This fact is very demoralizing to this population of recent Arab immigrant men, who often ask whether ICSI can be performed effectively in the Middle East and whether it is less costly there. Clearly, future studies of male infertility among Arab men need to examine the ways in which the actual costs of ICSI services - including accessibility to non-elites by virtue of partial state subsidization (as is being tried in some clinics in Egypt) or partial insurance coverage (as is being tried among some professional syndicates in Lebanon) - affects infertile Arab men's sense of hope for these technologies, as well as their feelings of masculinity.

Indeed, in my current Arab-American study, diminished masculinity seems to be more pronounced for recent immigrant men than among the men I interviewed in Lebanon. Perhaps economic and social marginalization in the U.S., coupled with a male infertility diagnosis, leads to synergistic feelings of emasculation. Furthermore, many of the men in my Arab-American study are newly diagnosed cases, who have yet to come to terms with the meaning of male infertility in their lives. Perhaps in my current study I am beginning to capture some of the secret feelings of emasculation that were beyond my reach in Lebanon, due to the high non-

response rates of infertile men. Perhaps, too, in a U.S. setting, where childlessness is considered socially acceptable, if not always desirable, non-response rates are lower, because Arab men feel more comfortable speaking with a researcher about their infertility, including their feelings of lost manhood. Perhaps over time, as more Arab-American men of diverse backgrounds and acculturation levels participate in my study, I will be able to assess how Middle Eastern masculinities can change in a diasporic Western setting, where the very definition of manhood, at least in the society as a whole, may be less bound to the achievement of patriarchal fatherhood (Van Balen and Inhorn 2002). Do Arab-American men, especially those who are second- or third generation immigrants, continue to equate fertility with manhood? Or do they forge new meanings of manhood in a society where paternity and fatherhood may no longer be the essence of masculinity? These are research questions that I hope my study will eventually answer.

In conclusion, my study of male infertility and masculinity among diverse groups of Arab men is, to my knowledge, the first of its kind. But it is a study that I hope will be repeated by other researchers in diverse Middle Eastern settings. Together, such studies can make a significant contribution to the social scientific and public health knowledge of male infertility as an important reproductive health issue in the Arab world. Furthermore, investigation of this topic is timely, given the exciting possibilities afforded by the newest new reproductive technology, ICSI, which has made its way to the Middle East. There, gender studies are also shifting from an almost exclusive focus on women to a new interest in Middle Eastern men as men, whose masculinity is molded in particular, culturally regnant ways. Thus, studying male infertility in the era of ICSI will contribute in unique ways to the emerging field of masculinity studies in the Middle East, and will help to bring this once intractable, potentially emasculating, and still hidden condition from behind its veil of secrecy.

END NOTES

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Egypt and Lebanon," in *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* (Vol. 18, No. 2, 2004).

Although I was initially reluctant, as a female researcher, to conduct a study exclusively on male infertility in the Arab world, Arab male colleagues convinced me that it might be easier for an Arab man to speak about his reproductive troubles with a female researcher than with a male, given the homosocial competition over fertility/virility described in this article. Also, my American nationality may have affected my ability to speak with some Lebanese and Syrian men during the U.S. invasion of Iraq. I have written about this in a forthcoming article on "Privacy, Privatization, and the Politics of Patronage: Ethnographic Challenges to Penetrating the Secret World of Middle Eastern, Hospital-Based In Vitro Fertilization" (Social Science & Medicine, in press).

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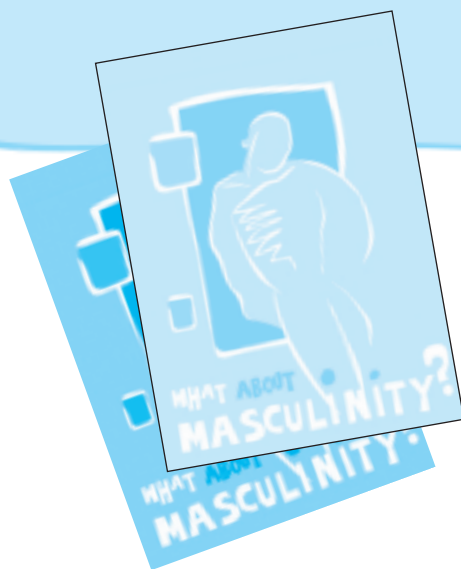
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New Constructions of Masculinity: Understanding the Dynamics of Conflict: Insights from the Case of Algeria*

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Competing interpretations of gender roles have played a central role in the recent conflict in Algeria. It is impossible to understand this without exploring the desperate circumstances of many men in Algeria, and throwing new light on the debate on the 'crisis of masculinity'. Nearly all the accounts I have read by women of their experience of the conflict highlight the issue of gender separation and difficult, painful relations between men and women, which leaves both parties in distress. This article is an attempt to explore the way in which masculinity is constructed and represented in Algeria, and to look at the range of possibilities available to young men in particular.

To understand these possibilities I am using three different sources: the independent press, feature film and novels. I will look at newspaper accounts of the position of the hit-tistes¹ namely the young unemployed men in contemporary Algeria; the fictional representation of the Afghans (Algerian men who, on returning from Afghanistan in the early 1990s formed the backbone of the Islamist militias) and the treatment of masculinity in Algerian film. I will situate this in a socio-economic-legal context and draw out some implications for understanding the relationship between constructions of masculinity and the vulnerability of young men in situations of conflict.

I would like to begin by discussing a well-known Algerian film, *Omar Gatlatu* made in the late 1970s by the director Merzach Allouache. Omar Gatlatu refers to the expression *gatlatu al-rujula* literally 'machismo killed him'. The film affectionately highlights male posturing and alienation (Allouache 1976). It was made during a more stable and prosperous period in Algeria's history, but it illustrates the problems facing young men at the time, and suggests ways in which the situation would later develop. The central character in the film is Omar. In a semi-documentary style, Omar recounts his daily life in the Bab el Oued neighbourhood of Algiers. What Omar says, and the camera shows are two quite different stories. While he dresses himself carefully we discover that he is still living with his parents, grandfather and sisters (some unmarried, another divorced) in a tiny flat. He has an un-pressured bureaucratic job in the service des fraudes but it lacks direction. We see the demoralised routine of office life, casual and liberal phone calls, reading the sports sections of the newspapers, and the occasional raid on (female) illegal street traders in jewellery. The overwhelming impression we are given is of the ineffectiveness of these men's lives. So during the raid the women escape sanction and reprimand the bureaucrats for interfering in their attempt to earn a liv-

ing. Omar's close circle of friends, other young men like himself, look longingly at young women from a distance: Omar sees one woman he likes on his way to work everyday. As she shakes bedding from her window, they exchange discreet signs of recognition. But his male circles of friends are his mainstay and they spend their leisure time together listening to chaabi and hindou music or attending football matches. When Omar loses his prize possession, a tape recorder, in a street robbery, he buys a replacement 'hot' from a friend. Unknown to his friend, it contains a cassette with a short message from a woman. He is fascinated by what she says about her life and despair, and he discovers that she works in the same office as he. He arranges to meet her but after an enormous build-up in which he gets drunk and finally manages to stand in his best suit on the other side of the busy street watching her waiting for him. Omar is torn between his friends who are simultaneously cheering him and calling him back because they don't want to lose him. Across the road, divided by the stream of traffic which would normally provide no obstacle, Omar is powerless to approach her and soon gives up. To save face, he tells himself he will meet her another day.

Three important themes emerge from this film. First it shows the gender segregation of Algerian society and men's hidden fear of women - a theme which is frequently evoked in other works (Allel 2001). Second it exposes men's relative powerlessness, alienation and aimlessness. Third, it draws attention to divisions between men and women who are living in overcrowded conditions and who scrutinise one another closely. Although Omar lives with his sisters, he has a very limited number of interactions with them. He doesn't know why his sister was divorced. He is uneasy about the physical proximity with her, but is powerless to change it. Events take place under the watchful eye of his friends and peer group. His male friends are all watching him and cheering when he stands poised to cross the road.

In retrospect the times of Omar Gatlatu, the 1970s, were relatively untroubled years in Algeria. But the 1980s saw considerable turbulence, the beginnings of structural adjustment, a rushed and incomplete process of democratisation and the emergence of the fundamentalist FIS (Lloyd 2003). The 1990s were years of terrible conflict and pressure on socio-economic structures. This has resulted in a social crisis, which has acutely affected many young men who form an active and vociferous minority especially significant in the volatile contemporary situation.

The Changing Status of Men in Algeria

As a whole, the world changing structures of production and reproduction, shifts in education, and the labour market and family organisation have weakened the 'tra-

ditional' roles associated with male dominance such as the role of breadwinner and head of the family and have given rise to the idea of masculinity in crisis or at risk (Bourdieu 2001; Chant 2000). Young lower income males are especially vulnerable to insecurity and marginalisation (Cornwall 1998). There is evidence that men's anger and confusion arising from this crisis may be expressed in increased violence and alcohol/drug abuse so their position is clearly an essential part of any analysis of conflict (Chant 2000).

In the next section I look briefly at the legal and socio-economic position of men in Algeria to reveal how this crisis is played out there.

Family relations and the legal position of men and women in relation to household members is determined in Algeria by the Family Code (1984) which is based on an interpretation of the shari'a. Since the recent changes to the Moroccan Family Code, the Algerian law is the most restrictive in the Maghreb. It established man's dominance over women, the husband as the head of the family, men's right to repudiate their wives, and institutionalised sexual inequality in inheritance. A woman's consent to her first marriage is mediated by a male guardian who can deny her choice of husband, and the code legalises polygamy although this is quite rare in practice (Saadi 1991). A great deal has been written and debated about the impact of the Family Code on women, but we should also be looking at its distorting consequences on gender relations in general (Marouane 1998).

Despite this pre-eminent legal status, men's position in the household is rendered problematic by extremely difficult social conditions. A look at demographics and family/household conditions reveals the extent of the pressure of change.

In the 1980s demographic boom, population grew at over 3% a year. In 1997 38% of the population was under 15.2. Life expectancy in Algeria is similar to Morocco and Tunisia at 66 for men and 69 for women. Since the launch of the National Programme for the Control of Demographic Growth in 1983 there has been a gradual acceptance of contraception, and fertility rates are slightly higher than in neighbouring countries but falling (UNDP 1998). Recent studies such as that recently published by Kamel Kateb suggest that there have been

... the Algerian law is the most restrictive in the Maghreb. It established man's dominance over women ...

basic changes in patterns of marriage running directly counter to the thrust of the Family Code (Kateb 2001). While marriage remains a near-universal institution in Algeria (almost 97% of all adults are married at some time) the average age of women at marriage rose – from 18 in 1966 to 25 in 1992 (Oufreha 1998).³ With a convergence in the age of spouses it is less common to find older men marrying younger women who they then try to dominate. So despite the Family Code, marriage is becoming more equal. Oufreha also found that the preference for male children is declining: 92% of Algerian women told the PAPCHILD survey that they would prefer female children to males (Oufreha 1998). This suggests that there may be important changes in women's self-perception and the way in which they negotiate patriarchal family structures which clearly has implications for men (Lacoste-Dujardin 1986).

In Algeria girls have traditionally been pressured to drop out of secondary school leaving the terrain open to their brothers ...

Living circumstances can be extremely difficult: the building of new housing stock has failed to keep up with population growth.⁴ Even in 1977 housing occupation was going beyond the level of 6-7 persons per unit. Despite the mushrooming of buildings since the 1980s, state initiatives lack coherence and the earthquake of 2003 exposed the failure to apply proper building controls.⁵ The conflict of the 1990s

has accelerated, and the flight from the countryside to the cities exacerbated overcrowding (Boumedine 1996). So the overcrowded conditions in which the fictional Omar was living in the 1970s have worsened.

Analysis of the crisis of masculinity also draws on evidence of male failure in education and employment (Chant and McIlwaine 1998; Hern 1998). In Algeria girls have traditionally been pressured to drop out of secondary school leaving the terrain open to their brothers, but recent figures show that more girls complete their education and do better than boys at their studies. Boys are more likely to drop out or have to repeat school years. Although girls are younger than boys in the final year of secondary education, they represented 55.3% of successful candidates in the baccalaureate exams in 1996.

In many countries men's failing integration into the family is associated with women entering the labour force in significant numbers (Moore 1994). But this is not really

true of Algeria. Women only constitute about 10% of the population in paid employment. There are also high levels of unemployment running at about thirty percent and surveys show soaring levels of urban poverty.⁶ Thousands of local businesses have closed involving the loss of many previously stable jobs. The growth areas are too frequently insecure and informal.

Recently the Algerian press highlighted the growth of the informal economy. Young men can earn well by selling places in the queue for visas in front of the French consulate in Algiers.⁷ Their clients are mainly women, older people and people living outside the city. Labour is divided between those who queue and those who find customers. Work starts with the queue at four in the morning. They charge about 300 dinars (about 5 Euros) for a place near the front but when the queue is longer it can rise to as much as 4000 dinars (about 60 Euros). This compares favourably with the minimum wage of 8000 dinars,⁸ or the daily wage of a building worker at 400 dinars. Those who work like this can earn 16,000 dinar (about 242 Euros), which is the equivalent wage of a secondary school teacher.

The catastrophic floods in November 2001 drew attention to the growing numbers of people in insecure employment. Two examples published in the daily newspaper *El Watan* give a flavour: 17 year old Samir sells second hand clothing in the Belcourt area of Algiers. His elder brother is a hittiste who at the age of 26 asks him for money to buy cigarettes. Samir gets up every morning at 7 and goes to work where he earns about 7000 dinars a month (about 105 Euros) and has the right to take one or two items of clothing for himself. He has no time to do anything apart from work. Another young man, Mohammed left school in the 4th year of primary education when his father abandoned his wife and children. He began running errands at the Triolet market in Bab El Oued, then selling and carrying crates of fruit. He then got a job in a shoe factory as a posteur, earning 2 dinars a piece. When the factory was inspected he was told to say that he was an apprentice although he was actually doing the work of a qualified worker sometimes doing unpaid overtime, with no paid leave. The factory was destroyed in the floods of November 2001 and he like many others had to start again.⁹

Different Roles

Given these constraints on men's positions within the family, education and employment, what are the roles open to young men in contemporary Algeria? Here I discuss two extreme cases: that of the hittiste and that of the Afghan. They are not the only possibilities available, but they illustrate the difficulties faced by many.

Hittistes

The word hittiste derives from the Algerian Arabic *hit* meaning wall: the hittistes are men who prop up the walls of Algeria's towns and villages. Their domain is the street; they observe life and take advantage of any opportunities, which may arise but are essentially aimless. Their presence in the streets reveals that there is no room for them at their parent's home and that they lack the resources to have their own private spaces. Hittistes are not necessarily unqualified, but they are victims of high levels of unemployment and lack of opportunity. Algerian popular discourse is full of references to the unrealised dreams of the hittiste who may fantasize about migrating, becoming a famous singer like Khaled, or a world class footballer like Zinedine Zidane, or even use his wit like the comedian Fellag who draws his material from street humour.¹⁰ It is no coincidence that these stories of success are of people who have left Algeria. The hittistes are a visible reserve army for any subversive activity since migration is not an easy possibility.

Afghans

In the early 1980s, one of the obvious directions for the disillusioned dreamer was to go and fight in Afghanistan. In Algerian literature of the 1990s there are many accounts of the impact of the returning veterans of the Afghan wars on local communities in the late 1980s (Allouache 1995; Boudjedra 1991; Boudjedra 1992; Boudjedra 1993; Boudjedra 1995; Khadra 1998; Khadra 1999; Sansal 1999; Sansal 2000; YB 1998; YB 1999; YB 2001).

Yasmina Khadra's¹¹ novel *Les Agneaux du Seigneur* is set in the late 1980s and early 1990s at the outset of the civil conflict in Algeria in the remote village of Ghachimat (Khadra 1998). It traces the way in which the village is gradually implicated in the conflict. Old animosities are channeled into the conflict, helping to determine people's positions. Women play a subordinate role in the novel except for two women: Sarah the virgin of the village who is pursued by a number of suitors who compete for her hand. The other woman is Mère Osmane, the mother of one of the main Islamist terrorists, who controls events from behind the scenes.

In this novel, Khadra shows how the Afghans' command over their communities arises partly from their challenge to the Algerian authorities and partly from prestige attached to their experience of hardship either in prison or in travelling (or both). Their experiences outside the country set them apart from those who remained in the village. The novel opens with the return from prison of Cheikh Abbas who brings Islamist ideas to the village. Although he did not go to Afghanistan he is portrayed as someone who has had exceptional experiences, and therefore, is worthy of respect. But Kada Hilal, a schoolteacher, gives

up his love for Sara who marries a policeman and sets off to Afghanistan. Kada is given a rapturous send-off by his peers when he decides to go to Afghanistan (p. 95). When he returns he automatically takes command of the situation because of his new won authority, based on experience. Another form of authority comes from social status. In some instances (as with Issa Osmane known as Issa la Honte) his position is partly determined by his role under colonialism or during the war of independence in the 1950s.

We can trace the history of the eruption of religious zealotry in post-independence Algeria to the early 1980s when for a short time a group captured the town of Laghouat on the edge of the Sahara and forbade women to work outside the home, and insisted that people should only eat dates and milk and walk barefoot. They were eventually chased away by the police. But in the next decade groups such as these launched other attacks (especially towards the border with Tunisia) Significantly, such men grew up in the urban slums where their tirades against government corruption found an audience among young people who were acutely aware of social inequalities.¹² Islamic Fundamentalist groups aided by the Saudis and others rapidly responded to social crises such as the earthquake in the autumn of 1989, and began building a popular base¹³, while many others were recruited to go to Afghanistan (Mahfoud Nahnah, current leader of the MSP and member of the present government, has recently recognised that he sent some thirty groups of Algerians to fight in Afghanistan in the early 1980s).¹⁴ As they returned in the early 1990s from Afghanistan the first references to Afghans began to surface.¹⁵

One of the militias, the GIA (Groupe Islamique Arme) was dominated by the "Afghans". Tayeb al-Afghani was one of its early leaders. Al-Afghani was the nom de guerre of an Afghan War veteran and former smuggler who had commanded an Arab group in Afghanistan.¹⁶ The GIA and its Afghans were active around Algiers in the mid 1990s. While the FIS military wing, and the AIS largely confined their attacks to military and government targets, the GIA concentrated its death squads on foreigners and Algerian intellectuals in and around the capital. For some time, it was viewed as the champion of young, uneducated and mostly unemployed Algerians who were turning to militant Islam.

Men wearing ties and collars were accused of working for the government and thus were targets for assassination.

People's position towards the Islamistes was expressed in the kind of clothes they wore and their beards which were grown and shaved off depending on the political climate.¹⁷ Men wearing ties and collars were accused of working for the government and thus were targets for assassination.

Following the Concorde Civile of autumn 1999, the Algerian authorities have been involved in a controversial attempt to end the conflict by offering an amnesty to members of the Islamist militia who were prepared to call a truce. The return of the so-called repentis to their communities in the early months of 2000 has given rise to agonised analyses of their effects, particularly on Algerian youth. One analysis published in the independent daily newspaper *Le Quotidien d'Oran*¹⁸ wrote of 'the terrorists, these new heroes'. *Le Quotidien* shows how they are telling stories to fascinated groups of youth about war activities, ambushes, assassinations, the fraternity of the maquis, and their exploits with women. Since they have been cultivating a myth about their heroism, their sheer return from the war alive is a victory in itself. Many commentators believe that the repentis are acting like conquerors, and seeing their new position (which involves considerable social support) as the right one. The psychologist Fatima Karadja is not surprised by their attempts at self-glorification, but draws attention to the way in which many have transgressed human taboos, mutilating bodies, booby-trapping corpses and committing rape. She argues that they need to go through a more sustained process of treatment in which they recognize what has happened to them. There is deep concern about the possibility of another generation of young men being indoctrinated especially in the present situation.

END NOTES

* Thanks to the ESRC for funding this research The role of migrants in sustaining or resolving conflict Grant no. R000239716. 1. They are young, but they don't move around, they are just there, always in the same place, their backs to the wall, a blank gaze, they watch the time go by, they are called hittistes. Definition: Hittiste : a masculine name derived from the word "Hit" which in Algérois means "wall". Deeper Definition: All young people who can find nothing better to do with his life than to practice hittisme is a hittiste. Intellectual Definition: A youth leaning against a wall because he has no personal space at home or particular activity in society. Hittiste speech : young people speak of "dégoutage" the key word of the 1990s. They also say "Leguaia" to express a confused feeling, a mixture of distress and disturbance. Hittiste joke: "instead of breaking down the Berlin wall the

Conclusion

The idea of a crisis of masculinity is present in the case of Algeria for several reasons. Firstly we are talking about a crisis of identity which goes back many years, to massive social dislocation during the colonial period and which persisted even after independence. This identity crisis was underscored by problems in housing, education and employment which have given rise to massive migration in the ranks of the hittistes, and the under/unemployed. There is enormous unrealised potential which comes to the surface when we study accounts of survival strategies, and responses to disaster. Accounts of the way the population of Bab el Oued responded to the November floods or how young men worked to save victims of the earthquake of 2003 shows a capacity to show goodwill and contribute socially.

The Family Code was introduced in an attempt to re-establish what was seen as Algerian, particularly Islamic values. But what many women experience as intolerable oppression also involves a distortion of gender relations which has presented young men with the possibility of wielding power, inside the home having been denied power outside because of unemployment.

In the 1980s another set of options opened up, represented by the growth of Islamic Fundamentalism and the adventure of the war in Afghanistan. This had a brutalising impact, but we should not lose sight of the positive values of experience, knowledge, travel, action, which require to be harnessed in a less destructive manner. Alongside the valuing of sensational and violent exploits, there is also respect for the attempt to take control of one's life. It is striking that young men's main alternatives to the tedium of their lives at home lies outside the country either joining foreign wars or migrating.

Germans should have sent it to us' This typically Algérois humour enables us to pose the question : "Given the birth rate are there enough walls for the hittistes?" <http://www.lesouk.org/arhittistes.htm> (accessed 21 January 2001). 2. <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications.wpp2000/annex-tables.pdf> (accessed 27 March 2004). 3. EASME/PAPCHILD survey 1999 conducted by the Office national des statistiques among 6,694 households. 4. A report published in 1963 emphasised the need to build 100,000 housing units a year in order to replace housing destroyed by the war. But no action was taken, partly because of the illusion of abundance created by the departure of Europeans who left empty accommodation behind them. Between 1973-4 an initiative to build 1,000 socialist villages, realised only 350. The Ministry of Housing, Urbanism and Construction was established in 1977.

5. More than 786,000 building permits have been issued in the last twenty years. Often plans are not realised: land is being privatised, the cost of raw materials increases, and building standards lax.
6. *El Watan* 23-24 novembre 2001.
7. AFP 28 janvier 2001
8. In Jan 2001 the national minimum wage was 8,000 dinars (about 212). 100 dinars = 1.51.
9. *El Watan* 5 janvier 2002.
10. Fellag says about the sources of his compassionate humour: 'While I was writing *Un bateau pour l'Australie*, I was in a café in Algiers in 1989 and I heard a dialogue between two youths: 'Yesterday one of my cousins came from back home. He slept in my bed. And you? Under the cupboard. It's a good job my cousin is in temporary transit' When I got home, I wrote twenty pages in one go. That 'my cousin is in temporary transit' was all theatre.' 'Fellag le rire grâce', René Solis Liberation vendredi 26 mars 2004.
11. Yasmina Khadra is the nom de plume of Mohammed Moulesshoul, an ex-army officer. Many of 'her' readers suspected that Yasmina was not a woman (style of the novels, treatment of the themes and the male/female characters). 'Yasmina Khadra se

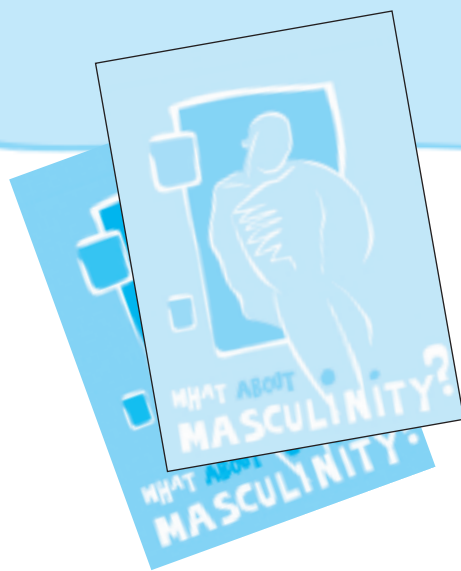
- démasque Entretien' *Le Monde des livres*, Yasmina Khadra, ancien officier supérieur de l'armée algérienne, révèle son identité. 11 janvier 2001. Also Guardian 3 January 2002.
12. *Independent* 15 October 1988.
13. *Sunday Telegraph* 8 April 1990.
14. *El Watan* 6 novembre 2001.
15. On the role of Afghans in the Casbah. *Daily Telegraph* 8 Feb 1992; *Sunday Times* 3 Feb 1992.
16. He became a symbol of the Afghans and Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria when he was captured after an attack on a police station at al-Gummar in south-eastern Algeria near the Tunisian border in November 1992. That triggered a wider conflict between the fundamentalists and the Algerian army. Other splinter groups, hard-line, anti-Western radicals, emerged, such as the Organization of Free Islamic Youth, held responsible for the murder of Islamic moderates who advocated dialogue between the FIS and the government, and the Movement of the Islamic State: Compass).
17. Robert Fisk 'Going underground at the barbers', *The Independent* 10 February 1992.
18. *Quotidien d'Oran* 10 février 2000.

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Female Genital Mutilation and Constructions of Masculinity in Twentieth Century Egypt

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Masculinity in Egypt has traditionally been in part a function of control of female sexuality; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is one instance of this. Likewise notions of femininity have served to encourage FGM among women, as the practice can be interpreted in part as removing or reducing a portion of the female anatomy that is popularly considered more properly male in terms of both structure and function; this has been considered a necessary precondition for marriage. In recent years, as anti-FGM educational campaigns have become more common in Egypt, anecdotal evidence indicates there has been some shifting of these ideas, as educated men sometimes show a preference for "uncircumcised" girls as marriage partners, believing that they will be more sexually responsive. Yet this too is tied to notions of femininity and masculinity – in this case, enlisting female sexuality in the service of male sexual pleasure and prowess. If FGM is to be combated effectively, social space for unmarried women must be created, anti-FGM campaigns must broaden the scope of their activities to include male audiences, and men must be educated about the biological and psychological components of sexuality.

FGM as an Essential Component of Masculine and Feminine Identity

Both sex and gender can influence an individual's role in society. Sex is the biological identity that describes the presence of the X and Y-chromosomes during conception, resulting in the formation of a male, female, or intersex individual; an individual's gender is based upon society's expectations and treatment of an individual.¹ Gender is what creates the idea of masculinity and femininity as expectations to which males and females must adhere. These expectations are better defined as gender stereotypes – behavior considered the norm or ideal, which creates a shared gender identity.² Such stereotypes are defined as "socially shared beliefs that certain qualities can be assigned to individuals based on their membership in the female or male half of the human race."³ Yet, the definition of what is masculine and what is feminine changes depending on cultural norms. Such constructs are best understood as ones that are in a constant state of flux within particular cultures, and all cultures develop their own patterns of gender construction.⁴

Nevertheless, the differences in gender that emerge across cultures often construct women and men as gender opposites – a man is what a woman is not, and a woman is what a man is not. Often, stereotypes define men as strong, aggressive, and intelligent, while labeling women

as weak, submissive, and ruled by emotion.⁵ One common manifestation of masculinity has historically been control of women; in the traditional view, "humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being."⁶ This control by men of women has taken many different forms in various cultures and across time periods, including attempts to control female sexuality.⁷ Yet at the same time, many of the practices that have evolved to support and demonstrate masculinity within a society also, by extension, support the society's notions of femininity. As one scholar has argued, "men often attempt to police the mobility and conduct of their sisters, daughters, companions and comrades, sometimes – quite often in fact – with the complicity of their mothers and other senior women."⁸ For women, as for men, upholding the expected roles of each gender is something that supports the social order and guarantees the individual a place within the society, whereas "violating sex roles [gender expectations] has the most negative consequences amongst those who believe that conformity to sex roles is important."⁹

In many African countries, including Egypt, FGM has historically been one means of enforcing control of women's sexuality, and hence of reinforcing traditional gender roles and expectations within society.¹⁰ In Egypt, women are seen as sexual beings, whose innate, intense sexuality must be controlled and regulated in order for society, and the family, which is seen as the basis of society, to function properly. Here, "according to dominant gender constructs, men and women each have a different part to play.... women's inherent sexuality is believed to be constantly endangering the social harmony of society (by tempting men) and is, therefore, best controlled through women's modesty and their remaining as much as possible within the private sphere of the family."¹¹ FGM is part of this process, as it is believed to be crucial to proper socialization and behavioral norms.¹² Although there are many procedures that fall under the general category of FGM (e.g. clitoridectomy, excision, female circumcision, female genital cutting), in Egypt, the procedure generally entails removal of part or all of the clitoris and sometimes the labia minora as well, in the belief that circumcised women will not be sexually aggressive.¹³

Fatima Mernissi has argued that there are two contradictory yet coexisting conceptions of female sexuality in Islamic culture – what she refers to as the explicit theory of women's passive sexuality and the implicit theory of women's active sexuality. The passive sexuality theory holds that women are best, and perhaps solely, fulfilled in passive roles and in their submission to men. According to this view, men are and must be the sexual aggressors and women the passive recipients of their attentions. The key to a woman's femininity, according to this view,

is the experience of pleasure through suffering and subjugation – a masochistic view of pleasure that is deemed quintessentially female. According to the active sexuality theory, women naturally possess significant power through their sexual appetites and desires and through their attractiveness to men. Women therefore need to be controlled and their sexuality restrained so that men can fulfill their social and religious obligations without distraction – women and female sexuality must be restrained for the good of society.¹⁴ FGM conveniently fits both these theories of sexuality. In terms of the passive sexuality theory, in removing the anatomical locus of sexual pleasure, the practice confirms the woman's passive role in intercourse and the man's role as sexual aggressor. The procedure itself likewise causes physical pain and suffering, which this theory holds is actually a source of feminine pleasure. In terms of the active sexuality theory, FGM removes the anatomical source of sexual pleasure, which serves to control female sexuality, enabling men to go about their business without facing constant temptations by women or constant demands for sexual services from highly sexed women.¹⁵

The physiological basis of these beliefs is open to question; indeed, many medical professionals and psychologists argue that even women who undergo forms of FGM more severe than those practiced in Egypt are quite capable of experiencing sexual desire and achieving orgasm.¹⁶ Others take the view that the absence or mutilation of the clitoris makes orgasm impossible to achieve, and the psychological effects of the procedure, coupled with real and potential medical complications achieve the end that the practice is designed to achieve – physical control of female sexuality.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the fact that in the popular imagination, it is the clitoris itself that causes women to be excessively focused on sex and sexual gratification and hence the removal or reduction of that organ is believed to "tame" a woman's sexuality is what is crucial in analyzing the practice.

Another reason FGM has been practiced is the belief that it cleanses, purifies, and beautifies the female genitals, thus making them appear more feminine. This belief stems from two sources: first, the understanding of sexual pleasure as a male prerogative and second, the understanding of the clitoris as a sort of small penis, an unnecessary and de-feminizing appendage that ought to be removed.¹⁸ The first of these beliefs is tied to a dualistic view of the sexual act itself; the male role in intercourse is to achieve pleasure, the female role is to receive the biological matter necessary for reproduction. Thus, "the most effective method of preserving a girl's chastity and of guaranteeing her fidelity after marriage, is purely and simply to amputate the organ capable of procuring her any erotic pleasure. Removing the clitoris, an organ

unnecessary for fertilization, also means reducing a woman to her primary function: motherhood."¹⁹ The second of these beliefs stems from cultural ideas about masculinity, femininity, and the body. In Egypt, there is a "belief in the presence of one sex of a characteristic of the other sex. In women, this presence is thought to take the form of the clitoris, hence the need to remove it. Disencumbered of this virilising appendage – the clitoris – the woman can now assume her true feminine nature and the capacity to bear children....It is only by undergoing excision that a girl becomes a complete, separate woman and is then ripe for marriage."²⁰

The social importance of marriage reinforces the practice of FGM in Egypt, according to many experts. In Egypt, as in many other Arab and African countries, women as a group have comparatively fewer opportunities than men for education and career; even those who do become educated and seek a career outside the home are faced with a dilemma. As Nahid Toubia has argued,

In Middle Eastern societies, the overwhelming majority of women (85% in some countries) are illiterate, and work opportunities outside the home are scarce. Women's work is restricted to the home, the family business, or land. Survival outside the family is physically impossible.... there is still no 'social space' to accommodate her if she remains unmarried. Hence, Arab women... can survive only within the institutions of marriage and the family – they have no other choice.²¹

Despite the centrality of FGM to gender identity in Egypt, and although FGM seems to have been practiced in Egypt to some extent for thousands of years,²² the public debate on the topic is a relatively recent development. The next section reviews anti-FGM campaigns in Egypt and their connection to gender construction.

FGM and Masculinity in 20th Century Egypt

In 1954, prominent activist Aziza Hussein was serving on the social committee of the UNGA, whose agenda included "unhealthy traditional practices." She did not know what this meant, and thought perhaps there were some types of extreme surgery occurring in Africa. However, she recalled, the members of the committee "did not come out openly to spell out what they meant. Apparently the problem [of FGM] had surfaced worldwide and had been camouflaged as usual."²³ Hussein related that she and many of her upper class, reform-minded colleagues were not aware of the problem, and in fact believed FGM to be illegal.²⁴ Hussein, speaking of her experiences in the 1950s, related her surprise,

[we were challenged] to produce the text of the law, but it was not to be found. Only a ministerial decree had been

passed assigning a committee to study female circumcision in Egypt and to give its recommendation. The terms of these recommendations were so ambiguous as to be shocking. The doctors, if they take any heed of it at all, can find an official backing for their performance of the superficial excision. Traditional midwives, it is true, are forbidden to perform surgical procedures including female circumcision but they continue to do it and nobody takes them to task. Moreover, the committee referred to divergent religious interpretations as regards degree of excision, leaving it largely to the discretion of the public.²⁵

Ministerial decree #74 of 1959 created a committee to study FGM and its consequences. The committee determined that only qualified medical doctors would be legally permitted to perform the procedure, that only the less severe forms of FGM should be allowed, that FGM would be banned in health units governed by the Ministry of Health as a first step towards eliminating FGM, that *dayas* (midwives) would not be allowed to perform any sort of surgery, including FGM, that FGM is harmful, and that Islamic legal authorities agreed that complete excision is contrary to Islamic law, though they differed regarding partial excision.²⁶ According to Hussein, the fact that the decree did not ban the practice outright appeared to contradict an older law banning unnecessary and unprofessional surgery.²⁷

In 1963, the Cairo Women's Club was asked by Mahmoud Karim, a prominent gynecologist and family planning activist, to include female circumcision in educational and research agendas. Hussein described the response of the CWC in 1994:

We refused outright; it would compound our problem, we said, to address two controversial issues at the same time. Furthermore, none of us could see any relationship between family planning and female genital mutilation.... Sexuality and the status of women did not yet figure on our reproductive health agenda. Nor were we even conscious of the gravity of the situation. Taboos had prevented us from even hearing about it – taboos perpetuated by ignorance and misconception, preventing public discussion and objective handling of the issues.²⁸

Even after the UN experiences of Hussein and despite the ministerial decree, not much attention was given to the practice and its persistence. Nawal El Saadawi recounted the problems she faced when attempting to do research on the question of women and sexuality in the 1970s, noting the absence of reputable research on FGM and sexuality. Some of the first works published in Egypt on the topic appeared in 1965 and addressed both the issue of medical complications from the procedure as well as the more controversial issue of its impact on female sex-

uality and desire, yet these works were few and far between, and none addressed the relationship of the practice to constructions of masculinity.²⁹

Hussein continued her work in 1975, spurred on by her participation in the UN Decade for Women Conference in Mexico City and the international attention being given to the practice there. Upon returning to Egypt, Hussein decided that the Cairo Family Planning Association should become more actively involved in the emerging international discussions on FGM.³⁰ Egyptian women's organizations and NGOs were, in Hussein's words, "suddenly bombarded with questions about female circumcision in Egypt prompted by the writings of Egyptian doctors, particularly Dr. Nawal Sa'adawi, although we were under the impression that the practice was illegal. In fact, the only legal prohibition extended to traditional midwives, who were forbidden to perform surgical procedures including female circumcision, but continued to do so."³¹

By October 1979, the CFPA had organized the first public seminar on the topic, entitled "Bodily Mutilation of Young Females," held as part of the International Year of the Child. It explored the religious, medical, social, and legal aspects of FGM, thus breaking the taboo on discussing the practice.³² In Hussein's view, it was "a course in sex education for the public at large, the likes of which had never been experienced before. The question dealt basically with the way taboos can perpetuate ignorance and violate the female child's body in the name of chastity and hygiene...."³³ The outcome of the seminar was the formulation of a plan of action, which included urging the media to begin an educational campaign about the dangers of FGM, encouraging women's groups and existing female social service personnel in urban and rural areas to undertake educational campaigns, and pushing for inclusion of information about FGM in school and university curricula.³⁴ The argument that FGM should be included in educational materials was a new one, which included male audiences and held the potential for linking the practice not only to the reproductive health of women, but also to notions of masculinity, sexuality, and power.

Nevertheless, the seminar was a landmark event, and in addition to the recommendations already noted, the seminar also concluded that the holy books of all religions of Egypt did not mention the practice and that there were serious health consequences to it. The ministerial decree resulted in more unsupervised operations and in the need for educational work and research; and since numerous misconceptions existed about the benefits of the practice; FGM should be criminalized.³⁵ As a result of this seminar, the CFPA decided to launch its Female Circumcision Project. Hussein described why this

was done: "We decided to make it our task to break the silence and taboo around this subject, as we had done with family planning, turning it from a taboo into a national movement."³⁶ The FCP then began issuing numerous pamphlets in Arabic and English on the practice to the public through its family planning clinics.³⁷ Hussein's focus on an educational, rather than legal approach, stemmed from an awareness of the fundamental role that FGM plays in gender construction.

In 1992, the FCP broke from the CFPA and became its own organization, with the cumbersome, politically correct name of the Egyptian Society for the Prevention of Traditional Practices Harmful to Women and Children³⁸ (hereinafter referred to as the Society) and undertook an aggressive educational campaign aimed at public health officials, media figures, social workers, and students.³⁹ The Society was particularly proud of its television campaigns, presenting them in the following light: "One of the major achievements was our full-scale access to the media, particularly broadcasting and TV. After a total black-out on the subject, they [made] female circumcision one of their priority subjects.... [which] resulted in an unprecedented public debate on the subject." Hussein recounted that the Society then limited TV involvement for fear of a pro-FGM backlash against such efforts.⁴⁰ Despite this, since the early 1990s, the campaign has increased its momentum, building in part on the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994. One significant change since 1994 is that anti-FGM messages are not only provided by NGOs, but government agencies have embraced and begun communicating the message as well.⁴¹ Egyptian television has also been more open to discussions on FGM in recent years, as part of the general proliferation of talk-shows and news that have occurred in the wake of the expansion of satellite channels broadcast from other Arab countries.⁴²

In 1994, during the ICPD, a CNN program featuring a young girl being circumcised by a barber in Cairo was aired. President Hosni Mubarak, facing strong international criticism, agreed to ban the practice of FGM. Due to opposition from religious groups, the Minister of Health then "clarified" the government's position in 1995: "We have no plans to ban this operation... but we are looking at ways for it to be carried out by qualified doctors and under proper medical supervision."⁴³ Since this was a restatement of the 1959 decree, it did not silence international criticism. Therefore, in 1996, the government issued a ban on FGM which applied to all practitioners, including doctors, at all locations, whether in or out of a hospital.⁴⁴ In June 1997, an Egyptian court struck down the ministerial ban on FGM in state and private clinics, while preserving the ban on FGM by those

untrained in medicine. Although not commenting on the practice itself or its legality, the court ruling stated that the ban placed "undue restrictions on doctors" by preventing them from performing surgery.⁴⁵

According to Hussein, this decision was appealed in 1997. The Society and other anti-FGM groups filed amicus curiae briefs with the court of appeals and intensified their public educational campaign.⁴⁶ The end result was a decision by the court of appeals that stipulated that "FGM violates the Criminal Law and those who perform it could face imprisonment." Yet, this ban alone will not end the practice, and may have the opposite effect, as journalist Mariz Tadros argued in 2002,

The decree helped legitimize the work of NGOs in the eyes of their constituency but, like all legislation, it offered little hope of engendering social change. Many NGOs themselves knew that an approach based on threatening to punish midwives and doctors who perform the practice could well backfire.... prosecuting the practitioners of FGM could well lead to antagonizing entire communities, especially where the targeted doctor or midwife is well-liked. It also raises the possibility that, should people not be convinced that the practice is harmful, scaring them with legal repercussions could potentially drive the phenomenon underground.⁴⁷

In recognition of the ingrained acceptance of FGM among both men and women, in November 1998, the Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs conducted a seminar whose goal was "to provide reliable scientific information on women's health, in an attempt to raise people's awareness and encourage them to change their attitudes towards certain practices, especially [FGM] and early marriages." Reaffirming the government's commitment to anti-FGM efforts, Minister Mervat Tallawi asserted:

Confronting harmful practices against women is a tremendous challenge which requires the cooperation of all the relevant ministries, NGOs and United Nations agencies.... These organisations should cooperate in raising public awareness of the negative effects that practices such as early marriage and female genital mutilation can have not only on women but also on society as a whole.... The ministry will continue to take the necessary steps to help the various organisations in their fight against harmful practices against women.

Tallawi was joined in her condemnation of FGM by Minister of Health and Population Ismail Sallam and Sheikh al-Azhar Muhammad Sayed al-Tantawi.⁴⁸ In January 1999, Maher Mahran, Chairman of the Population Council, argued at a seminar of the National Council for Motherhood and Childhood that FGM is an

embedded cultural tradition that is difficult to change, particularly when people believe it is religiously mandated.⁴⁹ These statements, however, continued to focus primarily on the relationship of FGM to women's health and neglected to address its link to masculinity.

Nawal el-Saadawi's research in the 1970s concluded that education is an effective tool to reduce the incidence of FGM.⁵⁰ That view has been repeatedly endorsed by virtually all organizations and individuals involved in the fight against FGM. Yet there has been considerable controversy over the proper methods and content of anti-FGM education. A 1999 study by the FGM Task Force (*quwwat al-'amal lil-munahaddat li-khitan al-banat*, a coalition of NGOs and others actively campaigning against FGM in Egypt) discussed the experiences of seven NGOs involved in the campaigns, including Caritas-Egypt, which has been engaged in providing information about FGM to students attending its literacy classes. However, gender attitudes have made its work difficult. Although female teachers distributed information to girls, who appeared receptive to the message, the girls' families were not. Their mothers "were more suspicious, and did not always think it fit that such issues be discussed openly, especially when marital relations were discussed by unmarried teachers. Mothers were also worried that their daughters would remain unmarried if they were not circumcised. Many of the [male relatives of the students], the report continued, could not understand why the issue is being raised now, and why such attention is being devoted to it."⁵¹ Moreover, male teachers were less likely to raise the issue with the boys in the classes, as they "felt that FGM was not a topic that they should be discussing with young boys."⁵²

Not only is the gender of the educators and the audience a factor in the success of the campaigns, but so too is western bias. In 2003, Egyptian television began showing an anti-FGM commercial as part of its commemoration of the Year of the Girl Child. Although the commercial was praised for its anti-FGM position, the framework in which the message was conveyed was widely criticized, as it linked abstaining from FGM to upward mobility, westernization, and wealth.⁵³ Involvement by international, especially western, groups is often interpreted as inappropriate and as a western/Christian attempt to undermine Egyptian / Arab/Islamic society through a reorientation of gender norms. Hussein herself insisted on an Egyptian, rather than an international, approach to eradicating FGM, writing, "the last straw came when I received a communication from some women leaders asking me to join them in signing a statement addressed to Dr. Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations, asking him to work for the elimination of female circumcision. I refused, saying that if the problem concerns

women of my country, the responsibility of tackling it should be mine, not that of the Secretary General of the United Nations."⁵⁴ Marie Assad, one of the country's foremost anti-FGM activists, illustrated the problems inherent in western involvement with anti-FGM campaigns, commenting in 2001, "As a person, I'm against [FGM] but when USAID is involved, my interpretation is that they want to destroy the families in Egypt."⁵⁵

Islamist activists have also criticized the rapid increase in anti-FGM efforts since 1994, attributing it to a desire to enforce "the agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which seeks to obliterate the Islamist wave in the Middle East – a task that has been facilitated by globalization" and which includes Egyptian court action prohibiting the wearing of the *niqab* (face veil) by schoolgirls.⁵⁶ The fact that the prominence of FGM in the agenda of the ICPD was largely a result of the previously mentioned controversial CNN documentary that premiered during the conference feeds into these sentiments.⁵⁷

Nevertheless, NGOs and the government remain committed to anti-FGM efforts. The government has revised textbooks to make them more sensitive to gender issues and to portray a more positive image of women: "FGM is now introduced in various subjects and in various grades (in the Islamic religion books for example), and pupils learn that the practice is not of Islamic origin or prescription. In the science curriculum for third preparatory, pupils learn about FGM's harmful physical effects." Yet it is difficult to make teachers use the revised texts when they disagree with their content", as Fatheya Mustafa, vice president of the Centre for Curriculum and Institutional Materials Development has noted.⁵⁸ Since, as will be argued shortly, men seem to be more likely to believe FGM is necessary, male teachers may be less likely to use the anti-FGM sections of schoolbooks to reinforce those readings in class. This, in turn, may mean that boys will not be exposed to more anti-FGM education in the future, perpetuating the cycle of more supportive attitudes among men for the continuation of FGM.⁵⁹

This is particularly troubling, since men play a role in choosing to circumcise their daughters. Although women have historically been seen as the primary instigators of FGM, recent work in Egypt is challenging that view, explicitly linking the practice to gender constructions. In 1991, the CFPA noted that, "studies have shown that the person responsible for making the decision in the family to circumcise the girl is primarily the mother, then both parents together."⁶⁰ A 2001 survey of university students emphasized male attitudes and male dominated family decisions as primary factors in circumcision choices. It showed that "males were 1.5 times more likely than

females to support the practice of FGM.... The belief that FGM is absolutely necessary in order to make a woman attractive or even an acceptable candidate for marriage appears to be the most compelling reason.... Other factors inherent in the culture, such as male dominance, appear to still exist among the educated population, which may explain why males were more supportive of FGM in our study."⁶¹ The study recommended an approach that centers on education of men and families about FGM, "not just women who are often helpless beside their dominant male counterparts," as an effective means of reducing the incidence of FGM.⁶²

Findings of another study conducted in 2001 confirm these views. Although the sample size was small, the study found that "men possess limited knowledge about FGM but hold strong opinions about whether or not their social dependents (sister, wife, daughter) should be circumcised – men are the principal decision-makers in the question of whether or not to circumcise their children; most respondents favored circumcision." The study further concluded that, "men's main reason for supporting circumcision was that it would diminish women's overwhelming sexual desire which threatens male status."⁶³ In other words, the practice supports the prevalent constructions of masculinity and femininity, and both genders buy into the dominant constructs. Recent work on masculinity in Egypt has focused on such concerns. As Nadia Wassef of the FGM Task Force argues, "For men [sexual performance] seems to mean a lot, everything – so all these men are going out of their minds trying to get their hands on the pill [Viagra]. On the other hand you have women who are perceived to be over-sexed and hence must be quietened down which is why you circumcise them."⁶⁴

A 2000 study sponsored by the NCPD and carried out by Wassef and Abdallah Mansour made a clear link between masculinity and FGM, one of the first times such an argument had been publicly made in the research context in Egypt. Although the study was based on a small sample (fifty men), the study indicated that masculinity is a complex set of attitudes, and that many of these attitudes revolve around power and control, particularly control over sex, sexuality, and women. It also noted the prevalent male fear that masculinity was something that must

studies have shown that the person responsible for making the decision in the family to circumcise the girl is primarily the mother ...

be continually proven, lest it be lost or taken away. Such attitudes were particularly strong among younger men, and only one of fifty articulated the view that sexual intercourse was a means of emotional expression; the other 49 viewed it as a means of enforcing their dominance over their wives. Likewise,

men's answers revealed a great deal of insecurity towards uncircumcised women. Some men were convinced that uncircumcised women would make excessive sexual demands, which they would not be able to fulfill.... All the men's responses regarding masculinity, identity and their perceptions of women clarified their positions on FGM. 'Something about FGM made men feel more secure in their sexuality,' suggested the study. FGM, the men indicated, was a way of keeping women's sexuality in check. This is an important consideration, when women's enjoyment of sex is essential to proving men's sexuality and masculinity. 'In a sense, their ultimate fear was of not being able to satisfy a woman because of being weak. FGM can be seen as a function in the reverse mode: FGM weakens the woman so that a man can satisfy her,' indicated the study.⁶⁵

In addition to the shortcomings of current educational campaigns, legal campaigns against FGM are also inadequate. Legal prohibitions on FGM are not enforced, and as Hussein has noted, doctors have a financial incentive to perform FGM as long as there is a demand.⁶⁶ A related problem is ignorance about legal rulings concerning FGM. The 1998 death of a young girl undergoing FGM in a northern suburb of Cairo was the seventeenth such death since 1994. Yet, the girl's family was unaware that the practice was illegal or harmful, and the police investigating the girl's death were not aware "that an order by the State Council, the highest administrative court, had banned the performance of the operation in public and private hospitals and clinics."⁶⁷

Conclusion

It is difficult to find reliable statistics on the prevalence of FGM or assess the effectiveness of anti-FGM campaigns.⁶⁸ Some studies indicate a reduction in FGM, while others do not, and the same statistics are often interpreted differently:

The Population Council [in 1999] points to a decline in [FGM].... A survey carried out on Adolescence and Social Change in Egypt (ASCE) indicates that circumcision rates among single girls are now 86 per cent, 10 percentage points lower than the almost universal prevalence found in the 1995 Egyptian Demographic Health Survey (EDHS) of ever-married women aged 15-49. The ASCE notes that 'there is evidence of a delay and possible reduction in female circumcision following the 1994 International

Conference on Population.' This optimism, believes Fatma El-Zenati, technical director of the EDHS, is unfounded. 'Bear in mind that the almost universal rate of 97 per cent referred to married women. When they were asked whether they would circumcise their girls, 86 per cent said yes. So the ASCE had only confirmed the EDHS's findings. There is no reduction in percentage because we are talking about two totally different groups, unmarried girls and mothers,' explains El-Zenati. She estimates that it will take 10 years before we can observe any significant decline in the practice of female circumcision – if only because the process of informing people, changing their attitude and the reflection of this change in their practice is a lengthy one. 'This does not mean that there is not change in attitude, but it is too early to show any changes since the ICPD [in 1994].'⁶⁹

Hussein evaluated the anti-FGM efforts in the following way: "We believe we have succeeded in at least breaking the taboo and, to a limited extent, changing attitudes and behaviour.... [but] cultural traditions die hard and education is a long-term process."⁷⁰

One way to improve the effectiveness of anti-FGM campaigns is to broaden the scope of their activities to include male audiences and the education of men about the biological and psychological components of sexuality. A new approach adopted by NGOs has been to stress "positive deviance," a strategy whereby NGO workers identify those in a particular area who are going against community norms, determine why they chose to do this, encourage them, support them in their decisions, and attempt to enlist them in convincing others, thus giving them more legitimacy and status within their communities.⁷¹ Although this approach has enjoyed some success among women, NGO experiences in trying to educate men about the issue have not been positive, as men often consider this a women's issue and having nothing to do with them.⁷² Tasoni Yoanna Salib, a Coptic nun, doctor, and social worker, noted that the real test of whether anti-FGM campaigns are effective will be in the male response. Although one village in which she works has not had any girls circumcised in three years, Salib is not declaring victory in the anti-FGM campaign there, noting that "The first time that a man marries an uncircumcised woman and [is] publicly proud of it, then our task will have been achieved."⁷³

An interview conducted in 1999 with Dr. Aziza Kamel of the Society highlights some of the difficulties Egyptian women face in an atmosphere of changing attitudes about FGM. Kamel related the story of a young woman whose family insisted that she undergo FGM (in this case, removal of the clitoris) while she was a child. The family was conforming to the social pressures and traditional

beliefs concerning the supposed necessity of performing this operation previously described. The girl grew up and married an educated man from a less traditional family. Shortly after marriage, problems developed. The husband was not satisfied with the young woman's sexual responses, a problem he attributed to the excision of her clitoris. As a result of sexual problems, he threatened to divorce the young woman. The young woman's mother brought her to Kamel's clinic, crying and begging the staff to somehow reattach or reconstruct the young woman's clitoris so that her husband would not divorce her and would be satisfied with her sexuality.⁷⁴

Whether FGM is practiced as a means of repressing the sexual drive of women or whether it is avoided as a means of providing an adequate female response to intercourse, what must be emphasized is that in both of these views, the most important thing is seen by men to be their ability to satisfy a woman. How to get satisfaction for the man is the real issue – is it best done by conducting sex in a manner that means the woman does not ask for more (in other words, circumcise her so she is satisfied with whatever level of sexual activity the man is inclined to provide), or is it in making the sex act more pleasurable for the woman (in other words, do not circumcise her so she achieves orgasm and exhibits pleasure more readily, thus stoking the man's ego about his sexual performance)? In either view, the woman is treated as an object, not an active participant, in the sexual act, and the ultimate criterion for decision-making is male sexual pleasure and psychological dominance.

Another means of improving anti-FGM activities would be to create social space for unmarried women. As Toubia, a prominent Sudanese doctor and anti-FGM spokesperson, has argued, campaigns against FGM that base their arguments on the risks of the procedure and/or argue simply that it is not religiously required miss the crux of the issue. The real reason for the persistence of FGM, she believes, is its connection with marriageability and the central role of marriage for women and society. In her view,

one of the most important reasons for circumcising a girl is to ensure that she will not lose her chance to marry; ... this would mean that she loses her chance for a respectable life. Loss of a woman's genitalia is not, therefore, too high a price to pay in order to secure her chances in life through marriage. This is the social significance of female circumcision and its real value. To argue against this practice on the grounds of its physical damage and to attempt to eradicate it through health awareness and education are futile. It is essentially a social phenomenon reflecting the position of women and not a medical problem.⁷⁵

If this view is valid, then it means that barring any fundamental reorientation of Egyptian social norms to create a social space for large numbers of unmarried, career-oriented women, or women who marry later in life, FGM as a practice will diminish only as views about the relative benefits of "circumcised" and "uncircumcised" girls and as marriage partners change. And in Egypt these views seem likely to change only if there begins to be a wider alteration in the social construction of gender. Moving conceptions of masculinity away from power and control and reorienting them in part towards female sexual responsiveness, rather than maintaining them as oriented towards suppression of female sexuality, might, as the anecdotal evidence indicates, achieve this goal. Likewise, reorienting notions of femininity to include sexual responsiveness (within the proper social constraints – i.e., marriage) seems essential as well. Whether educational campaigns against FGM are capable of making and sustaining these arguments remains to be seen.

Whether these arguments go far enough towards a more equitable construction of gender, likewise, is open to debate. Indeed, the seeming emergence among the educated classes of a preference for "uncircumcised girls" as marriage partners is arguably tied to existing notions of masculinity and femininity that subordinate women to men – in this case, enlisting female sexuality, albeit a reformulated one, in the service of male sexual pleasure and prowess. Critics of such an approach might rightly argue that such a reorientation does nothing to change the fundamental ideas of gender or of male dominance in Egyptian society: to be masculine, one must still control female sexuality – but such control would be exercised not through its suppression but through an encouragement of female sexuality as a means of satisfying male marriage partners. Nevertheless, if the goal is reorienting notions of masculinity in a constructive manner to allow for the reduction or eradication of the practice of FGM, thus allowing women to more fully experience their sexuality, it seems a step in the right direction. Although it would not fundamentally change the definitions of gender roles, it would change one part of one manifestation of masculinity, perhaps to the mutual satisfaction and benefit of both males and females.

One of the most important reasons for circumcising a girl is to ensure that she will not lose her chance to marry.

END NOTES

1. Margaret L. Andersen, *Thinking About Women: Sociological Perspectives on Sex and Gender* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000), 20-5. The binary definition of sex as male and female is being increasingly called into question, particularly with the breaking of the public silence on intersex. In the US and UK, scientific journals and even popular news magazines have been publishing more and more studies and personal accounts related to the phenomenon. See, for instance, Christine Gorman and Wendy Cole, "Between the Sexes," *Time* (1 March 2004), 54-6 for a popular account of recent work on intersex. For more scientific and specialized recent work, see Sharon E. Preves, *Intersex and Identity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003); Carrie Paechter, "Learning Masculinities and Femininities: Power/Knowledge and Legitimate Peripheral Participation," *Women's Studies International Forum* (November 2003, volume 26, issue 6), 541-53; Juan A. Tovar, "Clitoral Surgery and Sexual Outcome in Intersex Individuals," *Lancet* (July 2003, volume 362, issue 9379), 247-9; Myra J. Hird, "Considerations for a Psychoanalytic Theory of Gender Identity and Sexual Desire: The Case of Intersex," *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* (Summer 2003, volume 28, issue 4), 1067-93; and Surya Monro, "Transgender Politics in the UK," *Critical Social Policy* (November 2003, volume 23, issue 4), 433-53.
2. Hilary M. Lips, *Sex and Gender* (London: Mayfield Publishing Co., 2001), 8. There has been a proliferation of studies of gender identity, expectations, and stereotyping in and of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals in the last three decades in the US academic community. See, for instance William F. Pinar, "'I Am a Man': The Queer Politics of Race," *Cultural Studies/Critical Methodologies* (August 2003, volume 3, issue 3), 271-87; Michael J. Bailey and Joseph S. Miller, "Maternally Rated Childhood Gender Nonconformity in Homosexuals and Heterosexuals," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* (October 1993, volume 22, issue 5), 461-70; Janet Lever and Sally Carson, "Behavior Patterns and Sexual Identity of Bisexual Males," *Journal of Sex Research* (May 1992, volume 29, issue 2), 141-68; David J. Lutz, Howard B. Roback, and Maureen Hart, "Feminine Gender Identity and Psychological Adjustment of Male Transsexuals and Male Homosexuals," *Journal of Sex Research* (November 1984, volume 20, issue 4), 350-63.
3. Lips, 2. Such constructions are most often generally accepted and understood by the dominant culture (and to some extent even by the existing subcultures), regardless of their basis in reality or experience and regardless of any contradictions or observations and experiences to the contrary.
4. Indeed, "a culture's attitudes and practices regarding gender are deeply embedded in its history, environment, economy and survival needs." Letitia A. Peplau, Sheri DeBro, Rosemary Veniegas, and Pamela L. Taylor, *Gender, Culture, and Ethnicity* (London: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1999), 20.
5. Peplau, 29. Of course, cultures have additional gender stereotypes, many of which ascribe both positive and negative qualities to both genders.
6. Evelyn Ashton-Jones, Gary A. Olson, and Merry G. Perry, *The Gender Reader* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000), 54.
7. Julia T. Wood, *Gendered Lives* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1994), 32. See also Mai Ghoussoub and Emma Sinclair-Webb, eds. *Imagined Masculinities Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East* (London: Saqi Books, 2000), 20, for a brief discussion of how circumcision of boys and girls fits into public displays of masculinity.
8. Ghoussoub, 9.
9. Wood, 33. Male power, influence, and control in traditional Egyptian culture are such social expectations, which, for many, are

difficult to violate. This comes forth in various forms including the expectation of FGM.

10. Although most westerners believe such practices to be confined to African and Middle Eastern societies, Mary Crawford and Rhoda Unger, *Women and Gender: A Feminist Psychology* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2004), 271, report that similar procedures were common in the US and Britain until fairly recently, "clitoridectomies were done by physicians to cure upper-class women of too much interest in sex, and one health expert advised parents of girls who masturbated to 'apply carbolic acid to the clitoris.'"

11. Bahira Sherif-Trask, "Egypt" in *Women's Issues Worldwide: The Middle East and North Africa* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 74.

12. For more on the rationale for FGM in Egypt, see Nawaal El Saadawi's groundbreaking work, *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World*, translated by Sherif Hetata (Boston: Beacon Press, 1980), 33-43. El Saadawi related a story told to her by one Egyptian girl. When asked about her circumcision, the woman described it in the following terms: "I did not know anything about the operation at the time, except that it was very simple, and that it was done to all girls for purposes of cleanliness, purity and the preservation of a good reputation. It was said that a girl who did not undergo this operation was liable to be talked about by people, her behaviour would become bad, and she would start running after men, with the result that no one would agree to marry her when the time for marriage came. My grandmother told me that the operation had only consisted in the removal of a very small piece of flesh from between my thighs, and that the continued existence of this small piece of flesh in its place would have made me unclean and impure, and would have caused the man whom I would marry to be repelled by me." El Saadawi, 34-5.

13. In comparison with some of the other forms of FGM practiced in some sub-Saharan Africa countries (which can entail removal of the clitoris, the labia majora and the labia minora as well as sewing or fastening together the vulva with various materials, leaving only a small opening for urination and menstruation), the Egyptian form of FGM is relatively mild, yet the purposes behind all such procedures are generally similar. It is not the purpose of this article to discuss the historical origins of the practice at length or to debate its relationship or supposed relationship to religious doctrine. These issues have been dealt with at length in the secondary literature. A brief history of the practice, though, can be found in El Saadawi, 39-40, and is included here: "Many people think that female circumcision only started with the advent of Islam. But as a matter of fact it was well known and widespread in some areas of the world before the Islamic era, including in the Arab Peninsula....the Prophet [Muhammad] tried to oppose this custom since he considered it harmful to the sexual health of the woman. In one of his sayings the advice reported as having been given by him to Om Attiah, a woman who did tattooings and circumcisions, runs as follows: 'If you circumcise, take only a small part and refrain from cutting most of the clitoris off. . . The woman will have a bright and happy face, and is more welcome to her husband, if her pleasure is complete.' This means that circumcision of girls was not originally an Islamic custom, and was not related to the monotheistic religions, but was practised in societies with widely varying religious backgrounds, in countries of the East and the West.... Circumcision was known in Europe as late as the 19th century, as well as in countries like Egypt, the Sudan, Somaliland, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Guinea and Nigeria. It was also practised in many Asian countries such as Sri Lanka and Indonesia, and in parts of Latin America. It is recorded as going back as far into the past under the Pharaonic Kingdoms of Ancient Egypt, and Herodotus mentioned the existence of female circumcisions seven hundred years before Christ was born."

14. Fatima Mernissi, "The Muslim Concept of Active Female Sexuality," in *Sexuality and Gender*, eds. Christine L. Williams and Arlene Stein (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 297..

15. Of course, it must be noted that FGM is not practiced in most Islamic or most Arab or Middle Eastern societies. Nevertheless, the fact that the practice is in consonance with the prevailing theories of female sexuality in Islamic societies identified by Mernissi means that in societies like Egypt where the cultural practice of FGM predates Islam, it could continue to exist in a predominantly Islamic culture, and it could be redefined sociologically to coincide with new values and norms.

16. See Lynne Brydon and Sylvia Chant, *Women in the Third World: Gender Issues in Rural and Urban Areas* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 29. A 1995 Egyptian Demographic Health Survey reported that 96 percent of women in Egypt were circumcised, and that half of those did not achieve orgasm. See Mariz Tadros, "Planting the Seeds of Change," *al-Ahram Weekly* (6-12 May 1999).

17. Crawford and Unger, 270.

18. This notion is not unique to Egyptian, Arab, or Islamic cultures. Indeed, Sigmund Freud made similar arguments in his works, when he argued that "The elimination of the clitoral sexuality is a necessary precondition for the development of femininity." Sigmund Freud, *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, 196-7, cited in Mernissi in Williams and Stein. See this chapter for more discussion of Freud's ideas and their relationship to Muslim ideas of female sexuality.

19. Wédad Zénié-Ziegler, *In Search of Shadows: Conversations with Egyptian Women* (London: Zed Books, 1988), 94-5.

20. Zénié-Ziegler, 97. See also Mahmoud Karim, *Female Genital Mutilation: Historical, Social, Religious, Sexual, and Legal Aspects* (Cairo: National Population Council, 1999), 69-72 where he discusses this issue as well, noting that the "female" part of the male body is traditionally considered to be the prepuce (foreskin), which is removed during male circumcision.

21. Nahid Toubia, "Women and Health in the Sudan," in *Women of the Arab World: The Coming Challenge. Papers of the Arab Women's Solidarity Association Conference*. Ed. Nahid Toubia (London: Zed Books, 1988), 99.

22. See, for instance, Karim, 50, where he notes the existence of FGM in some ancient mummies and discusses the possible pharaonic and Sudanese origins of FGM. Other sources argue that although FGM was practiced in ancient Egypt, it was brought to Egypt by Ethiopians in the 8th century BCE as part of a fertility ritual that involved FGM and the Nile. See, for instance, Mariz Todros, "Planting the Seeds of Change," *al-Ahram Weekly*, 6-12 May 1999, quoting Seham Abdel-Salam, a doctor from the FGM Task Force.

23. Aziza Hussein, "Female Circumcision," Egyptian Society for the Prevention of Harmful Traditional Practices to Woman and Child, 1999, 2.

24. Amy J. Johnson, interview with Aziza Hussein, Mit Ghamr, Daqahliya, Egypt, August 2, 2003.

25. Hussein, "Female Circumcision," 2-3.

26. "haqa'iq ilmiyya hawl khitan al-inath" Egyptian Society for the Prevention of Harmful Traditional Practices to Woman and Child, 1999. See also "Facts About Female Circumcision," Cairo: Cairo Family Planning Association, 1991, 17; and Zénié-Ziegler, 99.

27. Amy J. Johnson, interview with Aziza Hussein, Cairo, Egypt, June 1999.

28. Aziza Hussein, "The Role of NGOs in Eliminating Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Woman and Child," Egyptian Society for the Prevention of Harmful Traditional Practices to Woman and Child, prepared for the NGO Forum of the ICPD, 1994, 2.

29. See El Saadawi, 38. These two studies were done by Mahmoud Karim [Koraim] and Rushdi Ammar of Ain Shams University and enti-

tled *Female Circumcision and Sexual Desire and Complications of Female Circumcision*. See also Mahmoud Karim, *Female Genital Mutilation: Historical, Social, Religious, Sexual, and Legal Aspects* (Cairo: National Population Council, 1999).

30. See Marion Levy, *Each in Her Own Way: Five Women Leaders of the Developing World* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1988), chapter 6. Levy recounts the Mexico City experience as follows, "The subject aroused international indignation. Aziza warned that world opinion considered female circumcision a serious mark of backwardness and a poor reflection on Islam. She seemed stung by her own ignorance of the practice and by the universal condemnation of it outside the Arab World. She persuaded her colleagues at the Cairo Family Planning Association to launch an investigation of circumcision and then negotiated funding for it from IPPF [International Planned Parenthood Foundation]," Levy, 176.

31. Hussein, "The Role of NGOs in Eliminating Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Woman and Child," 2.

32. Amy J. Johnson, interview with Aziza Hussein, Mit Ghamr, Daqahliya, Egypt, August 2, 2003. Hussein noted that the practice was not common among the educated classes or among those of Turkish descent.

33. Levy, 176-7.

34. "Facts About Female Circumcision," Cairo: Cairo Family Planning Association, 1991, 4-5.

35. Hussein, "Female Circumcision," 4-5.

36. Hussein, "The Role of NGOs in Eliminating Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Woman and Child," 2. The reference here is to Aziza Hussein's experience in forming the CFPA as the first NGO in Egypt specifically devoted to family planning activities.

37. The Society issued a 1999 pamphlet entitled "haqa'iq ilmiyya hawl khitan al-inath" which cites eight doctors, professors, and health workers as sources. It briefly reviews the historical background of the practice, the opinions of Muslim and Christian religious scholars, the types of FGM found in Egypt, and discusses in more detail the immediate and long-term physical and psychological harms of the practice and the legal responsibilities involved. "haqa'iq ilmiyya hawl khitan al-inath" 1999 by the Society. Another pamphlet issued by the Society reviews the Christian religious perspective on FGM. It argues that the practice has no biblical basis, that the Jewish community never practiced FGM, that it is not mentioned in the Old or New Testaments, that it therefore has no basis in Christianity, that it is not practiced by Christians elsewhere in the Middle East, and that the religion forbids harmful tampering with God's creation, and that therefore it is religiously prohibited to mutilate one's body. Moris Asad, "khitan al-banat min munthar misih" (Cairo: Modern Egyptian Press, n.d.). Another pamphlet discusses in more detail the opinions of Islamic scholars on the practice, noting that the practice is not found in the Qur'an and not found to be a duty in any respect in the sunna of the prophet. It further argues that the prophet treated women with honor, implying that FGM contradicts the overall view of women by the prophet. It also notes the lack of agreement among jurists and concludes that the practice has no positive and only negative physical and psychological effects. Anwar Ahmed, "ara' ulama' al-din al-islami fi khitan al-untha" (Cairo: Modern Egyptian Press, n.d.). A 1985 pamphlet issued by the CFPA in both Arabic and English discusses the relationship between Islam and FGM, and concludes, based on evidence from religious scholars, that Islam does not require and in fact prohibits FGM. It stresses that the happiness of the family is based on comfort, affection, and gentleness, and that it is a duty to treat one's daughters kindly. It notes that there is no mention of FGM in the Qur'an, that Muhammad did not circumcise his daughters, and that the only hadith that mentions circumcision of girls is a hadith with an unreliable chain of transmitters. Moreover, according to the

pamphlet, even if the hadith were reliable, it would mean that only the most minimal amount could be cut from a girl's clitoris, and then only "if the clitoris is abnormally protruding and causes harm to the girl, and this is to be decided by a specialized doctor." The pamphlet then reviews the differing positions of legal scholars of all four Sunni law schools, notes that circumcision of girls is only considered obligatory in the Shafii school, and says that even so, modern legal scholars abide by the general principle that if a practice causes harm then it should not be continued. FGM, according to the pamphlet, is known to cause health harms to women, and therefore, according to this guiding principle of Islamic law, must not continue. Abdel Rahman al-Naggar, "Mawqif al-islam min khitan al-inath", CFPA, 1985, 6. The Society has also distributed the following pamphlets: Aziza Hussein, "Female Circumcision, 1999; Aziza Hussein, "The Role of NGOs in Eliminating Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Woman and Child," prepared for the NGO Forum of the ICPD, 1994; Abd el-Ghaffar Mansour, "Mawqif al-shari'a al-islamiyya min khitan and inath," n.d; and Aziza Kamel Mahmoud, "Dalil makafiha khitan al-inath." These are in addition to "Facts About Female Circumcision," issued by the CFPA in 1991.

38. The name is sometimes given in the English literature as the Egyptian Society for the Prevention of Harmful Traditional Practices to Women and Children" or simply, "The Egyptian Society for the Prevention of Harmful Practices." Its Arabic name is "al-jam'iyya al-misriyya lil-waqaiyya min al-mumarasat al-dara b-saha al-mara'a wa-al-tifl."

39. Hussein, "The Role of NGOs in Eliminating Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Woman and Child," 4. That year (1992), the Society calculated its educational efforts in the following manner: "...the following numbers of professionals were given intensive training: 228 nurses, 51 doctors, 284 social workers, 197 TV personnel, 228 broadcasters, 228 public health and medical cadres, 261 nursery supervisors. Those given orientation and information were: 1845 university graduates, 600 students in nursing schools and 200 youth in youth camps. Furthermore, mothers are reached in family planning clinics, religious festivals, at nurseries, maternal and child health care centres, and integrated social welfare services."

40. Hussein, "The Role of NGOs in Eliminating Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Woman and Child," 4-5.

41. Mariz Tadros, "Five Years for Fathiya," *al-Ahram Weekly* (4-10 February 1999).

42. Amina Elbendary, "TV Meets the Madding Crowd" *al-Ahram Weekly* (14-20 June 2001).

43. "Egypt: Top Islamic Authority Supports FGM," *Women's International Network News* (Spring 1995, volume 21, issue 2).

44. Mariz Tadros, "No Time to Talk," *al-Ahram Weekly* (8-14 June 2000).

45. Douglas Jehl, "Egyptian Court Voids Ban on Cutting of Girls' Genitals," *New York Times* (26 June 1997).

46. Amy J. Johnson, interview with Aziza Hussein, Cairo, Egypt, June 1999.

47. Mariz Tadros, "Proud to be Different," *al-Ahram Weekly* (7-13 March 2002).

48. Gihan Shahine, "Ministry Moves Against FGM," *al-Ahram Weekly*, (19-25 November 1998).

49. He urged further religious education and noted that this was the proper means of reform, since "even educated mothers in Upper Egypt [traditionally a more conservative area] are still convinced female circumcision is [religiously] proper." Rania Khallaf, "Girls Have Rights," *al-Ahram Weekly* (7-13 January 1999). The seminar was held under the auspices of first lady Suzanne Mubarak. FGM has been included in discussion and seminars on domestic violence as well. See Mariz Tadros, "The Word is Out," *al-Ahram Weekly*

(20-26 January 2000), noting its inclusion as a form of violence against women in a recent workshop on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in Cairo sponsored by the German development agency Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung.

50. El Saadawi, 34, states that "The research that I carried out on a sample of 160 Egyptian girls and women showed that 97.5% of uneducated families still insisted on maintaining the custom, but this percentage dropped to 66.2% among educated families." These statistics are based on work in 1973-74 and were published by Ain Shams University.

51. Mariz Tadros, "Progress of Sorts," *al-Ahram Weekly* 4-10 February 1999.

52. Mariz Tadros, "Progress of Sorts," *al-Ahram Weekly* 4-10 February 1999. Tadros noted that the experience of CEOSS, the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services, "reported a success rate in FGM eradication of about 70 per cent in eight villages," yet the report noted that this was after a seven year long educational campaign, and largely due to the unambiguous position of Christian religious leaders. It noted that because Muslim scholars are divided on the advisability and legality of FGM in Egypt, the experiences of CEOSS are not typical. The report reiterated the importance of using religion as a means of educating and eliminating the practice. It further noted that anti-FGM training has not been wholly effective either, noting that many of those trained in anti-FGM educational efforts are nurses, yet nurses have little opportunity to reach out to families and girls to educate them about FGM. The nurses also misunderstood parts of the anti-FGM message, believing that FGM causes frigidity, which can cause divorce, drug abuse by husbands, or husbands abandoning their families.

53. The commercial is described in Fatemah Farag, "The Girl is Egyptian," *al-Ahram Weekly* (22-28 May 2003). This linkage was especially problematic because much of the public debate over FGM is perceived as being instigated by foreigners. Television coverage is particularly vulnerable to such criticism in the wake of the 1994 CNN documentary on FGM in Egypt, which showed graphic images of the procedure. The same year, an international conference on FGM was held in Cairo, which drew delegations from 28 Arab and African countries. The conference, held under the auspices of first lady Suzanne Mubarak, issued a statement saying, "The prevention and abolishment of female genital mutilation (FGM) can be achieved only through a comprehensive approach, promoting behaviour change and using legislative legal tools required to combat the practice of female circumcision." Dina Ezzat and Dahlia Hammouda, "Putting down the Scalpel," *al-Ahram Weekly* (26 June-2 July 2003).

54. Hussein, "Female Circumcision," 3.

55. Quoted in Amira Howeid, "Reluctant Grassroots," *al-Ahram Weekly* (21-27 June 2001). For more on the issues involved with this view, see Kamran Asdar Ali, "The Politics of Family Planning in Egypt," *Anthropology Today* (October 1996, volume 12, issue 5) which discusses the roles, perceptions, and problems of international involvement in reproductive health politics in Egypt. Also see Kamran Asdar Ali, "Global Processes and the Nation State," *Sex Roles* (October 1998, volume 39, issue 7/8), 651-7.

56. Summary of comments by Islamist lawyer Montasser El-Zayyat, in Mariz Tadros, "Veiled Insinuation," *al-Ahram Weekly* (29 July-4 August 1999).

57. "Egypt: UN Conference on Population and Development and FGM," *Women's International Network News* (Autumn 1994, volume 20, issue 4).

58. See Mariz Tadros, "Dad in the Kitchen?" *al-Ahram Weekly* (13-19 September 2001).

59. More recently, activists in Egypt have also begun criticizing male

circumcision, on the grounds that it too is an unnecessary and potentially harmful bodily mutilation. See "Global Women Unite," *al-Ahram Weekly* (10-16 January 2002). These criticisms have not been well-received.

60. "Facts About Female Circumcision," 12.

61. M.F. Allam et al, "Factors Association with the Condoning of Female Genital Mutilation Among University Students," *Public Health* (2001 volume 15), 353.

62. Allam, 354. This recommendation is based on the positive results of such campaigns in rural Kenya.

63. The study, conducted by Nadia Wassef and the FGM Task Force, is based on surveys of sixty men. Its results are summarized in "Challenging the Tradition? Eradicating FGM in Egypt," *Women's International Network News* (Winter 2001, volume 27, issue 1), 42.

64. Fatemah Farag, "Viagra Blues," *al-Ahram Weekly*, (21-27 May 1998).

65. Mariz Tadros, "A Question of Control," *al-Ahram Weekly* (20-26 April 2000).

66. Hussein remarked that, "Our source of disappointment has to do with the increasing number of doctors performing the operation: 20 per cent in 1991 as opposed to 15 per cent in 1986. They see the ministerial decree as a sanction for performing the 'superficial' operation, which they rationalized as the lesser of two evils since it allegedly protects against resort to clandestine operations performed by the traditional practitioners in unhygienic conditions. But it could also be a lucrative business for doctors." Hussein, "The Role of NGOs in Eliminating Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Woman and Child," 5. A tragic story of one family's experience with FGM illustrates the problem Hussein mentions here. The mother of a young girl took her to doctors to have her circumcised. The girl died during the operation from circulatory failure and cardiac arrest, most likely as a result of improperly administered anesthesia. According to an article about the girl's death, "The mother was surprised to learn that the operation is banned in both public and private hospitals. 'This is the first time we hear this today. We are poor and uneducated women; we have never heard that it is banned. If it does harm to a woman's body, why did the doctors not tell us so?' she lashed out. The doctors charged LE 80 for each circumcision." Mariz Tadros, "FGM Claims Another Victim," *al-Ahram Weekly* (23-29 July 1998).

67. Mariz Tadros, "FGM Claims Another Victim," *al-Ahram Weekly* (23-29 July 1998).

68. Girls do not typically receive gynecological exams prior to marriage, and often not until they undergo their first pregnancy after marriage. In some areas, FGM is not talked about openly, although much progress has been made in that regard since the 1970s. Estimates vary widely, and have since the first attempts at quantifying the scope of the practice in Egypt were made in the 1970s. A brief summary of recently published statistics illustrates this. A 1991 CFPA publication estimated that not less than 95% of girls in Egypt have undergone FGM procedures. "Facts About Female Circumcision," 12. A 1994 publication of the Society stated that, "A wealth of data has been collected.... The results so far have demonstrated a positive correlation between formal education of girls and the non-practice of female circumcision and vice-versa. Around 65 per cent of girls with above secondary education were not circumcised, and 35 percent were, whereas 89 per cent of girls with primary education and over 90 per cent of illiterate women had been circumcised." Hussein, "The Role of NGOs in Eliminating Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Woman and Child," 4. These statistics are based on surveys of female attendees at the educational programs carried out by the Society. The sample is therefore biased, in that the respondents are located in institutions and forums in which anti-FGM campaigns are situated. Aziza Hussein estimated in 1999

that approximately 90% of Egyptian women have had FGM performed upon them. Amy J. Johnson, interview with Aziza Hussein, Cairo, Egypt, June 1999. A 2000 article said that "Official statistics indicate that... nearly 67 per cent of girls are subjected to FGM." Reem Leila, "Our Bodies, Our Lives," *al-Ahram Weekly* (10-16 August 2000). Another article in 2001 presented the rate of FGM at "98 to 100 percent of women aged 15 to 45." Reem Leila, "Life Changes," *al-Ahram Weekly* (5-11 April 2001). Another report quotes the 2000 Egyptian Demographic Health Survey, which shows that 97% of women of reproductive age have undergone FGM. Mariz Tadros, "Proud to be Different," *al-Ahram Weekly* (7-13 March 2002). As Tadros reports, "The survey was conducted on a nationally representative sample of 15,573 married and divorced women between the ages of 15 and 49." But the report also "suggests that there have been positive changes in peoples' attitudes towards the practice. There is some evidence that support for the practice is gradually changing. Just over eight in ten women with daughters (81 per cent) reported in 2000 that they had a daughter who is already circumcised or that they intended to circumcise in the future. This represented a decrease over the proportion of women with daughters who said in 1995 that they had or planned to have a daughter circumcised (87 per cent). Those who supported the continuation of the practice in 2000 dropped in 1995 from 82 per cent to 75 per cent." Mariz Tadros, "Proud to be Different," *al-Ahram Weekly* (7-13 March 2002). According to a 2003 report, "Most women surveyed (82 percent) were firmly convinced that female circumcision should be continued. Seventy-four percent believed that husbands prefer their wives to be circumcised, and 72 percent believed that circumcision is an important aspect of the teachings of Islam. A surprisingly low number of women recognized the negative consequences of circumcision, such as reduced sexual satisfaction (29 percent), the risk of death (24 percent), and the greater risk of problems in childbirth (5 percent)." Sherif-Trask, 77.

69. Mariz Tadros, "Five Years for Fathiya," *al-Ahram Weekly* (4-10 February 1999).

70. Hussein, "The Role of NGOs in Eliminating Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Woman and Child," 5-6.

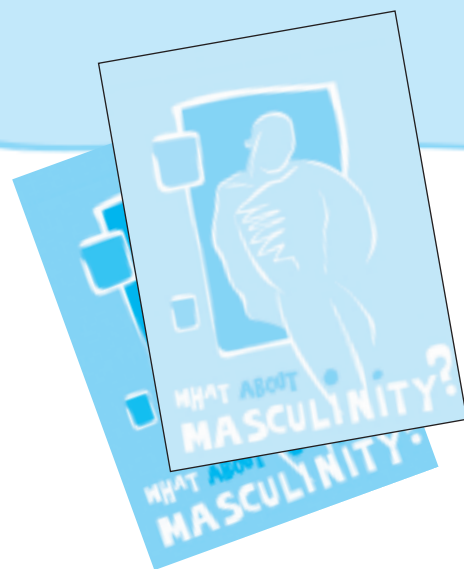
71. See Mariz Tadros, "Proud to be Different," *al-Ahram Weekly* (7-13 March 2002).

72. See Mariz Tadros, "Proud to be Different," *al-Ahram Weekly* (7-13 March 2002).

73. Quoted in Mariz Tadros, "Proud to be Different," *al-Ahram Weekly* (7-13 March 2002).

74. Amy J. Johnson, interview with Dr. Aziza Kamel and Mme. Nemat Abul Soud, Cairo, Egypt, June 1999.

75. Toubia in Toubia, 102. Thus, what is needed is not just anti-FGM education, but a fundamental shift in social norms in Egypt, and this entails, among other things, more education and career opportunities for women – women "must be given benefits that will compensate for not complying with social norms." Samia Nkrumah, summarizing some of Toubia's views, in "Action Time on FGM," *al-Ahram Weekly* (19-25 June 2003). Yet the current anti-FGM campaign in Egypt does not fulfill all of these goals. Dina Ezzat and Dahlia Hammouda described the Egyptian approach as "first, promoting the role of legislation in banning FGM. Second comes the role of education and raising social awareness of the problem, which will rely on revitalizing the role of informal leaders within villages and communities to disseminate knowledge on the issue. Third, boosting the role of the media in spreading understanding of children's rights and expanding the scope and impact of the current successful media outreach programme. Finally, enhancing the capacities of local NGOs and providing them with the necessary



Adolescent Boys' Response to Gender Equitable Programming in Rural Upper Egyptian Villages: Between 'Ayb¹ and Haram²

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In the Middle East, as elsewhere, gender roles are transformed in response to a number of influences. The changing socioeconomic conditions in much of the Arab world have created economic disparities, and, at the same time, have meant an increased participation of women in the labor force in many countries. These changes, along with the overall increase in female education, have threatened the "traditional" organization of households and are beginning to redefine female space and boundaries (Ali 1996).

Changing patterns of production and reproduction are also indicative of changes in gender relations which challenge traditional images and expectations associated with men's - as well as women's - roles, such as those of breadwinner, care giver, or head of household. These developments increasingly call for a re-assessment of the roles and responsibilities of women and men, of stereotypical and traditional gender roles, and of existing power relations between women and men.

Inequality in gender relations is often considered a given of society and culture, and rarely questioned as to how it is maintained, perpetuated, or changed. Kandiyotti (1994) attempts to provide greater depth to the

homogenous representation of male behavior and masculinity and discusses the notion of dominant (hegemonic) and subordinate masculinities in Muslim and Middle East societies. She places the production of masculine identity in generational and institutional terms and shows how masculinities are produced and altered as men move through their life cycles. For example, when the older men of the household are absent, the mother and sisters of a young man may jokingly treat him as the "man of the house". While in the presence of his father and older brothers, a young boy retains a position inferior to the older women of the family. Accordingly, masculinity is continuously negotiated in Egyptian society.

In patriarchal systems, such as those of rural Egyptian villages, boys begin to enjoy status and privileges afforded to adult men; they gain more autonomy, mobility, and opportunity for engagement in public life than do girls. With these expanding privileges comes a taken for granted assumption that men have authority over women and children. Despite this, we posit that these gender norms are increasingly dysfunctional for young men, given new social and economic realities in Arab and Muslim societies.

Moreover, as development organizations increase their attention to girls, through awareness-raising, empowerment, and opportunities to engage outside their homes, how do boys respond to such developments in their communities? Does it change boys' perspective on girls' roles, and if so, in what direction? Despite the global proliferation of development activities targeting and enlisting youth, a review of the international literature yields little information about how adolescent boys respond to emerging opportunities for girls. Mainstream literature has largely concentrated on the health and development of adolescent boys, and on the construction of masculinity among adult men, and we find no published articles on adolescent boys' notions of masculinity in the Middle East. Our contribution may be to extend the insights of the literature to account for the unique challenges facing adolescent boys and their lived reality as they are socialized into becoming young men.

The Setting

An experimental social development program aimed at improving life choices for out-of-school adolescent girls in Upper Egypt³ provides an interesting lens through which we can begin to explore these questions. The ISHRAQ program based in four rural villages of Al Minya governorate of Upper Egypt piloted a holistic package of education, skills building, and sports activities aimed at 13-15 year old girls. Program implementers realized that building girls' skills and sense of agency will go only so far if girls find themselves in the same restrictive environments - that is - ones in which the institutions of patriarchy remove young women from direct public participation. Boys are particularly important in this regard, as their behavior in public spaces and in the home bears strongly on girls' mobility and participation in public life, and because boys are the future husbands and partners of the girls in the program. Thus, recognizing the gate keeping role boys and parents play vis-à-vis girls, interventions with both groups have also been piloted.⁵ Through this comprehensive approach, the program hopes to begin to change norms surrounding what is acceptable for adolescent girls while at the same time redressing gender inequity. To do so, the engagement of men and boys in achieving gender equality requires greater attention to gender stereotypes and expectations about men's roles and responsibilities, and how these expectations influence male behavior.

Data Sources

This paper analyses the experiences of adolescent boys and young men aged 13-19 living in rural communities in which the ISHRAQ empowerment program for girls was launched. Qualitative research was conducted to explore boys' notions of masculinity and male roles, as well as their perception of girls' evolving roles in their

communities. Through the use of focus group discussion (FGD) methodology we sought to understand boys' views of girls' place in community and home life, and their opinions of the ISHRAQ program itself and the girls who participate in it. A total of twenty-two FGDs were carried out in six villages with 170 (6) boys and young men aged 13-19 in six villages. The discussion groups were held at local youth centers. Trained moderators conducted FGDs which were audio-recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed, using standard research techniques. There were very few groups comprised of younger out-of-school boys as most boys between 13-15 years of age were in school. We anticipated differences in responses between groups of in school versus out-of-school boys - hypothesizing that better-educated boys may hold more progressive views towards girls - but we did not find this to be the case. We did find, not surprisingly, that focus group discussions with younger boys were more challenging to conduct and revealed less sophisticated understanding of the topics compared with older boys.

Boys' Notions of Manhood and Masculinity

In this section, we explore notions of masculinity amongst rural Egyptian adolescent boys. Although this did not form an explicit aspect of the original research, the opportunity to explore these concepts within a broader research and program context presented itself.

In order to develop effective intervention programs and policies to empower rural girls, it is vital to study the attitudes and behaviors of adolescent males and to understand how boys' notions of masculinity affect girls and young women. There is ample international evidence suggesting that versions of masculinity or manhood that young men adhere to, or are socialized into, have important implications for their health and that of other young men, as well as for the young women around them.

In an effort to identify norms and behaviors deemed critical for boys and young men to function in communities characterized by distinct and segregated roles for men and women, we must first understand the meanings, perceptions, attributes and factors influencing boys' notions of masculinity.

Almost unanimously, boys' definition of manhood is described as "someone who works, earns, and spends."

Boys' Understanding of Masculinity

The field of masculinities is beginning to shed light on how boys are socialized into prevailing norms about what is socially acceptable "masculine" behavior in a given setting, and how boys' adherence to these prevailing norms can sometimes have negative consequences for their health and development. As in many societies, families and culture promote a type of masculinity that is achievement and action-oriented, and outwardly directed with the explicit or implicit goal that boys should become providers and protectors. Thus the understanding of masculinity involves an analysis of important characteristics and roles such as provider and protector which are linked to the constructs of power and control. We found this to be the case within this group of boys. At a young age, boys are socialized to be aggressive and competitive - qualities which are deemed necessary for their future roles as providers and protectors. Our data illuminated how notions of masculinity and gendered division of roles and responsibilities are constructed. We explore the various connotations of masculinity and how boys perceive themselves in relation to their own notions of masculinity.

Masculine Roles and Responsibilities: Providers and Protectors

To understand how boys think about male roles as currently prescribed, it is important to identify the markers of masculinity which are deemed important for boys and men such

as: conduct, responsibility, and privilege. Almost unanimously, boys' definition of manhood is described as "someone who works, earns, and spends". According to many respondents, particularly among the educated boys, a man is "the head of the household who spends money"; "someone who shoulders responsibilities"; "who works in the field or any other job". Further they added, "husbands must prevent their wives from going to work because we do not want people to say that wives are spending money on the house"; "boys are responsible

financially for the house"; "I can bring money but not girls". The role of being the provider - which was universally understood as being a hard worker, resulting in earning money - emerged as critical to boys' understanding of masculinity.

According to most respondents, the essential task in performing the provider role is to ensure that girls and

women do not have to go out to work: "A man is someone who earns and a girl does the housework". This conception of masculinity results in a clear division of gender roles, and is then linked to girls' education. Most boys felt that boys need to be educated because they must fulfill their role as providers while girls, whose primary role is to perform domestic work, are in less need of education. Thus, boys endorsed the restriction on girls' education which they felt was justified because of the domestic responsibilities girls carry: "girls are used to staying at home so that they can do the house work"; "girls help their mothers at home and boys go to the club"; "the girl can look after her younger siblings"; "if there is something she (a girl) does not want to do, she has to do it by force".

In the domestic sphere, adolescent boys' perception of the man's role as protector is strongly expressed. In this regard, boys define a man as essentially someone who makes decisions and takes care of the family. Concerning men as protectors, boys' definition is someone who "has a word in marriage matters"; "the oldest in the family"; and about taking care of the family someone who "takes over responsibility when the father is away"; "someone who helps his parents and siblings financially".

In the public sphere and as brothers, their conception of masculinity is related to that of protector, and is also closely linked to being courageous and taking part in issues that concern their sisters such as protecting them from harassment. Closely linked to the need to protect girls is the need to control them. Even among younger boys, most felt that a girl has to be controlled and kept at home: "girls are born to stay at home"; "in our rural villages, people talk about girls who go out"; "if a girl is out they (people) will say that she is a loose girl (meaning with no parents)". Therefore, girls are not supposed to leave their homes alone.

Another important aspect of masculinity which emerged was that of control. Masculinity requires a boy or young man to exercise control over his sister. When asking adolescent boys about their responsibilities towards their female siblings, boys' expression of masculinity is closely linked to controlling their sisters and fulfilling their roles as gatekeepers. As such, brothers have the responsibility to control their sisters by "bringing her (my sister) from wherever she is"; "taking her (my sister) out with me with the permission granted from my parents"; "helping her choose her friends"; "controlling her"; "protecting her"; "not beating her"; "watching out to ensure that she (my sister) does not go out with a boy". In addition, and in reference to their sisters boys spoke of "allowing her to be educated" and "finishing her studies". Kandiyotti argues that for most men in the Middle East,

the construction of masculine ideals is based on power. Part of this power is related to the ability of men to control women in "public" and "private" domains thus masculinities created on this are likely to be on increasingly unstable terrain. In many settings notions of masculinity for adult men often rely on sexual power and relationships are intrinsically linked to a procreative role. Having children, marriage, starting a family are taken as universal signs of masculinity. However in our study, the role of procreator as a marker of masculinity was not mentioned by the boys. This is due in part to their youth and the fact that they were unmarried. Moreover issues of sexuality were too sensitive to be discussed.

From the boys' perspective, the understanding of feminine vis-à-vis the masculine, usually, if not always, emerges with a negative connotation. For instance, all boys consider girls to have less thinking capacity, and view them as soft, fragile by nature, weak and incapable of venturing out alone. The following quotes expressed by the adolescent boys illustrate these negative aspects: "A girl is weaker"; "girls can be secretaries, sit in a pharmacy, or be teachers"; "girls cannot carry heavy stuff"; "a girl cannot defend herself"; "when one gets tired at work (heavy physically), one wishes one were a girl".

For these boys, masculinity is perceived as the positive opposite of femininity. Among the most frequently cited characteristics attributed to maleness were the "ability to endure physically", followed by "having freedom". When asked their opinion of a popular saying: "this woman is worth 100 men", boys' responses demonstrated an understanding and appreciation of strong women: "she can fill in for the man and spend money on her children"; "someone who works because her father or husband is ill"; and who is independent, self reliant: "can take care of everything at home"; "she can work in a mixed environment"; "she depends on herself".

Male Privilege and Entitlement

Traditional agricultural communities are often highly patriarchal and families tend to hold strong preferences for sons. A male child is greatly valued and is a symbol of status for the family. Many families in these rural communities indicated a son preference which is reflected in a popular saying: "When they told me it was a boy, my back straightened up and I felt stronger, but when they said it was a girl, the wall supporting me collapsed on my head". Such sayings, which spell out the unwelcome birth of girls, are part of a girl's education and begins to shape her self-image as less valuable in the family. For girls, discrimination becomes an everyday experience reflected in the manner in which the entire spectrum of a girl's needs, from education and health care to the

manner of treatment is demonstrated. In our discussions with parents, some mothers said that if their son were sick, they would be willing to sell their galebias to take him to hospital, while for their daughter, they would simply give them aspirin. The persistence of such discrimination against girls stems from the perceived greater economic, social, and religious utility of sons over daughters.

The following narrations illustrate how boys' entitlements are endorsed: "a boy carries his father's name"; "boys inherit twice as much as girls"; "a boy looks after his father's land when he dies"; "a man prefers a boy"; "one takes boys' opinion not girls".

Being socialized not to express emotions, not to have close relationships with the opposite sex, and to work outside the home at early ages are among the costs of being a man. In traditional conservative communities, adolescent boys' most visible interaction in public with the opposite sex is often through verbal harassment and teasing. In many ways, this practice is closely linked to boys' and men's sense of entitlement to certain masculine privileges over women and girls. It is commonly held that boys and men who initiate harassment towards girls "feel very proud of themselves"; "feel that one is a 'real man'". According to girls, this harassment allows young men to feel that they have gone beyond childhood to adulthood.

Physical and verbal harassment towards girls is a widespread phenomenon in Egypt even in rural conservative communities. It is linked to the exercise of power and is an outward sign of male dominance. It is an important arena where boys and young men can "feel" their masculine entitlement. They are also entitled to having household tasks performed for them. Most boys felt that if girls do not perform their tasks properly or do not listen to their brothers, it is appropriate and right to punish them accordingly. Domestic violence related to women not cooking food properly is linked to men's sense of entitlement to food that is cooked by his wife in the time and manner that he wants.

Boys' Role in Controlling Sister and Family Honor

The notion of family honor and girls' reputation is very much entrenched in these rural communities. As brothers, boys unanimously expressed very strong concerns and worries about their sisters' reputations which is one reason cited for why rural girls usually have very limited physical mobility and social life when reaching puberty. A brother's role as gatekeeper thus is to keep constant surveillance on their sisters. The following narrations illustrate how brothers control their sisters: "We (as brothers) are worried about girls because we fear men's

behavior"; "girls should not go out in order for us (as boys) not to harass them"; "we are afraid she will have relations with men"; "we are afraid she will marry the *Urfi* way"; "girls are not allowed to talk to other men without our permission and the boys share information among themselves about whose sisters are going where". The extent of restrictions and surveillance of their sisters is much higher among uneducated girls as compared to educated girls, who are assumed to be better prepared, and able to handle the world beyond the homes more competently.

For Egyptian youth, falling in love with a girl and winning the girl's heart is also an essential component of a successful masculinity. For uneducated boys, enticing, falling in love and marrying educated girls is perceived as a major challenge and a testament of their manhood. The likelihood of this actually happening seems remote as most marriages are arranged by families, and bride and grooms tend to be paired along socio-economic and class lines.

Between 'ayb and Haram

Perhaps what was most striking about our conversations with boys was the ways in which they spoke about girls' roles and opportunities. According to the majority of boys, there is a clear male-female dichotomy in terms of roles and responsibilities. In their minds, this gendered division of roles and responsibilities justifies the division of public and private spaces, the public space being the domain of males. Further when boys talked about what girls could and could not do, the responses were frequently couched in terms of 'ayb or Haram. For example, when boys were asked if they played sports, there was an almost unanimous affirmative response. What about girls, we asked? To that question, we received a very strong chorus of "No, that is 'ayb". What about girls going to school (preparatory) with boys? "No, that is Haram". About schooling, boys further added that they cannot sit beside girls in a classroom as it is too "tempting for them" – that too, is "Haram". While it is not possible to say how strongly individual boys agree with these rigid notions, they certainly have internalized them to a strong degree which shapes the way in which they articulate their views on girls' rights and roles.

Conclusion and Final Thoughts

Our claims are modest. We have attempted to map the meanings of masculinity among adolescent boys in a changing socio-economic context. According to boys, masculinity is strictly defined in relation to gender roles which are linked to social duties and obligations. Even though the results suggest that notions of masculinity are divergent, there are some very basic notions com-

monly held. According to most boys, the essential difference between a boy and a girl is biological and physical, and physical attributes are essential characteristics of masculinity. Another commonly held notion is that boys are courageous and strong, as compared to girls who are viewed as weak, vulnerable, and submissive. Moreover, conduct was considered an essential component of masculinity, which included qualities such as courage, independence, power and control – all of which were considered important markers of conduct. Another prominent characteristic of masculinity according to the boys, particularly vis-à-vis their role as brothers, was related to maintaining girls' reputations.

In rural Egypt, adolescence appears to be a period in which "intensification" of gender roles leads to an exaggerated preference for role segregation. Boys' opinions seem to be deeply entrenched, and very few boys seem to want to challenge normative ideas about gender-segregated roles. Due to their socialization, boys internalize certain notions, which are very hard to give up. Peer pressure, socialization processes and belief systems influence boys' adherence to gender-specific stereotypes. Ideas of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes, and of stereotyped roles for men and women limit progress in achieving gender equality.

Increasingly, young men receive contradictory messages about masculine roles and their ability to fulfill them. While boys expect to be future breadwinners, they also recognize the difficulty in achieving that idealized goal. Notions of hegemonic masculinity to which many boys aspire are undercut by their socioeconomic constraints.

Most boys in this study believe that boys should be better educated than girls, yet they also recognize that an educated girl can be an asset to the family. Boys have mixed emotional responses to many of the issues surrounding them and hold conflicting opinions on a number of issues; many boys express concern and empathy for girls, alongside patronizing attitudes. While many boys acknowledge gender inequities in education, mobility, paid work, and other domains of life, they do not express interest in changing these practices.

Globalization is altering the conditions under which young people prepare for adult roles. The fissures and contradictions of social change are particularly acute among adolescent males, who are grappling with received wisdom from elders, personal insecurities of adolescence, and a growing awareness that gender relations are changing around them. Programs that incorporate these insights and enable boys to actively engage in dialogue and debate can serve a useful role for both sexes.

END NOTES

1. 'ayb in Arabic means socially unacceptable.
2. Haram in Arabic means religiously incorrect or unacceptable.
3. Upper-Egyptian governorates are the most disadvantaged and poorest region, located in the South of Egypt.
4. The New Visions Program has been developed by CEDPA in recognition of male influence on the enabling environment for the empowerment of girls. Girls have repeatedly told CEDPA that in order for their knowledge and attitudes to result in real behavior change, it is important they have the support of boys and men in their lives.
5. In the course of the ISHRAQ pilot project, the New Visions program was offered to boys and young men

ages 10-20 during a period of 4 months.

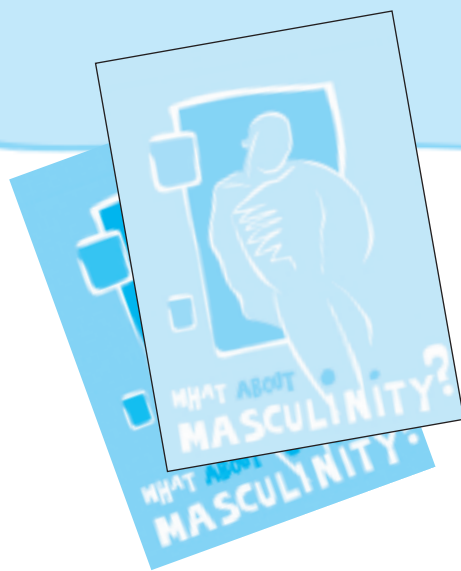
6. In the methodology of this study, male participants were selected according to their age (young: 13-15) and (old: 16-19) and education level (between those that have never been to school and those currently at school or finished). Indeed, four different categories of boys and young men were considered; 1) young educated boys, 2) young uneducated boys, 3) old educated young men, and 4) old uneducated young men. The rationale being that educated boys and young men are more likely to have fewer gender stereotypes based on traditional views about issues relevant to girls as opposed to their uneducated counterparts.

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Humiliation and Masculine Crisis in Iraq

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Introduction

The truth is that there are hundreds of thousands of angry, humiliated, frustrated, powerless young men in the Islamic world. And what we have done in Iraq is make ourselves accessible to them. – General Wesley Clark, November 2003¹

It is impossible to watch, as Iraq spirals out of U.S. control (I write at the end of April 2004), without noting the depth and combustibility of the masculine crisis that has taken hold in and around Iraq. The crisis is double-edged and dialectical; it has both Iraqi and American dimensions. The purpose of this brief article is to examine the parameters and politico-military implications of this masculine crisis, which can be defined as the traumatic psychological and material consequences of the inability, or threatened inability, to conform to masculine role expectations.

I focus in particular on the element of humiliation in masculine crisis. I also examine the crisis in terms of gender and human rights, something that is virtually never done in the case of male subjects. Building on many years of research into contemporary state repression, warfare, and genocide, I argue that it is typically

the case that militarized conflicts and uprisings lead to disproportionate violence against younger adult males – those of imputed “battle age” (military capability)². Iraq is no exception. There, younger adult males constitute *the most vulnerable population group in the present occupation and military struggle*, if by “most vulnerable” we mean the group most liable to be targeted for killing, torture (including sexual torture and humiliation), and other acts of repression.

Gender and Economic Crisis in Iraq

In the year that has passed since the U.S. “coalition” invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, basic infrastructure has remained in shambles, and the crisis of subsistence remains generalized. Crucially, unemployment appears to have increased from the Saddam Hussein era (to between 60 and 90 percent of the workforce), at the same time as the infrastructure of subsistence food distribution has faltered, and the prices of many basic goods (such as cooking gas) has skyrocketed.

Though female unemployment typically increases, relative to males, in times of transition, the picture in Iraq seems somewhat different. With the dismissal of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi soldiers, it may be that male



Saddam Saleh, a former prisoner in Abu Ghraib prison, shows a picture of the torture, humiliation and abuse they endured, May 17, 2004.

Picture Credit: Reuters/Oleg Popov

unemployment has increased more dramatically than in the case of women. These mass layoffs also likely exacerbated the humiliation that many Iraqi men, including these soldiers, felt after Iraq’s rapid defeat on the battlefield. Furthermore, because of their suspicions about the political loyalties of Iraqi men, the occupation authorities have flown in contract workers from as far afield as Bangladesh and Nepal, rather than hiring locally. Economically desperate Iraqi men see this, too, as a humiliating slap.³

For women, as well, growing unemployment and confinement in the home (exacerbated by the widespread insecurity in Iraq) represents an enormous and humiliating setback. Nonetheless, it can be contended that given patriarchal role expectations, a failure to find formal or adequate informal employment impacts *existentially* upon men-as-men to a greater extent than upon women-as-women. In any case, given men’s domination of the public sphere, this masculine crisis has direct and profound political consequences. The ranks of demobilized soldiers were probably the key ingredient in the early months of the Iraqi insurgency, while the more recent Shi’ite uprising has mobilized predominantly poor and unemployed men and male adolescents. As the BBC put it: “High unemployment is not just a waste of Iraq’s enormous human resources, it also leads to trouble, with hundreds of thousands of young discontented Iraqi men finding they have not much to do – except perhaps confront coalition forces.”⁴

The element of gendered humiliation that runs through this account seems vital to understanding the atmosphere of masculine crisis. American commentator Thomas Friedman defines humiliation as “the single most underestimated force in international relations.”⁵ The

Norwegian social scientist, Evelin Lindner, has explored the effects of humiliation and its companion, shame, in what she calls “honour societies” – including those of the Arab Middle East.⁶ The most lurid face of shame and humiliation are perhaps the institutions of “honour” killing and blood feud that are common in the Arab World (along with regions such as the Caucasus and South Asia).⁷ But their impact is more complex, subtle, and quotidian. Media reports have documented the central role of these quantities in fuelling rejection of, and

violent resistance to, the occupation. This is apparent also in the case of gender-selective victimization of Iraqi men by occupation forces.

Gender-Specific and Gender-Selective Targeting of Iraqi Men

Objective factors – particularly the socioeconomic ones just described – are vital in setting the contours of masculine crisis in Iraq. Also key, however, is the strategy of gender-selective victimization of Iraqi males that lies at the heart of U.S. occupation policies. The measures directed overwhelmingly at males include harassment, humiliation before family members, mass roundups, incarceration, torture, selective killing,⁸ and denial of the right to humanitarian evacuation from besieged cities.⁹

Gender-selective repression is particularly evident in the forcible depopulation of males in conflict areas – including boy children and very old men. According to the *New York Times*: “American forces are still conducting daily raids, bursting into homes and sweeping up families. More than 10,000 men and boys are in custody ... [T]he military acknowledges that most people it captures are probably not dangerous.” As a result, “entire swaths of farmland have been cleared of males – fathers, sons, brothers, cousins. There are no men to do men’s work. Women till the fields, [and] guard the houses ... Iraq has a new generation of missing men. But instead of ending up in mass graves or at the bottom of the Tigris River, as they often did during the rule of Saddam Hussein, they are detained somewhere in American jails.”¹⁰

This evisceration of the male population is often accompanied by the humiliating treatment of detainees in front of their families – forcing men to the floor and then placing soldier’s boots on their heads is a prime example.

More masculine humiliation follows in detention facilities themselves. On the very day that I write, shocking photographs have been published worldwide and broadcast across the Arab world, showing baroque acts of degradation inflicted on Iraqi men imprisoned at the Abu Ghraib prison west of Baghdad. In the description of investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, one photograph depicts a female soldier,

a cigarette dangling from her mouth, [...] giving a jaunty thumbs-up sign and pointing at the genitals of a young Iraqi, who is naked except for a sandbag over his head, as he masturbates. Three other hooded and naked Iraqi prisoners are shown, hands reflexively crossed over their genitals. A fifth prisoner has his hands at his sides. In another, England stands arm in arm with Specialist Graner; both are grinning and giving the thumbs-up behind a cluster of perhaps seven naked Iraqis, knees bent, piled clumsily on top of each other in a pyramid. There is another photograph of a cluster of naked prisoners, again piled in a pyramid. ... Then, there is another cluster of hooded bodies, with a female soldier standing in front, taking photographs. Yet another photograph shows a kneeling, naked, unhooded male prisoner, head momentarily turned away from the camera, posed to make it appear that he is performing oral sex on another male prisoner, who is naked and hooded.¹¹

It is hard to think of imagery more likely to fuel the rage of Iraqis, and particularly younger Iraqi men.¹² Indeed, we may look back on the release and widespread diffusion of these photographs as one of the most significant moments in the history of post-invasion Iraq. U.S. Senator Joseph Biden (D-Del.) went so far as to contend that "this is the single most significant undermining act that's occurred in a decade in that region of the world in terms of our standing."¹³

Masculine Crisis and the U.S.

Feelings of humiliation figure strongly in the other side of masculine crisis in Iraq: that of the invaders, led by a president apparently seeking to avenge his father's humiliation at the failure of the 1991 Gulf War to win him reelection, while Saddam Hussein remained in power throughout the 1990s. Jonathan Freedland captured this with some suggestive comments about humiliation and politico-military aggression:

A veteran New York political operative once told me: "Never underestimate the subtext of male violence that runs through American politics." ... Bush feeds that glad-



Former Iraqi prisoners wave from a bus after they were released from Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, May 14, 2004.

Picture Credit: Reuters/Alj Jasim

itorial appetite skilfully. "Slowly but surely we're going to hunt them down," he warns the "bunch of cold-blooded killers" of al-Qaida. There will be no limp-wristed attempt to understand terrorism's root causes. "See, therapy isn't going to work," he says to laughter. And, in a moment of pure Mafia-speak, he mentions an al-Qaida suspect caught by the US: "This guy is no longer a problem for America," he says, with an implicit wink. You could be watching *The Sopranos*.¹⁴

There was humiliation, too, in the sophisticated and widespread insurgency against the US occupiers that left the US occupation reeling in April 2004. "In the space of two weeks," notes the *Washington Post*, the insurgency "isolated the U.S.-appointed civilian government and stopped the American-financed reconstruction effort ... pressured U.S. forces to vastly expand their area of operations within Iraq, while triggering a partial collapse of the new Iraqi security services ... [and] stirred support for the insurgents across both Sunni and Shiite communities."¹⁵ This massive blow paralyzed the US authorities on the ground and shocked their masters in Washington, along with those trying to ensure George W. Bush's reelection. The contrast between the macho "mission accomplished" rhetoric of the immediate post-conquest period, and the collapsing occupation structure at present, could hardly be more stark. Such contradictions injure a specifically masculine pride; they are the politico-military equivalent of a kick to the *cojones*.

As for the pathological machismo displayed by some of the occupying troops, it is to be expected – though never condoned – and it is secondary, both chronologically and logically, to its political counterpart. That the military lives and breathes this gender ideology hardly needs emphasizing, after two generations of diligent feminist criticism

on this count.¹⁶ Likewise, under conditions of protracted occupation of an alien population whose public face ranges from the sullen to the murderously hostile, the stress and isolation have increased, while discipline and self-esteem have declined; and so it is that once- or sometimes-stable masculinities have tilted towards abuse and atrocity.

Conclusion

This short article has contended that a multifaceted masculine crisis is central to understanding patterns of opposition and insurgency during the first year of the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq. Enormous material damage and psychological trauma has been inflicted on the children and

women of Iraq. However, the specifically male/masculine crisis of post-conquest Iraq has direct and decisive politico-military implications. Economic hardship and unemployment have played a key role in fuelling anti-occupation sentiment among men, often leading them into the swelling ranks of the violent opposition. Likewise, the gender-selective repressive measures deployed by the occupation forces has spawned a gendered backlash. A skein of masculine humiliation pervades all these phenomena, and is also highly relevant to the masculine crisis. A more generalized comparative understanding of these phenomena provides powerful insights into dynamics of repression and resistance worldwide.

END NOTES

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1. Clark quoted in *Business Week*, 24 November 2003, p. 43.
2. The selective targeting of "battle-age" men, both combatant and non-combatant, has roots deep in human civilization and human conflict. The organization that I direct, Gendercide Watch (www.gendercide.org), confronts gender-selective killing of both women and men. Among our central contentions is that "state-directed gender-selective mass killings have overwhelmingly targeted men through history, and that this phenomenon is pervasive in the modern world as well." One of the grimmest examples of recent decades is the Anfal Campaign of 1987-88 against Iraqi Kurds, when up to 180,000 people – overwhelmingly male civilians – were consumed in the Ba'athist holocaust. For scholarly treatment of the theme, see Adam Jones, ed., *Gendercide and Genocide* (Memphis, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004); on Anfal, see the Gendercide Watch case study at http://www.gendercide.org/case_anfal.html.
3. See "Jobs for the Boys – and for Foreigners," *The Economist*, 11 October 2003, p. 48.
4. "Iraq Unemployment," BBC Online, 6 January 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/3372029.stm>
5. Thomas Friedman, "Thomas L. Friedman Reporting: Searching for the Roots of 9/11," CNN International, October 26, 2003.
6. Evelin Lindner defines "humiliation as the enforced lowering of a person or group, a process of subjugation that damages or strips away their pride, honor or dignity." She cites Suzanne Retzinger and Thomas Scheff's finding that "humiliated fury" plays a major role "in escalating conflict between individuals and nations." Lindner, "Gendercide and Humiliation in Honor and Human-Rights Societies," in Jones, ed., *Gendercide and Genocide*, pp. 40, 45.
7. For an overview, see Gendercide Watch, "Case Study: 'Honour' Killings & Blood Feuds," http://www.gendercide.org/case_honour.html.
8. Selective, at least to the extent that men of "fighting age" are

viewed en bloc as a threatening force, with fire directed accordingly. This should not efface the apparently indiscriminate, but withering, "counterfire" frequently directed by U.S. forces against predominantly civilian quarters and populations.

9. In April 2004, Iraqi males of "fighting age" were routinely prevented from leaving besieged Fallujah. On other occasions, only males accompanied by children were allowed to leave, leading to desperate scenes of men accosting children near the checkpoints and seeking to pass them off as their own in order to escape. The South African Sun Times reported an encounter with a "young Marine [who] tells us that men of fighting age can't leave. 'What's fighting age?' I want to know. He contemplates. 'Anything under 45. No lower limit.'" See Jo Wilding, "U.S. Snipers Shoot Anything That Moves," *Sun Times*, 18 April 2004.

10. Jeffrey Gettleman, "As U.S. Detains Iraqis, Families Plead for News," *New York Times*, 7 March 2004.

11. Seymour M. Hersh, "Torture at Abu Ghraib," *The New Yorker*, 10 May 2004.

http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040510fa_fact

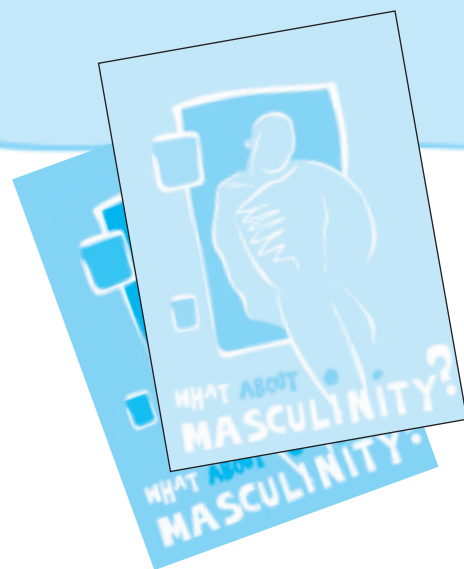
12. One survivor of alleged torture at Abu Ghraib, Dhia al-Shweiri, gave voice to the intimate link between masculine humiliation and misogyny. "They [American forces] were trying to humiliate us, break our pride. We are men. It's OK if they beat me. Beatings don't hurt us, it's just a blow. But no one would want their manhood to be shattered. They wanted us to feel as though we were women, the way women feel and this is the worst insult, to feel like a woman." Quoted in Scheherezade Faramarzi, "Iraqi Prisoner Details Abuse by Americans," *Associated Press dispatch*, 2 May 2004.

13. "U.S.: No Widespread Abuse in Iraqi Prisons," *Associated Press dispatch*, 2 May 2004.

14. Jonathan Freedland, "The Natural," *The Guardian*, November 5, 2002. The Sopranos is an HBO television program built around the lives and crimes of mafia gangsters.

15. Rajiv Chandrasekaran and Karl Vick, "Revolts in Iraq Deepen Crisis in Occupation," *Washington Post*, 18 April 2004.

16. See, recently and representatively, Cynthia Weber, *Faking It: U.S. Hegemony in a "Post-Phallic" Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).



The Preferred Partner

An Investigative Field Study of Lebanese Youth

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"A girl from a good family, pretty and rich" – these are the three main criteria and in this order that have been cast in the extended family where I grew up and in that order – for evaluating men's right choice of a bride. On these three qualities and their variations, I witnessed endless conversations in mutual visits between my maternal aunts, their relatives, and their friends. However, as far as the prospective husband for the family's young women was concerned, I noticed a disregard of his family's status and of his physical appearance, a disregard sometimes followed by the saying: *"There's nothing shameful for a man except his empty pocket"*. Though these conversations addressed existing couples, they also referred to other prospective ones in which the man and woman seemed to satisfy the above-mentioned prescriptions. These prescriptions and criteria remained in my value frame of reference and in my cognitive repertoire, as fixed hypostases of unquestionable necessity.

The link with my family was broken when I joined a multi-sectarian coeducational boarding school (in which I spent my adolescence) and later enrolled at a university whose student majority was non-Lebanese. The diversity and heterogeneity of people in these two institutions offered me a unique opportunity to reconsider the values

of my family – among them the three hypostases – and to replace them by other, seemingly more attractive ones. These new hypostases enabled one "to be" many things in order to contract a partnership instead of the need "to have" a family with high status, money, or beauty.

If I have attributed that quality leap in values and criteria to my own secondary school and university environment, this is because I had not perceived at that time that this period (most of which happened to fall during the first half of the 1960's) would be a preface to a time abounding with promises of all types of revolutions – among them the women's liberation movement – and that the prevailing values regarding us women had begun to decline to make way for values more compatible with the latest transformations. Later, I had the opportunity to read what researchers had written to affirm that there is a strong link between social history and people's private lives¹ and that the occurrence of historic events in the lives of age cohorts of people can produce a "political generation" of people who share the experiences and opportunities offered by their world. This "political generation" enables them to define their potential, qualifies them to embrace modes of thought, and offers them the

experiences needed to carry out certain behaviors – like selecting a partner and endorsing that partnership – which seem to characterize people of that era of historic events.²

The Second Wave of Women's Liberation Movement, in the 1960's and 1970's was such a "historic event" that stamped, with its own imprint, the personalities of a whole generation of women and men. Diverse types of writings and studies, most of which were anecdotal, have documented this era. Most feminist writings³ affirmed the pivotal importance of feminist consciousness (acquired by both women and men through their affiliation to consciousness-raising groups)⁴ in the formation of their respective individual identities.

However, this feminist consciousness was not restricted to individuals or groups but rather went beyond that to infiltrate all scientific and academic fields. In Gender Psychology (the field of concern here), the works of Feminist pioneers such as Bem, Spence, and Helmreich⁵ were published. These works attempted to assess the presence of a new feminine identity compatible with the above-mentioned transformations, its forms, and its psychological and psychosocial features, etc.

In the mid-1980's, directly inspired by the works of Bem, Spence, and Helmreich, and relying on their research tools, we undertook an attempt to identify the new identity of female undergraduates in Lebanon.⁶ We had sensed the difference in the context of a major transformation, unlike any other experience in our society.

We assumed that the 18-21 age cohort (which constituted the population of the above-mentioned study) had spent its early formative years in a revolutionary era fraught with liberation movements; that this age cohort "inherited" the achievements and opportunities for which the former generation had struggled to acquire and which had now become (for this age cohort) a task already completed and a given; and finally, we assumed that the impact of the achievements and opportunities acquired takes a certain time period to fade.

In Lebanese society today, one observes a cohabitation of contradictory phenomena and a "peaceful" coexistence of discordant ideologies. Despite this, one observes some stability in the expanded presence of Lebanese women's new identity.⁷ This identity, whose prevalence we detected among female university students in the 1980's, was expressed in a self-concept not strictly limited to the traditional feminine model. In fact, this faction of Lebanese women attempts to transcend that model by integrating into their self-concept, masculine psychological features in addition to traditional feminine ones. These masculine

features have been cast in the minds of both female and male undergraduates as more desirable for men than they are for women in Lebanese society⁸.

The Issue and the Questions

The fundamental question that this paper will attempt to answer is: Do the features of the image that young Lebanese men seek in their future partners resemble the actual identity of their female coeds?

That is, what is the prevalent gender type of the preferred partner as perceived by those young men? Does it resemble, or transcend, the traditional feminine profile?

Is there a link between the gender type of the preferred female partner's image and the gender attitudes of male undergraduates?

If the young man's image of the preferred female partner, for example, resembles the "New Woman" as she perceives herself, is his preference accompanied by unconventional gender attitudes? Would the opposite be true? Or are the two unrelated?

What about the female undergraduate? Has her transcendence of the traditional gender type affected her preference when selecting a male partner? Does her image of that partner resemble the self-image of the male coed?

The Sample

This paper offers an analytical discussion of some of the results of a preliminary survey conducted in Spring 2003 on a convenient sample of male and female Lebanese University students (First Branch of the Lebanese University). This preliminary survey was conducted as part of a field study in process. One of the study's preoccupations is a search for the features of the profile male Lebanese students have of their prospective partners; and a search, as well, for the facets of similarity and dissimilarity between that profile and between the actual self-image of the corresponding group of youths. The study also aims at identifying the nature of the existing relationship between the profile of the preferred male/female partner and the gender attitude of university youth.

There is nothing shameful for a man except his empty pocket.

Thus, 84 male and female undergraduates completed an inventory designed to determine the extent to which they are characterized (according to their own estimation) by traits previously classified across four scales: 1) the masculinity scale (M); 2) the femininity scale (F), 3) the neutral scale (N); and 4) the masculinity-femininity (M-F) scale.

Also, 80 male and female undergraduates completed an identical inventory consisting of the same traits/scales but designed to determine the degree to which the students seek these features in their preferred future partners.

All the above – totaling 164 male and female undergraduates – completed a questionnaire designed to measure their gender attitudes.

Research Tool

At this point in our presentation, and in an attempt to give the reader a better understanding of the following discussion and the opportunity to assess the reliability of the results we obtained, we shall present, in what follows, the mentioned inventories (our research tools) and their components.

The Gender Identity Inventory

This consists of four scales, the first for masculinity, the second for femininity,⁹ the third designated as “neutral”, and the fourth designated as “masculinity-femininity”. In this study, “femininity” and “masculinity” are empirical concepts, each consisting of a number of traits. We have obtained the traits that constitute “masculinity” and “femininity” by way of a preliminary survey. In this survey, two independent groups of male and female undergraduates selected socially desirable traits but ones that are more desirable for women than for men, thus creating the “femininity” scale. These traits revolve around nurture (ten-

derness, love of children, sacrifice, understanding, sentimentality) and relationality (tolerance, patience, kindness); others cast the person in a passive role (calmness, contentment, preserving tradition, modesty) while still other traits bear an ethical connotation (loyalty, etc.).

Similarly, two groups selected the “masculinity” scale, consisting of traits more desirable for men than for women. This scale consists of cognitive traits (analytical

ability, organized thought, intelligence, creativity, eloquence), active traits (courage, ambition, strength, confrontational ability, readiness to help in a crisis situation, inclination to challenge difficulties), and a third set of traits that characterize the person in charge (productivity, bearing responsibility, etc.).

As for the neutral scale, its constituent traits are socially desirable, equally, for both genders. Among these are: the readiness to help, generosity, adjustment, religiosity, etc.

The masculinity-femininity scale consists of traits considered socially desirable for one of the two genders but not for the other. These traits include: the readiness to take risks and love of adventure (for men rather than women) and innocence and obedience (for women rather than men), etc.

To complete the gender identity inventory, the respondent is asked to assign, on a five-point scale, the degree to which each of these traits describes his/her personality. As such, each respondent receives a score on each of these scales, making it possible to classify him/her, in accordance with selected statistical principles,¹⁰ on the gender identity map. Regardless of his biological sex, the respondent is classified as either androgynous (characterized by both high masculinity and high femininity), feminine (characterized by high femininity and low masculinity), masculine (characterized by high masculinity and low femininity), or undifferentiated (characterized by low femininity and low masculinity).

As for the male/female partner inventory, it is exactly the same as the gender identity inventory, with the exception of the instructions in the beginning, which request the respondent to assign the degree to which each of the listed traits describe the preferred female/the preferred male partner respectively.

Gender attitude (or gender prejudice) measure is no different from other attitude measures. Here, we adopt a five-point scale to assess respondents' agreement with the listed items. These items consist of statements about popular sayings that judge the status of women and men, their roles, traits, relationships, and relationship-related values and connotations.¹¹

Results

First: Partner and Co-ed: Similarity and Difference

Examining the features male undergraduates seek in their female partners and comparing them with those that female undergraduates attribute to themselves, one encounters many similarities. These similarities are not restricted to feminine traits but apply to masculine ones

too (i.e., traits more socially desirable for men in our society than they are for women). It is true that young men seek prospective female partners who are nurturing and relational and who have expressive skills. These young men even wish these partners to be sometimes passive, but they always wish them to be agentic and instrumental as well.

Despite this, the male undergraduate in our sample tends to attribute feminine traits to his preferred prospective partner to a higher degree than young women attribute such features to themselves. The most important of these features are beauty and attractiveness. With regard to this finding, young men in our sample are no different from men around the world! Men's desire for a beautiful and attractive woman is one of the most persistent desires¹² in western and cross-cultural studies conducted by researchers on men's mate selection preferences. This persistence has prompted researchers to seek possible associations between those two features and between the instincts needed for the survival of the human race and its evolution, among them women's ability to procreate; researchers suggested that men perceive a woman's beauty as related to procreation in view of its traditional association with youth. What is noteworthy in our sample is that men and women equally give themselves moderate scores on beauty and attractiveness.

The Lebanese male undergraduate seeks an innocent and obedient partner. Young men want their female partners to be innocent to the same extent that young women (their co-eds) attribute innocence to themselves. The paradox is that young men in our sample have a self-image that is less innocent than both their preferred partners and their co-eds. In any case, innocence is not desirable for men in Lebanese society. As such, the young man identifies with his masculine stereotype and does not violate its requirements. But the case differs with “obedience”. Young men require more obedience from their partners than their female coeds attribute to themselves. Instead, young women and young men were equal in indicating “obedience” as the feature least descriptive of their personality. This feature, like innocence, is desirable for women but not for men. But both distance it when describing themselves, although men retain this feature as desirable for their preferred prospective partners.

This double standard reveals itself, as well, in neutral traits desirable to the same degree for both genders in Lebanese society. Among these, for example, are those that carry conformist connotations (such as preserving tradition and religiosity) and other ethical connotations (such as frankness and adherence to morals). All these

features are sought in the female partner to the same extent that the college female student attributes them to herself, but much more so than the male attributes them to himself.

Finally, we consider traits that are rejected by the young man in his preferred prospective partner. These are divided into two groups:

The first group of traits is socially desirable for women and not for men, and they are: accepting fate (fatalism) as well as sentimentality and sensitivity; young men do not attribute traits in this group, neither to themselves nor to their partners. The second group of traits, in contrast, is socially desirable for men and not for women. Male undergraduates attribute to themselves love of adventure and readiness to take risks but reject them in their partner; do these two features carry in their cognitive/cultural repertoire a sex-based connotation and as such conflict with their strong desire for innocence in their prospective partners? As for love of competition and sense of superiority, can we assume, in accordance with different theories in psychology,¹³ that perhaps these traits - when attributed to a female partner - pose a threat to men's supposed superior status over the female sex? These theories contend that the superiority threatened in this case is that guaranteed by men's status in the existing patriarchal system and as such provides one of the psychological as well as cultural preconditions of manhood.

Among the interesting traits are self-reliance and independence. According to the classifications based on the statements of Lebanese university youth in the mid-eighties,¹⁴ self-reliance is a masculine feature while independence is desirable for men and not for women (classified thus on the masculinity-femininity scale). Although male undergraduates attributed 16 masculine features to their preferred female partner, they rejected attributing “self-reliance” to her; the degree to which they wanted her to be “self-reliant” was less than their co-ed actually was. Is this because independence and self-reliance, in contrast to other masculine features, deprive the persistent image of Woman in our cultural repertoire of one of its most important components; i.e., her dependence on and “belongingness” to a certain man

... self-reliance is a masculine feature while independence is desirable for men and not for women.

The Lebanese male undergraduate seeks an innocent and obedient partner.

(the male partner in this case)?; it seems that neither independence nor self-reliance are pertinent traits when discussing preferences for female partners' features.

At this point, we proceed to examine the gender profile in its entirety and its relationship to the co-ed's self-image as follows:

	Andro _(F) & _(M)	Fem _(F) & _(M)	Masc _(M) & _(F)	Undiff _(M) & _(F)	High Masc* _(M)	High Fem* _(F)
% of male students preferring a female partner of gender type:	24.2	42.2	9.1	24.2	33.5	66.6
% distribution of female students according to self image gender type	50	17	10	23	60	67

* We note that the median adopted in order to classify high masculinity and high femininity in all the sample was calculated for the pooled scores of the male and female undergraduates who completed the female partner/male partner questionnaire respectively. Its value is different, then, from the median mentioned in Footnote 10.

A study of the above table reveals that the percentage of feminine young women – those that attribute to themselves feminine traits to a high degree and distance masculine traits – are a minority; their percentage is prone to decline with time.¹⁵ However, the percentage of male undergraduates (their colleagues) who prefer a feminine partner is higher. The “feminine” woman is the most preferred, statistically, among the four gender types.

Among these four gender types, the androgynous group totally prevails over the other gender types (50% of female students have an androgynous self-image) while only 24% of men desire such androgynous female partners. Also 66% of the male undergraduates in our sample selected a future female partner with low masculinity while 60% of their co-eds are characterized by high masculinity; i.e., the percentage of women of high masculinity is almost twice that of men desiring high masculinity in their preferred partners.

Does this gap between “supply” and “demand” in women's gender types and degree of masculinity imply

potential emotional miscommunication between the two sexes in university youth?

The attempt to answer this question requires reference to studies that took psychological adjustment as one of their topics. These studies have always indicated the superiority of this gender stereotype¹⁶, as opposed to others, in

different indicators of psychological adjustment. Researchers have demonstrated that the androgynous young woman can, for example, adapt to different situations: she can respond to a feminine situation in a feminine way, and with equal competence, to approach a masculine situation with an appropriate masculine behavior.¹⁷

If we assume that the mate selection situation stimulates a

behavior or inherent feminine disposition in women, we can also assume, based on the findings of the studies mentioned above, that the feminine dimension in an androgynous young woman will be the most prominent dimension in that situation, while the masculine dimension will decline for the same reason, particularly if that young woman receives unspoken or spoken signals of the young man's psychological demand. Hence, the young man's desires would be a constituent of the mate selection situation, calling for the prominence of her “femininity” and the decline of her “masculinity” at the same time. This tendency to adjust to a “coupling” situation is - as documented by gender differences researchers - a women's feature par excellence, a feature for which a female begins training during adolescence and one that accompanies her into adulthood, particularly into the time of mate selection.¹⁸

Some studies have documented¹⁹ female undergraduates' tendency to exaggerate in attributing masculine features to themselves, compared to other women's groups or compared to male undergraduates. These studies indicate that these students tend to exaggerate as such because their roles as university students require instrumentality and agency, and even dominance and competition (these last two features are considered socially undesirable for women). These studies also indicate that masculine behavior in this situation does not

detract from these women's sexual attractiveness. These results are specific to female university students since previous studies – particularly those that adopted an evolutionary perspective²⁰ – demonstrated that women characterized by masculine features were undesirable partners.

One of the reasons for the high masculinity in female undergraduates in our sample, in addition to the above-mentioned reasons, is that the reference group²¹ (most probably consisting of women in traditional roles) on which these women rely upon to determine their gender identities is perceived as less masculine than themselves; this is what perhaps leads to the above-mentioned exaggeration.

Second: The Partner Is Not the College Mate

A first glance at the features of the preferred male partner by the female undergraduate indicates that he is perceived to be more masculine than their male colleagues' actual self-image; these male colleagues seem “deficient” with respect to the female's exaggerated requirements. We do not find one feature on any of the 3 scales (masculinity, femininity, neutral) that characterizes the male undergraduate to a higher degree than that assigned to him as a prospective partner by his co-ed! Instead, we find her desiring a partner perfect in all respects, for he must be: brave, capable of confrontation, strong, self-confident, defiant in facing difficulties and pressures, and capable of decision-making and of high endurance; i.e., fearless and audacious, much more so (statistically) than he attributes fearlessness to himself. Female undergraduates also attribute to their preferred male partner the qualities of intelligence, creativity, orderly thought, and eloquence in self-expression – these are advanced cognitive characteristics that the male undergraduate does not claim to possess to the expected degree.

Although the female undergraduate is preparing herself for a certain vocation and for economic independence, she is no different from women in all cultures²² studied by western researchers, for she desires an independent partner who is responsible and self-reliant (these two features do not characterize the male undergraduate to the expected degree). Can we conclude that the female undergraduate (who is to be economically independent) seeks in a male partner the features that enable him to be a family provider, the characteristic that seems synonymous with traditional masculinity in all societies, particularly Mediterranean ones?²³

On the neutral scale, we find a balance between “supply” and “demand” with the exception of few features, such as “live conscience” and “honesty”. If we add to these “modesty” and “loyalty” (feminine features), and

this last feature (loyalty) is more in demand than it is in supply, does this set of features indicate from a hidden end (and sometimes a frank one by supporters of polygamous multi-wife marriages) an attitude attributed to men in Lebanese society – that of tending to desire more than one partner? Does the female undergraduate desire a male partner whose psychological features clash with the prerequisites of sharing him with another woman?

Among the features the female undergraduate does not seek in her male partner are the tendency for aggression, dominance, and the willingness to take risks (all of which are considered socially desirable for men but not for women), obedience, sensitivity, shyness, sentimentality, and acknowledgement of weakness (all of which are considered socially desirable for women but not for men). Male undergraduates attribute all these features (with the exception of the willingness to take risks), to a low degree, to themselves as well. It seems that both male and female undergraduates agree that extreme deviation from either stereotype is undesirable; they both severely distance from their respective partners those features socially rejected for those partners' given sex.

We point to another group of features desired by each of the genders in the partner even though the young men and women actually view themselves as not possessing such features. These include “tolerance”, “patience”, and “modesty.” The male undergraduate, just like his co-ed, attributed to himself low scores on these traits. These features involve a rhythm that does not suit, in our opinion, the expected roles of the university context, and this is what makes both male and female students unconcerned, perhaps, with “possessing” these features. Perhaps these features are considered complementary, viewed as necessary by each gender but mutually left for the partner to possess!

A descriptive analysis for the set of features discussed above leads to the following preliminary remark: a male undergraduate's preference for his partner is stereotyped to a considerable extent. Yet further consideration of the four gender types reveals a more complicated picture: The exaggeration with which the female university undergraduate describes her preferred partner's masculinity – as identified above in the analytical description of masculine

Contracting romantic partnerships does not occur outside the cultural/ideological, political, or economic context.

	Andro _(F) & _(M)	Fem _(F) & _(M)	Masc _(M) & _(F)	Undiff _(M) & _(F)	High Masc _(M)	High Fem _(F)
% distribution of female students preferring a male partner of gender type:	30	7.5	35	27.5	65	37.5
% distribution of female students according to self image gender type	23	12	21	44	45	33

traits - reappears in the table that reveals the distribution of female undergraduates (according to preferences of partners' gender type) and that of male undergraduates (according to their gender identity). Two-thirds of the young women selected partners of high masculinity while less than half their male colleagues describe themselves as having high masculinity.

One wonders: what are the reasons for this exaggeration? Is this exaggeration the result of the response style provoked by the inventory? We are referring to the known tendency for 'Social Desirability' to which respondents are inclined to fall prey to in similar inventories, a tendency whose influence researchers attempt to neutralize. If the inventory is responsible for provoking this tendency, its effect would have been generalized; i.e., it would have applied to both female and male respondents. The same would have applied to the high femininity desired in the male partner, particularly since a high percentage of women attributed high scores to themselves on that scale. But the female undergraduate did not exaggerate in attributing feminine features to her male partner, as becomes evident from scrutinizing the scores of traits on the Femininity scale; the percentage of male undergraduates of high femininity is close to the percentage of young women who desire that high femininity in their male partners.

Perhaps the exaggeration phenomenon results from the following factors

we noted above that young women's self-image tends to be saturated with high masculinity. If the young woman seeks a masculine partner, as do women generally,²⁴ she will attribute to that partner high scores on the masculinity scale, in whole and in part, so as to make him masculine

to a degree at least equal²⁵ to her own masculinity. It is true that the sample of female undergraduates who selected their preferred male partner is different from the sample that completed the gender self-image questionnaire. Yet attributing high masculinity to oneself is, as mentioned above, a phenomenon observed in women, one whose recurrence has been documented by western researchers and which describes female

youths in Lebanese society according to several studies.²⁶ Hence, exaggeration – when compared to the woman's self-image – does not really turn out to be exaggeration after all.

Studies concerned with the topic of human mate selection indicate factors that are almost fixed in most societies (developing societies in particular) under study. One of these factors is that women prefer an older man while men prefer a younger woman. Could it be that the female undergraduate was not in fact describing her colleague (the male undergraduate)? Was she describing an older man who has gone a long way in consolidating his masculinity, so that the male undergraduate, compared to the preferred male partner, seems deficient in his "masculinity"?

The components of masculinity refer to a traditional situation where the male role was complementary to the female one. Eagly and Wood²⁷ have found, upon conducting a meta-analysis of studies on this topic, a decline in the importance of the male partner as provider or as the older partner. This decline is consistent with the rise in the "Gender-Related Development Index" and the "Gender Empowerment Measure" adopted by researchers in UN organizations. If the survival of the Human Race involves a division of roles among women and men for maximizing the conditions necessary for that survival (being an economic provider and its precondition for men, health and fertility related to youth in women), then the continuity of those conditions, despite the decline in their necessity, is nothing more than the persistence of an ideology that loses, gradually, its material basis but that survives, as do all ideologies, much longer than its *raison d'être*.

Finally, we would like to point out that 35% of female undergraduates prefer a male partner of high femininity. Some studies conducted in the 1980's²⁸ demonstrated that the high degree of femininity in men (and women) is positively correlated with high marital satisfaction. One explanation offered by researchers is that the situation of emotional partnership stimulates, in both sexes, romantic associations. These associations, in turn, are linked more to the feminine tendencies of both men and women (such as emotional expressiveness, relationality, nurture) than the masculine ones.

Does asking the female undergraduate to describe her preferred male partner make her tend to refer to that romantic partnership and set off associations related to those feminine components? This holds true for 35% of female undergraduates only. Perhaps the most influential factor, in the context of well-known economic and demographic conditions in Lebanese society,²⁹ is that a life partnership for university students has come to connote a life arrangement next to which romance becomes a luxury. As such, preference for masculinity – instrumentality and agency – is rising; in contrast, "demand" for femininity is declining. This applies even when both masculinity and femininity are independent and non-conflicting constructs, as is the case in the conceptual background and operational definitions that govern the research tool used here.

Conclusion and Discussion

Lebanese university youth no longer possess a stereotyped identity. However, women's style in transcending gender stereotyping differs from that of men. While the gender identity of female undergraduates expands to embrace socially desirable features for women and men in Lebanese society, their male colleagues tend to avoid resembling either of them.

However, the above-mentioned transcendence does not reflect on mate selection neither in female nor in male undergraduates: most young men tend to prefer a feminine partner, and most young women tend to prefer a masculine partner. That is, the socially desirable profile for women remains the most suitable when describing the female partner, and the socially desirable profile for men remains the most suitable when describing the male partner.

We would like to point out that we are describing a preference and not actual mate selection. Studies concerned with determining preferences in the domain of romantic partnerships have documented mate selection style that does not differ much from the results indicated by this study. Some researchers believe that the mutual attraction between the feminine woman and the masculine man is

the most widely occurring, despite the prediction of some of these researchers that this type of attraction will necessarily decline with the decline in the traditional division of gender roles. In fact, according to some studies, the actual partnership between the masculine man and the feminine woman - and not merely the preference for it - is the one that occurs most, compared to that involving other gender types. However, what the researchers regret (those who have conducted longitudinal studies that traced the course of that type of partnership) is that it is more prone to breakup than other gender type partnerships.³⁰

Why is this so? Ickes,³¹ for example, believes that attraction between the two stereotyped couples is the partnership model most suitable for the prerequisites of survival of the human race. Since partnership between the sexes in this era is motivated by desires and factors more complicated than survival needs and prerequisites, then the more primal type of attraction is likely to decline once the instinctual reasons for its occurrence are "consumed": fertility prerequisites and their related psychological factors (sexual attraction, in particular). These have come to occupy only a part of the lives of women and men and constitute no more a life-consuming "project". The paradox that people currently live is manifested by the clash between the culture of the past and the disposition provided by our genes on the one hand, and between our actual reality and what contemporary culture prescribes and provides, on the other hand.

These preliminary survey results are restricted to the convenient sample that was available to us and limited by the research tools used. Nevertheless, these results indicate that the group most sensitive to material and human changes – university students – is for the most part fixated in past times. As far as their romantic partnership preferences are concerned, their expectations of the partner are not concordant with actual reality, particularly the human reality. These changes, as indicated by our study results, consist in transcending gender stereotypes for both sexes. Why did this transcendence, exhibited by the majority of university students both male and female, not reflect on partnership preferences for university students?

Psychologists, particularly those inspired by psychoanalysis, tend to attribute to the above-mentioned partnership unconscious tendencies and representations most likely related to the personal history of the individual and that cannot be accounted for by changes of any kind in the real world. This renders generalizations derived from changes in social reality about partnership simplistic, partial and hence incorrect. But, researchers in the field of Social Psychology affirm that contracting romantic partnerships does not occur outside the cultural/ideological, political, or economic context.

We did not have the opportunity to explore Arab studies that indicate a quality change in the methods of mate selection. We refer, in this context, to the study by Mona Fayyad³² in which she documented men-women partnerships in a period when university youth in Lebanon witnessed national/liberation movements (the 1960's and 1970's), an era when university students felt capable of actualizing their personal as well as their political dreams, when they experienced the possibility of having control over matters in both the private and the public spheres of life. At that time, men and women selected romantic partners that were equal to them and "uncommitted" to gender stereotypes, capable of building equitable tradition-free relationships. If we go back further in time to the beginning of the twentieth century, to a revolutionary era similar to the sixties and seventies in its promises, we note what Qassem Amin wrote in his book *Woman's Liberation*, describing the female partner as equal to men in her concerns and education and in handling social responsibility and not merely as a female passively responding to her mate's desires and breeding his progeny. In this respect, the description given by Fayyad makes it possible to identify a quality transformation proportional to the time period that separates the two mentioned eras.

We wonder: why don't we find in the current time period a quality change similar to that witnessed when comparing the Nahda period in the beginning of last century to the 1960's and 70's? Why does the tendency of selecting a stereotyped partner resembling the traditional image of women or men more than it resembles actual women and men dominate? Is this tendency, found in a group of university students, and according to the above discussion, one of the signs of "frustration" in youth, a phenomenon much discussed in public discourse?

Is this tendency an indicator (among others such as the revival of religious fundamentalism) of that youth's regression into the controllable world of reassuring, established tradition, a kind of defence against the real world (and hence a less threatening substitute) that imposes a unitary universal reference, thus marginalizing most of our youth on more than one level?

Or is this no more than an expression of expected lingering of attitudes behind reality's transformation in accordance with the fact that all that relates to our attitudes, beliefs, and feelings – mate preferences at the heart of that – is likely to persist and remain much longer than its reality-based rationales?

The orientation of gender attitudes for this group of youth can answer some of these questions. This is because the adoption of conventional stands regarding

men's and women's roles in society; the strong adherence to traditional beliefs about these roles; and combating behaviors leading to amending policies, laws, and institutional measures in accordance with transformations that affected these institutions – all of these are related, according to some researchers,³³ to defensive authoritarian personalities, ones "defeated" in their actual reality, and vice versa. This is because gender prejudice belongs to the set of all biases: racism, sectarianism, religious fanaticism, and ageism etc.. This is what some of our results have indicated upon analyzing the existing relationship between gender identity and gender attitudes in this group of Lebanese youth.³⁴ Is mate selection subject to the same consideration? Is a gender stereotyped mate preference linked to conventional stands toward women's and men's roles? And vice versa?

Analysis of the results of this study's Gender Attitudes Inventory does not indicate a clear direction in this regard: With respect to this issue, men and women were divided according to their sex and not according to the gender type of the mate they selected. Female undergraduates, irrespective of the gender type of preferred partner, are much more liberated from gender stereotype constraints, than their male counterparts and less accepting of men's and women's traditional roles and the legal and status-based consequences that follow from these roles.

We note that the group of male undergraduates who preferred undifferentiated female mates seemed moderately less prejudiced than the other gender type groups of male students (yet they are much more prejudiced than female students in this sample). It is noteworthy that men who hold an undifferentiated self-image have been found³⁵ to be the most prejudiced among all four self-image gender types. This indicates that the act of attributing traits to oneself is subject to a different mechanism than that of attributing traits to a female mate. This group is small in number (it totals 8), so one must accept this result with caution.

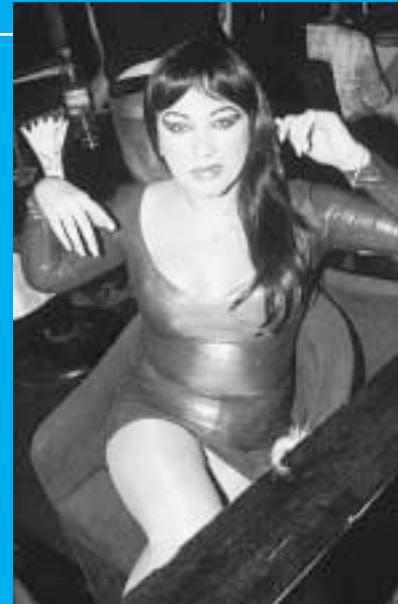
The aim of conducting this preliminary survey on partner profile preferences and its relation to the self-image of the corresponding members of the other sex among university students was to formulate possible answers (hypotheses) to the questions asked in the course of our search for manifestations of masculinity in Lebanese society. The results of this survey are indicators or keys that enable us to offer some answers but the results we have reached raise additional questions.

Isn't this what studies on humanity most often reap: finding few answers embedded with further questions awaiting answers?

END NOTES

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5. See summary, in Arabic, for the works of these in: Baydoun, Azzah Shararah, (1988), *Alhuwiyah Annisaiyya Aljadidah: Dirasah Midaniah Fi Attanmit Aljinsi Arrubaii Inda Ashabbat Allubnaniat*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, The Lebanese University. (The New Women's Identity: A Field Study in Four Fold Gender Stereotyping in Female Youth).
6. Baydoun, Azzah Shararah, (1991), "Alhuwiyah Annisaiyya Aljadidah: Dirasah Midaniah Fi Tajawuz Attanmit Aljinsi Lada Fiah Min Ashabbat Allubnaniat, (Dirasah Midaniah)", *Alulum aljtimaiyah*, Aljamiaa Allubnaniat, 1, pp. 153-186. ("The New Women's Identity: A Field Study in Transcending Gender Stereotyping in a Group of Female Youth", *Social Studies*, Lebanese University).
7. "Persistence and Change in Gender identities and Gender Attitudes: The Case of Lebanese University Students", in a Book of Joint Authors: *Proceedings of the Sexuality Conference*, Dec, 2003, AUB and Middle East Research Center – St. Antony's College – Oxford (UK), Edited by Samir Khalaf and Eugene Rogan.
8. Baydoun, Azzah Shararah, (1988), same as Footnote 5, pp. 111-118.
9. This inventory does not resemble traditional ones. Its masculinity and femininity scales, in contrast to traditional measures in psychology, are perpendicular, whereby their components do not lie on one bipolar continuum. Femininity, according to this inventory, is not the opposite of masculinity, nor is masculinity the opposite of femininity; instead, they are constructs independent of one another. Accordingly, a person - whether a man or a woman - can exhibit both masculine and feminine traits. Aggressive people can also be nurturing, and the same person can be equally active or passive. As such, gender identities have multiplied, and their correlated characteristics have become more complex: where previous inventories produced one stereotypical identity for each sex (feminine for women and masculine for men) and one non-stereotypical identity (feminine for men and masculine for women), identities have become, based on the proposed form of classifications, non-stereotypical in two additional ways: androgyny (high masculinity and high femininity) and undifferentiated (low masculinity and low femininity).
10. We used the median for the pooled of scores of both women and men as a separator between « high » and « low » in each of the masculinity and femininity scales.
11. Among this inventory's items, we mention the following first six statements:
 1. Woman's nature is not compatible with political work.
 2. A man feels inferior if a woman shares in providing for the family.
 3. The relationship set by religious laws between men and women is correct in all cases and at all times.
 4. A man's manhood is not compromised if he does household work.
 5. Woman's nature is suitable for particular vocations and unsuitable for others.
6. A girl must guard her virginity until marriage.
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No Comment



These pictures are taken at an extra special disguise party. The pictures first appeared in Cocktail magazine, No. 4, December 2003/January 2004 and are reprinted after permission was granted.

"Dancing Against the Norms"

A Profile of Mosbah Baalbaki

■ Lynn Maalouf

Journalist

Every Saturday night, at around three o'clock in the morning, Music Hall's long velvet crimson curtains draw open, leaving way to a slim, tall figure that takes position in a bare set up, standing under a single spotlight. As the first percussion beat rips through the silence of anticipating viewers, the figure's hips take a bold swing left, and then another right, setting off a series of sexually-teasing belly dance moves. The now roaring audience is glued to the sight of the dark, dense hair plastered backwards, the toned muscles rippling through tight-fitting jeans, and the heavy gold chains reaching down to the navel swaying over a fluid see-through top. The name of the belly dancer is Mosbah Baalbaki, better known simply as Mosbah, the famous male belly dancer act who combines sophisticated dance moves and a playful charisma, and who in the past few years has come to disrupt a long tradition of exclusively female belly dancing in the country.

In a country dominated by a patriarchal system, where the stereotype masculine figure is characterized by high-gear testosterone-driven personae to the point where the legal system penalizes homosexuality, Mosbah has succeeded, over and above the controversy of his act and image, in dancing his way through the deeply entrenched norms of masculinity. He has imposed himself as a respected public figure on the regional scene: every couple of months at least, he is solicited to perform at private parties for political and financial bigwigs across the globe, from the Seychelles islands, to Milan, Sardinia, Paris, London and Dubai. And when he's in town, he dances before a



full house every week end; even if a few sarcastic boos made by suddenly insecure male voices accompany the cheers, there's no question that a significant number of revelers are ready to wait until that late hour just to see Mosbah's show, which lasts no longer than a mere 10 minutes at the most. Mosbah has also attracted considerable international media attention, including a special CNN report in 1999, and interviews with the BBC and the *New York Times*.

Born some thirty years ago and growing up as an only son in Sidon, Mosbah has come a long way indeed, thanks to this "hobby" as he calls it. Belly dancing has allowed him to fulfill his childhood dream, which is stardom: "Ever since I was a kid, I wanted to be a star, a celebrity of my own. I didn't want to be like everyone else. Even when I weighed 120 kilograms and that is until I was 17, I dressed in daring, eccentric colors. I loved music and adored Egyptian movies. I was always telling my mother that I wanted to go to Egypt to become an actor. But she convinced me to get a college degree first. And she was so right, because when you're educated and have self-respect, you can impose people's respect." At 20, Mosbah came to the capital to pursue a degree in communication arts at the Lebanese American University. Upon graduation, he traveled to Dubai for a few months where he worked as an assistant director before returning to Beirut to work as a fashion designer for a magazine. During one of his location hunts for the magazine, he met Michel Elefteriades, who owned at the time Amor Y Libertad, a popular nightclub that had just opened. "Michel invited me there one Saturday night. There were around 700 people," recalls Mosbah. "He came up front to me and asked me if I would mind dancing Arabic. He had seen me dancing at another club. He told me to go up to the bar and dance. My first response was: Are you crazy? I can't do something like that! What would my family, and my friends say? But I loved the idea. So I made my way through the crowd to the bar. When I tried to get on it, the bartender stopped me. Then Michel cleared it out. I danced to one song. It was crazy and I loved it." This

spontaneous episode turned into a weekly gig; two months later, a contract was duly signed with Elefteriades' production company, Elef Records, and Mosbah became officially a male belly dancer, gaining national fame a few months later.

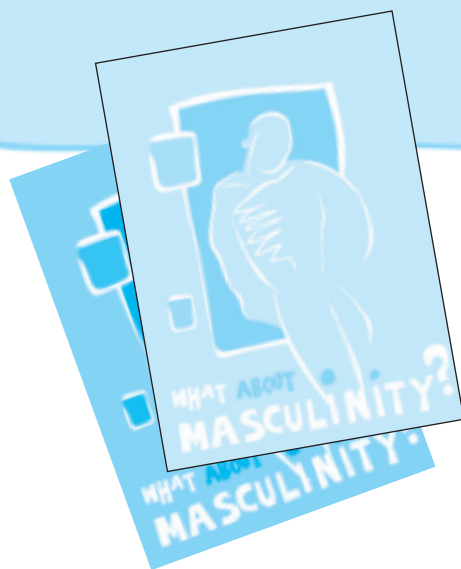
Off the scenes, Mosbah is just as picky with the details of his image as on stage; at the time of the interview with Al-Raida, which took place at a beauty institute owned by a friend of his, he was carrying along a checkered red and white Dior purse to go with his red and white track suite, a white cap and wide-framed red sunglasses. "Just for the 10 minutes of the show, there's a lot of work to do. I have to work out every day to stay in shape; I have to chose the songs, the fabric for my costumes, the set up," he explains. Even the rebellious button of his tight-fitting jeans shirt, which he was clipping back on for the umpteenth time during the interview, seemed to be a deliberate choice serving to expose a perfectly hairless, olive skin chest.



"I'm not trying to provoke anyone. I don't have anything to prove to anyone," he says. But when he first started out, he did suffer from people's reactions: "Of course, I saw the sarcasm, but didn't pay heed to it. Rumors started circulating and they even reached my family. Luckily, my family and I are very close. They know who I am and what I'm worth. They didn't buy into the talk. But I was hurt. I wanted to quit. It wasn't worth it. But then Michel managed to convince me. I held on because I have faith in what I was doing. I have passion for what I do."

When asked whether he believes he contributed to a more homosexual-tolerant society in Lebanon over the past years, he gives a modest shrug, but then refers to the special report published in 2001 in the French magazine *L'Express*, in which he was identified as one of the 100 Lebanese personalities to follow.

In a country and region, where deep intolerance of any deviation from the established norms of masculinity runs high, Mosbah has indeed managed to open a breach in these norms by imposing himself as an artist and a cultural icon.



Masculinity in Morocco

■ Abdessamad Dialmy

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The social and hierarchical relationship between the sexes in Morocco is now in crisis because of the increase in the number of women in the education and employment fields, the decrease in fecundity, and the de-institutionalization of sexuality. These three unfinished processes are the main factors that define the unequal traditional relationship between sexes. Additionally, these processes redefine masculinity, which has been considered for a long time as a source of privilege and power.

I-Issue

Men are not participating enough in the different programs related to reproductive health despite the infiltration of Moroccan women into the domains of education, work, reproduction and sexuality. The Moroccan man refuses to renounce (totally and for good) his privileges, and considers that he has the right to oppose, in the name of the Islamic sexual ethic, the woman's emancipation. This emancipation is considered a sexual liberation, which means a "danger". Sexual liberation is considered, in the name of a patriarchal Islam, as debauchery, prostitution and license.

In the same logic, the socio-economic crisis pushes the Moroccan man to become attached to, even to regress to

the traditional religious forms of masculine domination. Consequently, the principle of the equality of the sexes finds itself the primary victim of the economic crisis. Tradition becomes a shelter against the difficulties that development programs, especially in matters related to reproductive health, encounter. Chauvinism manifests itself through religious texts and fundamentalist Islam. According to traditionalists, matters relating to reproductive and sexual health must be treated in conformity with two unchangeable and pre-established Shari'a principles: the inequality of sexes in matters relating to personal status and the subordination of sexuality to marriage. Consequently, the Moroccan man finds himself lost between two calls: the egalitarian call of reproductive health programs and the discriminatory call of religious traditions.

In Sexual identity and reproductive health in Morocco¹, we analyzed this indecisiveness through 10 large variables:

- The psychosocial profile of masculinity
- The sexual orientation of masculinity
- The judicial profile of masculinity
- The self-determination of feminine sexuality
- The (pragmatic) protection of sexuality

- Masculinity, between fertility, impotence and contraception
- The masculine obstetrical conscience

II. Methodology

The questions that this section tries to answer include those related to the inquiry's population, the concerned administrations, the inquiry's sites, and the obtained samples.

II.1 Population of the Inquiry

The inquiry has decided to target the "ordinary" man only. Since he does not have an advanced academic education, the "ordinary" man does not have the intellectual means to conceive the principle of equality of sexes as a rational and democratic principle. Unlike the intellectual man, who not only conceives the principle of feminism and fights for it in some cases, the ordinary man considers masculine domination as a natural and sacred religious fact. It is in such a man that we might find a deep-rooted masculine identity that resists egalitarian calls.

It seems to us that the minor civil servant best illustrates the ordinary man. A minor civil servant is a man who works in public administration and whose annual salary does not exceed 25 000 dirhams (\$2500). Working in the office and occupying subordinate positions encourage this man to manifest traditional masculine qualities such as virility, courage, and the ability to support his wife. It is within this man "without special qualities" that a crisis in masculine identity is bound to be the most acute. The crisis of economic power drives the ordinary man towards a defensive and compensatory reaction. This reaction includes stronger attachment to preconceived notions of masculine identity which is defined as unconditional power and privileges "based" on a sexist and a-historic "understanding" of Islamic texts.

II.2 Administrations

Since we did not have sufficient means to cover all administrations, we chose the ones accountable to the following ministerial departments: Interior, Agriculture, Equipment, Health and Education. This choice was made because of the importance of these departments. In fact the number of personnel that these five ministries employ is 322 925 out of a total of 423 664 (76,2%), all ministries combined.

Another reason for choosing these departments is because the ministries of education, health and agriculture are involved, as institutions, in the reproductive health programs. Therefore it would be useful to see to what measure their minor civil servants are imbued with the reproductive health's egalitarian sexual ideology. As far as the Ministry of Interior is concerned, it represents

authority and power, an excellent field where masculine identity might be applied. The Ministry of Equipment, on the other hand, is associated with technical power still perceived as belonging to man.

II.3 Sites of the Investigation

Initially, we have chosen to carry out the investigation in three different sites: the Oriental-Rif (*Oujda*), the Middle-Atlas (*Khénifra*), and the city of Rabat. Why such a choice?

The Oriental-Rif, is considered in Morocco as the center of masculinity in its extreme brutality. The natural constraints and economic precariousness of the Oriental-Rif are compensated for by an increase of masculine values centered around honor. The Middle-Atlas (*Khénifra*) is the opposite of the Rif in that it is perceived as the place where a "primitive" sexual liberty for women is accepted and tolerated. Finally Rabat, which is the administrative and intellectual capital, represents both the domain of minor civil servants par excellence and the location of feminine/ feminist associations.

When the Direction of Population at the Ministry of Health, supported by the USAID, took a look at our project, it suggested that we enlarge our sample to include three other cities that particularly interests the Ministry, especially for phase V of its "Family Planning Project and Maternal and Infantile Health in Morocco" (1994-2000). These cities are Agadir, Tanger and Tétouan. Thus, the investigation was enlarged to include minor civil servants of these three cities.

II.4 Obtained Samples

The data collection started on March 19, 2000 and finished on May 19, 2000. The team, which includes 4 researchers under my supervision, accomplished a one-week stay in each of the six chosen sites.

Despite many objections and death threats expressed by fundamentalists against the director of research (mainly in Khénifra and Oujda), 524 minor civil servants filled out a questionnaire (table 1) and 43 were interviewed (table 2).

The size and the nonrepresentational aspect (in the strict sense) of the two samples imply that the results of this investigation should be considered as indicative and informative.

III. Results

Throughout this article, we will present the results related to aspects of masculinity and the role of sexual orientation, virility and fecundity in the masculine reconstruction of masculinity.

III.1 Psychosocial Profile

In Agadir, masculinity is defined as "practicality", self-

Table 1: The Repartition of Questionnaires According to Sites and Administrations

Administration Site	Agriculture	Education	Equipment	Interior	Health	Total
Agadir	28	17	33	19	26	123
Khénifra	17	12	23	30	10	92
Oujda	21	17	15	0	21	74
Rabat	15	13	23	35	20	106
Tanger	15	9	14	8	13	59
Tétouan	16	13	13	14	14	70
Total	112	81	121	106	104	524

Table 2 : The Repartition of Interviews According to Sites and Administrations

Administration Site	Agriculture	Education	Equipment	Interior	Health	Total
Agadir	2	1	2		2	7
Khénifra	2	2	2	2	2	10
Oujda	2	2	2		2	8
Rabat	2	1	2	2	2	9
Tanger	1	1	1		1	4
Tétouan	1	1	1	1	1	5
Total	10	8	10	5	10	43

control, ability to keep promises, seriousness, responsibility, decision-making, honesty, sexual temperance, and loyalty to the country.

In Khénifra, being a man is synonymous with being intelligent, intellectual, and reasonable. Man should be moderate, rather than aggressive, hypocritical, or traitorous, and despotic. Man should keep his word, should behave well, take the right decision, and not be afraid. Man should be in charge of expenses. A health civil servant elaborates this “quality” by asserting that “if a man does not have money, he cannot be a man...the entire concept of masculinity means that one should have money”. Man should be the protector of the family, and its shelter. He is the woman’s soldier, and her bodyguard. All in all man should inspire respect and fear to his entourage.

In Oujda, to be a man signifies heroism and courage. Man represents reason, a sense of responsibility, honor and dignity. He is the one who has an opinion and states it. Man, as already mentioned, is the one who keeps his word. Man is as well *qawwam*, which means the one who supports his wife and children because of the money he provides: “Perhaps man’s main characteristic is work ... a lazy man is not a man”.

In Rabat, to be a man, is to have self-control and authority over wife and children. Man supports his family. He is the one who will work anywhere, and the one who has a job, and money. He has a strong character and is rea-

sonable; he also keeps his word, faces difficulties, does not reveal secrets, and does not run away from problems.

In Tanger, to be a man, is to know how to dominate a family and inspire children with respect. Man should keep his word, especially when dealing with money. He should use his reason, and be able to see beyond the limits of the present. Man must be stable and possess a strong personality, principles, and the ability to support his family.

Finally in Tétouan, being a man is being responsible for the house, having a strong personality, authority, irrevocable decisions, and presence at home. Being a man means to be reasonable, delicate, wise, and always moving forward. To be a man is to take initiative, and be a leader. A man is the one who knows how to handle problems, who works hard, is tough and capable of handling hard tasks. Man should not be harsh rather than tender. He must be punctual and must keep his word. All in all, masculinity is about decision-making.

The characteristics associated with sexual behavior can be regrouped into four categories: psychological, moral, social, and political.

III.1.1. Psychological Characteristics of Masculinity

The category of psychological characteristics (table 3) includes 16 characteristics that define manhood. These

Table 3: Category of Psychological Traits of Masculinity

Cities Psychological traits	Agadir	Khénifra	Oujda	Rabat	Tanger	Tétouan	Total
Reason		x	x	x		x	4
Courage		x	x	x			3
Fear / respect		x			x	x	3
Authority				x	x	x	3
Personality				x	x	x	3
Self Control	x			x			2
Equilibrium /Measure		x			x		2
Decision-making	x					x	2
Practical	x					x	2
Intelligence		x					1
Handling difficulties				x			1
Precaution					x		1
Sensitivity						x	1
Roughness						x	1
Toughness						x	1
Taking initiative						x	1
Total	3	5	2	6	5	10	31

characteristics were mentioned 31 times. Reason comes first, mentioned in four sites, followed by courage, awe, authority and personality, all mentioned in three sites. No single characteristic was mentioned in the six sites. Tétouan is the city that refers to psychological characteristics the most, followed by Rabat. Among the psychological characteristics mentioned during interviews, are authority and toughness.

Those who define man as “commander”, represent only 24% of the total sample. On the sites’ level, we mainly find them mostly in Rabat, where they constitute 32% as opposed to 13% in Tétouan. We mainly find them in

the equipment (31%) and lastly in health (17%). The age variable does not lead to pertinent results. All the age categories have a percentage of accepting the proposition that varies between 23,7% and 25%. As for the ones who agree with the proposition “to be a man, is to be tough”, they only represent 10%. On the sites’ level, they reach their highest point in Khénifra with 15% and are almost absent in Tétouan (1%). On the administrations’ level, health comes first with 12%, whereas education comes last with 8%. The age variable links toughness with manhood in men over 45 years old.

III.1.2. The Moral Qualities of Masculinity

The moral qualities category (table 4) includes 10 qualities that have been cited 17 times. To keep his word is the moral quality that was cited unanimously. Responsibility comes in second position with 3 citations. Oujda is the city that cites the most moral qualities. Tétouan is the one that cites them the least.

III.1.3. The Social Indicators of Masculinity

The social indicators category (table 5) includes 4 elements that have been cited 11 times. Man as the supporter of the family is the quality that heads the poll. This quality was cited by five cities with the exception of

Table 4: Category of Moral Qualities of Masculinity

City Moral quality	Agadir	Khénifra	Oujda	Rabat	Tanger	Tétouan	Total
Keep his word	x	x	x	x	x	x	6
Responsible	x		x		x		3
Honest	x						1
Non-fornicator	x						1
Non hypocrite		x					1
Non traitor		x					1
Chivalrous			x				1
Honorable			x				1
Worthy			x				1
Keep a secret				x			1
Total	4	3	5	2	2	1	17

Table 5: Category of Social Indicators of Masculinity							
City Social indicators	Agadir	Khénifra	Oujda	Rabat	Tanger	Tétouan	Total
Home supporter		x	x	x	x	x	5
Hard-working			x	x		x	3
Has money		x		x			2
Protecting the family		x					1
Total	0	3	2	3	1	2	11

Table 6: Category of Political Qualities of Masculinity							
City Political Qualities	Agadir	Khénifra	Oujda	Rabat	Tanger	Tétouan	Total
Loyal to the country	x						1
Not despotic		x					1
Has an opinion			x				1
Takes position						x	1
Total	1	1	1			1	4

Agadir. Unlike Khénifra and Rabat, Agadir does not cite a single social quality that defines manhood,.

III.1.4. The Political Qualities of Masculinity

The political qualities category (table 6) includes four traits (loyalty to the country, having an opinion...) that were cited four times. Each quality was cited on one occasion. None of the cities cited two traits. Rabat and Tanger did not cite any.

The distinction between the four traits that define man generate the following conclusions: As far as number and frequency are concerned, psychological traits head the poll of notions that define manhood, followed by moral and social traits. Political traits come in fourth position. Of the psychological traits, reason (it is a psychological trait, because it implies moderation, equilibrium and precaution), keeping one's word (moral quality), supporting the family (social quality) come first among notions that define manhood. Tétouan is the city that uses the psychological perspective the most in order to define manhood, while Oujda adopts the moral perspective. Khénifra and Rabat adopt the social perspective.

This notional approach in defining man reveals a certain continuation of the

patriarchal definition of masculine identity. This patriarchal continuation expresses itself through the affirmation of the intellectual, physical, social and religious superiority of man. Opposition between reason and emotion is always defined as opposition between men and women. The same applies to the opposition between physical force and weakness. Man is considered more suited to accomplishing hard work. In Oujda, some assert that physical force allows man to "correct" his wife, which does not stand in the way of seducing her. Socially, man symbolizes the protection of home; he is the defender of the house, meaning the women living inside it. Finally, from a religious point of view, "the woman is inferior because she cannot lead in prayer".

But the definition of man as being superior is a definition that is far from appealing to everyone. In fact, only 21% of interviewees (against a majority of 66%) are favorable to the proposition "being a man signifies being better than the woman" (table 7).

In all cities, the feminist attitude implying that the man is not better (than the woman) won the polls by a high majority. The city of Oujda realized the highest feminist percentage (86,5%). On the administrations' level, education comes in the forefront of feminist attitude with 79%, whereas health comes last with 61%. All the administrative sectors reject the masculine superiority with an absolute majority.

Table 7: Chauvinism of Man According to Cities					
Attitudes Cities	Man is better	Intermediary	Man is not better	No answer	Total
Agadir	26,02%	15,45%	58,54%	0,00%	100%
Khénifra	27,17%	11,96%	60,87%	0,00%	100%
Oujda	8,11%	4,05%	86,49%	1,35%	100%
Rabat	23,58%	9,43%	64,15%	2,83%	100%
Tanger	20,34%	6,78%	66,10%	6,78%	100%
Tétouan	15,71%	11,43%	68,57%	4,29%	100%
Total	21,18%	10,50%	66,22%	2,10%	100%

Man should manage house matters without violence and through dialogue. In Rabat, the woman is identified as a better manager of domestic economy, and she is seen more and more as an equal partner. Even in Oujda, the city that realized the lowest feminist score, masculine authority has been softened. Man's commandment cannot be blind, unconditional, and dictatorial. To command is to direct while taking the woman's opinion into consideration. Therefore, there is a redefinition of authority, which is more and more considered as reasonable commandment. In the same way, physical force is not a "privilege": "muscles, even the elephant has some", some say with irony. Consequently, man is not defined as physical force (according to 46%) which should mean toughness, violence or despotic commandment.

III.2 Sexual Orientation

Despite not being spontaneously cited in the interviews, the sexual profile is central in the Moroccan social construction of masculine identity. This profile is largely determined by the necessity of heterosexuality. "Being a man, is being heterosexual": this recurrent phrase signifies the rejection of homosexuality because it is considered as an anomaly that undermines masculinity.

III.2.1. Bisexuality, a Subject of Doubt

Regarding bisexuality, opinion is divided: 44% of interviewees agree with the following point "in every human being, there is both femininity and masculinity", where as 41% reject it. The city of Oujda (54%) and the health administration (48%) adopt in the strongest way the patriarchal response (non-recognition of bisexuality), whereas the city of Agadir (51%) and the agriculture administration (51%) adopt mostly the feminist response. If the Oujda patriarchal opinion was expected, the health opinion was, on the contrary, unexpected. In fact, the health civil servants are theoretically the most suited to say that every human being possesses masculine and feminine hormones. Only one health civil servant mentioned this biological foundation to explain the presence of masculinity and femininity inside the human being.

It is recognized in Agadir that masculinity and femininity can coexist in the same person and that bisexuality does not undermine the masculine identity. Generally speaking, the bisexual hypothesis defense did not provide a rich and diversified plea. Because of the dominant patriarchal perspective, mono-sexuality is stated as evidence. In Oujda, it was asked, "does man become pregnant?" This question was used as the irrefutable argument-the argument par excellence-of non-bisexuality. It is said that man should be man and woman should be woman. The femininity of man is inconceivable, and to treat man, as a woman is to question his masculinity, and to humiliate

him. In Tétouan, a normal man cannot be masculine and feminine at the same time. In case bisexuality exists, it can only be a sickness, a deviance and a devaluation of man. To accuse a man of bisexuality, is to feminize him; it is to degrade him to an inferior ranking. In fact, according to 79%, to treat man as woman is to insult him.

III.2.2. Homosexuality, an Anomaly

The most tolerant social attitude explains homosexuality as a surplus of feminine hormones, but still considers it as an anomaly. Implicitly, this "scientific" explanation reduces homosexuality to the so-called passive homosexuality. It is only the penetrated homosexual that is considered as homosexual. He is abnormal because he suffers from an excess of feminine hormones, wich is interpreted as sickness.

In Khénifra, the homosexual is called *chadd*, which means pervert, and the notion of *choudoud* (perversion) signifies, in the everyday language, the "passive" homosexuality only. The hormonal surplus explanation does not excuse the passive homosexual. In Rabat, it is thought that the over-presence of feminine hormones does not justify a man's receptive homosexual behavior.

In Oujda, the hormonal explanation leads to the hypothesis of sexual impotence: the receptive homosexual is a sexually impotent male because he has a surplus of feminine hormones. Because he is impotent, he lets himself be penetrated, like a woman. Nevertheless, "active" and "passive" homosexuals are both considered sick, vicious, perverse, and especially non-religious. Homosexuality is deviant and religiously illicit (*haram*). In Oujda and Tanger, the judicial Islamic sentence that states that homosexuals should be killed to purify society, is adopted once more. In Oujda, it goes as far as requesting that they be burned to death.

In Agadir, an unprecedented attitude has been noted and it consists in explaining homosexuality as sexual work. Here homosexuality is recognized as prostitution, as a trade of bodies, as a trade-alternative, since unemployment is affecting boys and girls. A young Moroccan is ready to play active and passive roles, depending on the client's will. In Agadir, the questions regarding morality with respect to homosexuality are declining, so are the "etiological" reasons in explaining homosexuality (hormones, impotence...).

III.2.3. The Homosexual: A Male? A man? sexless?

Does homosexuality weaken masculine identity? The empirical answers to such a question can be regrouped into five rubrics: 1) man stays a man because he is still a male, 2) only the receptive homosexual is not considered a man, 3) Whether being receptive or performing an

intromission, the homosexual is not considered a man, 4) homosexuals are neither men nor women, 5) homosexuals are not considered human beings. Let us examine these responses one by one.

a. Being a Male, is Being a Man

In Khénifra and everywhere else, it is stated, "the first thing we look for when a birth takes place, is the penis". If it is found, the baby will always be a man, even if he later on becomes a receptive homosexual. To have a penis is enough to define masculine identity, regardless of sexual practices and orientations. Consequently, even the receptive homosexual stays a man because he has a penis. Therefore, homosexuality does not undermine masculinity.

The same reasoning applies to a male who practices homosexuality to make money. In this case, pleasure is not the purpose of the homosexual act. For example, it is concluded in Agadir that the homosexual prostitute is more a prostitute than a homosexual and does not deserve to be called homosexual. There is a distinction between homosexual practice and homosexual identity: to perform the act for money does not signify that one is a homosexual. In Khénifra, it is stated, "The penetrator and the penetrated both remain men" simply because they have a penis.

b. "Demasculinization" of the Receptive Homosexual

It is inconceivable to be a (sound) man and a receptive homosexual (especially for pleasure) at the same time. Consequently, the homosexual identity applies to the ones who practice receptive homosexuality, based on a bio-psychological need. For 61%, a man who was submitted to sodomy by another man is no longer a man (table 8).

As a result, active homosexuality is implicitly more accepted because its actor respects the masculine paradigm of penetration. The penetrator has more value. He

is called a man because he practiced sex with someone else. In fact, for 38% of interviewees (against 54%), to be a man does not only signify being heterosexual. A man practicing sex with another man is not only defined as man, but also as a non-homosexual. For 61% of interviewees, a man who was submitted to sodomy by another man is no longer a man. 67% of interior civil servants think so. The city of Rabat expresses this attitude the most (with 75%), followed by Oujda (68%). It is only in the city of Tanger where the sodomized is still considered as man by a relative majority of 42% (against 40%). On the national level, 24% think that sodomy does not undermine the sodomized masculinity, mainly because of the presence of the penis.

These results are in conformity with the paradigm of patriarchal sexuality: to have sex with the penis, is to penetrate the other, to be active, to be masculine, to be virile, to be valorized. On the other hand, to have sex with the anus, implies being penetrated, implies being passive, being feminine, being depreciated. Masculinity is socially thought of as sexual penetration. It is said in Oujda that the penetrated man is only a male not a man. Hence to be a male is not enough to be a man. For certain interviewees, especially in Khénifra, active homosexuality symbolizes a "victory" of social class where the "poor" takes his revenge.

c. "Demasculinization" of All Homosexual Actors

This third attitude undermines the masculinity of all homosexual actors. To be homosexual because of a psycho-hormonal or a financial need, to be penetrated or to penetrate, is not considered manly.

The religious aspect is not foreign to this depreciation of all homosexual actors. It is stated that neither the penetrator nor the penetrated have a value: "Our religion forbids us from considering them as men". Both should be condemned to death, because they go against religion. The ideal Islamic city is perceived here as free from homosexuality.

Table 8: Sodomy and Masculinity According to Cities

Attitudes Cities	Sodomized, man is no longer man	Intermediary	Sodomized, man stays a man	No answer	Total
Agadir	55.28%	5.69%	31.71%	7.32%	100%
Khenifra	60.87%	18.48%	20.65%	0.00%	100%
Oujda	67.57%	4.05%	20.27%	8.11%	100%
Rabat	74.53%	4.72%	15.09%	5.66%	100%
Tanger	40.68%	5.08%	42.37%	11.86%	100%
Tétouan	64.29%	8.57%	18.57%	8.57%	100%
Total	61.45%	7.82%	24.24%	6.49%	100%

d. "Desexualization" of Homosexuals

Homosexuals are neither considered men nor women. The sodomite should not be considered a woman out of respect for her. This respect for women is shown in several places. In Khénifra, it is estimated that treating the penetrated homosexual as a woman is degrading to her. To reduce her to a sex object is to despise her for "Sexually speaking the woman is a partner". In Oujda, it is specified that the receptive homosexual is socially more degraded, not because he resembles a woman, but because he has renounced his biological sex, his manhood. In Rabat too, the one who has been sodomized should not be compared to women: "A gay person does not deserve to be treated as a woman".

e. Dehumanization of Homosexuals

Homosexuality as transgression of law, transforms the human being into an animal. Man becomes animal when he stops being religious, and stops being religious when he becomes homosexual. Heterosexuality is considered as an Islamic principle that defines the human being.

III.3 Sterility and Virility

Does man recognize masculine sterility? To what extent does he recognize the difference between sterility and sexual impotence? To what measure does man stay a man without having to be virile or fertile?

III.3.1. Dissociation Between Sterility and Impotence

A majority of men acknowledge masculine sterility (table 9). In fact, 76% think that masculine sterility is an incontestable fact (against 15%). The woman cannot always be accused of being responsible for the couple's infertility: "the husband can also be the cause". But against all expectations, 16% of health civil servants think that man can never be responsible for the couple's infertility. 19% of equipment civil servant and 9% of education civil servant have the same attitude. Another paradox concerns one of the most feminine cities, Agadir, where the patriarchal attitude is the strongest in regard to this

item: 20% of gadiri think that man is never infertile. The recognition of masculine infertility does not lead to confusion between infertility and impotence. It is said that "The sterile man can make love with force, can be virile, but it is his sperm that is bad".

Table 10 shows that 79% of interviewees (against 16%) make the difference between masculine infertility and sexual impotence. It is the interior civil servants that differentiate the least: 37% of them think that a sterile man is sexually impotent.

The dissociation between masculine sterility and sexual impotence has an effect on the definition of fertility. To be virile or sexually active does not mean being fertile. Fertility is no longer the visible sign and material proof of virility. The latter means only the aptitude to make love.

III.3.2. De-responsibility of the Impotent and Sterile Man

Facing sterility and impotence, the social explanation combines morality and science on the one hand, and magic and religion on the other. Science and morality tend to accuse man and make him responsible for his sterility since he carries microbes and performs debauchery. On the contrary, the magic-religious tradition was made to relieve responsibility from the sterile and/or impotent man and ensure his masculinity.

Such an explanation shows to what degree the layman is

Table 9: Acknowledgment of Masculine Sterility According to Administrations

Attitudes Administrations	Man cannot be sterile	Intermediary	Man can be sterile	No Answer	Total
Agriculture	13,39%	6,25%	79,46%	0,89%	100%
Education	8,64%	4,94%	81,48%	4,94%	100%
Equipment	19,01%	9,92%	68,60%	2,48%	100%
Interior	14,15%	3,77%	80,19%	1,89%	100%
Health	16,35%	8,65%	74,04%	0,96%	100%
Total	14,69%	6,87%	76,34%	2,10%	100%

Table 10: Sterility and Sexual Impotence According to Administrations

Attitudes Administration	Infertility means sexual impotence	Intermediary	Infertility does not mean sexual impotence	No answer	Total
Agriculture	21,43%	3,57%	74,11%	0,89%	100%
Education	1,23%	3,70%	93,83%	1,23%	100%
Equipment	9,09%	2,48%	84,30%	4,13%	100%
Interior	36,79%	6,60%	56,60%	0,00%	100%
Health	6,73%	3,85%	89,42%	0,00%	100%
Total	15,65%	4,01%	79,01%	1,34%	100%

familiar with biomedical knowledge and shows that etiology is largely impregnated by culture. Hence, magical belief in spells can stop a man being man, meaning powerful and fertile. So, "we go see a clairvoyant in order to heal him". In fact, the patriarchal logic still dominates the unconscious of the tribal man, creating a feeling of inferiority inside the sterile man: the sterile man cannot but "feel inferior", says an education civil servant.

In case therapy (magical or biomedical) fails, a divine causality is invoked as a last attempt to reconcile the sterile man with himself. Most civil servants said that fertility and sterility, virility and impotence, are questions that depend on God. The ability to fertilize is independent of human will. Consequently, "man should not fight against his destiny. Sterility does not weaken the masculinity of a man that believes in God: it is when man ignores God that he doubts his masculinity." Furthermore, it is said that even if man is sexually impotent, he stays a man as long as he does not become a homosexual. The ethno-racist explanation of sexual impotence was expressed once in Agadir. Health civil servants said that, compared to the Berber man, the "Arab is sexually deficient". Being a Berber himself, this civil servant takes his revenge, since the Arabs are (ideologically) dominating.

III.3.3. A Critic of Sexual and Reproductive Health

The patriarchal tradition is rejected when it defines masculine identity as virility, progeny or a large progeny.

Tradition is rejected when it defines man as being virile. Of course, excluding virility from the definition of masculinity is not accepted unanimously. It is believed that masculinity is sexual power, which implies sexual satisfaction of the wife. According to an interior civil servant, when a man does not have sexual libido, he does not have what really defines man. According to some civil servants, nowadays women demand more sex, openly express their need for sex and have no problem showing it. It is recognized that the "woman is sexually more powerful". Hence, it is normal that virility is now explained more and more in terms of orgasmic power. It is also nor-

mal that sexual fear inspired by the "new woman" pushes man towards more sexual failures. An education civil servant says that "the woman can have an orgasm four times, whereas the man has less, I am not sure if it is due to food, climate, nature, but man has to handle this...he has to heal himself, to eat vegetables...". In addition, impotence can lead to adultery and divorce. Also, an individual who does not satisfy his wife sexually is not a man. 38% of civil servants in Rabat and 29% in Agadir believe that an impotent man is not a man. Moreover, 24% think the same throughout Morocco.

For an absolute majority of 62% (see table 11), sexual impotence does not indicate non-masculinity. The danger of identifying masculinity with virility is clearly apparent, mainly in Oujda and Tanger. The modern civil servant refuses to define man based on sexual activity: "man is not only sex". Defining man according to his sexual activity is degrading and incorrect because "virility is found in animals, especially animals" (Tanger). Hence the impotent man stays a man because "he also takes decisions", and because of this, he has what really defines man (Tétouan).

Tradition is rejected when it pushes man to have male descendants to be considered as a man. It is in Khénifra where people tend to associate the most between masculinity and masculine progeny (21%). But for 87% of interviewees (table 12), masculinity does not consist in having boys: "To have a boy or a girl is a pure hazard, it has nothing to do with masculinity...it is God who decides". A national education civil servant demystifies the masculinity/progeny association by stating that men who prefer to have boys think less about their virility than the perpetuation of their name (lineage).

Thus to have daughters only does not weaken man's masculinity: "Our prophet had daughters only, and he was a man...". In Oujda, it was "wisely" said that babies' sex depends on God's will. It was stated that "we are no longer in the jahiliya² period", and we need to show that girls are actually welcome. Furthermore, we can feel a slight prefer-

Table 11: Sexual Impotence and Masculinity According to Cities

Attitudes Cities	An impotent man is not a man	Intermediary	An impotent man is a man	No answer	Total
Agadir	29,27%	9,76%	57,72%	3,25%	100%
Khenifra	23,91%	13,04%	63,04%	0,00%	100%
Oujda	4,05%	13,51%	79,73%	2,70%	100%
Rabat	37,74%	13,21%	46,23%	2,83%	100%
Tanger	16,95%	6,78%	72,88%	3,39%	100%
Tétouan	18,57%	15,71%	62,86%	2,86%	100%
Total	23,66%	12,02%	61,83%	2,48%	100%

Tableau 12: Masculinity and Masculine Progeny According to Cities

Attitudes Cities	Masculinity signifies masculine progeny	Intermediary	Masculinity does not signify masculine progeny	No answer	Total
Agadir	4,88%	3,25%	86,99%	4,88%	100%
Khenifra	20,65%	7,61%	71,74%	0,00%	100%
Oujda	4,05%	0,00%	93,24%	2,70%	100%
Rabat	2,83%	0,94%	93,40%	2,83%	100%
Tanger	5,08%	0,00%	93,22%	1,69%	100%
Tétouan	2,86%	4,29%	88,57%	4,29%	100%
Total	6,87%	2,86%	87,40%	2,86%	100%

ence for girls. There is a reason behind this preference: girls are more tender, even when they are married; they continue to take care of their parents, unlike boys. It is also recognized that they can be strong and responsible. Tradition is finally rejected when it forces man to have a large progeny to be considered a man. As stated in table 13, 77,8% dissociate masculinity from large progeny.

Traditionally, virility meant a large progeny because people used to refer to the animal model, which used to dominate the agrarian society. The large family model is itself conceived through the large herd model: number creates force. For the older generations, the one who does not have a lot of children is not a man. Hence, the male animal that succeeds in impregnating several females is always called "*fahl*", which means virile. Man's virility "*fouhoula*" was modeled on the animal model. But this social construction of the male based on the animal model is no longer dominant. People are now conscious that they cannot procreate without limits simply because they are virile. Financial considerations are starting to play a role in rejecting the definition of reproductive virility: "Knowing my salary, I cannot afford to have four or five children. It is not a question of virility." An equipment civil servant admits that: "Nowadays, it is a

good thing to limit births...times are tough... we should not make seven or eight children sleep in the same room, like sardines...a boy needs his own room at a very young age, and the girl as well..."

A man who has a lot of children is clearly accused of being the first cause of the economical decadence of society. In Tétouan, people who see a similarity between virility and large progeny are perceived as illiterates.

Synthesis

The analysis of man's psychosocial profile leads to the distinction amongst four categories of traits and definitional qualities of masculinity. Because of their number and their frequency, the psychological traits come in the foremost position of definitional notions of man, followed by moral and social qualities. Political traits (loyalty to the country, personal opinion) come in fourth position. Reason (psychological trait), keeping one's word (moral quality), supporting the family (social quality) come in first positions of man's definitional notions.

The risks that masculinity is facing because of social evolution are felt and expressed. Financial difficulties are designated as responsible for the de-masculinization of

Table 13: Masculinity and large Progeny According to Cities

Attitudes Cities	Masculinity signifies Large Progeny	Intermediary	Masculinity does not signify Large Progeny	No answer	Total
Agadir	12,20%	8,13%	74,80%	4,88%	100%
Khenifra	17,39%	7,61%	75,00%	0,00%	100%
Oujda	8,11%	5,41%	83,78%	2,70%	100%
Rabat	14,15%	4,72%	81,13%	0,00%	100%
Tanger	10,17%	6,78%	81,36%	1,69%	100%
Tétouan	17,14%	4,29%	72,86%	5,71%	100%
Total	13,36%	6,30%	77,86%	2,48%	100%

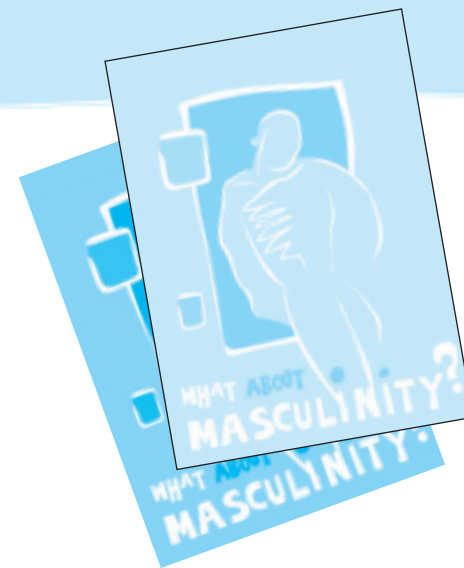
young people, which means the loss of patriarchal "qualities" of masculine identity. This de-masculinization, which is anti-traditionalist, constitutes the starting point of a new masculine identity. Hence, it is said that the sentimental man should not be considered a woman. It goes the same for the one who helps his wife performing domestic works. Tenderness and friendliness are from now on compatible with masculine qualities. We can conclude that man is not a sacred identity, an unchangeable soul: he is susceptible to change and evolution. To reject everything that is feminine is no longer essential to demonstrate masculinity in Morocco. Man no longer dominates the relationship between men and women. This evolution is less visible on the sexual orientation level. Bisexuality still means sickness and deviance, and is mainly degrading for man. In fact, to call a man a bisexual, is to feminize him, to degrade him to an inferior patriarchal ranking, it is to insult him. For a large majority, to be a man, and to be heterosexual, not homosexual.

To identify homosexuality as masculinity is probably the only way to make it acceptable. Homosexuals are men living a dominated masculinity, but are still considered men. The social contempt towards the passive homosexual does not automatically imply treating him as a woman. This indicates an undeniable feminine aspect within the ordinary masculine thought.

Sexual impotence no longer deprives man of masculinity. Because of his penis, a man stays a man. Today, the ordinary man refuses to be defined as a sexually active and functional male only. Virility goes beyond the ability to have orgasm and is redefined as education, nobility of the soul, and reason. Ordinary men are starting to recognize publicly that a woman is sexually more "potent" than a man.

In the same way, the masculine and/or large progeny is no longer a necessary condition of masculinity. It is rather the capacity of supporting children that is becoming synonymous with masculinity. A successful sexual activity is not the one that leads to a masculine and/or large progeny, but to a profound conjugal understanding within a more or less democratized nuclear family. To have fewer children is becoming a choice, a necessity. Consequently, to have fewer children is no longer synonymous with non-virility and non-masculinity. Also, to have only daughters is no longer considered as a defect or a handicap. To go even further, the infertile man is considered a man despite his infertility. To summarize the situation, the ordinary Moroccan man is successfully undergoing sexual transition.

Translated by Josiane Maalouf



"In Morocco, a Man
is Like a Diamond:"

The 2004 *Mudawwana* Reforms and the Problem of Moroccan Masculinity

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In October of 2003, King Mohammad VI announced his intention to radically improve women's rights by reforming Morocco's *Mudawwana al Ahwal al Shakhsiyyah*, or Code de Statut Personnel,¹ and in January 2004, parliament unanimously accepted a series of dramatic changes based on his suggestions. The new set of laws, renamed the *Mudawwana al Usrah*, or Code de la Famille, promises to increase women's power and authority in family and public life. Although some celebrate these changes as a revolution in human rights,² others express a range of ambivalent reactions to the reforms, viewed as threatening the stability of the family and calling into question the pillars of Moroccan religious and cultural identity.³ Based upon a period of ethnographic fieldwork in Fes and Rabat during the time of the change,⁴ this essay combines feminist and "Male Studies" perspectives to examine how individuals deploy constructions of authentic Moroccan "male-ness" and "female-ness" in discourses of opposition to the reform.

Gender Complementarity/Gender Equality

According to sociologists and anthropologists who study traditional North African marriage practices, the pre-amendment family laws are based on a logic of strategically maximizing procreation within the patriline while

encouraging a certain fragility in the marriage bond, in line with the Maliki interpretation of *shari'a* dominant in the area (i.e. Mounira Charrad,⁶ Fatima Mernissi,⁷ and Pierre Bourdieu⁸). For example, while the pre-amended Code's legal marriage for women (15 years) prolongs her legitimate childbearing years⁹ and the right to polygamy maximizes the male's reproductive potential,¹⁰ both practices undermine intimacy and reciprocity between the spouses. Other features heighten this disparity, such as the husband's right to confine the wife to the home;¹¹ the stipulation that women must be represented by a *wali*, or male tutor in the marriage contract;¹² and differential access to divorce.¹³ In turn, the pre-amendment Code positions the husband as undisputed head of the household, the sole provider¹⁴ responsible for regulating the behavior of female and junior members of his family. A model of the family based on the culturally sanctioned ideal of husband as provider and woman as passive consumer,¹⁵ is set against the economic realities of contemporary Morocco, where many women are economically active and where it is no longer uncommon to find women at the head of the household.¹⁶

Many of the Code's sex-specific factors were overturned or reformed in the 2004 amendments. Women's age of

END NOTES

1. The primary credit for the realization of this inquiry goes to the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS, Beirut), which accepted and supported my project, as part of the Middle East Research Competition (MERC). I address my most sincere thanks and gratitude to LCPS/MERC, and especially to Dr. Oussama K. Safa, director of the MERC program.

The acknowledgment for this inquiry's expansion to other sites goes back to Dr Mostafa Tyane, director of population in the Moroccan ministry of health, to Dr Théo Lippelvel, director of JSI project (USAID), and to Dr Najia Hajji, chief of family planning division at the Direction of Population. In order to realize this inquiry on a such sensitive theme in an Arab-Islamic society, where certain questions are still inconceivable to some, it took all the open-mindedness of the following directors: Director of Population, Ministry of Health, Director of Pedagogic Support, Ministry of National Education, Director of Human Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Director of Human Resources, Ministry of Equipment, Director of General Affairs, Ministry of Interior.

Consequently, my thanks go to these five directors for not only authorizing such an inquiry, but also for facilitating its accomplishment next to their delegations and directorates in the chosen cities.

Concerning the cities of Agadir, Kénifra, Oujda, Rabat, Tanger, and Tétouan, my most sincere thanks go to the Walis and gov-

ernors of the ministry of interior, to the delegates of the ministries of health and national education, to the regional and provincial directors of the ministries of agriculture and equipment. I would like to thank them for appreciating the strategic stake of this work, and for encouraging their civil servants to answer the questions of people conducting interviews.

I cannot forget these civil servants who sacrificed their time and revealed their most intimate thoughts on personal subjects, I thank them for the trust they had in us. Therefore, I would like to thank the five administrations of agriculture, national education, equipment, interior and health on the central level, and on the regional and provincial levels in the cities of Agadir, Khénifra, Oujda, Rabat, Tanger and Tétouan. I would like to thank them for having encouraged scientific research and believed in it. A grateful thought asserts itself and goes to my students in my LIDESP laboratory, at Fès University: Houda al Addouni, Hakima Mrini, Habiba Hafsaoui, Bouchta al Khayari and Jamal Fezza. They did their best to collect in the best possible way reliable and credible facts. I would like to congratulate them for having put up with wisdom, even in some rare cases, the provocations they were subject to. My last thank you goes to Mrs. Bouteina Elomari, IEC consultant at JSI, for her precious help.

2. It is worth noting that during the Jahiliya (pre-Islamic era), newly born girls used to be buried alive, to avoid dishonor to their families.

marriage was raised from 15 to 18, thus made equal to that of men.¹⁷ The new Family Law places strident regulations on the man's right to polygamy.¹⁸ In addition, the new reforms radically equalize men's and women's access to divorce and improve divorced women's right to property and support in the event of divorce.¹⁹ In a radical re-formulation of how the rights and duties of husbands and wives vis-à-vis one another are constructed, the new regulations also guarantee the wife the same rights to employment and access to the public sphere as her husband, and make both spouses responsible for provisioning the family.²⁰ The new *Mudawwana* therefore, greatly minimizes—although it does not completely erase—the differences between the sexes in the eyes of the law. "The man is no longer the sole provider and legal representative," affirms Dr. Fatima Sadiqi, founder of the first Gender Studies department in Morocco (University of Fes), agreeing that the new *Mudawwana* has changed the legal definition of what it means to be a husband and father in Morocco.²¹

Hanan and Sulta

For those who advocate a culturally specific form of justice based on sex-role differentiation, the pre-amended regulations are not seen as disadvantageous to women, but rather as giving men and women separate sets of rights and responsibilities most suitable to their respective natures, in line with a religiously and socially sanctioned ideology of gender complementarity. Discourses of protest to the reform open up the way for a critical examination of how systems of apparent "male-privilege" are grounded in everyday practice, offering the opportunity to question how such systems compromise the quality of life for men as well as women. Men's Studies innovator Harry Brod encourages such an approach in the introduction to his *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies*: "In its explorations of the debilitating effects of various codes of masculinity on men's lives. . . men's studies. . . demonstrates the connections between the pursuit of patriarchal power and various sorts of male self-denials" (Brod, p.8-9). In line with this critical perspective, my work is committed to exploring masculine domination as a source of limitation for men as much as for women.

To justify resistance to all or parts of the reforms, many of my informants describe the basic nature of women and men as crystallized in two complementary essences: the woman is the source of *hanane* or tenderness, and the man is the source of *sulta*, or authority. Citing the Qur'an and *Hadith* as the sources of this philosophy, informants elaborate that women's propensity to become pregnant and especially to breast-feed makes them subject to a greater sense of integration with another human being, the child, but this propensity for integration is generalized and affects her relationality with other human beings

as well. Thus, not only in the act of breast-feeding, but in all her interactions, she has a tendency to bare her heart and sacrifice her own interests in favor of an empathetic bond with another human being. While this is a strength in terms of being a mother or a wife, it is seen as a liability in the public sphere, where people are likely to take advantage of her trusting, giving nature.

The man's *sulta*, also rooted in biology, is described in contrast to the woman. Because man is not required to open the boundaries of his body in making love to a woman, in giving birth, or in nursing a child, he is thus constitutionally better suited to rationally protect his self-interest and that of his family. His family is constructed as an extension, but not as an invasion of himself. Within relationships between men and women, the man has the right to be "the head of the household" because he thinks with his head, not with his heart. To a greater or lesser extent, I found that this opposition of *hanane* and *sulta* came into play in almost all discourses of opposition to the changes. It was most often invoked to critique the reform which gives women the right to contract their own marriages—which I found to be the least popular of the reforms.²² Following this logic, women are constitutionally unfit to independently choose their marriage partners because they think with their hearts and not with their heads, and thus are likely to make impulsive choices based on emotion.²³ While men too may make choices based on love, this tendency is mediated by their rational capacity to discern what would be in their best interests and, also importantly, in the best interests of their family of birth, to which, given the fact that Morocco is a patrilineal society, he still owes allegiance and support. In addition, the wrong marriage choice would not be as catastrophic for a man as for a woman because he has far less to lose in the transaction. Indeed, given that the main source of symbolic capital for a woman is her virginity,²⁴ she has everything to lose in choosing the wrong partner.

Sex and Money

In her study, *Beyond the Veil*, which came out in 1975 and which deals with male-female dynamics in Morocco, Moroccan sociologist Fatima Mernissi examines the responsibilities of the archetypal male sole provider/head of the household and describes how the features of current socioeconomic reality make this role untenable: "A respectable man is not simply someone who acquires some degree of economic power, but also who controls the sexual behavior of his wife, daughters and sisters. But this is possible only if he is able to control their movements, to limit their mobility and thereby to reduce their interaction with the strange men with whom they threaten to 'sully the family's honor'. Once again, money and sex are intimately linked in the definition of identity, both for women and men" (Mernissi, 1987, p. 149). Given

the high rate of unemployment and difficulties of finding steady work,²⁵ men are no longer in a position to oppose their wives' employment, as the survival of the family may depend on women's income. Therefore, men are frustrated in fulfilling the societal demand to "protect female honor," as women's entry into the workplace represents a loss of control over their movements.

In this vein, Brod's essay also analyses the destabilization of masculinity in the passage from precapitalist to capitalist systems: "A transfer of power from the hands of individual patriarchs to the institutions of capitalist patriarchy. . . creates a gap between institutional and personal power. For men, this creates a disjuncture between the facts of public male power and the feelings of men's private powerlessness." He continues, "Persisting images of masculinity hold that 'real men' are physically strong, aggressive and in control of their work. Yet the structural dichotomy between manual and mental labor means that no one's work fulfills all these conditions" (Brod, 1987, p.14).

Borrowing a useful term from sociologist Emile Durkheim,²⁶ Mernissi identifies "anomie" or deep and persistent confusion about societal norms as the salient response to the sudden socioeconomic change that characterized her period of analysis, the 1970's. If, as Mounira Charrad claims, "Family law by definition embodies an ideal of the family and social relations" (Charrad, 2001, p. 5), it would seem likely that the advent of a new *Mudawwana*, which sanctions changes in the gendered breakdown of labor in contradiction to traditional ideals, would intensify such confusion. In light of this, many of my informants have been answering my questions about their views on the new Family Law by reporting on a "crisis of marriage" in Morocco, marked by the rising age of marriage for both women and men²⁷ and also by men's—but not women's—rising disinclination to marry at all. Some informants predict that this crisis will be brought to a head by the *Mudawwana* changes, a set of reforms which "turn marriage into a prison for men."

Many of my informants describe marriage as something men can gladly do without or indefinitely postpone, given society's tacit approval of out-of-wedlock sexuality for men in the form of their recourse to prostitutes or girlfriends. According to Mernissi, whether married or not, "men are encouraged to expect full satisfaction of their sexual desires, and to perceive their masculine identity as closely linked to that satisfaction" (Mernissi, 1987, p.161). However, while masculine identity is affirmed through sexual conquest, Moroccan society closely links women's honor with virginity before marriage, and women's identities remain somewhat centered around their achievements as mothers and wives. Given this tilted playing field, many argue that the government is actu-

ally doing women a great disservice with the advent of the Family Law reforms, and suggest that if the government really wanted to help women, it would be doing all that it could to make marriage more attractive to men instead of exacerbating the problem by introducing another obstacle in the form of a controversial and threatening family law.

Sadiqi provides a modifying perspective on these alarmist claims. Although she agrees that there is a "crisis of marriage" in Morocco, based on "complex causes that range from unemployment, women's education and work, to suspicion towards 'mixity' and fear of failure in marriage (which for women brings shame to the family)," she doubts that the *Mudawwana* reforms will actually exacerbate the problem. Rather, Sadiqi expresses the more positive view that these changes will "gradually be in favor of a better image of women," adding, "As in the case with any major change, there will be a phase of uncertainty and doubt, but that is only normal. The royal support, the legal and political support, as well as the support of the feminist movement will certainly help in this regard."²⁸

A Man is like a Diamond

A specific social myth that has emerged with regularity within my interviews is a pervasive belief that women greatly outnumber men in Morocco, with informants estimating from three to five times as many women as men. Although demographic realities of such as male immigration and the longer lifespan of women undoubtedly play a role in shaping these perceptions, the estimation of difference is greatly exaggerated. The myth of the overabundance of women²⁹ expresses a belief in their dispensability and emphasizes the symbolic overvaluation of the man. "In Morocco, a man is like a diamond," one Moroccan sociologist recently related to me. "If a woman gets one, she considers herself very lucky." If in Morocco, a man is like a diamond, what is a woman like? When I asked this question to the sociologist, he only laughed sadly.

"Women—who are citizens of [the] domestic universe and whose existence outside that sphere is considered an anomaly, a transgression—are subordinate to men, who (unlike their women) also possess a second nationality, one that grants them membership of the public sphere. . . . Having been identified as primarily citizens of the domestic universe, women are deprived of power even in the world in which they are confined, since it is the man who wields authority within the family" (Mernissi, 1987, p.139). The feminist men's studies approach defined by Brod would challenge us to rethink this uneven division in different terms. Instead of imagining men as possessing a dual citizenship in both worlds, Brod would rather invite us to consider the price

of masculinity as a sort of emotional exile from the domestic sphere.

"Paradoxical as it may seem. . . men's public lives in an important sense represent a retreat and escape from their personal lives, a shrinkage rather than an enlargement of their spheres. . . [Richard] Ochberg writes: 'Men may attempt to escape their private troubles by migrating—like souls fleeing diseased bodies—from their private lives into public ones' (Brod, 1987, p. 3). In the case of Morocco, the burden of masculinity carries with it a set of untenable financial responsibilities and harsh emotional denials. In my interviews, many describe the *Mudawwana* reforms as "a victory for women," or even, upon further questioning, "a victory for women over men." Yet, a consideration of the various, albeit more

subtle ways, the reforms encourage greater sex-role flexibility for men as well as women, lead to a more expansive assessment of the reforms, deflecting the conversation away from an unproductive reiteration of conflict model or "battle of the sexes" rhetoric. By shifting the focus to capture how the heavy burdens of the masculine dominant role compromise men's opportunities for self-actualization and the opportunity to experience a full range of interpersonal dynamics, including vulnerability and mutual dependence with an intimate partner, studies of masculinities across different cultures and historical periods promise to collectively debunk the myth that "masculinity is a positive desideratum of male personal identity," and reveal the "pernicious effects" (Brod, 1987, p. 2) of this belief upon the lives of both women and men.

END NOTES

1. For the full text of the speech in which H.M. King Mohammed VI announced the reforms at the opening of the Parliament Fall Session on October 10, 2003, see the Magreb Arabe Presse website www.map.co.ma. Since its original drafting in 1957-8, directly following the French occupation, the Code had been slightly reformed once before, in 1993. For a summary and evaluation of the 1993 changes see Malika Benradi's 2003 article, "Le Code de la Famille: la Moudawana," especially section 1.2 "La timidité des révisions de 1993" (Benradi, 1993, p. 69).

2. Dr. Nouzha Guessous, one of the members of the royal consultative committee for drafting the reforms, elaborates "Le nouveau code de la famille constitue une avancée historique incontestable en ce sens qu'il consacre les principes de dignité, d'égalité et de responsabilité au sein de la famille et par là même dans la société marocaine en général. C'est une avancée des droits humains au Maroc car il concerne la protection des droits et de la dignité de franges parmi les plus vulnérables de la société, à savoir les femmes les enfants" (Hassan, 2003, p.1).

3. As detailed by Abderrahim Sabir, much of the public controversy over the *Mudawwana* reform has taken shape within the larger debate that raged over the adoption of Le Plan d'Action National pour l'Intégration de la femme au Développement (PANIFD), officially introduced to Prime Minister Abderrahmane Youseoufi in March 1999, of which the Family Code reform constitutes one of the most controversial parts. Sabir characterizes opposition to the reform by focussing on the rhetoric of two major Islamist groups, Adl wa al-Ihsan and Al-Islah was al-Tawhid: "The antagonists of the Plan fiercely denounce it, arguing that it would discourage men from marriage, would incite 'prostitution and debauchery,' and would be against Islamic law" (Sabir, 2000, p.3). In this vein, Souad Eddouada sums up the tenor of the dialogue between advocates and opponents during the pre-reform years as regards the issue of cultural authenticity: "The main demand of Moroccan women's associations was reform in accordance with international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), a factor that enfeebled the feminist's claims. Representatives of Moroccan reli-

gious parties challenge the feminist struggle for "gender equality" which is, according to them, a western, secular value that promotes the primacy of the individual over that of the family. According to this outlook, both the culturally specific and the religious importance of the family are disregarded by Moroccan proponents of CEDAW-guided reforms (Eddouada, 2001, p.1). However, the King himself defends against these claims: "In my capacity as Amir Al-Muminin (Commander of the Faithful), I cannot make licit what God has forbidden, nor forbid what He has made lawful. It is necessary to be mindful of the tolerant aims of Islam, which advocates human dignity, equality and harmonious relations, and also to rely on the cohesiveness of the Maliki rite and on *ijtihad*, thanks to which Islam is a suitable religion for all times and places. The aim is to draw up a modern Family Law which is consistent with the spirit of our glorious religion" (Magreb Arabe Presse, 10/3/2003).

4. September 2003 to July 2004, under the support of a Fulbright IIE grant.

5. As formulated by Harry Brod: "The most general definition of Men's Studies is that it is the study of masculinities and male experiences as specific and varying social-cultural-historical formulations. Such studies situate masculinities as objects of study on a par with femininities, instead of elevating them to universal norms (Brod, 1987, p. 2).

6. See especially Chapter 2, "Islam and Family Law: An Unorthodox View," in *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco*, where Charrad summarizes, "An aspect of Maliki family law emphasized in this chapter is the fragility of the conjugal unit. The legality of polygamy, the unilateral right of repudiation, the absence of common property between husband and wife, all tend to facilitate the dissolution of the marital bond. The message of the law is that the nuclear family does not constitute the significant locus of solidarity. Islamic law in effect defines the conjugal unit as potentially short lived. By contrast, it identifies the blood ties united the extended patrilineage as those likely to endure" (Charrad, 2001, p. 49).

7. In her 1974 *Beyond the Veil*, Mernissi writes, "Muslim wariness of heterosexual involvement is embodied in sexual segregation and its corollaries: arranged marriage, the important role of the moth-

er in the son's life, and the fragility of the marriage bond (as revealed by the institutions of repudiation and polygamy)" (Mernissi, 1987, p. 45).

8. In *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Pierre Bourdieu identifies the strengthening of the patriline as the first goal of Algerian tribal matrimonial strategies. The customs described in the section, "Matrimonial Strategies and Social Reproduction" (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 58-71) offer a productive point of comparison to the tendencies codified in the 1957-58 *Mudawwana*. "The mythic world view which accords [women] only a limited existence and never grants her full participation in the symbolic capital of her adoptive lineage, the sexual division of labor which restricts her to the domestic tasks leaving the representational functions the man—everything combines to identify the interests of the men with the material and particularly the symbolic interests of the lineage" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 66).

9. *Moudawana Code de Statut Personnel et des Successions* Art. 8 (1996, p.45).

10. *Ibid.* Art. 30 (p. 57).

11. As Mernissi points out, Art. 35.3 (*Ibid.* pp. 60-61) of the original code provides that husbands should authorize wives' visiting their parents, with the implication that women's access to the outside world in general is mediated by their husbands (Mernissi 1987, 109).

12. *Ibid.* Art. 12 (p.47).

13. Book II, articles 44-81 detail men's and women's differential rights to divorce (pp. 69-85). Within these pages, we find that men have the right to unilateral repudiation, and that for women, divorce is a more lengthy, complicated and expensive ordeal.

14. *Ibid.* Art 115 (p. 97). Mernissi's translation: "Every human being is responsible for providing for his needs (*nafaqa*) through his own mean, with the exception of women, whose husbands provide for their needs" (1987, p.148).

15. "The fact that we cling to images of virility (economic power) and femininity (consumption of the husband's fortune) that have nothing whatever to do with real life contributes to making male-female dynamics one of the greatest sources of tension and conflict" (Mernissi, 1987, p.149).

16. According to Fatima Nessif's 2001 study: "Female headed households are increasingly established in Morocco. . . [where] one fifth of households depend on women for their needs and livelihood. Based on 1991 statistics, this percentage reaches 22.5 in urban areas compared to 16.0% in rural areas" (CERED, 1995, p.123). . . Nationally, the percentage of this type of household has increased from 11.2% in 1960 to 19.3% in 1991. . . most important is the strong probability of continued increase (Nessif, 2001, p. 274).

17. *Al Mudawwana al-Jadidah al-Usrah* (Le Nouveau Code de la Famille) 2004, Art. 19 (2004, p. 19).

18. See *Ibid.* Art. 40. (2004, p. 22). Also, according to an online fact sheet issued by the Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc/Women's Learning Partnership, entitled "Comparison of former Moroccan Family Law with the new provisions: "Polygamy is allowed, subject to the judges authorization [the former code did not require this authorization] and to stringent legal conditions. . . The woman now has the right to make her acceptance of marriage conditional upon a pledge by her husband-to-be to refrain from taking other wives" (2003, p. 1).

19. *Ibid.* Arts. 78-128 (2004, p. 36-43). As summarized in the ADFM/WLP factsheet: "Repudiation and divorce, defined as the dissolution of marriage, are a prerogative that can be exercised as much by the husband as by the wife, under judicial supervision, and in accordance with the legal conditions set for each party. (Under the [former] legislation, repudiation and divorce are left to

the discretion of the husband only, and are often exercised in an arbitrary way) (2003, p. 1).

20. In the pre-amended code, the rights and obligations of the spouses are divided up and described under three separate sub-headings: Art. 34, "The Rights of the Spouses Vis-à-vis One Another"; Art. 35, "The Rights of the Wife Vis-à-vis Her Husband;" and Art. 36 "The Rights of the Husband Vis-à-vis His Wife" (60-61). This section of the Code authorizes many aspects of spousal inequality: Art. 36.1 demands the wife's fidelity to the husband; yet we find no complementary demand for the husband's fidelity to the wife; Art. 36.2 establishes the wife's "obedience" to the husband; Art. 36.4 places "the management of the household and its organization" squarely in the male spouse's hands; and Art. 35.4 implicitly gives the husband the right to monitor his wife's access to the public sphere. The amended Code radically reformulates these rights and duties under the single Art. 51 (2004: 109), "The Mutual Rights and Duties between the Husband and Wife." Art. 51.1 makes fidelity a mutual obligation, and also replaces the stipulation of the wife's "obedience" (*ta'ah*) to the husband with a call for mutual "respect" (*ihiram*). In addition, Art. 51.3 affirms, "The husband and the wife are both responsible for caring for the house and the children," and 51.4 stipulates, "consultation before making decisions concerning the family and family planning," thus newly placing the authority over the family as well as the responsibility for its economic survival into the hands of both husband and wife. The ADFM/WLP factsheet sums up these changes as follows: "Equality with respect to the rights and obligations of both parties. . . In return, the wife must contribute to the household expenses (2003, p.1).

21. Email communication 29 February 2004.

22. Most agree that this reform undeniably contradicts the teaching of the Maliki school, which envisions marriage as "a contract between families" rather than individuals (Charrad, 2001, p.32). In this vein, my informants unanimously claimed that even with their new right, women will not exercise the prerogative of independently contracting their marriage, for in doing so they would alienate both their family of birth and their husband-to-be, who would "not respect" a woman who did so. The idea of a woman entering into marriage on her own was mainly met by anxiety and disapproval, as it goes directly against the grain of the still widely-held view of marriage as an affair between families, not individuals. Interestingly, the idea of a man opposing his parents' wishes to marry the girl of his choice was not considered a catastrophe, but rather seen as a surmountable difficulty. Of the four majors schools within the Sunni tradition, only the Hanafi gives women the right to freely contract their own marriage (Ikkanacan, 2003, p. 14).

23. Raja Rhouni, in her analysis of the cultural resistance to this change, draws upon the work of Ait Sabbah: "The tutor (*wali*) represents the interests of a Muslim patriarchal social order, in which the woman is believed to be uniquely motivated by her libidinal desire in her choice of a husband. Thus, in reading the symbolism of an institution like the *wali*, we find a reiteration of the androcentric binary opposition inherent in orthodox Muslim discourse: the woman and the male tutor come to represent respectively the confrontation between the forces of nature and those of culture; anarchy and the ordering force of Muslim civilization (Rhouni, 2004 p. 153; Sabbah, 1984, pp. 64 & 113). Incidentally, within her dissertation Rhouni argues that Fatna Ait Sabbah is actually the pen name for Fatima Mernissi.

24. For a discussion of the significance of female virginity in Morocco, see Mernissi's chapter "Virginity and Patriarchy," in her collection *Women and Rebellion in Islamic Memory* (1996).

25. For a discussion of socioeconomic instability Morocco, see "Reform and Politics of Inclusion in the Maghreb," in which

Azzedine Layachi summarizes: "In Morocco today, around 20 percent of the population of 30 million live in poverty, ten percent in sheer misery and 30 percent (mostly the young and the elderly) are classified as vulnerable. . . . Unemployment is around 20 percent. . . and job creation cannot keep up with the increasing number of job seekers. The educational system, which has been turning out more and more unemployed graduates, is ailing and in need of major overhaul (Layachi, 2001, p. 11).

26. Emile Durkheim, "L'Education Morale," in *Selected Writings*, edited by A. Giddens, Cambridge 1972, p. 174.

27. According to Beamish and Tazi Abderrazik, "The mean age at marriage in Morocco has risen dramatically to 26.4 years in 1997 (27.8 in cities and 24.7 in rural areas). Citing a 2002 study by Tazi Benabderazik, Beamish and Abderrazik continue: "The rising age at marriage in Morocco indicates that marriage during adolescence is becoming less common. In 1960, nine out of every ten young women ages 20-24 years and four out of every ten ages 15-19 were married; almost 40 years later, only four out of every ten young women (39%) ages 20-24 and just over one of every ten young women (13%) ages 15-19 were married." Citing a 2000

CERED study, Beamish and Abderrazik note: "A study of urban adolescents in 1999 found even more striking figures: less than 6% of women and 1% of men married by the age of 20, down from less than 18% and 3% respectively, in 1994 (Beamish and Abderrazik, 2003, p. 6).

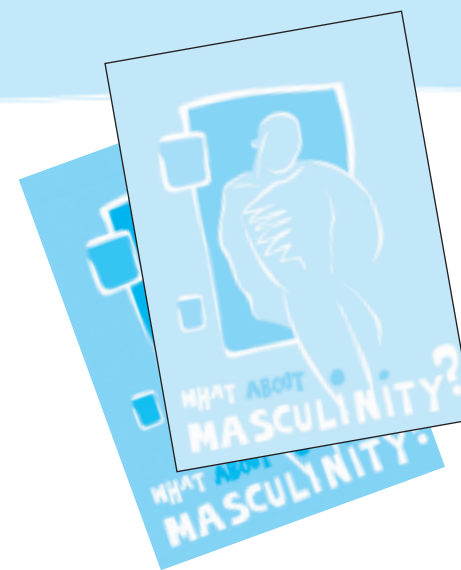
28. Email communication 29 February 2004.

29. According to the Afrol Gender Profile for Morocco, in terms of the 2000 total population estimate, we find 1 male/female. However, we find the male/female ratio shifting according to age, with males slightly outnumbering females under 15 years (1.05 males to females). For the 15-64 age category, we find .98 males/females, a tendency which increases as the population ages (www.afrol.com/Categories/Women/profiles_women.htm). However, this slight difference in no way approximates the exaggerated nature of the claims that women significantly outnumber men. Furthermore, data from the U.S. census bureau's demographic data on Morocco, which provides more precise age breakdown into four year periods, states that men slightly outnumber women until age 30, but again the gender difference remains a negligible one (www.census.gov/cgi-bin/ipc/idbsum?cty=MO).

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Masculinity as Violence in Arab Women's Fiction

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Introduction

Feminist literary theorists have, until recently, focused on the treatment of women as Other in texts written by men. Although this is an extremely important project for feminists, especially because of the weight that men's writing continues to have in the canon, I feel that in order to decentre men's writing and to understand the roles men play in women's lives, it is also important to analyze how women authors are representing men. In this paper, I have examined some of the writings by Arab women authors who have managed to be accepted into the Arabic literary canon and how men and masculinity are represented in their texts.

The most striking characteristic associated with men and masculinity in Arab women's writing is violence. Men's violence in these texts may either be on a small-scale, aimed at individual women, or may reflect a larger violence toward ethnic or religious groups or indeed society as a whole. This violence may be organized and legitimized by the state, as in the case of war, or may be an unforeseen passionate reaction; it may be an isolated incident or a chain of violent acts; it may be enacted as a tangible incident of physical violence or it may remain as an omnipresent threat. But as different as the repre-

sentations of violence may be, what is common is that the more masculine a man is, the more violent, and vice versa. Conversely women and femininity are represented as pacifistic, as rejecting violence. While some individual men may be less violent they are depicted as more feminine, and there is still a strong association between men's sub-culture and violence as masculinity. Because culture is dominated to a large extent by men, the culture of violence is pervasive and forces itself upon the female characters, who generally reject it. This connection between men, masculinity, and violence can be witnessed in texts written by Arab women authors. Here I look at how this connection is constructed by looking at the depiction of individual men as violent, violent women, and men who resist violence, and then use the notion of the Other as outlined by Foucault and Cixous to analyze the significance of these representations.

I have chosen to look at texts that have been translated into English not only because the fact that they have been translated demonstrates the general importance that the texts have been given but also because this should provide all readers of this paper access to the texts themselves should they wish to continue the investigation in greater depth themselves. It is always a diffi-

cult and dangerous task to generalize anything relating to Arab women; this term refers to women who possess a range of identities across disparate geographic and historical spaces. With this in mind, I am simply looking for common trends in Arab women's writing without hoping to produce any "truths" that are supposed to reflect all Arab women's experiences. Due to the length and time constraints of this essay, I only refer to the texts that best illustrate the representation of masculinity as violence. The authors referred to here are Hoda Barakat, Salwa Bakr, Hanan al-Shaykh, and Sufi Abdallah.

Feminists have demonstrated in countless works that traditional definitions of violence do not adequately represent male violence against women. Because they ignore the systematic and pervasive nature of violence against women, often these definitions, usually incorporating physical violence only, are too narrow. Like the feminist sociologists and philosophers who have

studied violence against women, I have adopted a woman-centered definition of violence; that is, I am including as violent those behaviors or actions that women experience as dangerous and abusive. This expands the traditional definition of violence from straightforward physical violence to include emotional and sexual violence, abuse and exploitation, and the threat of violence. All of these forms of violence are connected with masculinity in many Arab women writers' texts.

Violent Men

Masculinity is generally equated with violence and individual men are depicted as unrestrained and unruly when it comes to women. Such men in Arab women's texts are most often flat characters where their aggression is their primary personality traits and their relationship with the women protagonists is characterized by violence. In these texts, men become their violence and all other aspects of their selves disappear. In *The Story of Zahra* by Hanan al-Shaykh nearly every man the protagonist Zahra encounters exploits or abuses her in some way. From the earliest years of her life, Zahra learns the violent potential of men from her father. This father beats not only Zahra's mother for suspected infidelity but Zahra herself. He "showers her with blows" that she

might admit her mother's betrayal, and her mother is left bloodied (Al-Shaykh, 1995, pp. 14-15). Later in her life, Zahra rarely mentions her father except to express his attitude toward her—ranging from indifferent to negative, or to express a fear that he might kill her: "my father's image, coming into my mind, frightened me to the extent where I felt sure he would kill me should he ever find out. He would not hesitate, I knew, even if it meant him spending the rest of his life in prison. He was capable of severing my head from my body." (Al-Shaykh, 1995, p. 31).

After her father, the next man she forms a relationship with is her first lover, Malek. A married man and friend of Zahra's brother, Malek manipulates Zahra by offering friendship and romance in order to seduce her. After taking her virginity, knowing well the consequences for an unmarried woman without a hymen in the Arab world, Malek refuses to marry her. The friendship, romance, and even any semblance of care disappears; even after two pregnancies and abortions, Zahra is left feeling used as Malek still does not feel any attachment or responsibility toward her. Even when Zahra has a nervous breakdown and needs to be hospitalized after Malek takes her for an abortion without her consent, Malek evades responsibility by lying to her family about the situation and saying that the breakdown occurred at work and that he came to her rescue (Al-Shaykh, 1995, pp. 38-9).

After the breakdown, Zahra decides to escape to Africa and ends up in her uncle's house. Again, the uncle, Hashem, who was a leader in a violent coup d'état in Lebanon, abuses her. As the only person she knows in Africa, Zahra is dependant on Hashem, and he takes advantage of this situation. Although the beginnings may seem innocent, such as when he watches her sleep and tries to hold her hand, Zahra is disgusted and disturbed by her uncle's advances. But when his desire pushes him to lie on top of her, as she is sleeping, Zahra again suffers a breakdown and tries to kill herself.

While recovering in hospital, Zahra chooses to accept a marriage proposal from Hashem's friend Majed. Majed is a patient and forgiving husband, but still there exists in him a subtle and latent violence. He is emotionally abusive toward her, insulting her with unnecessary cruelty: "You look like a cat that has just eaten its own kittens," he said. "How is it possible for anyone to wear such a short, tight skirt? Who do you think you are, girl? ...It would be all very nice if the short skirt showed a pretty figure. But look at you, look at all this make-up. Your face is no better than a Halloween mask." (Al-Shaykh, 1995, p. 96)

After several fits Majed's patience is exhausted, and he reacts violently when Zahra refuses his sexual advances:

He tried to put his arms around me. I slipped away. He drew close. I stepped back. He followed. I screamed, but he ignored my cries. I tried to push his hand away, but he was set on having a fight.... I forced him away, making up my mind that he would never touch me unless I were dead, lifeless, as it had been with our foreign neighbour...when she defended herself to the death as the hair-dresser tried to rape her....

Majed remained insistent, and "I [Zahra] went on defending myself until my resistance began to fail, my crying still having no effect. Then I bit his hand with all my strength and heard him bellow, 'Damned woman! Bitch! Animal!'...I fell on the floor as he pushed and then kicked me. He threw me down on the couch as I went on ceaselessly screaming and moaning" (Al-Shaykh, 1995, pp. 108-9).

Zahra then requests that Majed divorce her and she returns to Lebanon. There she becomes involved with the next and last man in her life. The Lebanon she has returned to is raging with war and violence. Even Zahra's brother Ahmad, the only man who until this point has not acted violently, has become a combatant. Every trip outside the house could amount to suicide. But when she is out one day, she notices the neighborhood sniper watching her. They meet, and they have a sexual relationship. With this sniper, Zahra experiences her first sexual pleasure; she falls in love with him and even entertains thoughts of marriage. But when she discovers she is pregnant and too far along to abort, she tells her sniper. He is supportive to her face, but when she leaves him, she is shot from the rooftop. Every relationship with a man that Zahra has had in her life is characterized by violence and abuse. Though some of the violence she has witnessed by the men in her life is part of the war, most of it is directed at her.

Violent Women

One might argue that there also exist violent women in texts written by Arab women. Yet, upon closer examination, it will be noticed that in most cases the violence of women is represented as aberrant, abnormal, and not an essential characteristic of the women's personality. Whereas violent men are represented as little more than their violent actions, violent women are represented as "naturally" non-violent. They are only pushed into violence as a necessary reaction to their circumstances, which are usually depicted as caused by men. In this way, as Nadjie al-Ali writes, the authors "turn around the roles of criminal and victim by demonstrating how the real criminals are not the women of the prison, but those considered to be their victims." (Al-Ali, 1994, p. 63). The novel *The Golden Chariot* by Salwa Bakr demonstrates this.

The Golden Chariot, a novel set in al-Qanatir women's prison, also tells the tale of a group of criminal women. They are not only abused by individual men (as in *The Story of Zahra*), but are victims of the masculine culture of violence as a whole. All of the women in the prison are there "as a reaction to men abusing their bodies, men being unfaithful, dishonest, exploitative and violent" (Faqr, 1995, p. v) and all of the violent crimes committed by the inmates, which range from castration to murder, have occurred as a result of "the violation suffered by them at the hands of men" (Manisty in Faqr, 1995, p.v). The male characters in Bakr's work tend to be flat and essentially violent toward women.

The main character, Aziza is in prison for killing her step-father who had sexually abused her since childhood. After the death of her mother, and fearing his abandoning her and taking a second wife, Aziza determines to kill him. Before committing the act, she imagines how to accomplish the deed in the least violent, most romantic possible way - as she does love the man. She imagines coating him in chocolate and breaking him into edible pieces, or alternatively smothering him with the powerful scent of flowers. (Bakr, 1995, pp. 8-9). The other women in the prison who were charged with violent crimes similarly committed them against an abusive man. Two besides Aziza were murderers and two had committed assault.

Azima the giant, as she is known in the text, is a woman imprisoned for having had her ex-lover castrated. The man, Hussain, whom she loved deeply, had exploited her sexually and financially, offering promises of marriage and lifetime love. In reality, however, he was only in the relationship to gain access to her wealth. After years of being used by him, when Azima finally realized that he was only using her, she ended the relationship. Hussain began spreading vicious rumors about her that greatly damaged her reputation. In order to avenge herself Azima hires a career-criminal to castrate the former lover. Another imprisoned for assault is Jamalata who is a poor thief who threw a hot iron at a neighbor. This man had been stalking Jamalata and her younger mentally disabled sister. Jamalata was less afraid for herself than she was for her sister, whom she feared she could not always protect

I tried to push his hand away, but he was set on having a fight. I forced him away ...

and of whom she was afraid the man would take advantage. Despite repeated warnings, the neighbor continues to bother the girls. When one day he arrives at their apartment, Jamalāt fulfils her threats and assaults him with the iron.

The only murderess whose victim was not her lover is Madame Zaynab. A wealthy member of the aristocracy, Madame Zaynab murders her brother-in-law who, by various means, tries to acquire her inheritance after she is widowed. Although she puts up with most of his schemes to access her dead husband's wealth, Zaynab turns violent when he manages to convince a court that she is an unfit mother by making accusations of sexual impropriety. When the court delivers its decision that the uncle should be given custody of her sons, Zaynab shoots the uncle.

Hinna is an elderly woman who murdered her husband. After several years of emotional and sexual abuse, Hinna can no longer be with the man who had "sex with her no less than nine times on her wedding night, despite the terrible pain that she suffered and which made her beg him to desist from the painful act that made her feel as though she was going to die" (Bakr, 1995, p. 39). As time goes by she begins to fear that he will take a new young bride to fulfill his insatiable sexual appetite, and fears that she will be thrown out of the home in her old age. In order to pre-empt this, she leaves the gas oven on overnight and kills her husband while he sleeps.

All of the above characters were represented as passive and gentle, and their crimes as aberrant single acts that went against their nature and were only a direct reaction to the violence their victims inflicted upon them. Not one of them is represented as having a violent or even aggressive personality. These acts are portrayed as solely situational, where anyone, no matter how naturally non-violent, would have done the same. Regarding Madame Zaynab, Bakr writes, "People found it impossible to imagine that this beautiful, petite woman, as fragile as fine crystal, was capable of such a thing; they never knew...that she could have done it a second, third, or fourth time were she ever to be placed in a similar situation again." (Bakr, 1995, p. 150). It can be seen in all of these cases that the women would not have acted violently had they not been threatened by their male "victims".

Men Resisting Violence

Not all males are represented in these texts as violent. Those who resist violence, however, are not seen as men by society. It is in these cases that the connection between violence and masculinity is the most striking. Unlike the majority of male characters in fiction by Arab women, this type of character is round and is likely a

protagonist, and he is represented as abnormal. His relationship and resistance to violence is a struggle between himself and the person he feels he should be, that society wants him to be. Both the short story "Eight Eyes" by Sufi Abdallah and the novel *The Stone of Laughter* by Hoda Barakat deal with struggle.

The "eight eyes" after which the story is entitled are those of men in an Upper Egyptian village that haunt the story's protagonist. The young hero, Ismail, is expected by them to avenge his father's death in a blood feud. Ismail, on his part, sees the violence as unnecessary and believes that "justice [has] run its course". (Abdallah, 1990, p. 334). When he expresses this reluctance to the village men, Ismail feels that their eyes tear into him in judgment, saying, "The Young man is spineless....Hasanain did not have a son. He had two daughters: Haniya and Ismail." In order to assert himself as a man, Ismail feels that he must fulfill the violent expectation imposed upon him. Ismail has a nightmare that he killed the intended victim, and wakes up with a scream to tell his mother: "His eyes were innocent, modest like two doves. Yet the eight eyes continued to chase me and burn my breast with their looks: Be a man, Ismail. Be a man!" (Abdallah, 1990, p. 335). His mother responds that she is proud of Ismail's pacifism and asserts that she has taught him to be like that, to behave better than the beasts. In this way, the author identifies pacifism with women and violence with men. The mother appears to reject violence "naturally", whereas Ismail's pacifism is learned. All of the other men in the story accept the violent practice of blood feuds without question.

Ismail laments, "Mother, why did God make me a man?" (Abdallah, 1990, p. 335). Ismail does not necessarily question why society expects violent behavior from men and not women, but rather his own suitability as a man. In this way, the author, while criticizing the use of unnecessary violence, equates violence with men and pacifism with women as if they are natural and even essential characteristics of men and women.

The Stone of Laughter even more explicitly equates masculinity with violence. The novel by Hoda Barakat traces the transformation of the protagonist, Khalil, from an effeminate mainly homosexual man to a powerful, masculine war-monger and rapist. Khalil begins as a man who embodies mainly feminine traits in both body and behavior. He is physically slight and underdeveloped, and is described as an adolescent with "more female hormones in him than there should naturally be." (Barakat, 1995, p. 75). The story is set against the background of the Lebanese civil war, and while his friends (male) are busy with demonstrations, politics, and warfare, Khalil is concerned with housekeeping, his rela-

tionships, and his identity. All of his actions are those associated with women - cleaning, cooking, handicrafts, daydreaming, analyzing the actions of loved ones, and so forth. Furthermore, he compares himself to women several times throughout the novel: a housewife (Barakat, 1995, pp. 10 and 33), an old maid (Barakat, 1995, p. 10), a divorcee "who sits, squat, and pudgy on a stone that has witnessed the beloved" (Barakat, 1995, p. 23). Through the bulk of the novel, Khalil is portrayed in this effeminate way, and the metaphors he employs are associated with the female rather than the male. Amongst these feminine traits is Khalil's aversion to violence. He is apolitical and sees the war mainly as a nuisance that affects the immaculately clean state of his apartment. Unlike all of the other male characters, Khalil's main feelings for the war are for those he loves who die because of the war. He reveals, as is the case in many war novels with female protagonists written by Arab women, that "wars involve not only guns and ideologies in conflict, but, more essentially human beings". (Amyuni, 1993, p. 10). In a world that is permeated by violence, Khalil manages for most of the story to remain a neutral pacifist.

Eventually, the reader begins to notice a change; it is almost imperceptibly gradual, and initiated by three crises. The first and second force Khalil to question his sexual and gendered identity. The first occurs after the assassination of his love-object and boyhood friend, Naji. Disturbed by erotic dreams and feelings toward his dead friend, he tries to persuade himself that this is just a passing phase:

After Naji was killed, Khalil's body...began to get confused, the surface of his inhibitions was slit open and his suspicious dreams invaded him, they unfastened the ties by which he kept a grip on many intricate and ambiguous matters, the least of which were his erotic dreams which used to shake him like a violent storm. They would batter him with their sharp little hatchets and, after he woke up, he would struggle to gather up the fragments and rack him brain to analyze them, which helped a lot but did not completely wipe out his feeling of anxiety...Khalil knew that a fear of blood to the point of faintness, having short legs, a slight build, straight chestnut hair and large eyes, all these things do not make a man a hermaphrodite, or effeminate, or make him any less masculine, or...queer. He knew that the temporary breakdown that he was suffering was only a psychological crisis that the mad world outside has imposed upon him.... (Barakat, 1995, p. 75).

During the second crisis, Khalil's relationship with the violence that surrounds him begins to change. Because he is disturbed by his lustful feelings for his young

cousin, Khalil finds himself encouraging the new object of his affection, Youssef, to join the fighting. This way Khalil does not have to be tortured by Youssef's presence and poisonous honey (Barakat, 1995, p. 81), but Khalil is disgusted with himself for pushing Youssef to be the man that he could not be and allowing himself to indulge in a feminine role:

The truth is, I'm using him to test things out...to see how to go back to the bosom of the group, to see what I'm not able to test for myself because I'm a coward.... I'm using him to test things out so I can pull back and feel my nausea, so I don't have to go out and do the dirty work for money.... All that toil because Youssef is beautiful and because I'm a wife of the wrong sex (Barakat, 1995, p. 115).

It is after this second crisis, when Youssef is killed, that Khalil begins to become slightly more masculine in his behavior and attitude. He stops cleaning his house, goes out more with his political friends, gets a job (which until this point he has resisted), forgets sentimentality and rents out Naji's old apartment and sells whatever has been left behind.

The final crisis occurs when Khalil meets an older gay man, who guesses Khalil's sexual orientation. Known only as "the Brother", this man is a powerful political figure, a leader in the war and in weapons smuggling. He expresses his desire for Khalil, thus giving Khalil the first opportunity in his life to consummate his homosexual feelings. This confuses Khalil even more, causing mixed feelings:

Khalil realized that what drew him to the Brother, what drew him like a magnet, was that he knew how intensely the Brother desired him.... People desire and lust for those who realize the extent of their desire for them.... Desire mingled with acute nausea. With hatred verging on the pleasure of torture. More torture from this man who is often tormented in his attempts to reach me, stamp his imprint on my soul and possess it, so I become like him. Khalil thought: we certainly become like the people we have sex with and I do not want to be like this man. (Barakat, 1995, p. 194).

Khalil does not have sex with the Brother, but he does become like him. He is attacked on the street by armed men, but when he shows them the Brother's business card, they desist. He becomes angry and filled with hatred for the world, for his weakness, and for being given the opportunity by the Brother to become an active member of society. He has no choice but to become what is required of a man in a violent, dangerous situation - violent and aggressive. In the epilogue of

the book, which is several weeks or months later, the change to masculinity is complete. The man that the reader was introduced to at the beginning of the novel has disappeared, replaced with a cold, powerful arms dealer. The proof of the shift to masculinity occurs when Khalil rapes a woman neighbor. The ultimate expression of Khalil's transformation is his transformation into a violent man—one who not only supports a violent war that he may provide for himself, but also acts violently and without cause toward one of the weakest members of society, a single mother.

In tracing the transformation of a man from feminine to masculine and paralleling it with a shift from disinterested pacifism to cold-blooded violence, Barakat establishes violence as the strongest characteristic of masculinity. Because rape and leadership in war are written to mark the culmination of Khalil's transition into masculinity, violence is set up as the epitome of manhood.

Conclusions

Drawing primarily on the theories of literary theorist Jacques Derrida, scholars have explored the ways in which authors represent the Other. Derrida suggests that the human mind tends to view the world in terms of binary oppositions, where one term is given more value; for example, self/Other, good/bad, strong/weak, and so forth (Eagleton, 1996). Each part of the binary defines the other, with the valued part of the binary being the prime signifier. Each set of binary opposites becomes linked to other similar sets, so that "strong" may be associated with "good" and "weak" with "bad". Because of the relationship between the binary oppositions, people tend to align themselves with the valued parts of the binaries and view anyone who is different to themselves, who is "Other", as having negative traits. Helene Cixous, the French feminist literary theorist, adopts Derrida's understanding of binary oppositions and develops it further by arguing that the primary opposition is male/female and that all other binaries follow (Moi, 1985). Feminist scholars have elaborated on this notion in their analyses of the textual representation of women by male authors. They suggest that while men represent themselves as good, rational, known, normal, autonomous, and so forth, they represent women, the Other, as evil, emotional, foreign, abnormal dependant and so forth.

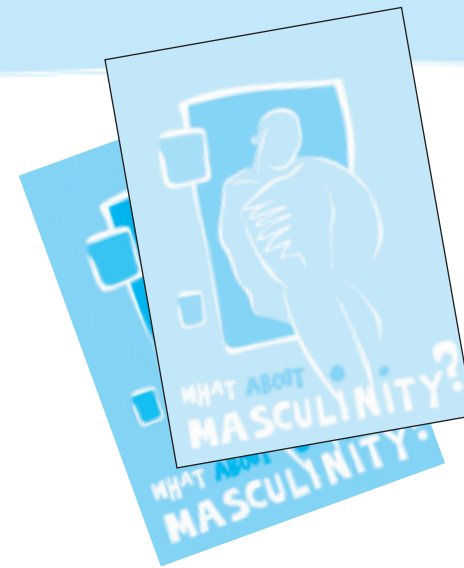
In my analysis of Arab women's writings, I found that female authors also tend to represent men as Other, with characteristics in opposition to their own. The difference, however, is that women writers seem to disturb the ordered sets, so that while men may have opposite traits, these traits are not necessarily associated with

other sets of opposites. Therefore, women represent themselves as good, but also caring, emotional, pacifist, strong, wise, and so forth, and men in these texts become bad, selfish, insensitive, violent, weak, and insensible.

Because of this fundamental disruption of the binary opposites, where women have been able to become the signifiers in the binary of male/female, and are able to define men and masculinity as they know it, their texts fulfill to a large extent the feminist deconstructionists' project. Despite this rupture, however, the Arab women writers discussed here have continued to write of men and masculinity in opposition to women and femininity. This, although reinventing and challenging traditional phallogocentric binary thinking, may be read as reasserting natural and perhaps essentialist notions of masculinity and femininity. A feminist reading of the texts may reveal that the writers may only be depicting a version of their reality, where most men are potentially violent and where this violence may only be a product of socialization rather than as innate qualities. However, by depicting most men as violent they may instead be read as reaffirming "natural" differences between men and women. By so strongly insisting that violence is a fundamental part of masculinity, these writers run the risk of establishing binaries that are equally rigid and that may continue to constrain members of both sexes to their gendered norms.

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Masculine Identity in Hoda Barakat's *The Stone of Laughter*

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Since masculinity is "historically changing and politically fraught" any attempt at defining it remains deficient and incomplete. As R.W. Connell puts it, masculinities "come into existence at particular times and places, and are always subject to change" (Connell, 3). In Lebanon, the civil war had an enormous impact on the manner masculinity is perceived. The war polarized people according to their gender; the masculine ideal was reflected in courageous men killing and fighting in the name of patriotism, whereas women were frequently associated with passivity. The irrelevance of this opposition is reflected in many Lebanese war novels, where the traditional roles are reversed. (Aghacy, "Domestic Spaces in War Fiction: Entrapment or Liberation", 83). The absurdity of this division is expressed in Hoda Barakat's *The Stone of Laughter* through the protagonist Khalil, who refuses to accept the identity that is imposed on him by society. In this novel, one of the major themes Hoda Barakat deals with and criticizes is gender roles in Lebanon at the time of the civil war. As Mona Fayyad succinctly puts it, Barakat's novel presents the war as a situation "where gender roles are rigidly overdetermined, where participation in the community through fighting is the basic touchstone of masculine identity" (163). Nevertheless, it is clear that in Barakat's novel the male protagonist is ill-at-ease in an aggressive male role, and consequently, retires into a protected female inner space. (Aghacy, "Introduction: Lebanese Women and Literature", 13).

Khalil, who lives in an apartment in Beirut at the time of the civil war, adopts feminine traits physically and psychologically. Since the interior sphere, which is usually considered the "feminine" sphere, represents a safe place, Khalil adopts the feminine condition in order to protect himself. He spends his time in his apartment cooking and dreaming. After every battle he busies himself in cleaning up his room:

Whenever a battle draws to an end, Khalil feels the need for order and cleanliness and the feeling grows, spreads until it becomes almost an obsession. After every battle, his room is clean and fresh like new, as if the builders had just left. The tiles shine and the room gives out a smell of soap, of polish, of disinfectant. (Barakat, 9)

Unable to fight the chaos in the streets, he tries to create order indoors in order to preserve his sanctuary that protects him from the violence of the streets.

There are two versions of masculinity that are presented in the novel: the first category is made up of youths "who have broken down the door of conventional masculinity and entered manhood through the wide door of history", who shape "the destiny of an area of patent importance on the world map", and the second consists of those of Khalil's age who "have got a grip on the important things in life" (Barakat, 12). Khalil has no access to these "very attractive versions of masculinity, the force that makes the volcano of life explode", and thus he remains "alone in his narrow passing place, in a stagnant, feminine state of submission to a purely vegetable life" (Barakat, 12). Khalil is reluctant to accept the mark of gender, and thus he finds a refuge from having to make a choice in a pregendered self (Fayyad, 166-167). He recalls the moment when his voice broke, which to him represents the moment which ended "the delight of being outside sex" (Barakat, 142):

When his voice fell and its high wave broke like the glass of a lamp his surprise was so great that it left him no opportunity to realize what it was that he had lost now, forever. His voice became thick, like a thick wound and his green leaves fell from him in a moment, leaving him a large, dry, brown trunk which will carry him as far as language can to the edge of nothingness, to the isthmus of successive extinctions. (Barakat, 142)

Khalil is homosexual, but as Frédéric Lagrange correctly points out, his sexual orientation is just "an element in his reluctance to choose virility" (185). His longing for submission and passivity is also apparent when it comes to his sexuality. He dreams of the men he loves and waits for their visits feverishly, but he never talks about his feelings or takes any kind of action. On one occasion, he even seems to be repelled by sexuality. He sees Zahra, a young woman who was in love with him, walking in the street with a young man she apparently has a relationship with, and he starts watching them. They

remind him of "two pigs who walk, with the revolting secret smells that their vile bodies secrete", and he laughs at the thought of telling them that "all these blazing embers are extinguished in one, tiny moment in two disgusting little parts of their bodies" (Barakat, 117). Khalil is in love with his neighbor Naji, who gets killed by militiamen. Several months after Naji's death, he falls in love with Youssef, who also gets killed. Khalil is attracted to their masculinity. Even the bare torsos of dead men fill him with excitement because "those firm, naked bodies confirm to him beyond all doubt that they are men, that the sharp flame of their masculinity is what led them to kill" (Barakat, 144). But when Youssef dies, even this fact becomes questionable. The women who mourn over Youssef's death refer to his corpse as "she"¹, making the issue of gender seem even more so complicated to Khalil.

Even though Khalil strongly resists the mark of gender, he eventually realizes that in order to survive, there has to be a change in his life. The death of both Naji and Youssef affect him deeply. Unable to express his sorrow, he isolates himself and avoids almost all human contact. Khalil also gets severely sick. Unable to eat, he vomits blood and his body gets thin and ugly. He develops an ulcer and he has to be operated on. The time he spends in the hospital is central to Khalil's transformation. He is fascinated by the hospital's ambiance and sees it as "the city's real paradise" because it creates the right atmosphere for forgetting the war (Barakat, 158). The hospital seems to be independent of the world outside: it has its own light, its own air, and the whiteness "washes the brain clean of any images of the blood" (Barakat, 158). The nurses are Thai or Filipino and don't speak Arabic. Doctor Waddah, who is in charge of Khalil, treats him like a loving mother. This means a lot to Khalil, especially after the operation in which he almost dies, because Dr. Waddah gives him the feeling that he is loved. In addition to the affection Dr. Waddah provides Khalil with, he gives him a new healthy and strong body. Khalil is filled with delight simply because he is alive and healthy again, and decides to "learn a new alphabet with which to love himself, the self he hated so long and abused" (Barakat, 175).

Khalil's relationship to other people improves and his friend Nayif introduces him to new people, such as a man known as "the Brother", a warlord who has the power to open one of the doors of manhood for Khalil. He feels attracted to Khalil and wants to help him. On one occasion, he takes Khalil with him to show him how he exchanges drugs for weapons. To protect Khalil, he also gives him a card. When Khalil gets beaten up by some militiamen later that evening, he remembers the card and hands it to the men. Khalil does not know what is written on the card, but we understand that through the card, the militiamen take Khalil to be a lawyer from a group of friends, and thus they apologize and take him home. Through these incidents, Khalil eventually realizes that in order not to be a victim, he has no choice but to become a victimizer.

In the last scene, Khalil is transformed. His transformation does not take place without a process in which Khalil dehumanizes himself and others (Fayad, 165). He is a different person; he wears sunglasses and a leather jacket; he smuggles weapons and rapes a young woman who lives above him even though he initially took care of her. As Frédéric Lagrange correctly asserts, "it should be stressed that Khalil does not 'become straight' in the last scene" since "the end of hesitation is also the end of 'passive' sexuality: whether it be heterosexual or homosexual" (185).

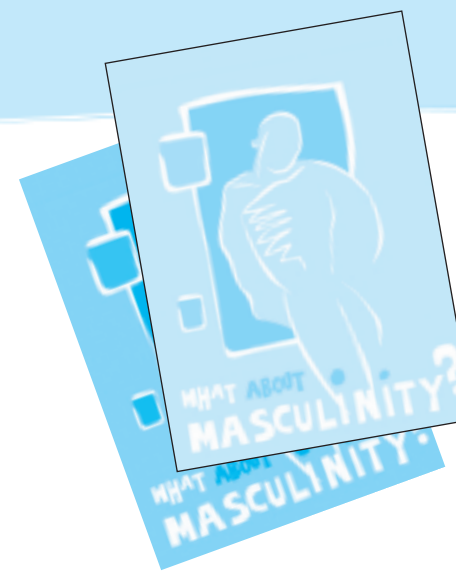
Khalil's transformation is illusory, as the title of the novel suggests. The "Stone of Laughter" refers to the philosopher's stone, which, in alchemy, is a stone or chemical substance thought to have the power of transmuting baser metals into gold (Fayad, 165). As the gold that is sought by the alchemists, Khalil's new identity hardly resembles his former identity. The narrator does not condemn Khalil nor tries to justify his acts. As Rashid al-Daif puts it, the realism in Barakat's novel is neutral; she merely wants to expose man. It is as if Barakat were trying to say: "That's the way life is" (Al-Daif, 62). Nevertheless, the moral standards are criticized in this novel, and Khalil's transformation is not presented as something desirable. Khalil, whom we loved at the beginning, becomes a violent monster we fail to sympathize with.

END NOTES

1. The Arabic word for corpse is feminine.

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Masculinity, Manhood and Machismo in Radwan El-Kashef's *Arak El-Balah*

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In a region where gender differences are deeply ingrained and sedimented within its social structure, it is no surprise that the rhetoric of masculinity and femininity has long been reified in various Arab cultural and literary productions. This rhetoric has also been projected in diverse forms and from various vantages. Moreover, while it is true that substantial studies have been devoted to the discourse of femininity, much still needs to be said about the manifestation of masculinity, manhood and machismo in modern/postmodern Arab productions and publications. More specifically, much needs to be said about the multifarious exultations of masculinity, the ambiguities it entails and the subversion and perils it has underwent in Arab literature, cinema and poetry. Thus, this essay will attempt to highlight the rhetoric of masculine hegemony and its subversion as it has been manifested in the award winning film *Arak El-Balah* (1998) by prominent Egyptian director Radwan El-Kashef¹. Therein, it will make clear that in traditional societies challenging masculine ideals are bound to trigger irrepressible violence.

To begin with, much has been said about the world of Radwan El-Kashef and the realm of his films. Born and raised in the southern part of Egypt, this native of the Sa'id is said to have "brought his home village alive in the imagi-

ination" of his friends and viewers, through "the innumerable stories" he captured on and outside the screen. This attachment to his southern roots, says Hani Shukrallah, stems from and is intrinsically linked to his devotion to his mother, and "through her to the world of women." According to Shukrallah, notes found in the papers of this renowned film-director read:

The world of women, for me, is a world of symbols, concealment and allusion. It is a reality different to that which is lived. For me, the world of women is a storehouse of genuine feelings, expressed indirectly, magically.

In fact, this world is deeply decoded within the "magical and mundane" reality of his films. From his first graduation project *Janoubiya* (The Southern Woman 1984)², to *Leh Ya Banafsaj* (The Blueness of Violets 1992)³, *Arak El-Balah* (Date Wine 1998), and *Al-Safer* (The magician 2001), El-Kashef has weaved multifarious stories of women; stories that encapsulate their dilemmas, weakness, desires and - above all - convoluted reality. Consequently, El-Kashef's films are said to be "situated within a woman's world" and "seen through a woman's eyes" (*Al-Ahram Weekly*, Internet). While it is true that El-Kashef's films are concerned with and work through as

well as with the world of women, the rhetoric of masculine hegemony is still an intrinsic element in them. In fact, *Arak El-Balah* (Date Wine) best indicates and exemplifies this discourse.

This essay will examine the rhetoric of masculinity, manhood and machismo in *Arak El-Balah* and will address the following questions: How is masculinity constructed and negotiated in the film? Are male characters able to conform to the ideals of manhood or do they subvert and flout these ideals? What happens when a male is secluded in a world of women? For instance, does close proximity to women play havoc with the making of male identities? Or is the rhetoric of hegemonic masculinity dependant on and fostered by stereotypes of women? In other words, is masculinity supported, constructed and confirmed through such

notions as virginity, shame and honor? Also, what happens when a male is unable to conform to the ideals of manhood? Ultimately, what are the consequences of subverting conventional male ideals in a place as traditional as the setting of the film itself?

Arak El-Balah is one of El-Kashef's most acclaimed films. Since its release,

the film has been lauded by both critics and viewers alike. It has also appeared in various international and regional festivals and has received numerous awards including: the Silver award in the Carthage Film Festival (1998) and the African Film Festival in Milan (1999); Jury and Youth Award in the Montreal African Film Festival (1999); the Jury Award and the award for Best Actress in the Namur Francophone Film Festival in Belgium (1999); as well as Best film in the International Festival for Mediterranean Cinema in Tetuan, Morocco (1999) ⁴.

Like most of El-Kashef's films, the story takes place in Upper Egypt, in an imaginary village in the district of Sohaj. The plot of the film is as follows: all the strong men in the village depart in search of wealth leaving behind women, children, an old man and a young boy - named Ahmad - who is on the threshold of adolescence. Thus, begins a new precarious phase in the village, a phase where strong, frustrated, angry, and befuddled women attempt to defy individual and collective hardships, where Ahmad dreams of climbing the tallest palm tree in the village and where uncontrollable violence erupts once the men return.

Nevertheless, at the center of all this is also the story of the making of a man in a community of women and the ambivalence this inflicts.

The initiation of Ahmad (played by Hamdy Ahmad) into manhood is very much an intrinsic part of El-Kashef's cinematic narrative. In fact, from the opening scene, which captures a throng of men bidding their wives, mothers and grandmothers adieu, Ahmad's milestone journey into manhood begins. For as the men depart, the females turn to him and laughingly proclaim that "you are the only man left"; a phrase very much indicative of the new role that will be ascribed to him and which he has yet to fulfill. Elsewhere, a woman addresses a boy by telling him that they will make him a man no matter the challenges. Yet, the scene that follows does not only capture the festivities that take place following the birth of a baby boy, it is also a celebration of Ahmad's instigation into manhood. Amid bouts of ululations and songs, the women dress Ahmad in proper men's attire, hand him a gun and watch him fondly as he mounts a huge stallion. Evidently, the ritual underscores the surface transformation of this young boy into what is presumed to be manhood. It is also an early indication that it is the women in this community who will bolster/destabilize Ahmad's manhood, who will indirectly construct/deconstruct his masculine identity and who will instruct him as to what it takes to be a man; a factor that is bound to create a lot of havoc in the shaping of his masculine identity.

After all, Ahmad is secluded in a community of women. Instead of learning about what Chenjerai Shire calls "the gender of certain material objects that are vital in the shaping of masculine identity" (150), Ahmad learns about the objects and idioms employed in a woman's space. Thus, instead of listening to the banter of males as they boast their hunting or fighting expeditions, as they assess their weapons or even as they share sexual experiences, Ahmad learns that a "bikriyah" is a woman who is pregnant for the first time, that one needs to prepare hot water to help the midwife deliver babies and that special feminine rituals take place once women give birth. He also listens as women comment on their appearances and watches as they cook and share secrets. Ahmad is, in short, exposed to the repertoire of feminine speech and to the complexities/banalities of their everyday existence. Thus, what is at play is the incorporation of values and principles that may be defined as 'feminine'. Moreover, almost all the women in El-Kashef's film have a mind of their own; they are strong enough to face adversaries and confront hardships.

Therefore, amidst this community, Ahmad finds no impetus to conform to the typical male ideals of his society nor is there any compulsion to act 'macho'. For the young

man, it is enough that the little boys cling to him, that the women ask him to run errands and perform tasks that require more physical strength and that he has managed to kiss Salma (played by Shirihan), his sweetheart, on the lips and has asked for her hand in marriage. This, however, soon changes when he is confronted with a series of humiliating incidents that destabilize his naïve delusion of manhood, emasculate him and propel him to perform macho acts.

The first incident that flouts Ahmad's manhood occurs when he seeks a group of male entertainers from outside the village to participate in a celebration and falls prey to their ridicule. The men scathingly remark that they will only communicate with men and that they will not approach the village if there are no men. What is evidently at play here is a discourse of manliness among men themselves. The men scorn and indict Ahmad because he has remained with the women and has not joined the others in the struggle to find more fiscal resources on behalf of the group (villagers). After all, as David Gilmore notes, one of the core characteristics of masculinity is to function as "an inducement for high performance in the social struggle for scarce resources." Since Ahmad has yet to display his manhood by a certain "code of conduct that advances collective interests" (qtd. in Toshiko; Online), he loses credibility in the eyes of all men.

Consequently, he feels devastated and bewildered. He also begins to realize that masculinity is "a prize to be struggled for, a rigorous test of skill, power, or endurance" (Toshiko). On a broader level, the incident highlights a key masculine discourse in traditional societies; that there is no concept of manhood without machismo, that the necessity to conform to the parameters of male ideals and to situate oneself within an image of machismo is very much part and parcel of becoming a man, particularly in the Sa'id. Thus, Ahmad's attempt to pursue his life-long dream of climbing the el-iliyah, the tallest palm tree in the village and one that only heroic men can ever approach, is a struggle to situate himself within masculine parameters. Yet, before the young man even has a chance to perform what he perceives to be the 'macho' deed, another incident occurs that further decenters his notion of his manhood.

Ahmad finds out that one of the married women (Shifaa) in the village has committed adultery with a stranger and is pregnant. Instead of fulfilling his duty as the only man in the village, Ahmad demonstrates 'weakness' by not washing the family and village honor. In short, amid Salma's pleading, Ahmad shoots an animal instead of the 'dishonorable' woman. By failing to conform to the male ideals of protecting one's honor and shame, Ahmad exhibits what other men would describe as a male malaise, i.e. getting in touch with one's sensitive part. Thus, he exposes a fun-

damental glitch in his manhood and becomes 'effeminate' in his own eyes before anyone else. In an attempt to reassert his manhood, the young man tries to shoot the woman's lover. However, he does not possess the 'manly' precision required for such a task and his target manages to escape.

The consecutive and degrading events heighten Ahmad's intention to climb the palm tree. The young man needs to perform what Frank Pittman calls "the Big Impossible" for the attainment of a "heroic masculinity" (182). Thus, he seeks a silent consent from his grandfather (the only one liable to give it) and proceeds with his mission despite the reservations of the women. As Ahmad mounts the tree, the women - clad in black abayas - stand in awe and fear, all the while attempting to stop him. Yet the young man is heedless to their warnings; the climb is an essential element in his ascent into manhood. As he clammers to the top of the palm tree and plucks the ripe fruits, Ahmad's notion of who and what he is undergoes a marked transformation in his eyes and in the eyes of the female masses.

For thereafter, the women's attitude towards Ahmad changes. Salma no longer derides his 'boyish' behavior. Rather, she accedes to his wishes and repeatedly says: "Set as much conditions as you want, you are my man and it is your right to do so." Elsewhere, Salma reassures him that her father - upon his return - will bless the marriage, after all "where else will he find such a strong and able man." Salma is not alone. One married woman tries to seduce him, but stops short when an older woman rebukes her behavior. In short, the women's newly established stance towards Ahmad helps construct and affirm his manhood and dominance. Yet, El Kashef soon subverts this rhetoric of masculine hegemony by a sequence of symbolic events that force the viewer to reread and reevaluate this traditional rhetoric and perhaps question its appropriateness in light of the changes that are sweeping this region.

As Ahmad basks in the exultations of masculinity that the women bestow upon him, Shifaa, the adulteress, burns herself amid implicit encouragement from the women. Shifaa's suicide carries nuanced interpretations. On one

He begins to realize that masculinity is 'a prize to be struggled for, a rigorous test of skill, power, or endurance'.

level, it is a subtle condemnation, perhaps by the women themselves, of Ahmad's simulacrum manhood which was too frail to commit the deed. In other words, despite the admiration the women shower on Ahmad, there is a deep-rooted part of them that continues to be influenced by patriarchal idioms of honor and shame. Consequently, these women unintentionally demean Ahmad's manhood when they exhibit no qualms about urging Shifaa to go ahead with the suicide - a factor that is cinematically suggested rather than stated.

Moreover, the fact that Shifaa herself took the initiative to perform what Ahmad should otherwise have accomplished is perhaps a subtle message that Ahmad's manhood and through him all conventional ideals of manhood in the Sa'id are slowly disintegrating and are being eliminated by women such as Shifaa; women who choose to become perpetrators of their own fate and destiny, even when they do so out of despair. The suicide, hence, asserts their individuality rather than their feebleness. Thus, the scene forces a re-evaluation of our understanding of manhood in this region.

If Shifaa's suicide awakens Ahmad's masculine insecurities, the death of his grandfather (perhaps the one clear icon of traditional masculine values) devastates him. On a more symbolic level, the death of the old man further enunciates and enforces the idea that the traditional discourse of male dominance, as depicted in the character of Ahmad, has also reached a tragic trajectory in places as remote as the Sa'id. Nevertheless, in a patriarchal society that is so deeply enmeshed in its values, El Kashef will soon reveal that the subjugation of masculine ideals are bound to create tragedies in the lives of everyone involved and may, perhaps, lead to death. Therefore when El Kashef's camera tracks the old man as he leads his horse into an endless land that represents death, he prepares us for what is to come.

Yet prior to these revelations, Ahmad seeks yet another antidote to his manhood by sleeping with Salma. The love-making is triggered by the despair of Salma upon the death of Shifaa and by Ahmad's need to attest to his masculine virility. In her essay "Variant Masculinities, Variant Virinities: Rethinking Honor and Shame," Nancy

Lindisfarne explains that the "seduction of a virgin [is] a widespread idiom which conveys a notion of essentialised, almost heroic virility." Thus, the act is necessary for "defin[ing] the very essence of maleness," (89); an essence that, even thereafter, Ahmad continues to unconsciously resist. In other words, although Ahmad enacts many of the common patterns of masculinity prevalent in the region, he still recoils from them. For instance, in the discourse of honor and shame that is entrenched within the Sa'id, men expect deflowering to occur on the wedding night only. Yet, Ahmad does not even muse over this notion. He does not incriminate Salma's sexual capitulation nor does he deem her an 'immoral' woman. On the contrary, Ahmad anxiously awaits the return of Salma's father to marry her.

Ahmad's incongruous attitude towards certain social values pertaining to this region reflects the opposing forces residing within him. Ahmad clearly stumbles between two forces: the one insists on practicing conventional ideals of manhood and the other flouting and contesting these ideals. Moreover, his ambiguity does not merely spring from the fact that he has dwelled in women's spaces for long, but also from the flux of social and political practices that are emerging around him. These changes include the immigration of many male villagers, the individuality of women and the fact that the Sa'id is no longer as remote and isolated. Strangers such as the male entertainers can now gain entry into the village. Yet, through the final crisis of the film, El-Kashef predicts and emphasizes that these changes will not be as easily absorbed as those changes that have swept other regions.

The anticipated crisis springs forth with the homecoming of the men. For when the latter arrive, they do not placate Ahmad's insecurities nor do they appease the women's vent up emotions that have been caused by the many economical and social hardships. Rather they trigger uncontrollable violence and tragedies. This is because the immigrants soon discern that much has changed in their absence. The women are no longer weak, emotional and fragile. Instead, they exhibit individual autonomy and what the men perceive as 'rebellion' and 'disobedience'; one woman refuses to sleep with her husband because she is not in the mood, another smokes openly and still another asserts her opinion without any reservations. These occurrences baffle and enrage the men.

Since in societies as the one depicted in the film, a woman's behavior is an index to a man's success in controlling them, the men blame Ahmad. They reprimand his inaptness at monitoring the behavior of their wives, daughters and granddaughters. Even more, they soon consider him an accomplice in the 'detrimental' transformations they detect. Nevertheless, the condemnation only explodes when Salma's father discovers that his daughter

is pregnant and learns of the real reasons behind Shifaa's death, concluding that her lover must be Ahmad. The discoveries lead to the conviction of Ahmad.

The men cunningly plan Ahmad's execution to avenge their honor and to re-establish their dominance. Perhaps the reason behind their actions is best explained through Lindisfarne's notion that "the cause of men's violence toward women (and men) are twofold." These include "a man's commitment to ideals of honor as judged by neighbors and others, and his dishonor, which lies not only in the actions of women but in those of men who have challenged his authority as a surrogate father, brother and neighbor and rendered him socially impotent," adding that, as a result, "violence may be a means through which the illusion of wholeness is reasserted" (87). R. W. Connell also emphasizes that "the hierarchy of masculinities is itself a source of violence, since force is used in defining and maintaining the hierarchy" (217). Thus to reaffirm their disintegrating masculinities and to avoid the downward spiral of the patriarchal pecking order, the men take action - violent action.

First, they invite Ahmad to one of their gatherings, a factor that flatters his manhood. They, then, repeatedly boost the young man's 'machismo' at having climbed the palm tree. Salma's father also stresses that Salma will become his only if he succeeds in climbing the palm tree again and in the dark. Ahmad's need to prove his manhood to the men and his eagerness to marry Salma drives him to comply. But the moment he climbs the tree, the men shatter its root and the young man is killed. As the gigantic tree falls, chaos erupts. Also, the

last symbol of traditional manhood and machismo is obliterated.

The women, no longer willing to confine themselves to their passive roles, rise-up against the tragedy. Led by Salma herself, wives, daughters and granddaughters angrily march forward in protest against the violent actions of their kith and kin. Hence, one of the film's major messages is made clear; due to the erratic social and political forces, conventional ideals of manhood in the Sa'id have reached a crisis and the rhetoric of masculine hegemony is no longer subject to the same discourse. However, the conflict between dominant and subordinate masculinity that the locals of such a place experience and will experience may have lethal and detrimental consequences because their rigid values and traditions are so deep-rooted. In short, El Kashef highlights that quelling the rhetoric of masculine hegemony will shatter the whole social structure of this traditional region and will, in turn, be fiercely resisted.

In conclusion, it is quite clear that the rhetoric of masculine dominance and its collapse are one of the major discourses of the film. Through this discourse and through the actions of the characters, the film emphasizes the inherent influence women had, and will continue to have, in undermining and fostering a man's sense of himself. It also highlights that a woman's behavior and local idioms such as honor, virginity and shame are tied to and affect the construction of male identities. More importantly, the film exemplifies the harsh reality of many traditional villages in Upper Egypt and elsewhere that have been thrown off guard by the changes beleaguering them. Consequently, in an effort to shield themselves from such currents they respond brutally and, sometimes, viciously.

END NOTES

1. El-Kashef died of a stroke in June 2002, at the age of 50, days before the release of his film *Al Saher*.
2. *Janubiya* won the Ministry of Culture's prize for Best first film in 1988.
3. *Leh ya Banafseg* won the Cairo International Film Festival's Special Jury prize in 1992.
4. *Arak El-Balah*'s other awards include: Best film, directing, editing, script, actress and photography in the Egyptian National Film Festival (1999); Best Film in the Angers Film Festival in France (1999); Best photography in the South African Film Festival in Johannesburg (1999).

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International Committee Discusses Discrimination Against Women in Lebanon

Gender-Based Discrimination in the Area of Nationality

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The United Nations' International Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) held its 64th session from February to March in Geneva, Switzerland. On March 3rd and 4th the committee considered the fourteenth to sixteenth periodic reports of Lebanon on its implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (in accordance with article 9 of the CERD).

The committee's 18 members representing Russia, China, The United Kingdom, The United States, Guatemala, Egypt, Algeria, Brazil, Denmark, Pakistan, India, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Greece, Austria, France, Ecuador, and Argentina, examined the report submitted by the Lebanese Republic and had some serious concerns on a number of issues.

The committee requested clarifications related to the status and working conditions of domestic migrant workers, the confessional system, and the conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The committee also asked the Lebanese government to explain the reasons why Lebanese nationality is derived from the paternal side only. Both the Brazilian and the Russian committee members Jose Lindgren and Alexei Avtonomov, raised important questions about the principle of

jus sanguinis, civil marriage and naturalization. Committee Expert Tang Chengyuan (China), who served as 'rapporteur' for Lebanon, asked whether the jus sanguinis principle, which stated that Lebanese nationality was only derived from the paternal side, might be reconsidered.

Jus sanguinis, latin for 'right of blood', is a right by which nationality or citizenship can be recognised to any individual born to a parent who is a national or citizen of that state. It contrasts with jus soli, latin for 'right of soil'. The regulation of the acquisition of nationality by birth to a parent who is already a citizen of the state is provided by a derivative law called lex sanguinis. Lex sanguinis does not necessarily discriminate against the mother as is the case in Lebanon. In many European countries, lex sanguinis still is the preferred means of passing on citizenship. More recently, these countries have begun to move more towards use of lex soli, partially under the influence of the European Convention on Nationality.

Answering the question on jus sanguinis, the Lebanese national delegation said Lebanon was among several countries which had adopted this system and saw no need to amend this law at present to adopt another form of nationality acquisition. The delegation, which included four middle

aged men, stated that Lebanon preserves the principle of jus sanguinis in order to "preserve the unity of the family under the father".

In Lebanon, laws regarding women's ability to retain and transmit citizenship are similar to those that existed in the United States in the first part of the 20th century. Lebanon does not recognize the citizenship of children from marriages between female citizens and foreign men. Yet the question of marriage does not necessarily enter into it, rather, women are not recognized as being able to confer citizenship upon their children. A child born to a foreign father and a Lebanese mother must take his father's citizenship, or else risks having none. Countries like Kenya and Malaysia, do not recognize citizenship by descent from the mother if the birth occurs overseas. But others, like Algeria, Kuwait, Nepal and Lebanon restrict recognition of citizenship to descent from the father, whether the child is born in the father's country or elsewhere.

Gender-based discrimination in the area of citizenship is one of the ruthless forms of de jure discrimination faced by women in Lebanon and around the world. The Lebanese mother carries her baby for months inside her 'Lebanese' body. The pre-born baby is then 'Lebanese' as long as he/she is not born. The minute the child is born he/she is separated from the mother's nationality and is forced to acquire the nationality of the recognized father.

Gender subordination in Lebanon, that was taken for granted most of the Twentieth Century, has become legally insupportable. The right to establish independent legal domicile, women's access to equal educational and employment opportunity, pay and benefits, and independent immigration and naturalization law rights are related one to another. They follow logically upon the emancipation of women, collectively from the rejection of the concept of legal 'unity of the family' under male dominance.

Nationality remains a convenient criterion for exclusion of women. The solution to past and present administrative discrimination against women in Lebanon lies in the judiciary and the legislature. Gendered and ethnocentric directions in policy making and within the Lebanese Parliament partially explain outdated conceptions of nationality. Such conceptions are inappropriate for the liberal state to which at least some of the Lebanese look up to.

Equal nationality both implies and is dependent upon equal citizenship. Prohibiting the children from acquiring the nationality of their mother is considering the mother a 'second class' citizen inferior to men. 'Authority', 'obedience', 'subordination' and 'property' are commonly used to describe the pre-modern status of women. The chaotic, ungovernable state that denies relevance to modern liberal norms is unlikely to provide women or children their entitlements.

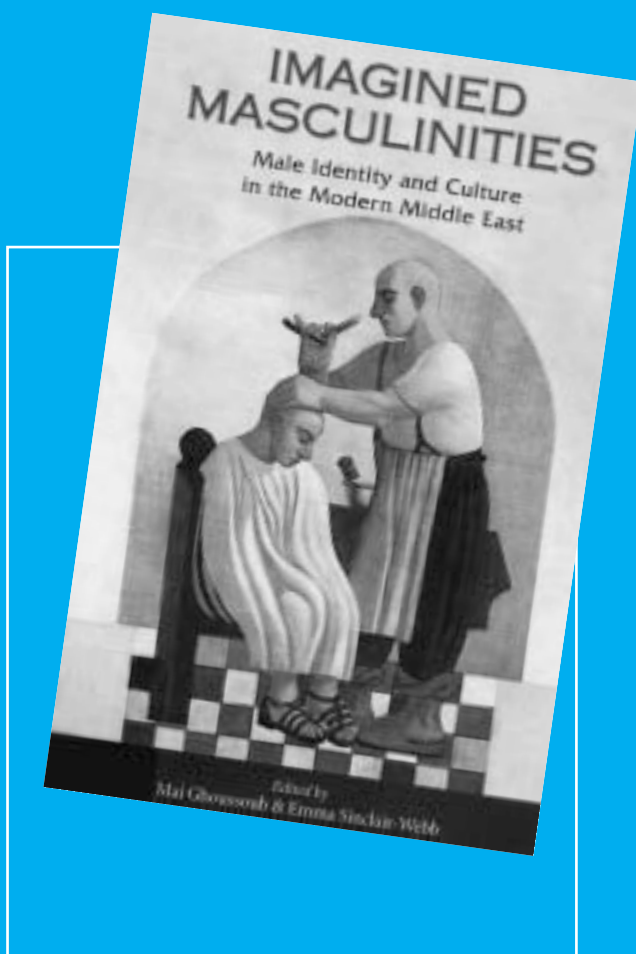
Imagined Masculinities: Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East

Edited by Mai Ghoussoub and Emma Sinclair-Webb
Saqi Books, 2000

Reviewed by Lynn Maalouf

As Emma Sinclair-Webb explains in her preface, this collection of essays is premised on the general notion that masculinity is "as socially constructed as femaleness" and that with regards to the study of masculinity in the Middle East, there is a need to revisit the traditional scholar work on the subject, which has been somewhat neglected with the focus on women in the past years. Thus, the editors of *Imagined Masculinities* have attempted – and indeed successfully – to offer a refreshing approach to masculinity in the Middle East, shying away from static preconceptions and generalized claims, by offering a large array of approaches, including anthropological analysis, interviews, literary criticism, fiction, and personal memoir, in various nations such as Turkey, Israel/Palestine, Iraq, and Egypt.

The essays are grouped in three sections. The first, "Making men: Institutions and Social Practices" is the most 'academic' part of the book and addresses rituals and practices, such as circumcision, through which boys enter the socially accepted realm of 'manhood'. Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, in his discussion of circumcision in Tunisia and Morocco, questions the religious and physiological validity of this ritual, concluding



that it mainly reflects “a symbolic valorization of the phallus and an obsessional fear of losing it.” Yoram Bilu addresses the same ritual, but in the Jewish community, as well as two subsequent rituals, which are the first haircut and the school initiation ceremony. All three practices, he explains, are the initiation rites into manhood, which in the ultraorthodox Jewish community, is associated with the initiation to the world of Torah study. Two essays then address the institution of military service, in Israel and Turkey, the latter complemented by a particularly gripping interview with a former conscript. Emma Sinclair-Webb’s article sheds light on the two-dimensional perception of military service in Turkey; on the one hand, a recently refreshed association between military service and manhood has resulted from the conflict with Kurdish groups, while on the other hand, the evasion of military service by those directly involved, namely young men. As the editor remarks, the theme of violence stands out quite forcefully in these essays, and while it had not been anticipated, it is “fitting in relation to a region which is currently one of the most militarized and conflict-ridden areas.”

The second section, “Male Fictions: Narratives, Images and Icons,” is a richly diverse and informative part dealing with perceptions of masculinity in literature, movies and the press. For instance, Frédéric Lagrange in “Male Homosexuality in Modern Arab Literature” explores attitudes to homosexuality in Middle Eastern societies, attitudes marked by “the will not to know” that most probably contributed to the quasi absence of sociological work on this matter. He asserts: “For reasons that have to be analyzed, not only are the margins of the sexual ethic, such as homosexuality, severely underdocumented in sociological essays, hushed or harshly attacked in the press, but literature itself proves much less eager to discuss pleasure in all its manifestations than it did until the first half of the 19th century.” As such, his essay offers a cultural insight on a subject that has practically never been analyzed, let alone discussed.

The final section “Memoir and Male Identity” consists of three personal accounts that illustrate the formation of masculine identity. The last essay closes the loop of the book with an original work on the moustache in Middle Eastern societies: “Pipe, moustache, sun-glasses, and also the overcoat which we used to imagine as the dress of secret policeman, all this combined to make up the complete man who lacked nothing,” he writes, concluding that the moustache is “no more than a remaining trace of the customs of a previous generation.”

As Sinclair-Webb suggests in her introduction, many more fields of interest can be explored in the future to gain a richer understanding of masculinity in the Middle East. *Imagined Masculinities* is by no means an academic work in the strictest sense, and was not intended to be as such; the contributors’ backgrounds are as diverse as the approaches adopted in the book. Read as such, this book can be of great interest to scholars interested in gender studies and those interested in the Middle East, as well as to the general readership. Moreover, by offering translations of original work in Arabic, the book brings the non-Arab audience insights into issues of masculinities by writers from the region. On the whole, its conscientiously eclectic approach brings fascinating and more importantly, groundbreaking material, to a wide audience.