BEIRUT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

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CONTENTS

Women's Psychology

In founding psychonalysis, Freud's contribution lies in the theories he developed regarding the existence of subconscious complexes in man that exert a dominating influence on his personality. According to him, these complexes are mainly connected with sex and family relationships, (the Oedipus complex, the Electra complex, the Cain complex, etc.). They are commonly inherited but generally disappear in the period of adolescence; yet in some people they persist and are repressed into the subconscious, whence they may reappear under certain circumstances and cause psychological troubles. In analyzing a number of people who suffered from nervous depression, Freud overemphasized the influence of sexual differences on the character of both men and women and the part played by sexual repression in producing neurosis. Another debatable question in his theories is his belief in the determinist character of these theories. Men and women, he says, are born with certain natural tendencies which dominate them and which find outlets in different ways. In some cases, they lead to harmful behavior: for example, in men, they lead to sadism, desire to destroy or to commit suicide. In women, they produce masochism or the abnormal pleasure in suffering. They also produce the inferiority complex, the tendency to self-effacement, narrow narcissim, inability to love, inability to fight their complexes and to achieve distinction. Unlike a man, who is generally able to overcome his complexes, a woman remains passive, is apt to lose her personality by identifying with a mother or a father or, finally, by developing a neurosis.

Freud created psychotherapy to treat the above mentioned psychological troubles but in his studies, he adopted a biased, one-sided attitude when he attributed the psychological differences existing between men and women to biological factors alone. To him these differences are natural but environment may contribute to emphasize them.

Now if we consider the other side of the question and try to show the influence of environment on women's personality aside from biological factors, we may affirm that, throughout a long history of patriarchal domina-

tion, woman never enjoyed enough freedom to be herself, to cultivate fully her potentials and to reveal her real feelings. Though the work she did was equal in quantity or importance to that of man, she was not treated on an equal basis with him. I like to give here excerpts from an article on women's work, written by the well-known Lebanese writer May Ziadeh, a pioneering feminist, whose description of women's character is derived from both experience and wide reading on the topic:

> "She suffers from intense emotionality which allows her to tolerate suffering and hardship to an unusual degree. She pursues her aim keenly and stubbornly, to the point of injuring herself and accepting martyrdom."

This is what Freud calls masochism and considers as an inherited characteristic of womanhood, but May explains it in a different way. According to her it is the result of accumulated tension and monotonous existence which clipped woman to one single purpose: love, marriage and family.

> "When matrimony is her sole raison d'être, she seeks it with all her might, unmindful of thorns, rocks and other obstacles. If a new purpose or task show up, she follows it with the same enthusiasm and achieves distinction either in wrong doing, like Marie Tudor, or in lofty deeds, like Joan of Arc. In both cases she shows a lack of equilibrium, a passionate character which may lead to self-annihilation."

While Freud considered woman's inferiority and emotionality as results of her jealous attitude aroused by man's sexual superiority, May Ziadeh attributes those traits to the different orientation and treatment she receives at home, at school and in society. A change in treatment should result in a change in character.

Some time ago, I read about a secondary school principal who kept in her drawer a handkerchief with which she wiped the tears of young girls who came complaining about their problems and asking her help. That was before 1940. "Since that time," said the principal, "the

hankie has remained dry and clean in my drawer. Times have changed. Knowledge and education have made our girls more self-reliant. They have achieved a high degree of poise and self-assertion.''

The change is bound to continue. Modern technology and the amazing progress attained in the field of gynecology and reproduction have reduced to a minimum women's biological and housekeeping burdens.

Rose Ghurayyib

Psychological Differences Between Men and Women

In discussing differences between males and females, people are generally inclined to consider the existing physical differences as the chief source of their divergence in character and in social behavior. In this respect, scientists are divided into two groups: the first, headed by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), affirms the existence of a strong relationship between the biological and the psychological differences, making the latter a direct result of the former; while another group insists on denying that relationship and considers the differences in character as a result of non-biological factors.

Freud explains the differences in the following ways: the behavior of male and female children reveals no divergence until the age of 5. The boy develops the Oedipus complex which means a subconcious desire, inherited from primitive ages, to possess his mother and kill his father, his rival in this desire. But he soon succeeds in getting rid of this complex, when he feels afraid of being castrated by the father and thus identifies with him. His success forms the first step of his positive evolution toward the development of his higher self; while the girl remains dominated by the complex of jealousy, resulting from her lacking the penis, which is the exclusive possession of the male. Her jealousy takes the form of a subconscious desire to emulate her mother in the love of her father and a strong wish to have a male child. Her wish is satisfied through marriage followed by giving birth to a male child who will compensate for

the absence of the penis. Thus the influence of sex, according to Freud, is different in each of them. The girl, unlike the boy, is unable to fight her complex and get rid of it. She fails to develop the strength and independence which her brother acquires from fighting and overcoming his complexes. The jealous attitude which overrules a woman prevents her from achieving a high degree of humanitarian feeling and cultural development. Moreover, her sexual evolution passes through two stages, one of frigidity, another of warmth, awakenend by contact with a man. Hence her need for him is stronger than his need for her.

Freud's ideas affirm the domination of sex over a woman's life and the important role it plays in dwarfing her personality. A fair amount of thinking and experience regarding this question will show that what he says depends more on imagination than on fact. His abberration is probably due to the limited information he obtained from experimenting with a group of idle, wealthy women dominated by superstitious beliefs and suffering from nervous disorders.

Freud's proposals were an object of doubt among other researchers but they gained popularity among common people who are ready to accept sensational ideas without questioning, yet many were those who refuted Freudian theories by showing their contradiction, as, for example, when he says that the absence of jealousy in a woman proves that she has sublimated it

into some humanitarian activity. This contradicts his former affirmation that a woman is unable to free herself from jealousy without the marriage bond.

Among Freud's contesters was a scientist called Eric Erickson who said that the biological influence in woman's psychology is due to her physiological constitution which fits her for pregnancy and the other arderous tasks resulting from it. This does not mean, Erickson says, that she is a masochist who finds pleasure in suffering but that she is physically prepared to accept it as an inherited, psychological phenomenon. He concluded by saying that a woman is dominated by her physiology which compels her to seek motherhood. To prove his argument, Erickson resorted to an experiment by which he asked a group of 150 girls and 150 boys, before whom he placed a collection of varied objects, to use them for building or creating anything they liked. The result was that the girls started making household articles while the boys were occupied with other kinds of work. Erickson here committed the same error as Freud when he drew his conclusions from an inadequate or unconvincing experiment. It is a well-known fact that a girl, as soon as she is born, receives a different treatment and orientation from that of a boy, just as the idle women treated by Freud lived in a milieu that favored the development of nervous troubles. The capacities of each sex are never limited to one type of activity. It is the environment which imposes on each of them a different way of life. On the other hand, it has been found by anthropologists like Margaret Mead who carried out research work among the tribes of New Guinea (North of Australia), that in tribes which do not differentiate between males and females in orientation and socialization, women do not show any difference from men in character and behaviour. In her study of the Chambolee tribe, she discovered that the kind of training given to women developed in them the masculine traits of authoritarianism and administrative ability while their men formed the passive and less responsible group.

Society is responsbile.

Women are generally considered by society as more negative and less self-reliant than men. The latter are believed to be more capable of logical thinking and more ready for aggression and retaliation. But the most recent studies have proved, as we have just mentioned,

that society is primarily responsible for creating the difference. As long as boys receive a different orientation and treatment from that given to girls, it is impossible to make a final conclusion regarding the existing differences. We all agree that the influence of environment on people in general is tremendous. We know that encouragement and support can transform a coward into a hero, an average person into a capable individual. We also know, on the other hand, that unjust and harsh treatment may turn a talented person into a retarded one, an honest individual into a crook and an eccentric into a fool. We equally notice that a woman may act stupidly and feign softness and dependence because these traits are supposed to be the marks of femininity.

Rose Ghurayyib

Reference: "Readings in the Psychology of Women", New York, 1972.

Eugenism in Theory and Practice

The 19th century witnessed the end of a number of old theories which dominated the scientific field long before the dawn of our scientific age. One of them is the theory of spontaneous generation which gave way to the discovery of microbes by Pasteur (1822-1895) who was able to prove that contagious diseases and other forms of infection were due to microscopic organisms called microbes. Another theory which became obsolete was that of the fixity or unchangeability of forms or essences of living creatures which was replaced by Darwin's theory of evolution (1859). According to this biologist, change in living forms is a condition imposed by "natural selection", which means that nature works to insure the reproduction of the organisms most fitted for life in their environment and the elimination of those unable to adapt themselves to it, which thus tend to disappear or become extinct, like dinosaurs and mammoths. Mendelism, the system of inheritance elaborated

by Mendel (Austrian, 1822-1884), did away with the "dictatorship" of heredity, showing the complexity of this science and the impossibility of achieving, through the application of its laws on humans, the same results obtained in the field of plants and flowers.

This same century saw the rise of a movement called "eugenism", derived from "eugenics", a science which aims at the improvement of the human species through the control of human mating. At the same time, another movement, called "malthusianism", showed up as a complement to eugenism. It was inaugurated by Malthus (1766-1834), who recommended the limitation of births in order to prevent poverty and famine. The idea was taken up by Galton (1822-1911), a fervent adherent of eugenism and originator of this term as well as that of eugenics.

Galton believed that the quality of human beings should be improved by applying the laws of heredity but, since acquired characteristics, as shown by Weismann (1834-1914) cannot be inherited, the improvement should be made by encouraging the multiplication of gifted individuals. This is done by natural selection, as already affirmed by Darwin but the action of nature is slow and irregular; hence it should be accelerated through man's intervention, which can be done in two ways: first, encouraging highly talented people to have a large progeny; second, limiting the number of children of average people and sterilizing the mentally retarded and other handicapped individuals.

In the meantime, the theory of racial segregation began to spread, affirming the superiority of certain races and recommending the forbidding of intermarriage between superior and inferior or undeveloped races. Books dealing with this topic were circulated, dividing the world population into three races: the negroes, the mongoloid or yellow race, the caucasians including the Aryans, the Germans, the Anglo-Saxons, the Alpines, the Mediterraneans. The superior groups included the Germans, the Anglo-Saxons and other inhabitants of central Europe.

Eugenism discouraged intermarriage between superior and inferior groups. Emigration from underdeveloped countries to developed ones was limited. In Indiana, U.S.A., a law decreed, in 1907, the sterilization of the feeble-minded, the epileptics, the criminals, the sexually perverted, the alcoholics and the "degenerate patients." In 1935, in California, ten thousand were sterilized. The U.S. Government issued a law limiting the emigration to the States of those coming from Eastern and Southern Europe because they were supposed to carry the genes of inferiority. The term "gene" means "the element of the germplasm that transmits a hereditary character and forms a specific part of a self-perpetuating acid in the cell nucleus ." Cooperation between genetics and eugenics increased and genetic councils were created to advise spouses. However, the abuses committed by the Nazis who subdued eugenism to the service of political issues reduced the enthusiasm of eugenicists.

Another drawback appeared when a British geneticist, Lionel Penrose discovered, after meticulous research, that feeble-mindedness was not a uniform disease, determined by one gene, but was the result of a complexity of causes. This discovery showed the futility of anterior sterilizations.

The slow results obtained through the selection of genes failed to meet the expectations of eugenism enthusiasts. Interest in the movement declined until it acquired adherents like Herman Muller (1890-1967), an American geneticist who denounced the campaign which attributed racialism to promoters of the movement and initiated a system of positive activities based on the notion of germinal choice. The use of artificial insemination favored the reproduction of individuals most endowed physically, mentally and morally. A sperm bank was created by means of donations contributed by the multi-millionaire Robert Graham, for the purpose of allowing the inter-fecundation of spermatozoids and ovules of individuals with an intelligence quotient over 140.

Clinical Genetics was taught as a medical discipline when in 1952 the first Chair for this science was established in one of the French universities. Genetic consultation centers developed in many countries of Europe and America. Consultation became more significant when, in the seventies, the first technique of prenatal diagnosis of fetus anomalies was developed. This technique permitted an early detection of those anomalies during pregnancy, leading to therapeutic abortion. This operation permitted also the detection of the sex of the expected child.

The following are some of the diseases detected by means of prenatal diagnosis: mongolism (in 90% of cases), hemophilia, chorea of Huntington, falciform anemia, congenital malformation.

Prenatal diagnostics are usually performed in cases of "risky pregnancies", when couples are informed about the risk they might incur by planning to have children. But in the majority of industrialized countries, a systematic control of pregnancies is made in order to check the development of the fetus and detect eventual malformation in the nervous, renal or cardiac systems.

Prenatal diagnosis of anomalies, encourages couples to attempt risky procreation, because they know that, if the fetus shows any malformation, it will be revealed and abortion will follow. But it may happen that, in some cases, an immune and sound child may be himself a carrier of a gene which will transmit the disease to his progeny.

Whatever the consequences, this practice has allowed biology to have its share in promoting eugenism.

Rose Ghurayyib

Excerpts from an article by Nadine Fresco "Le fil rouge" (From Galton's Theories to ADN Tests): Les Cahiers du Grif. Editions Tierce. Automne 1987.

Sex Tours "in the Far East"

Within the period which followed the proclamation of the Philippines' independence, 1946, the country became one of the few states where a woman occupied the highest position in the Government. Corazon Aquino was elected president of the republic in 1984. If we also mention that the Philippine women include hundreds of physicians, business managers, university professors, and that they form two thirds of the law students in the country, we might conclude, from the above facts, that the Philippine woman has achieved a high degree of freedom and modernism. But other facts, unfortunately, contradict this conclusion.

A handful of prominent women will not prove that all women have been liberated, just as a handful of rich people in any country will not indicate that all the inhabitants enjoy a respectable standard of living. A country is really prosperous when all the inhabitants without exception enjoy the rights claimed for them in the U.N. Charter. On the contrary, when wealth and freedom are monopolized by a minority group, this constitutes a form of injustice which is a cause of complaint all over the world.

In the Philippines, as in South Korea and Indonesia, prostitution is a flourishing trade. Its tools are the so-called "sex-tours" and the night clubs where young girls are used to entertain passengers and customers. To the same category of exploitation centers, belong the "friendship clubs" represented by agencies and offices in charge of marrying young girls or selling them by correspondence. These clubs are numerous in Manila where they maintain relationships with correspondents from several countries or choose to specialize in one country. Their customers are Japanese, American, European or Australian. Prostitution is considered illegal in the above countries, yet it continues to be a prosperous trade, yielding huge profits to its dealers. The latter are the owners of night clubs, the organizers of sex-tours, the keepers of cabarets, where customers are provided with illustrated pamphlets and folders containing ample information and attractive photographs of young girls who are ready for marriage or for sale at reasonable prices. Every one interested is invited to choose the girl who meets his desire through her picture and her qualifications and the agreement is made on the spot.

What is it that induces a European or an American to own a young girl from the Far East? Factors are varied. One of them is the infatuation that a foreigner arouses in another foreigner. Just as the oriental girl is attracted to the blue-eyed, fair-skinned occidental. Aside from his money, the European or American fellow is attracted by the black eyes, soft hair and brown skin of the Oriental woman, and the stories he hears about her easy temper and submissive character. Among the candidates, there may be the man in need of a servant to take care of him in his old age or who suffers from chronic disease and requires a nurse to look permanently after him.

Australians constitute the largest number of Philippin marriage customers. More than 2000 of them are wedded yearly to Philippin girls in this odd manner. It is noteworthy that the delegate of the Australian Government, who is in charge of checking the marriage requests and contracts, encourages these marriages for humanitarian purposes. "Every couple", he says, "send to the Philippines $ 100 per month, a large sum when we consider the extreme poverty of most of the inhabitants." This is particularly manifest in the overpopulated villages covered with slums, where dirty water flows into the streets and the mountains of refuse are invaded by thousands of diggers looking for valuable or usable material they may dig out of the rubbish.

Philippin women are generally eager to marry foreigners who would bring them wealth, provide their parents with financial help or carry them into dreamland, where they would experience a new birth. The educated girl who holds school diplomas is anxious to have a wealthy and honest husband whose education is equivalent or superior to hers. Are these mixed marriages successful? The answer is in most cases negative.

Many contracts lead to disappointment, especially when the occidental husband, who imagines that every Philippin woman is submissive and tender-hearted, discovers that she is stubborn and strong-minded. According to Alice Lamigo, President of a woman's association in that country, the proportion of successful marriages of this kind does not exceed 30%. Yet the disappointed wife resorts to patience and finds compensation in the money she sends to her parents. In rare cases, she decides to retrun to her homeland.

The feminist movement tries to lend a helping hand. This movement is represented by Sister Mary Soledad Perpignan, who has been struggling to free her country women from exploitation. She has warned them against believing stories they hear about the loyalty of the occidental husband and his good treatment of his wife. Many of those men, she affirms, beat their wives or repudiate them.

Sister Mary presides over a group of women who strongly claim the abolition of sex-tours organized by the Japanese in the Philippine Islands. In 1981, when the Japanese Prime Minister Suzuki visited the Philippines, he was interviewed by Sister Soledad who exposed to him the problem. Since then, the tours were reduced in number but not abolished. Philippin girls continued to be sent to Japan where they were treated as prostitutes under the guise of dancers and singers in public places. Marcos, former President of the Philippines, was the first man responsible for the spread of prostitution and white slave trade in his country. He used them to cover his debts and his extravagant expenses. But Sister Soledad followed up the problem when Aquino came to power. The new President promised to take the necessary measures to prevent white slavery, to control the process of sending dancers and artists to Japan and to inspect cafés and pleasure resorts established by foreigners in Manila.

With the coming of Aquino, Philippin women have great hopes for their future.

Rose Ghurayyib

Corazon Aquino, president of the Philippines.

Le rendez-vous(1)
(The Date)

Françoise Collin is a French writer who has published several novels: — **Ici. le jour fabuleux** (Le Seuil), **Rose qui peut** (Le Seuil), **331 W 20, élection du président** (Transédition), **Le jardin de Louise** (NB) — a philosophical essay: **Maurice Blanchot et la question de l'écriture** (Gallimard) — various collective works: **La séduction** (Aubier), **Les femmes et leur maitres** (Christian Bourgois), **Le récit et sa représentation** (Payot), **Le colloque de Tanger-William Burroughs** (Christian Bourgois), **L'émergence d'une culture au féminin** (Saint-Martin, Montréal), **J.L. Borgés** (Chicago Press), and many articles in various journals.

Françoise Collin is well known through her important contribution to **Les Cahiers du Grif**, the feminist Franco-Belgium journal which she founded in 1973 and is presently directing. She initiated several special issues amongst which is one on "Gertrude Stein" and another on "Hannah Arendt".

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In **Le rendez-vous** she gives a most sensitive and strong entry into her inner-world, as well as an expression of her innovative style of writing which experiments with language.

The book is divided into three sections, each introduced by lines from R.M. Rilke, which sets the mood: a pale expression of love trying to emerge, daring to be different, and the regret over a loss.

The first section is about "the date" as such, an appointment or an imagined meeting with her dying mother. The paragraphs starting with either 'you' or 'she' are mixed throughout in an interesting narrative process, making the reader wonder who is really talking,

and if the meeting has to do with the mother or the daughter. In French, the "tu" (familiar you) addresses the mother while the "elle" (she) addresses the daughter. The "you" is often interchangeable.

Before "the date", there had never been any touching or affectionate words exchanged between mother and daughter. The last moments are full of regret and nostalgia about their relationship — what it was and what it could have been. "You met in the few hours that were to be the last." (p35). "You were together as you had been at birth. You opened your eyes. You opened your eyes with her on your last day." (p.42)

The second section introduced by "every angel is terrible" (Rilke's lines), suggests the dialectical opposition of things, as well as the daring to do them differently. It is subdivided into eight parts, language exercises on the words: "Veille" (wake), "levée" (rising), "passage", "marcher" (to walk), "nommer" (to name), "aller" (to go), "dire" (to say), "entendre or (to hear). It is a transition between the first and last sections, while using the same theme: "It is the same wake which starts with the birth of one's children to be awake, even when one is asleep. It starts with death, that of one's children. (p.50)

The third section is about the loss of the father. It is "told through a different language, because it is another language which he had taught her". (p.113) This language is more straight-forward, with fewer subtleties than the one used in previous sections. It is like the life of the father— a doctor — and his relationship to his daughter — "a certain clarity, accomplished before death ended it." (p.113) It closes on the relationship between mother and father, wife and husband, "two interlaced lives, resisting fate, the assurance that nothing in the world equals in beauty and dignity the passing away of time, and that words are the price of infirmity". (p.123)

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(1) Collins, Françoise. **Le rendez-vous** Paris: Tierce, 1988. 123 pages.

The death of parents — especially of the mother — is a theme much exploited recently, specifically in feminist literature. It has given us some very beautiful texts — not least being that of Simone de Beauvoir in **Une mort très douce.** Françoise Collin's **Le rendez-vous** differs in that her text addresses the mother; it is not a description of her, thus leaving an aura of mystery around her. This beautiful, anguished narrative adds its touching, in-novative, creative voice to the nostalgic, often sad, yet necessary melody. It is a catharsic way of dealing with sorrow and the need to communicate.

Evelyne Accad
University of Illinois
2090 FLB 707 S. Mathews
Urbana, Illinois 61801

The Tunisian Women in the Era of Independence(1)

In a long article published by Zeynab Cherny Ben Said in the magazine of IBLA, Institut des Belles lettres Arabes in Tunisia, the author discusses the impact of the era of independence which began in 1956, on the status of Tunisian women. She tries to show the gains obtained by women through the leadership and en-couragement of the former president Al-Habib Bou-Rqibah.

The new era promised a change in family relation-ships and an improvement in women's status. Its main achievements have been the abolition of endogamous marriage, i.e. marriage restricted to cousins and other close relatives, proclamation of the freedom of marriage outside one's family and most important, the abolition of polygyny.

The new law gives equal rights to spouses in matters of divorce, limits the age of marriage, forbids unrestricted divorce practiced by men, declares that marriage is an agreement between two persons enjoying free choice and judgement. It ensures the strengthening of central authority and the abolition of the right of privileged families to neglect the exploitation of com-monly owned lands. This practice violates the capitalist principle requiring the full exploitation of land that it may yield the highest possible income.

Disadvantages of Tribalism

The ideology adopted by the new regime imposes a struggle against tribalism and clannish loyalty which in-dicate a primitive way of living, characterized by in-dividuality, jealousy and inability to unite. Tribalism refuses to identify with the state, to which it becomes a rival. "Blood ties" says Foucault, the French philosopher, "act as a means of preventing social disintegration through the revival of the extended fami-ly and the traditions binding together family alliances. In a country exposed to famine, epidemics and violence, blood ties are necessary for survival. Only a strong state can work to eliminate the above mentioned causes of disintegration and confirm its power over tribal divi-sions."

Planning Policy

The economic crisis of 1956-1961 obliged the govern-ment to act directly in order to ensure a minimum in-come of 50 dinars per year for the least privileged classes. Mechanized industry was encouraged, exporta-tion was increased, a three-year plan, followed by a four-year plan, were successively adopted. Cooperatives multiplied, campaigns against illiteracy were organized under the name of "struggle against underdeve-lopment". Offices of professional training were created and women's work in factories was encouraged. Family planning was introduced with the aim of establishing an equilibrium between national income and the rate of population growth.

(1) Cherny Ben Said, Zeinab. "Tunisian Women and Independence" **IBLA.** No. 159, 1987.

What role should be assigned to women?

Tunisian ideology of the independence period oscillates between woman's role as educator and social guide and that of a participator in national development. Tunisian leaders are generally influenced by the ideas of Muhammad Abdo, Qassem Amin and Al-Taher Haddad, from the early twentieth century, when a differentiation between the roles of men and women was the rule. "A woman is a factor of stability within the disturbances that shake the country. She is a guardian of the lasting virtues. The new woman shall be a symbol of renewal, endowed as she is with intrinsic wisdom and spirituality which transcend pure intelligence." Besides abstract generalizations, there are also concrete statements affirming woman's capacity to handle social projects such as child care, teaching the illiterate, helping the needy, the sick and the distressed.

The intervention of the state in favour of woman's promotion produced two images of her: one is the image of the working woman, free from family duties and entirely devoted to her work. The other, that of the family woman, mother of the new generation. The two images meet or clash, but both are considered necessary for the application of national ideology. The complexity of the feminine question prevent the development of a clear vision of it and the emergence of initiatives encouraging woman's work outside the home.

Conclusion

The personal status laws adopted by Tunisia are considered more evolutionary than any other laws of the same category applied in the Arab world. The Tunisian code is the only one that requires unconditional elimination of polygyny and considers females as sole beneficiaries of an inheritance in the absence of male heirs, a regulation which Tunisians share with the Shi'a sect. It may be proper to mention, in this connection, that the personal status laws are still under study in many Arab countries. In Algeria, for example, the code which was formulated a few years ago was strongly opposed by the feminine associations and consequently suspended.

Besides the problem of family laws, Arab countries have to face economic and social problems connected with woman's status. The era of independence, which achieved a number of reforms in favour of women, has not been able to apply the U.N. Charter which stands for equal rights between the sexes. The Tunisian law of inheritance, like that applied in other Arab countries, still allots to women half of the share allotted to men in inheritance.

Rose Ghurayyib
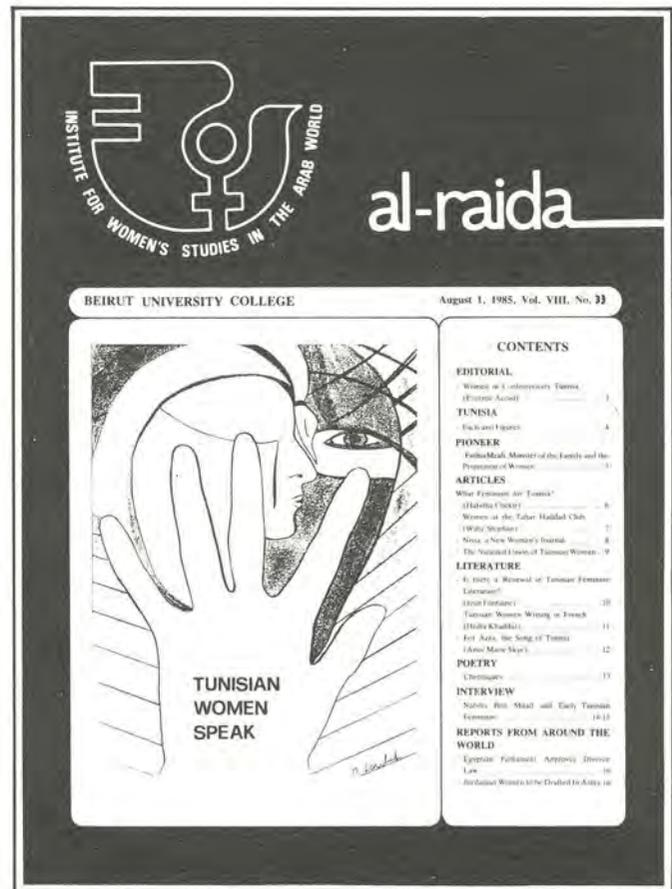
For more information on Tunisian Women, see Al-Raida, August 1, 1985, Vol. VIII, No.33, (Available at the Institute).

Causes of Divorce in Tunisia[1]

Abstract of a study effected on a group of Tunisian women forming part of the cadres.

In a paper of 13 typed pages, Mme. Souad Rjeb presents a report about a study of the causes of divorce in Tunisia where the rate of divorce has declined since 1965, that is since the promulgation of the new law of personal status. Mme. Rjeb attributes this decline to the difficulties involved in the act and to the problems which a woman has to face because divorce may interfere with her social freedom and deprive her of the financial support imposed on the husband by the marriage contract.

The study in question was limited to a group of highly educated women, who had been married and engaged in work outside the home, forming part of the country's cadres (trained personnel capable of assuming control). Their ages ranged from 28 to 42, they had rural or urban backgrounds, educated husbands with similar backgrounds and little difference in age between them and their wives. They were all recently divorced. The causes of their divorce were discussed in interviews lasting 2 to 6 hours each; sometimes several sessions were needed by the interviewer. The causes of divorce are the following, classified according to importance: physical violence practiced by the husband, conflicts with the husband's family, sexual conflict, adultery practiced by either of the spouses, quarrel about the distribution of roles in family activities, husband's dictatorship, conflict resulting from woman's work; political option of the husband, his showing symptoms of psychic trouble, his rejection of the marriage institution. The general complaint revolved on the contradiction existing between the democratic principle, adopted by the constitution and recommended at all levels of social life, and the rejection of this same principle on the sexual level and in the code of personal status.

The traditional image of woman, derived from the Arabo-Moslem heritage, limits her role to procreation and submission to the husband who is the sole provider for the family. Recently, a new progressive legislation and new cultural ideals have shaken traditional beliefs. Women included in the study made by Mme. Rjeb belong to this class of intellectuals who had to face a break between their former socialization and the role imposed by a repressive social system. Being self-supportive, they considered divorce a relatively easy resort but to the larger class of women this solution presents many problems, as previously stated. Many of them are condemned to defend married life at the risk of developing mental disorder.

A project carried out by a group of Tunisian psychiatrists (1982) showed that, out of 250 women patients, chronically showing depressive symptoms, 90% were married and, out of these, 57% attributed their ailments to matrimonial conflicts.

Annie el-Amouri, a Tunisian researcher, describes this phenomenon in the following terms: "How could we explain the fact that married women are more exposed than unmarried ones to depressive symptoms? It is strange to realize that marriage is an aggravating factor in a society which considers ti a source of security for women."

The author of the study finally proposes a revision of the personal status laws which impose on working wives a double task and on house-keepers a full-time job which is not equitably remunerated.

Children's Reactions to War:
the Case of Lebanon[1]

The logistic problems associated' with carrying out research in conflict-ridden areas are exacerbated by the limitations on professional, institutional and financial resources which most often accompany widespread hostilities. Relief projects for victims of war provide some aid, but this rarely includes mental health considerations. Although we have seen considerable expansion in research on stress in children, this research has dealt primarily with such family/life events as divorce-separation, hospitalisation, birth of a sibling, and the like. (See review in Ref. 1.)

Contemporary research on war and children has yielded inconsistent findings. Samples of 10 year olds from areas which had recently undergone shelling had manifest anxiety levels similar to those of samples from non-exposed areas (Ref. 2). In two studies, youngsters who had been exposed to shelling were compared to non-exposed children, but after about 18 months of calm, to assess selected attitudes and reactions which might reflect earlier stress: In one case no differences were found on a scale of attitudes toward war, but exposed children showed more latent aggression (Ref. 3): In the other, measured levels of manifest anxiety were not different, but exposed in comparison to non-exposed children reported higher anxiety following a film stimulating an attack on their area (Ref. 4). Wartime general anxiety scores were found to be higher than peacetime scores for a group of urban 5th and 6th graders (Ref. 5). A measure of 'involvement' (based on questions concerning family members in the military) was unrelated to anxiety change scores.

In a study of Lebanese undergraduates' reported fear and anxiety, the sequence of events permitted Saigh (Ref. 6) to obtain pre-and post-Israeli invasion measures for evacuees and non-evacuees from the besieged sector of Beirut. Evacuees did not differ from non-evacuees on either pre-or post-invasion measures of fear and anxiety, but there was a reduction in war-related fears from pre-to post-invasion for the two groups combined (attributed to the re-establishment of government authority).

In a recent volume devoted to children in Lebanon (Ref. 7) Day reports on state-trait anxiety and disturbed behaviour ratings for boys and girls (aged 6-7 and 11-12 yrs) living at home or in orphanages. The author reports higher state and trait anxiety for the older children. Parent/guardian and teacher ratings agreed in placing boys significantly higher than girls on the behaviour disturbance scales. Related research cited in Day's chapter indicated higher self-reported trait anxiety for orphanage in comparison to at-home children.

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Reactions to a much more specific event — death of the father in war — were found to vary from child to child, but the children as a group exhibited an increase in the number and/or severity of behaviour symptoms and problems, in some cases to a level considered "pathological" (Ref. 8).

The resulting picture is not clear and this is not surprising, given the limited amount of recent research on war and the variety, of research plans which have been used. However, much of the inconsistency may be due to the way in which war-related stressors have been specified in these studies: 'shelling', 'war', 'invasion' and 'orphanage living status'. Such definitions are much too vague. Keane points out that these broad, environmentally-defined war events are not really the stressors; they have their impact through increasing the likelihood that a specific event of great personal import (i.e., traumatic for the individual) will occur (Ref. 9).

With this view in mind, we selected for study a limited set of war-related experiences as having relatively high potential for personal trauma: death of a family member, forced displacement of the family, destruction of the home, and witnessing death. 'Trauma-yes' and 'trauma-no' children were compared for the extent of physical, nervous, regressive, aggressive and depressive symptoms of fear and anxiety and altered social behaviour in reaction to a general war stress situation (heavy fighting).

Twenty-one schools in Beirut, Saida and Tripoli participated in the IWSAW project. The schools were selected to include a range of social classes as well as Lebanon's major communities.

Questionnaires were sent to 1039 mothers of children in these schools requesting information about a particular child and about the mother. With hostilities continuing throughout data collection in Spring 1985, some of the forms were lost and had to be re-done as the security situation permitted. The children were aged 3 to 9 yrs; 47% were boys and 53% girls; 77% were from Beirut. All of the 216 teachers responding to a questionnaire concerning children's classroom behaviours were on the staffs of the participating schools and had at least 3 years of teaching experience. A total of 354 children ranging in age from 4 to 9 yrs were either personally in-

terviewed or given printed questionnaires, depending upon their age; 52% were boys and 48% girls; 79% were from Beirut.

Each mother reported on one particular child. Background questions asked for information on exposure to trauma as defined above. On a checklist mothers indicated 'does not exist', 'exists unaffected', or 'appeared-increased suddenly during heavy fighting' for specific symptoms of fear and anxiety and for behaviours with other children and with adults. The teacher's form included the behaviour checklist section, but teachers were asked to respond yes/no, on the basis of their general classroom observations, as to whether each behaviour was 'more prevalent now than in earlier years'. The form administered to children contained questions about their conception of war, objects of fear, targets of hatred and love, and attitudes toward war.

Among the behaviours taken as indicators of fear and anxiety, those most frequently reported on the checklist by mothers ('exists unaffected' or 'appeared-increased suddenly during heavy fighting') and by teachers ('more prevalent than in previous years') were as follows: nervous symptoms: hyperactivity (mothers and teachers)' regressive symptoms: overdependence (mothers and teachers); aggressive symptoms: hitting-kicking (mothers and teachers); depressive symptoms: cries easily (mothers), withdrawn (teachers); unusual behaviours: nagging (mothers), disruptive (teachers); behaviour with other children: possessive (mothers), dominant and rebellious (teachers); behaviour with adults: defiant (mothers), rebellious (teachers); behaviour with adults: defiant (mothers), rebellious (teachers). Disregarding the organisational categories, the profiles of potentially problem emotional-social behaviours exhibited by 3-9 yr olds are as follows: From mothers: overdependent, cries easily, shouting-screaming, hyperactive, possessive, defiant with children, and nagging; From teachers: hyperactive, distractible, overdependent, shouting-screaming, hitting-kicking, tics, and disruptive. It is of interest to note that mothers' and teachers' reports showed substantial agreement.

Now let us look at the relationship between those war-related experiences selected as traumatic and the appearance or sudden increase in symptoms of fear and anxiety or problem social behaviours during periods of general war stress (heavy fighting). Of the 1039 children

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reported on by mothers, 30% were classified as 'trauma-yes' in accordance with the definition given above. The statistical analyses of trauma and incidence of symptom-problem social behaviour yielded a clear and consistent pattern: children who had experienced one or more of the traumatic stressors were more likely to show emotional-social reactions to a general war stress situation. Among these reactions were nervous, regressive, aggressive, and depressive symptoms of fear and anxiety and problem social behaviours; these were about 1.7 times more likely to appear or increase suddenly among trauma-yes children than among trauma-no children. The largest differences between the two groups were found with respect to the following: generally unhappy, distractible, shouting-screaming, cries easily, hyperactive, disruptive, tics, overdependent and defiant with other children.

Additional analyses were carried out to study the relationship between mothers' and children's reactions to general war stress. The proportion of children showing physical symptoms of fear and anxiety was greater among the group of mothers reporting physical symptoms for themselves than among mothers not reporting them. This relationship was also found for nervous symptoms, aggressive symptoms, and for increases in fear, anxiety and anger. On average, the percentage of children showing these reactions was about 1.4 times greater for the group of mothers reporting these reactions for themselves, in comparison to mothers not reporting them.

Among the weaknesses associated with studies of the effects of war on children, two would seem to stand out: inadequate specification of the war-related stressor, and the employment of overly broad measures of childhood disturbance. In the absence of explicitness with respect to **what** was experienced and **which** reactions were observed, it is difficult to advance our understanding of the effects of war or to improve our position in formulating guidelines for intervention or treatment. These weaknesses have, to be sure, been only partially confronted in this project.

A number of efforts to classify stressful events have been proposed. Figley suggests a set of characteristics on which stressors vary in extent of impact (Ref. 10). The traumatic war stressors of the IWSAW study would likely fall at the extreme on all of the characteristics, but particularly on: sense of control (little); sense of disruption (much); sense of destruction (much); and sense of loss (much). However, certain features of the war situation as seen in Lebanon and in other regions beset by ongoing hostilities may justify modifying such a scheme to include characteristics which focus specifically on the implications of catastrophic events for **children**. In large-scale urban conflict situations: (a) little distinction is made at any level between 'civilian' and 'military' populations; (b) the conflict is long-term; (c) violent acts occur frequently and in varied form; and (d) person-person violence makes quite obvious the man-made nature of the disaster; the result is an abundance and diversity of opportunities to learn aggression.

The relationship between children's viewing of television violence and aggressive behaviour has been well documented (see review in Ref. 11). Eron reports evidence that: (a) viewing television violence is causally linked to children's aggressive behaviour; (b) the effect on children is longlasting; (c) the effect is probably cumulative; (d) children aged about 8 yrs seem particulary open to the effects of viewing violence; (e) among the violence-viewers, boys who identify with aggressive characters are the most aggressive; and (f) the extent to which children believe that television accurately portrays real life is a factor in the relationship between viewing violence and aggression (Ref. 12). These findings would seem to place the children of Lebanon and those in similar situations at high risk — with

repeated exposure to real-life violence, at an age of high susceptibility to the effects of viewing this violence, and with protagonists having enhanced potential to be identified with because of the recognition accorded by the various national, ethnic, political, religious and socio-economic groups in conflict. And this is complemented by television, cinema and videocassette films not unlike the American fare, as well as by explicit news coverage of familiar war-related events, which can serve to reinforce a true-to-life view of television violence.

Several studies have pointed to the prevalence of aggressiveness in response to war-related stressors. In a project planned as a cross-cultural replication of the relationship between viewing television violence and aggression (with 6-8 year old Lebanese youngsters), Day and Ghandour found that a widely-reported, real life local shelling incident yielded the greatest amount of rated aggression as compared to a 'neutral film' condition (for boys and girls combined) (Ref. 13). Saigh reported that 10-12 year old Lebanese children who had been exposed to a powerful stressor (unspecified) and who manifested the necessary symptoms for a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder classification showed more conduct disorders than normal children. Aggression was among the five factors statistically isolated for the scale used to assess conduct disorders (Ref. 14). Among the behaviour problems showing greatest increases following death of the father in war were dependence upon adults (63% of children studied) and aggressive behaviour (55%) for 2-10 year old children (Ref. 15). In the present study, aggressive behaviours were about 1.7 times more likely to be reported for children exposed to traumatic war-related stressors, as compared to those not so exposed.

Alongside the aggressive behaviours, there is also regular exposure to aggressive modes of thinking and to attitudes which have important implications for the adult population of the future. Thus, violent solutions to interpersonal and intergroup problems are conspicious among adults, as are attitudes of hatred, distrust and disregard for members of 'other' groups (Ref. 16). Among the children questioned in the present study, about 60% responded 'yes' they would fight; in response to 'fight whom?', these children mentioned foreign groups as well as other Lebanese communities; in response to 'why?', most explained: to defend the country or a specific community; they thought fighters were 'good' for the same reasons. To complete the picture, about 40% said they would not fight because 'war is bad', and that they did not like fighters because 'they kill and destroy'.

The literature provides a number of proposals for helping children who are facing difficult life situations. These techniques, activities and materials have potentials for adaptation, as suggested by the following examples.
1. Books dealing with difficult life issues have been used to promote mental health ('bibliotherapy'). Such crisis-oriented books can serve to: (a) stimulate exchanges of ideas; (b) show a child that he/she is not alone in the crisis situation; (c) illustrate techniques for coping; (d) encourage understanding among those unfamiliar with the crisis and (e) make school experiences more relevant to other life experiences (Ref. 17).
2. Games and routine classroom activities in which 'success' is achieved only through cooperation with others can help to balance out the tendency to emphasize 'winning', elimination of 'losers', and 'self' at the expense of 'others' (Ref. 18).

3. Stories, films and naturally occurring classroom incidents can be used to focus on constructive actions which contribute to peaceful resolution of problems among peers. Children know much more about how to make war than they do about how to make peace! (Ref. 19).

4. A sense of control and feelings of competence can be enhanced by having children express their ideas on important events and issues, and by seeing to it that these ideas gain some 'public' recognition whether at the classroom or school level or beyond (Ref. 20).

There is a general lack of empirical evidence relating to the effectiveness of these intervention plans. In further projects the IWSAW proposes to adapt the techniques and materials to those war-related experiences found to be traumatic in the present research and to assess the impact of selected intervention procedures on children's reactions to stress.

John Chimienti

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