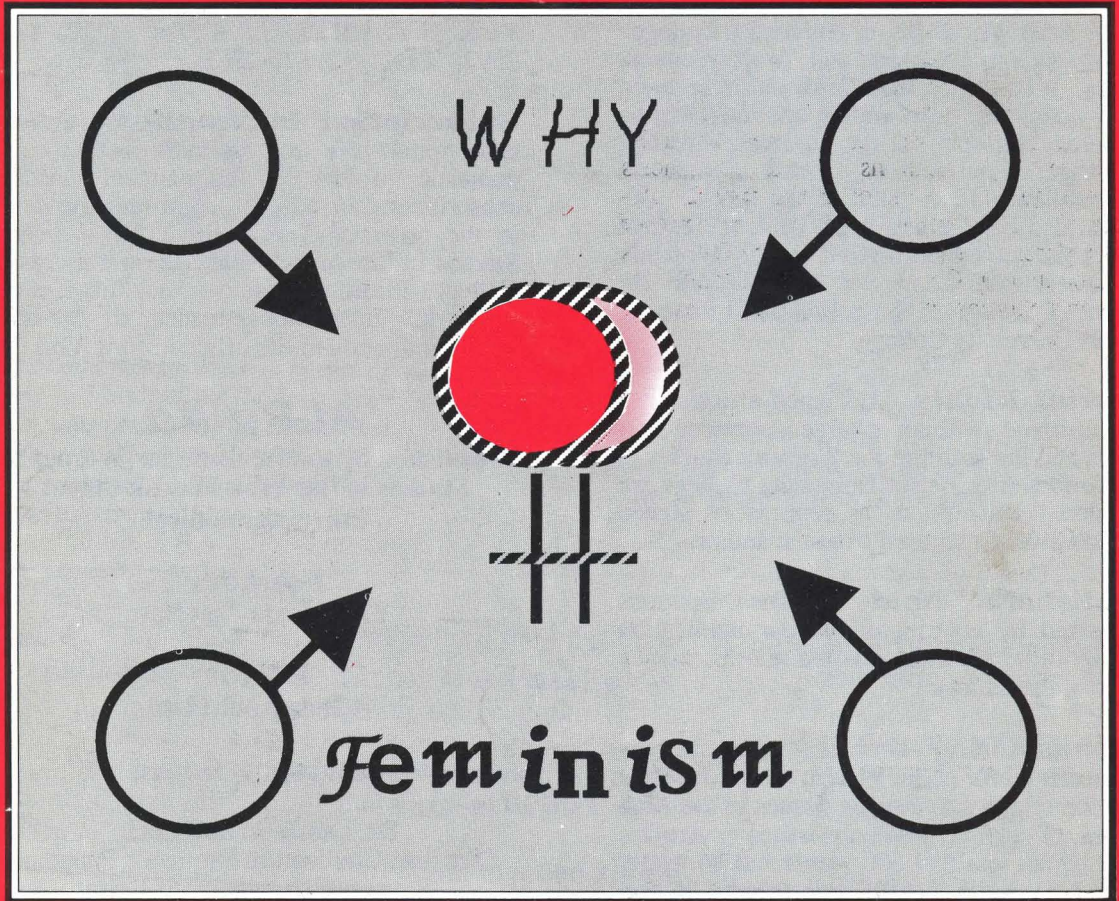


Al-Raida



**Making Women's Rights
Part of Human Rights**

— ● —
Feminism in Eastern Europe

— ● —
*The Theater of Beirut:
opening after 16 years*

The Purpose of Al-Raida - To highlight the plight of women in Lebanon and the Arab World and to emphasize their achievements by raising and discussing relevant issues and developments. To link Arab women with international networks by giving news-updates. To research, examine and lobby for development, change and progress for women in the Arab World and worldwide. To report the research and activities of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University College.

Production - Al-Raida is a quarterly newsletter of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University College. It focuses on Lebanese and Arab Women's issues. It is written based on local interviews, field-work, research studies and information gathered through various sources, notably, exchange publications and women's communiques from all over the world. Al-Raida also conducts its own book reviews of books purchased or offered to the Women's Documentation Center of The Institute for Women's Studies in the Scholtzfuz Library of Beirut University College.

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Al-Raida

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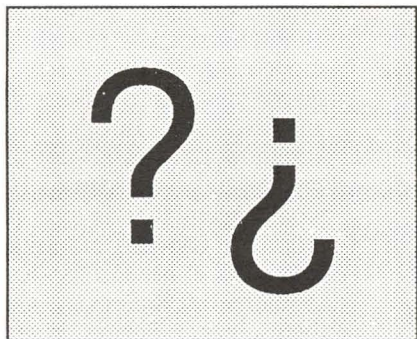
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Al-Raida

Winter 1993, Vol X. #60

Why Feminism

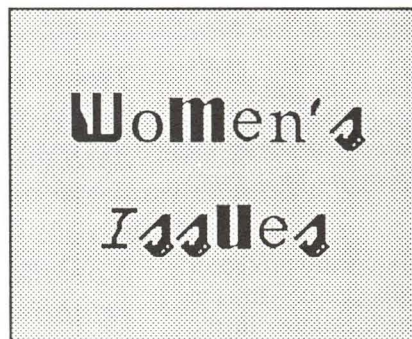
By Dr. Lamia Shehadeh



3 "Men and women are two halves of the same species and should fit together like two sides of a coin. Yet throughout history the sexes have regarded each other less as fellow human beings than as alien and exotic creatures."

A Cultural Dimension

Interview with Dr. Layla Nimah



13 "When we speak about liberation, I do not think that men are more liberated and free to be so. Our theories and our needs must be relevant to a realistic understanding of our culture and its customs."

2 EDITORIAL

Their Own Definition of Feminism

5 ARTICLES

Making Women's Rights Part of Human Rights

Biological and Learning Dialectics of Gender Differences

The Politics of Language: "Feminism in Eastern Europe" by Lisa Mulholland

Violence Against Women in Croatia

10 REVIEW

Debate on War by Rose Ghurayyib

15 CONFERENCES

Women Must Participate in Political Decisions

For a More Productive Role by Lebanese Women

Early Detection and Assessment of Disability: Series of Lectures by IWSAW.

19 PROFILE

Emily Fares Ibrahim Receives The National Cedar Award

21 ARAB WORLD/NEWS

Arab Woman: President of International Women's Democratic League

Special Committee for Women in the Tunisian Parliament

International Planned Parenthood Federation

23 PUBLICATION ON ARAB WOMEN

Unheard Voices
Both Right and Left Handed
Women in Saudi Arabia
The Veil and the Male Elite
The Becoming of Tunisian Women
Women in Arab Society

27 POEM

The Castle by Aida Farrag
Graff

28 THE CULTURAL SCENE

Re-Opening of the Beirut Theater in Ain-El-Mreysseh, Beirut, by Dr. Mona Amyuni

Their Own Definition of Feminism

I want to conduct research for publication which is important for promotion, and I want something easy and fast because I do not have the time to embark on a full scale study. I am investigating the possibility of writing something in the area of Women's Issues. I thought this would be an easy topic to tackle.

This is what a university professor said when she came to the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, one day, to inquire about references and data on women in the Arab World. I insisted that women's issues should not be and are not of peripheral importance. I went on to explain how elaborate academic research on women is, that the field is interdisciplinary and has multicultural dimensions, and that women's issues are real and cannot be treated lightly.

Yet the incident was rather discouraging; for although I had encountered this attitude before, I did not expect it from an upward-mobile woman. It reinforced my observation that it is largely representative of Arab women's self-perception and conception of their issues. They seem to go on adjusting to the new realities without giving them too much thought. For instance, the premise that Arab women are essentially identified with a male guardian continues to override a reality in which women have become bread-winners and assist their families and notably their guardians in the provision. Furthermore, despite educated and achieving women's integration in the mainstream, there seems to be a general consensus that the family reserves highest priority in their lives and in their ranking of rights, duties and responsibilities in society.

The concept of feminism in the Arab world remains ambiguous.

Now that it is defined and established, the movement in the West can afford questioning its structure.

The core of this perception lies in a widespread aversion to feminist thought. The term feminism in itself bears the stigma of sexual liberation, whose roots seem to lie in the sexual revolution of the Western world. Western feminists, on the other hand, are offended by such anti-feminist connotations.

The concept of feminism in the Arab world remains ambiguous. Its multi-cultural dimensions are not clear. Hence, a clear definition of the goals and soul of feminism for Arab women is in order. Thus, what are the feminists of this region really addressing: oppression or advancement? traditions or social realities? policies or norms? household politics or social politics? etc . . . Whatever the case may be, a very serious and profound review of traditional images, role definitions, work, education, reproductive and productive rights, laws, religious dogma and legislations, The Personal Status Code, and politics is required.

The greatest difficulty in addressing feminist perspectives is in adopting Western models. Now that feminism is defined and established, the movement, in the West, can afford questioning its politics, organization and structure. In other words, these structural debates do not threaten the credibility of the cause. However, it would seem that in our part of the world, a concise, culturally-relevant definition is needed for Arab women to internalize their cause and organize themselves. For as it stands, they seem to haphazardly imitate and adopt foreign concepts and images, and fail to understand their essence and examine their relevance to Arab society.

This is not to say that important issues like violence against women, for instance, will be addressed in one part of the world and not in another. It is to say that the heart of the issue lies in conceiving of equality and normality of women-men relations through a cultural approach.

Hence, if the starting point, i.e. the ideology is clarified and if the perceived threat of women's advancement is corrected, then Arab women will be able to confront injustice effectively. They will advance their rights as an integral part of societal development as opposed to it being a contradiction to status-quo values. This does not mean that a confrontation will not occur. Defining Arab feminism is the first confrontation. Only then will Arab Women's Issues be addressed more seriously and professionally.

Randa Abul-Husn •

Why Feminism

Dr. Lamia R. Shehadeh

Woman is goddess and devil She can bring man to salvation or drag him down with her to hell. On the face of it, the pedestal-gutter syndrome appears to reflect views that are diametrically opposed: woman is good, woman is bad. But in fact these views represent a single attitude: woman is different.

A Far Eastern writer is purported to have said, "How bitter it is to be a woman! Nothing on earth is held so cheap." And Angelica Grimke said, "The slave may be freed and woman be where she is, but women cannot be freed and the slave remain where he is." This might be strange to say when we realize that men and women are two halves of the same species and should fit together like two sides of a coin. Yet throughout history the sexes have regarded each other less as fellow human beings than as alien and exotic creatures -- to be loved, feared, cherished, or confined. In every society, in every century, people have assumed that males and females are different not merely in basic anatomy but in elusive qualities of spirit, soul and ability. They are not supposed to do the same things, think the same way, or share the same dreams and desires.

It is true that woman has been esteemed, worshipped and protected, but she has just as often been loathed, ignored and reviled. These apparently opposite attitudes have been referred to as the pedestal-gutter syndrome. Woman is goddess and

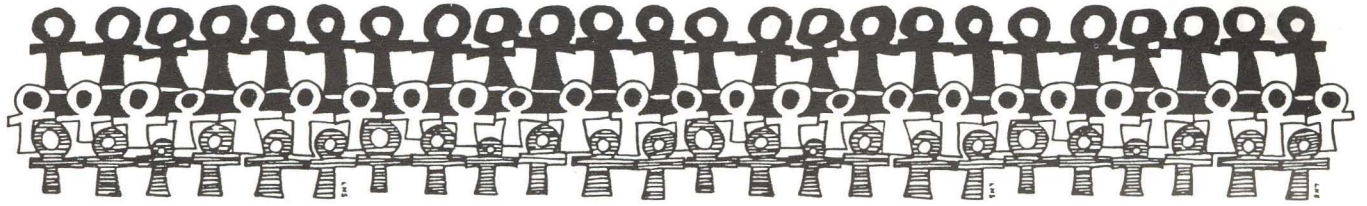
devil, virgin and whore. She can bring man to salvation or drag him down with her to hell. On the face of it, the pedestal-gutter syndrome appears to reflect views that are diametrically opposed: woman is good, woman is bad. But in fact these views represent a single attitude: woman is different. After all whether you are looking up to women or stooping down to them, you don't have to look them in the eye!

Differences in themselves need not cause animosity. It is only when one group considers the other to be immoral, deficient, or dangerous that conflict arises. In the relationship between the sexes, women have been regarded as deficient males, insatiable sex-pots, and incarnations of evil. They are the second sex, the weaker sex, the inferior sex, the sex to be explained. Often, like slaves, women have been regarded as men's property, to be bought and sold, punished and raped, traded or married off in political allegiances. If women were to be used as objects of barter and liaison, as tests of courage and symbols of conquest, they must learn to be obedient.

Thus, we find that even after the

French Revolution when the philosophers hoped that education would cure woman's defects, they were still reluctant to advocate full political equality for women. In fact, in the Social Contract, Rousseau described an exclusively male bond. Females, he said, "must be trained to hear the yoke from the first so that they may not feel it, to master their own caprices and to submit themselves to the will of others." A woman must learn "to submit to injustice and to suffer the wrongs inflicted on her by her husband without complaint." The implication, here of course, is that women are not submissive by nature but must be trained to perfect the role! It is noteworthy that this is the same Rousseau who said elsewhere demanding man's right to overthrow tyranny, "man is born free, yet everywhere he is found in chains."

Stereotype attitudes, like laws, still persist even after the realities change. If you believe that misogyny is anachronistic, ask some people to tell you the traits they think are typical of women and men. You will probably hear that women are dependent, talkative, timid, weepy, vain and bad at numbers, and that men are strong,



self-reliant, courageous, dominant, athletic and good at math. Parents still prefer to have boys rather than girls, and both men and women still think that men are the better and smarter sex.

In contrast to nineteenth century feminists, today's feminists argue that far too much has been made of the biological differences between men and women. For them, different socialization processes account for a larger part of the observed differences in men's and women's behaviour, while biology plays only a minor role. Thus their argument for equality is based upon the belief that the biologically derived differences between the sexes are relatively minor and that a vast inequitable system has been built upon the assumption that such differences are basic and major. Research has shown that although biological differences abound, yet it is clear that neither genes nor cyclic hormones lead to specific actions in any simple direct way; our bodies are not straight-jackets for personality. For one thing, research shows that experience and learning can override biological factors to a remarkable degree. For another, high testosterone levels do not make all men violent and sex-mad; and low estrogen and progesterone levels do not make all menstruating or menopausal women anxious and depressed. Bodily changes do interact with the social ones.

The new feminism presupposes social change. In order to better serve women's needs, changes must be made in people's attitudes, in laws, institutions and, ultimately, the whole social structure of society. The

changes may be only minor or drastic, but the feminists feel that not only will such organization benefit women but that ultimately it will improve all society. Thus, the new feminism is not about elimination of differences between the sexes, nor even simply the achievement of equal opportunity: it concerns the individual's right to find out the kind of person he or she is and to strive to become that person.

Behaviourists say that particular experiences in childhood eventually fit us for a social system in which males go one way and females another. Most laymen and psychologists believe that the basic ingredients of personality are set in childhood and that virtually from the moment of birth boys and girls take different roads to different personalities. This view implicitly accepts the idea that stereotypes about the sexes have a strong basis in reality: that men are more independent and aggressive and that women are more nurturant and emotional. But it also says that there is nothing inevitable about these differences. They are learned from books, films, parents and other people. Thus, because women learn that achievement (especially intellectual achievement) is aggressive, and therefore masculine, they worry that they will be less feminine, if they compete. Anxiety about this conflict makes women feel defensive if they do achieve and may prevent them from achieving in the first place. Able men do not have this problem because achievement and the masculine role go hand in hand. Women, unlike men, have a motive to avoid success, a fear that achievement

will have disastrous consequences, such as remaining single.

To many writers, the result in sex differences, in self-esteem and achievement motivation account for the greater prevalence of males in politics, business, science and art. To be creative you have to be confident; to advance in your field you need some drive and energy. If socialization suppresses a girl's ambitions and self-regard as it encourages a boy's, the implications for sex differences in social status and personal happiness are serious.

Finally, at the very least, getting females into schools and employment would seem to have clear utility beyond altruism. At stake are not only economic goals, but also the commitment to relieve human suffering and make a more equitable life available to all. In the final analysis, however, it may well be the degree of organization and consciousness of women themselves that will determine just how far along the road to equality the provision of economic opportunity will lead.

In conclusion, feminists are not after turning women into men, rather the qualities most feminists would like to see both men and women adopt and combine parts of the male and female role stereotypes. All people should be warm and concerned for others' welfare, they should be sufficiently self-assured to reach out to others, they should be self-motivated, adventurous, competent, and above all, they should be free to develop their individual potential. ●

Making Women's Rights Part of Human Rights

How can Lebanon speak of making Women's Rights part of the Global Human Rights Agenda when it has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women? Seventeen years of war carry a toll of human rights violations, yet the Lebanese praise themselves for the fact that women were not a target like women in Croatia.

In principle, women's rights in Lebanon is a legislative issue. Women's status is dictated by the Personal Status Code and in the civil code, the value of her signature is equal to half that of a man. According to Fadi Jamaledin, lawyer and activist in the Lebanese Human Rights Association who gave a keynote address at the Beirut University College's lecture for International Human Rights Day (December 8, 1992), civil laws that discriminate against women are often contradictory. He explained that a

woman's signature, i.e. her word of honor, is subject to many restrictions; yet she has the power to annul a transaction drawn on her behalf by a male relative.

Why Lebanon has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is a question that has not been answered yet. Women's rights may be the hardest to achieve given the complications and dualism between Personal Status Code which are essentially religious codes and secular state laws. Some government officials, men, who support women's rights have gone as far as preparing agendas for amendments securing women's legislative rights. Their proposals remain unheard under the pretext that other matters of law and order have higher priority in this precarious and critical phase of post-war reconstruction.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women has now been ratified

or acceded by 113 countries (see box). However, discrimination against women remains very hard to assess and reverse because reports can only be accepted from states who have ratified the Convention.

Key organizations working on Women's Human Rights are mobilizing to institute women's rights as a specific thematic item on the agenda of the first World Conference on Human Rights, and to integrate gender in all discussions. This Conference will be the first to be held in 25 years and will take place in June 1993 in Vienna, Austria. The group have collected over 75,000 signatures on a petition circulated in 78 countries asking the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights to comprehensively address women's rights at every level of the proceedings. Al-Raida has produced this petition in two of its issues and hopes that our readers have supported this call for Women's Human Rights. •

R.A.H

Countries which have not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Arab countries are highlighted)

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Botswana, Brunei, Darussalam, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Fiji, Gambia, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Kuwait,

Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshal Islands, Mauritania, Federated States of Micronesia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Vanuatu.

Countries which have ratified the convention with reservations limiting its meaning

Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Germany, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Libya, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritius, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Spain, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom.

All other U.N. member states have ratified the convention.

Biological and Learning Dialectics of Gender Differences

Early belief was that male and female brains were different as were their bodies. Women had the smaller brain size, and size being an indicator of intelligence they were believed to be less intelligent than men.⁽¹⁾ This biological argument for gender differences overlooked the correlation between the size of the brain and that of the body, whereby men's slightly larger brain is directly related to an average larger size of the body.

However, research on gender differences entered a new phase at the beginning of the nineteenth century, characterized by the rise of the mental testing movement and the development of standardized ability tests⁽²⁾. Alfred Binet, 1905 (French Psychologist) and Lewis Terman, 1916 (American psychologist) devising and testing Intelligence Quotient tests (IQ) believed that, in general, there were no gender differences. They attempted to produce equal average scores to construct their tests, and indeed, repeated large scale testing yielded on the whole no gender differences in general.

The next chapter of testing was with L.L. Thurstone's development of the Primary Mental Abilities (PMA) test in the 1930s and 40s. The PMA assesses verbal comprehension, word fluency, number, space (spatial visualizing), memory, perceptual speed and reasoning. By the 1960s, psychologists Anne Anastasi's *Differential Psychology* (first

Gender differences, . . . are one of the great fault lines of societies - Those marks of difference among categories of person that govern the allocation of power, authority and resources

Hana Papanek

published in 1937) and Leona Tyler's *The Psychology of Human Differences* (first published in 1947) reviewed series of gender related studies and experiments using PMA. Their conclusion revealed that females were superior in verbal and linguistic functions while males were superior in spatial and mathematical abilities.

In the 1980s, the development of a new statistical method called meta-analysis, using quantitatively cumulating results from many studies, produced more sophisticated probing of patterns of gender differences. Basic conclusions drawn from meta-analysis were that the largest difference is for one type of spatial ability, i.e. mental rotations, but gender difference in mathematical performance is moderate and there is no difference in verbal ability.⁽³⁾

Though sex is biologically determined, gender is culturally defined.⁽⁴⁾ Hence, the biological and

learning argument extends into anthropological constructs of gender differences. A cross-cultural division of labor by sex exists where women are child-bearers because they are the ones to give birth, and men are the providers because they are more aggressive and less nurturing. Such biological determinants are largely responsible for a sexual division of labor, and the private/female-public/male dichotomy of social structure. Productive and reproductive activities being organized in terms of public and private spheres, the public became men's sector for achieving power and status, whereas women's power and status lie in mastering and conforming in the private sector.⁽⁵⁾

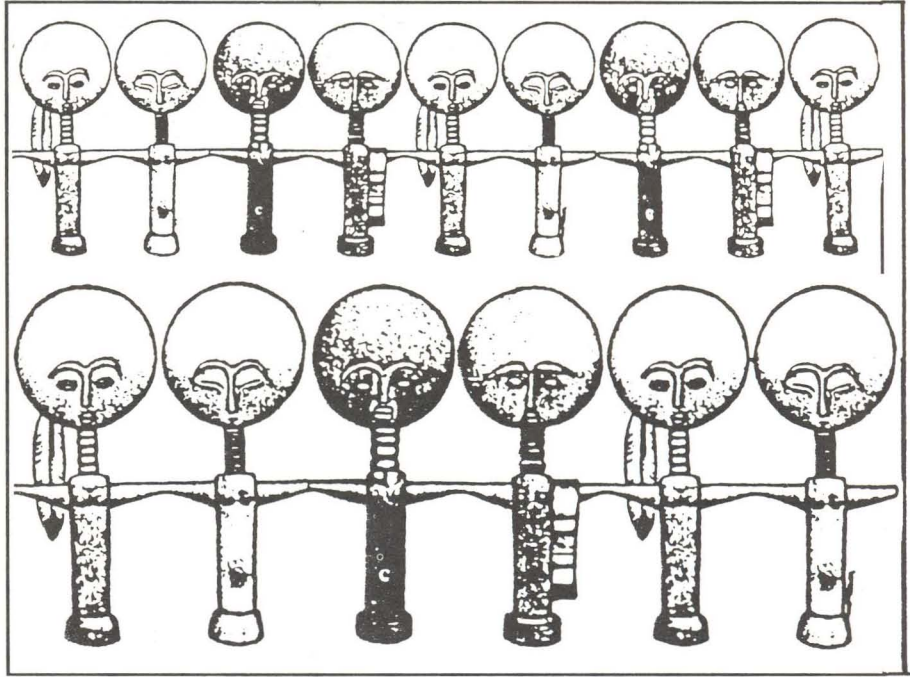
Other anthropologists have pointed out that the consistency of behavioral and temperamental differences between the sexes in different cultures cannot be reduced to biological determinism; it is rather a result of learning the environment.⁽⁶⁾ Boys

and girls will grow to become the men and women they are socialized and expected to be. Society itself structured along relevant sexual divisions of labor acts as the reference model further reinforcing gendered differences. To what extent gender is related to patriarchy is still debatable. Patriarchy essentially refers to kinship systems of male domination, whereas gender is relational and refers to culturally defined qualities of men and women.⁽⁷⁾

Are biological and learning variables mutually exclusive as such? It would seem that modern times illustrate how gender differences reflect an inequality.. Biologically, it is next to impossible that men will ever give birth, while social and cultural changes are slowly revisiting gender roles. Hence, the essence of women's distinctiveness lies in the multiplicity of their roles.⁽⁸⁾ Most women, in addition to being primarily responsible for house management and child bearing are heavily involved in economic production.

Early belief was that male and female brains were different as were their bodies.

Thus far, this article reviewed literature that attempt to trace gender differences. Gender is essentially a cultural principle, based on the social construction of biological differences as feminist Hana Papanek puts it. Papanek goes on to note that "gender differences, . . . are one of the great fault lines of societies - those marks of difference among categories of person



that govern the allocation of power, authority and resources". It is also generally accepted that gender - like class and race/ethnicity - is a source of inequality..⁽⁹⁾ Gender is not a modern synonym for feminism, but a discipline in itself. One that has become quite developed and interdisciplinary. It is not confined to psycho-social analysis of human systems, but examines sectors in which differences are inherent and continue to be unjustly and discriminably acute. Valentine Moghadam explicitly explains the concept of gender by saying:

Like class, gender is a relational concept. In the same way that class implies a relationship between labour and capital, gender implies a relationship between men and women. Many . . . assume that "women's studies" are of concern to women only.. gender is not "only about women"; it refers to a structural relationship between the sexes which is linked to the state, the economy and to other macro- and micro-processes and institutions. . . . Like class, gender

is not a homogeneous category; it is internally differentiated and elaborated by class, race/ethnicity, age, region, education.⁽¹⁰⁾ •

R.A.H

(1) Janet Shibley Hyde. "Meta-Analysis and the Psychology of Gender Differences". *SIGNS*. 16-1:55-73, Autumn 1990. pp.56.

(2) *Ibid.* pp. 58.

(3) *Ibid.* pp. 72.

(4) Tam Siu-mi, "Gender and Culture: An Anthropological Perspective". *Gender Studies: News and Views*. No.2. 9/1991. pp. 7. Newsletter of Gender Research Programme, H.K. Institute of Asian Studies. The Chinese University of Honk Kong.

(5) Randa Abul-Husn. "The Private/Public Dichotomy". *Al-Raida*. Vol.IX, No. 53. Spring 1991. pp. 2.

(6) Tam Siu-mi, *Ibid.*

(7) Valentine M. Moghadam. *Gender, Development, and Policy: Toward Equity and Empowerment*. Research for action by the World Institute for Development Economic Research (WIDER) of the United Nations University. 1990. pp.6.

(8) *Ibid.*

(9) *Ibid.* pp.8.

(10) *Ibid.*

The Politics of Language "Feminism" in Eastern Europe

Lisa Mulholland

In Eastern Europe, "feminism" is a dirty word. The same holds true for other words like "emancipation," "equal rights for women," and "women's liberation." Under communist regimes of the past, "emancipation" was imposed on women and given as the reason for requiring women to leave their homes to become part of the labor force.

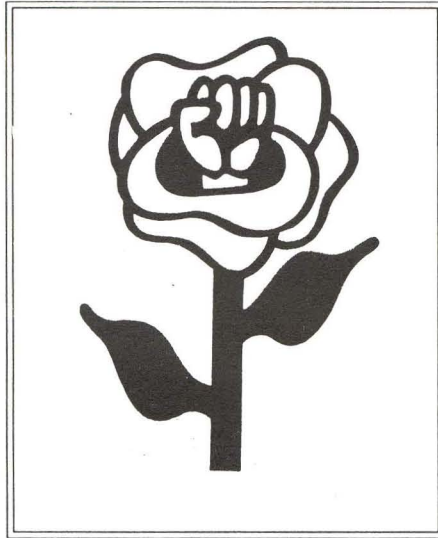
As a result, the newly democratic nations like Czechoslovakia and Hungary are experiencing a backlash against feminist ideas.

The analogy of pendulum used for other political and social trends in the region also works with this issue. In the past 50 years, the pendulum was held artificially to the left. Pictured as happy workers, contented to leave children with equally happy grandmothers or in provided childcare, women were visible in unrepresentative but recognizable numbers in the political and public social arena and the charters of most governments provided equality under the law.

The result was not so rosy. Not treated as social equals, women carried the double burden of outside job and household maintenance. They often mistrusted state provided childcare and resented demands on their time for mandatory attendance at party meetings and holiday celebrations.

Given present opportunities, the pendulum has swung far to the right. Private enterprise, imported goods on store shelves, and tourism are on the

rise, as are skinheads, racism, and threats to legal abortion. Women are expressing hopes to return to roles labelled "traditional," caring for the home, and their families.



When asked about their dreams for their daughters, many of the 110 Czech women questioned in a recent survey responded that they are looking forward to sons-in-law with well-paying jobs or circumstances that will allow their daughters to stay at home more than they were able to. One architectural engineer said, "The girls should [put aside] their emancipation, which they have learned in socialism. They should learn the woman's role in the family, which was suppressed by socialism."

Although a number of women hold beliefs which are encompassed in the spectrum of feminist thought --equal access to education, freedom to choose

a career, abortion on demand, etc., even many of these women would not claim to be "feminists."

Klara Sankova, a representative to the Czech and Slovak Federal Assembly, is one example. Elected on a platform of rights for minorities, she refuses the title of feminist, saying "I am for all minorities in our democracy, not just one."

Alena Kartka, a young, highly educated English teacher in Prague explains her distaste for the term. "I don't like the word "feminism" myself. It reminds me of the Czechoslovak Union of Women. It was a really formal group. The women in this horrible institution were gung-ho communists who were supposed to represent the working women of (what was) Czechoslovakia. They had funny congresses and funny meetings to solve pseudo problems, it was all in theory. They just talked about it. The institution was purely women and showed that women had the right to talk about problems in public, but it was very superficial, no depth. In the past, equality was not that a woman could become a head of a school, but that she could drive a tractor and operate a crane." •

Original source: Off our backs, July 1991 pp.10. 2423 18th NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, DC 20009, USA

Our source: Women in Action, Isis International. 1/92. pp.14. P.O.box 1837, Quezon City Main, 1100 Philippines.

Illustration: International Women's Tribune Center. Feminist Logos.

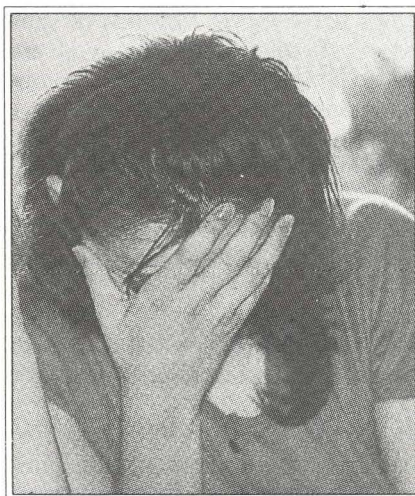
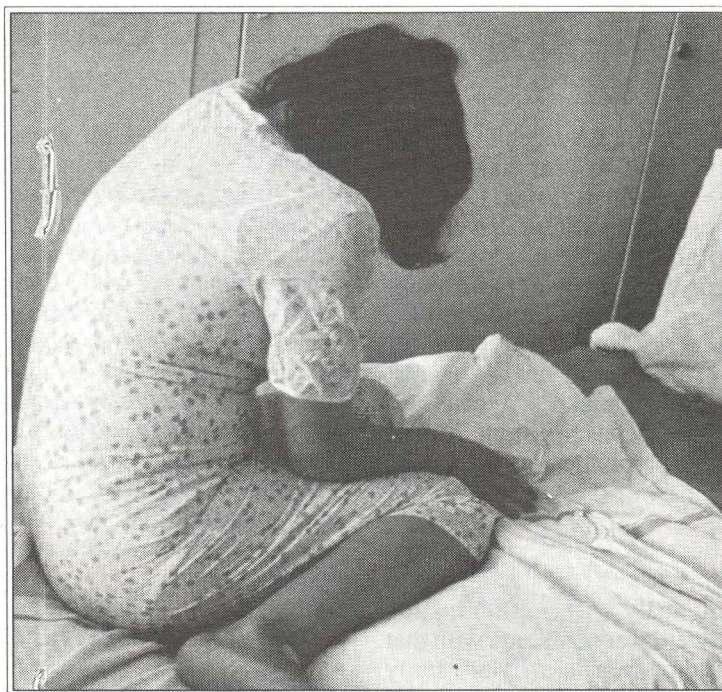
Violence Against Women in Croatia

The violence against women in former Yugoslavia is chilling. Below are excerpts from one of the many tragedies reported. These were transmitted to Al-Raida from the International PEN Women's Committee and a Women's Group in Croatia. Women's groups all over the world are networking the news and planning for action and protest.

Z.N. age 40.

As soon as Chetniks (serbs) came into our city, they selected women, children and old people; men were taken to a concentration camp with an excuse that they were mobilized. They put hundreds of us in a school in Doboje and they turned it into a camp. Our Serbian neighbors locked us in. I knew many; they used to visit our house. As soon as we entered a camp, "marticevic" (followers of Milan Martić, a Serbian leader) came in with guns and selected young women and girls. They put them in the hall and told the Chetniks to do with the women what they pleased.

There was silence. Then the crazy, dirty, stinking Chetniks jumped at the women like animals; they tore off their clothes, pulled their hair, cut their breasts with their knives. They'd cut the belly of the women who wore the traditional baggy trousers. Those who screamed would be killed on the spot.



In front of a few hundred prisoners they raped and tortured women and girls for days. It was unbearable to watch girls being raped in front of their fathers. In the evening, after heavy drinking, the Chetniks would come in the hall with lamps. Stepping on us, they would look for girls, not older than 12, 13.

International PEN Women's Committee,
532 West 111th St. #75, New York, NY
10025 USA. or Fax (1) (212) 932 0678.

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No.8, Newsweek, February 11, 1993

Debate on War

Review of Evelyne Accad's The Broken Mirror and the Death Wish

Rose Ghurayyib

Since 1976, i.e. since the end of the first two-year stage of the Lebanese war which lasted 17 years, many books and articles have been published about the war. Yet much more needs to be written, particularly about the underground causes and the multiple secret hands that wove its threads. The article I am reviewing, written by Evelyne Accad (1) reproduces a debate of nine pages, followed by a commentary of fifteen pages.

Like her book, "Sexuality and War"(2), this article reveals a desire to study and analyze the Arab male's attitude toward war compared with that of the Arab female. Her study contains an analysis of the debate she organized in Tunis in the summer of

1992, before the Gulf war and during the last year of war in Lebanon. In this debate, some twelve women, and about an equal number of men, discussed the Lebanese war, its causes and implications while Evelyne acted as participant and moderator. Those who took part in the debate belonged to the intellectual Tunisian class, though one of the women, Maria (of non-Arab origin) denied being an intellectual (pg. 165). This debate seems to the author, in many ways, exemplary of the position taken by Arab men and women regarding the Lebanese war.

MAIN POINTS OF THE DEBATE

The male participants in the debate, represented by Ali and Hameed,

emphasize the necessity of destroying Beirut, the quintessence of the Arab world. "Beirut = city = woman = prostitute, therefore Beirut must be destroyed." "Beirut = broken mirror = sightless eyes = faulty memory, therefore Beirut must be destroyed". The events of Lebanon signify a decline of the Arab world. War means rebellion against the ugly present, a desire for change and rebirth. Quoting Ethel Houry, author of the "The Little Mountain", Ali wishes that every Arab capital may have the fate of Beirut!

The women's attitude is totally opposed to that of the men. They refuse the idea that change may come through violence and war. The patriarchal system is responsible for war but war has not abolished the patriarchal system. One of the women dared to say that the "Arabs had turned their petrodollars into a brothel" which means that they used their oil income to multiply nightclubs, to make of Beirut a corrupt city, to buy arms for the militias which destroyed Beirut. These women expected hope to come from women who believed in a peaceful change, whose action during the war was much more positive than that of men.

In her commentary (pp.173-188), Accad first explains the sequence: "Beirut - city - woman - prostitute, therefore Beirut must be destroyed"

Beirut = City = Woman = Prostitute



Beirut must be destroyed

Beirut = Broken Mirror = Sightless Eyes



Beirut must be destroyed

by saying that a city in old literature has always been considered as feminine because it is round like a matrix, a womb, surrounded by a fence. Beirut is corrupt and must be destroyed because it is westernized, it is not more westernized than Tunis, but because it represents the triumph of urbanization which is to conservative Arabs an object of hatred. Although Arabo-Islamic civilization is essentially urban, the Arabs feel a nostalgia for the desert, which they glorify as the birth-place of the pure Arabic language and of the authentic Arab life and character. Urbanization means to them a loss of authenticity and of purity, a loss of identity. Here Hameed and Ali cannot but recall the glorious past of the Arabs, their great culture which haunts them, crushes them, because it is inaccessible and is being challenged by another culture whose power fills space. The conflict between authenticity and impurity, between a great past and a miserable present, constitutes the broken mirror. It forms the second sequence, which is parallel to the first and a compliment to it. "Beirut = broken mirror = sightless eyes = faulty memory, therefore Beirut must be destroyed".

Accad considers the violent attitude of men, shown through the metaphor of the broken mirror, as the result of their inability to realize their aspirations or to achieve self-realization. It reflects total despair, leading to the death wish or "fascination of death", which Issa Makhoul detects in the writings of Elias Houry (mentioned earlier), "who endows death with an attractive power, a real charm" (pg. 184).

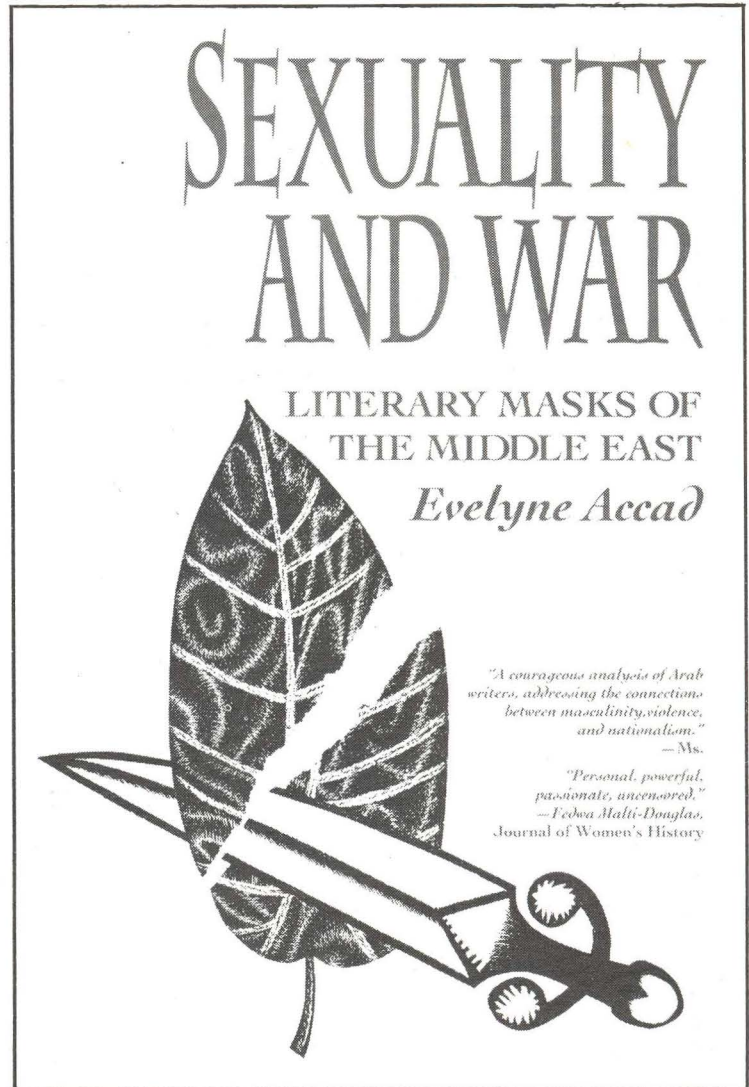
A broken window, a loss of identity, means a condition beyond repair, requiring a total renovation or a new regime. It means a radical change including the abolition of the

patriarchal system, which the Arabs refuse to abolish. Why? What role does the patriarchal system play in a disaster? In the first place, it is a form of unjust, democratic behavior.

Imposing on women a way of life which excludes them from the political field and forbids them to share in the planning and handling of decisive, national questions. It tends to create in them a dwarfish personality, centered around the worship of males, characterized by dependence and submission. It leads them to idolize their boys, to encourage in them the macho, i.e. a feeling of superiority and a tendency to aggression. That is what Aisha,

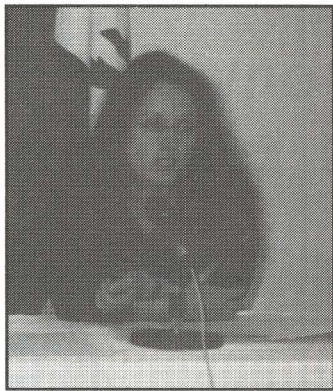
one of the women participants in the debate, tries to show in a brief, timid way, when she says: "The problem lies in us women, in the way we bring up our boys. Do we encourage violence in them?" (pg. 169). Family disorganization, based on the formula of "domination-dependence", falls back on the political scene. The private turns immediately into the political.

The commentary enumerates other reasons for Arab decline besides defective education and unhealthy family relations. The author mentions the effects of colonialism-imperialism, which paved the way





Rose Ghurayyib



Evelyne Accad

the change should mean getting rid of certain archaic mentalities, of some leaders' lust for power, of men's entrenched desire for women's enslavement. They want change but they don't know how to do it and what should be changed because they are blind to their defects and ignorant of their needs. Should a modern-minded leader rise and propose a practical, necessary change, they oppose him and thus fall into contradictions".

Finally, this debate and the following commentary raise so many questions and are so rich in suggestions, including psychoanalytic references, that it looks impossible to discuss all their contents in a short review. Accad, a writer dedicated to the cause of peace, dominated by the fear of another war or a generalized armed conflict in the Arab world, is eager to prove that war is a major crime, that "the broken mirror" reflects a feeling of powerlessness, implying a sense of disillusion in Arab youth.

The Lebanese war has proved that real change will not come through violence. The moderating influence of women, successfully presented in the debate, should qualify them to participate fully in political activity •

(1) Evelyne Accad "Le Miroir Brise et le Desir de Mort - The Broken Mirror and the Death Wish" *Mediterranean Peoples*, a quarterly review, No. 58-59, January-June 1992.

(2) Evelyne Accad, *Sexuality and War*. New York. New York University Press. 1990. Also reviewed by Rose Ghurayyib in

for the rise of dictators, the tension between East and West, the accumulation of sophisticated arms which swallows a large share of Arab wealth, the creation of Israel, an expansionist state, in the midst of the Arab world. Another factor is the gradual deterioration of the old Arab societies formed of tribal structures which depended on tribal alliances to control latent violence. We are witnessing the emergence of independent states which build their authority on the destruction of clans.

Yet, in spite of this evolutionary step, the patterns of family relationship resists, moves very slowly, maintains in a destructive society, the mechanism of violence which, in the future, will be difficult to restrain.

VALUE OF THE DEBATE

Its value lies first in its authenticity. It gives first hand information about the involvement of the Arabs in the Lebanese war. It is fairly representative of a section of the intellectual class in Tunis and in many other parts of the Arab world.

It represents a favorable ground for comparison between the point of

view of men and that of women regarding important questions such as war, violence, change, causes of Arab unrest and break-down, etc . . . At the same time, it allows the reader to notice the wide difference in character and demeanor between the two groups. Women seem to be self-controlled, rational, outspoken and independent in their thinking, while men participants are emotional, rhetorical, visionary and superficial. Their ideas are mere repetitions of statements given or written by a Lebanese writer, Elias Khoury, known for his bent toward violence and destruction. It looks strange that this one person should have so much impact on Arab intellectuals of today that his sayings spread far and wide as if they were divinely inspired and his name is mentioned thirteen times in the text. On the whole, the debate reveals clearly the positivism of women versus the negativity of men. Here, I like to give the abstract of a discourse contributed by Maria, one of the women participants in the debate (pg. 165). "I was in Beirut in 1966. Everybody talked about the necessity of destroying the city. This probability meant a desire for change which they thought would come through destruction. In my opinion,

A Cultural Dimension to Women's Issues

Dr. Layla Nimah, Assistant Dean, BUC

Dr. Layla Nimah was appointed Assistant Dean at Beirut University College, in Spring 1992. She comes from North Lebanon and has completed her high school studies in Tripoli. She later received a Bachelor's degree in Math from the Lebanese University in Beirut (1963) completed a two year program in Math at the Sorbone in Paris (1965) and a Ph.D. in Physics from Utah State University (1973).

She is trilingual and has been significantly exposed to three relatively distinct cultures, at least. Her ideas are very much her own. She feels very strongly about understanding the needs and structure of our own country and avoiding a superficial import of Western or other concepts. In the interview we spoke about why she chose Physics for her studies, how she coordinated between career and family consisting of a girl and a boy aged 22 and 17 respectively; how she perceived Beirut University College as a co-educational institution which, was a women's college; and various women's issues.

Al-Raida: Why Physics and Math?

Dr. Layla Nimah: Physics came by accident when I went with my husband to the United States. We attended the same university and Physics was the most appropriate field for me given my background in math. Why Math? I was good at it and was encouraged to pursue it. Have I had a better background I would have liked to go into medicine.



Speaking of liberation, I do not think men are more liberated or are free to be so

If you can go as far as a Ph.D. in Physics then why didn't you apply for medical school?

The University we attended did not have a medical school.

How do you view the difference between administrative work and teaching?

I was an administrator before, the Principal of St. Mary Orthodox College. But I can say that I enjoy teaching and working with students a lot.

Physics is not a common field for women any more than men, whereas teaching falls more within the accepted professions for women. How do you feel about that?

With physics you can become a professor or a researcher or a combination of both. When I returned to Lebanon there were no research projects in process so I had

to travel often, usually in the summer to attend conferences and conduct research. Being a mother it was not always easy.

What did you do with the children when you traveled?

I took them abroad with me. It is not possible to be a full time researcher in my field here and avoid traveling.

How did you manage to keep up with all of the roles involved in being a married woman and mother and a career woman?

It takes a lot, but you have to learn not to lose the order of your priorities. It is sometimes frustrating but if you WANT to do it, you have to find a balance between the family life and the career. A person can choose not to marry and be only a career woman. Marriage is a choice. If you choose both then you have no right to sacrifice your family for your career, because they also have their rights and needs.

When your children were young, did you have enough time for them?

I never stopped working, but I always made it a point to be there when they came back from school, even if I had to leave for a meeting later. I would explain to them that I had to leave and come back. I was there, at least the first hour, in case they had problems or special needs.

How did you manage when they were babies?

My daughter was born in the United States and I had to leave her with a baby-sitter when she was only 18 days old. I was working on my dissertation and had to go or else it would have delayed my graduation for another two years. It was very hard for me emotionally, but we both survived.

Did it get in the way of your work or performance?

No, because I kept thinking that I did not want to blame her for not getting my degree. I felt that feeling this way one day would put a strain on our relationship and because I love her so much, I do not want any guilt associated with her. With my son it was different because he was born in Lebanon during the war and my parents were around to help me out.

BUC was a woman's college and now it is mixed. How do you evaluate that in terms of performance and morale? At one point, the women could say this is our college, they cannot say that anymore. That's true, but you have to look at the needs of the country. In our part of the world there is a need for mixed colleges and universities. A women's college has its advantages but women must also learn to be in a mixed society, which starts from being in a mixed institution. On the other hand, being in a women's institution they may have more activities of their own. Nowadays most of the proposals for

activities in BUC, up to 90%, are presented by men. Men in our region are more aggressive and girls seem to shy away.

Do you notice that in your classes?

I do not have any female students in my classes. Yet I do not believe that females cannot achieve as much and I do not differentiate between the sexes in any field of study. It is simply the way they (women) are brought up and the setup that society reserves for them.

As a Dean how would you react to a

Women's Studies

proposal for a Women's Studies Degree keeping in mind cultural as well as academic considerations for establishing such a major?

It is something worth considering. I would consider it very seriously.

How do you think it would benefit the region, keeping in mind the controversies surrounding women's issues?

I think we are confusing the condition of women in our region, the cultural background with feminist theories of the West. Our theories and our needs must be relevant to a realistic understanding of our culture and its customs. A lot of the opposition to the women's movement here is a result of this confusion.

Furthermore, when speaking about liberation, I do not think that men are more liberated or free to be so. They do not have more freedom of thought just because they are more outspoken. They too are bound by so many rituals and expectations.

In many ways society follows a certain path which is essentially

patriarchal regardless of whether you are liberated as an individual or not. How has that been reflected in your work as an administrator?

I deal with all administrative matters and situations from a professional point of view and as a human being. Fortunately, I am not discriminated against as a woman and I do not invite it.

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World recently held a Conference on Women and the Environment. What is your opinion and evaluation of the Conference?

It was a very important issue. However, I noticed that a large majority of the participants were women and only a few men. Issues like the environment crisis, AIDS, smoking and others are HUMAN issues and should not be segregated by sex. One can highlight the role of women in the environment, but since decision-makers in Lebanon are all men, action is really in their hands. We still need male support and cooperation to get anywhere. (When I say support I am not implying protection or that women are weak creatures.) In many ways it is a universal condition. Just imagine how much more we can achieve if we had a dozen of liberated men who would work sincerely with women. How we deal with our problems should be consistent and tailored to our own needs, culture and background and realities. This is what I mean when I say we have to be careful about importing foreign ideas.

Are you saying we should not emphasize gender differences and inequalities?

I am saying that issues involving men and women and the well-being of the entire society must be dealt with as human issues. This does not mean that women's rights and liberation are not important. We have to be very clear on issues related to women and fight for them, as a struggle in itself •

Women Must Participate in Political Decisions

Beirut, November 11-12, 1992

Lebanese feminists came together with leading officials, ministers and deputies to reiterate the age old demands of Lebanese women's rights. Cheerfully, they all seemed to agree that women have been excluded from politics, knowing that any real possibility of implementation lies in the hands of the men monopolizing the legislative and political scene. These same men earnestly acclaimed Lebanese women's potentials and admitted that their participation in political decision-making is basic and must be achieved in this post-war new Republic. Thus, to emphasize Lebanese women's political rights, the Lebanese Council of Women in collaboration with the Friederich-Ebert-Stiftung held a conference, under the patronage of the First Lady, Mrs. Mona Hrawi, entitled *The Activation of the Role of Women in Political Decision-Making in Lebanon*.

"The problem is not with the men, but, the solution is in the hands of the women" emphasized Mrs. Hrawi, who then urged the Council to act and to be effective in mobilizing women for development. She noted that since Lebanon is in a developing phase, three observations come to mind: 1) We do not need anybody to assist us in restructuring our country: Lebanese women must form an integral part of reconstruction at this critical stage. 2) The rebuilding of a country begins with the rehabilitation of its people, and Lebanese women have proven to be the backbone of the family and therefore can be the backbone of the country. 3) Political decision-making requires wisdom, knowledge and experience which are evident among Lebanese women who have pioneered and excelled in

various walks of life throughout history.

The keynote address of Dr. Aman Shaarani, the President of The Council and a Professor of Education at the Lebanese University, concentrated on men's monopoly of the political machine in Lebanon and society's persistence in seeing politics as a masculine profession. She noted that even political parties who advocate change and consider themselves progressive, neither support women nor involve them in the decision-making processes and positions. Also the government, the institution which holds the key to women's participation in politics, is run by men who hinder women's empowerment. Consequently, Shaarani observed that Lebanese women are still on the defensive demanding their rights instead of exercising them. She reminded the conferees that Lebanese women have proven their historical, nationalistic, and responsible potentials, if only by surviving of the war. Hence, she explained that the purpose of the conference is to emphasize trust in women's abilities to participate in development and reconstruction. This reality, she noted, can only be achieved through equality, democracy, liberation and participation.

The agenda included three major topics of discussion: 1) The Required Status of Women, notably in the economy, society, the law and politics 2) The Role of the Public Sectors in



Left to right: Dr. Aman Shaarani, President of the Lebanese Council of Women; Ms. Linda Matar, President of the Lebanese Association of Women's Rights

Increasing Women's Participation in Political Decision-Making, with emphasis on the educational sector, syndicates and political parties. 3) The Role of the Government Increasing Women's Participation in Political Decision-Making, notably, the understanding of democracy, planning and implementation.

The highlight of the Conference was in bringing together government officials, deputies and women in the same room to discuss and debate pertinent issues. The officials jokingly admitted that their views on women's issues and their plans for women in the second Lebanese Republic were under scrutiny. The advantage of such a conference may have been this confrontation between politicians and women-activists, but the danger lies in its ending here, with the smiles and small talk in front of cameras and reporters. Will any development occur? Will there be any follow-up by the Women's Council and by the officials who were enthusiastically supporting women? •

For A More Productive Role Of Lebanese Women in Society

Lebanon, December 4-5, 1992

The purpose of the lectures of this conference was to examine women's needs and problems that must be addressed for development. The Lebanese Family Planning Association, organizers of the event, intends to develop workshops, action programs and bring forth women's needs to government officials based on these revised studies incorporating suggestions and corrections brought forth.

Hence, the 11th Congress, to evaluate the condition of Women in Lebanon, by The Lebanese Family Planning Association covered three basic issues: 1) The Role of Women in Political Leadership; 2) The Pressures of Familial Responsibilities on Working Women; and 3) The Role of Women as Educators in Assimilating the Effects of the War on Children.

Dr. Fahmieh Sharafeddine⁽¹⁾ on The Role of Women in Political Leadership insisted that the problems lie, essentially, in the patriarchal division of labor in society, not in men themselves. She proposed shifting the prevailing feminist approach from

protest (against discrimination) to emphasis of women's potentials. Sharafeddine suggested focusing on women in three sectors: a) the family, b) social work associations, and 3) the productive sector. They were selected because of women's abundant participation and involvement in them, and would consequently, serve as initial areas in which women may advance into political leadership. The specific action and measures to be taken by these women, she explained, would be based on extensive research and analysis of women's status, extent of participation, quality of participation, positions, decision making power and authority.

Dr. Bushra Qubaisi⁽²⁾, on *The Pressures of Familial Responsibilities on Working Women*, explained that women did not join the labor force by choice but out of financial need. All other social roles and duties remaining more or less the same, work becomes an additional load and puts more pressure on women. According to Qubaisi, research has identified three pressure areas in domestic life for working wives and mothers: 1) domestic duties; 2) time spent with children, needing care and attention; 3) possible strain on the marital relation. Qubaisi suggested that a census be conducted to measure the number of working women and closely examine their problems. Only then can policies and reliable strategies be devised to relieve some of the

tension.

Dr. Fadia Kiwan⁽³⁾, on *The Role of Women as Educators in Assimilating the Effects of War on Children*, identified three sectors where women can effectively reverse the destructive effects of the war on children: 1) the family; 2) social work institutions; 3) social and educational posts. Women are the ones most qualified in reversing war traumas on children where society's other institutions seem to fail, she noted. Dr. Kiwan based her observation on women's basic maternal instincts combined with the fact that they form the majority of school teachers and educators in the country. Thus, women have an advantage in this perspective and they have earned credibility for sustaining the family during the war. Whereas, violence in the media in general and television programs in particular not only tend to reinforce violence, latent aggression caused by the war, they also offer poor quality educational programs. Furthermore, Dr. Kiwan called upon the government to mobilize its various departments to take the necessary steps to create healthy social conditions

R.A.H

(1) Dr. Fahmieh Sharafeddine is President of the The Arab Institute for development in Lebanon.

(2) Dr. Bushra Qubaisi is Professor of Sociology at the Lebanese University

(3) Dr. Fadia Kiwan is Professor of Politics at St. Joseph University, Beirut.

The Lebanese Family Planning Association, Corniche Al-Mazraa, Al-Maskan Bldg. P.O.Box 118240, Beirut, Lebanon.



Scholars attending the Congress

Early Detection and Assessment of Disability

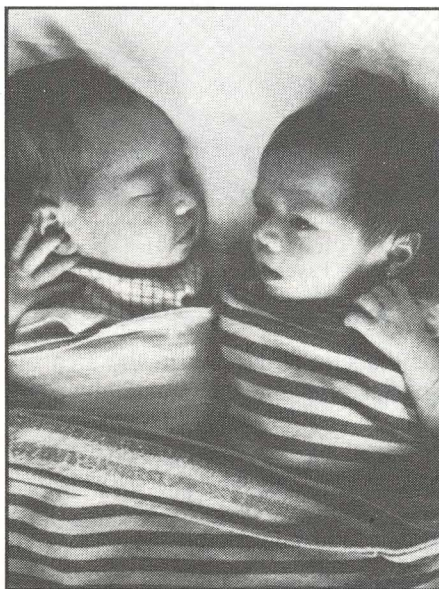
IWSAW Series of Lectures on Special Education

Beirut University College

For a long time, disabled people with special needs have been neglected. Little governmental and educational attention has been given to people with special needs and most of the existing institutions seem to be operated and funded by individuals, private enterprises as well as philanthropic and funding agencies.

Most disabled in Lebanon live with their families and only about 3000 are reported to live in institutions. The trend of disability is characterized by an increase in the incidence of physical insults due to war injuries, adding to this the psychological disturbances caused by fear and anxiety as well as neurological problems especially in infants and children. Some informal studies estimate the number of disabled to reach 5% of the total population and other studies raise this estimate to 10% covering all age groups, and regions, including handicaps due to chronic illness. A survey conducted in 1981 concluded that there are an estimated 43,896 disabled persons in Lebanon, keeping in mind that the whole population is little over 2 million.⁽¹⁾

The issue of disability is receiving more attention today than it has ever before. Many efforts have been directed during the last few years towards improving the status of the disabled in Lebanon. The physically disabled (especially the war injured) are receiving the greatest help followed by the sensory and finally mentally disabled population. The



attention, however, is only a fraction of what is really needed especially for children in their early years.⁽²⁾

In light of this situation, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW), Beirut University College in collaboration with World Rehabilitation Fund (WRF) organized a series of lectures on Special Education in 1992 which continue into 1993. The purpose of these lectures is to create public awareness and offer sound guidelines and information for detection, assessment, rehabilitation and

intervention.

Early Detection and Assessment of Disability was the topic of the panel discussion of November 25, 1992. The speakers were Dr. Imad Melki, a Pediatrician and Associate Professor in the School of Medicine at St. Joseph University, and Dr. Omeyma Yakteen a Psychologist and Professor at the American University of Beirut. The Dean of Beirut University College, Dr. Raja Hajjar, welcomed the audience and panelists and asserted the University's plan to establish a curriculum for Special Education. Both speakers stressed awareness as the first step towards detection and prevention.

Early Intervention and Psycho-Social Counselling for Parents and Care Givers of the Handicapped was the topic of the panel discussion of January 27, 1993. Two speakers who work in leading institutions for disabled people: 1) Ms. Hana Nassif a certified nurse and specialized social worker; and 2) Ms. Rita Merhej, a psychologist and specialized social

The schedule and topics of the coming lectures are:

February 17, 1993:
Language Disorders and
Speech Therapy

March 31, 1993: Physio-
therapy

April 28, 1993:
Occupational Therapy.

worker as well; spoke of the importance of early intervention and coordination between the parents, the psychologist, the social worker and the speech, occupational and physio-therapists.

It is worth noting, that as a result of the awareness created by such activities and other mobilizing events, issues of Special Education and attention to people with special needs are gaining ground in Lebanon. Specialized organizations and institutions are more visible than in the past probably due to a growing population of people with special needs or maybe even due to greater awareness among parents and schools for these services. Furthermore, the new Lebanese Cabinet created a portfolio for Disabled People. Thus far, the Minister has reviewed existing facilities, is surveying the situation and preparing for concrete action. The First Lady and the wife of the Speaker of Parliament are in the process of building a medical center



left to right: Ms. Hana Nasif, Ms. Hana Salem on Early Intervention and Psycho-Social Counselling for Parents and Care givers of the Handicapped

for diabetic children. In the area of Special Education, Beirut University College and the American University of Beirut are introducing a curriculum for special educators. Hopefully, people themselves will make an effort to care and understand the problems

of people with special needs

R.A.H

(1) Mufarij, Rita: Special Report, Beirut 1988.

(2) Special Report and Proposal for action by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World.



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Emily Fares Ibrahim Receives The National Cedar Award

Ms. Emily Fares Ibrahim outstanding writer, poet, feminist and a pillar in Arabic literature was awarded The National Cedar Award by the President of the Lebanese Republic on November 19, 1992. Who is Emily Fares Ibrahim?

She was born in 1914. Her father was an officer in the Lebanese Police force during the administration of the first President of Lebanon (1926-1934), Charles Debbas. Her grandfather, Habib Fares, was a leading lawyer and Doctor of Law and her uncle, Felix Fares, was a prominent scholar and writer. Consequently, Ibrahim's background was rich with substance and she was exposed to leading literary circles. Her first experiences in literature were in French having attended school in Beirut at a time when influence from France was at its peak. She was heavily exposed to symbolic romanticism and to the works of classical writers like La Fontaine, Moliere, Racine and Corneille, and novelists like Henry Bordeaux and Paul Bourge.

Her uncle, Felix Fares was responsible for Ibrahim's background in Arabic literature. Her expansion into Arabic literature came from the literary salons he held in her home, for he lived with them, and her accompanying him to lectures and other prominent literary events. She says that the literary uprising and awakening of the thirties were the days of Felix Fares, her uncle. Gibran Khalil Gibran's writings had

*Author of Adibat Libnaniyat -
Literary Lebanese Women*

*President of the Lebanese Council
for Women*

the first major influence on Ibrahim's ideas.. It was the era (1930's) when Gibran inspired the masses and the young with his revolutionary moral philosophy and poetry. Other giants in Lebanese literature who were to influence Ibrahim's awakening to Arabic literature were Elias Abu Shabakeh, Yousef Ibrahim Yezbeck, Amin Rihani, Amin Nakhleh, Michael Naimy, and the leading female writer of the thirties, May Ziadeh.

Ibrahim strongly identified with Ziadeh and her literature. She vividly remembers attending a historical lecture by Ziadeh that deeply moved her, at the American University of Beirut. She also attended the literary lectures organized by "Al-Nadwa Al-Lubnaniyah - The Lebanese (Literary) Club", which hosted leading literary figures, writers, poets and scholars from Lebanon, the Arab countries and the world. She gave lectures and speeches at the "Dar Al-Kitab Al-Lubnaniyah - The House of the Lebanese Book". She also

remembers, with nostalgia, the "Literary Salon of Charles Corm" that hosted the giants of Arab literature. She was the only female writer in the Salon of Charles Corm in the forties.

Of the leading publications of Emily Fares Ibrahim that we will highlight in this article are Adibat Lubnaniyat - Literary Lebanese Women (1961) and Al-Harakah al-Nisa'iyah al-Lubnaniyah - The Lebanese Women's Movement (1966).

Adibat Lubnaniyat - Literary Lebanese Women (Dar Al-Huriyah li-al-Tibaa' wa al-Nashr, 1961) is the first in-depth bibliography and analysis of the works of leading Lebanese women in the world of literature. This historical bibliography reviews women and their work as early as the second half of the nineteenth century. Warda Yazigi, Zeinab Fawwaz, Hana Kasbani Kourani, Princess Alexandra de Frino Fizifoka, Labibah Sawaya, Labibah

Hashem, Julia Tohmeh Dimashkiyeh, Afifeh Karam, Aniseh and Afifeh al-Shartouni, May Ziadeh, Salma Sayegh, and others are only a few of the women in the book. Adibat Lubnaniyat has become a major reference for women in literature and for historical analysis of the respective epoch.

Al-Harakah al-Nisa'iyah al-Lubnaniyah - The Lebanese Women's Movement (Beirut: Dar el-Thaqafah. 1966) is a historical narrative of the women's movement in Lebanon. It begins in the 18th century with the work of Sit Nasab, the mother of Prince Fakhreddine II and includes the famous Hindu nun

who almost divided the Maronite community. Ibrahim examines the status of women during the Ottoman Empire where they strictly adhered to the customs of the day all the way up to the reforms of Ataturk. She also reviews the emergence of women's groups in the nineteenth century, as well as the first Conference to discuss women's issues in 1922 in Beirut organized by Princess Najla Abi Lamaa', who was the owner of a local magazine Al-Fajr - the Dawn. She also reviews prominent Lebanese supporters of Women's liberation like Amin Rihani, Gibran Khalil Gibran and others.

Ibrahim's contributions to women's

plight and movement were not restricted to literature. She was President of the Lebanese Women's Council for twenty two years. Unfortunately, her work was obstructed by the seventeen years of civil war leaving the Council with little influence and status in the country. At the age of seventy eight she was finally able to retire and was thus awarded the High National Cedar Award for High Achievements •

R.A.H

Reference: Dr. George Haroun, Profile of Emily Fares Ibrahim, Al-Nahar daily newspaper. Beirut: November 19-20, 1992.

LIBRAIRIE DU LIBAN

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Arab Woman President of The International Women's Democratic League

Dr. Fatimah Ahmad Ibrahim was elected in the Spring of 1992, as the first Arab woman President of the International Women's Democratic Union since its establishment in 1945. The Union includes 147 women's associations worldwide and has an advisory status with the United Nations Council as well as eleven representatives in various UN commissions. The goals of the Union include improving the status of women and achieving equality. The Union also supports women's liberation in politics and economics in addition to defending justice, democracy and human rights.

Fatimah Ibrahim is a prominent feminist and leader in Sudan. She is the first woman deputy in the Sudanese Parliament, previously the President of the Sudanese Women's Union and the Editor-in-chief of a Sudanese women's magazine "Saout Al-Mara' - The Voice of Women".

Source: "The Arab Woman" newsletter of the Arab Association For Women and Development, Vol. 1, No.2, July 1992. P.O.Box 5118, Amman Jordan.

Special Committee for Women and Development in The Tunisian Parliament

The Tunisian Parliament formed a special committee specializing in "Women and Development" for the purpose of strengthening the role of Tunisian women in national development. The committee will be responsible for reviewing proposals for women in development and participation in economic, social and political sectors.

The committee is presided by Dr. Naziha

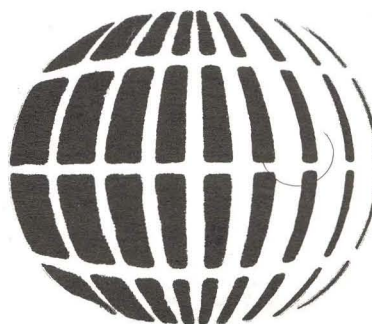
Mazhoud, who is also the second deputy of the Speaker of Parliament and the President of the National Association of Tunisian Women.

Source: "Majalat Al-Mara'-The Woman Magazine" No. 78, July 1992, newsletter of the The National Association of Tunisian Women. 56 Bab Banat St., 1008-Tunis, Tunisia.

International Planned Parenthood Federation Training Workshops

"Women and Leadership" in Jordan and Morocco

INTERNATIONAL
**Planned
Parenthood**
FEDERATION



The International Planned Parenthood Federation - Arab World Section organized two workshops on "Women and Leadership" in Jordan (September 2-5, 1992) and in Morocco (September 28-31, 1992). The women who participated in both workshops came from various Arab countries such as Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Palestine, Syria, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen.

The general objective was to provide women with data and psychological feedback

for developing decision-making skills and leadership attitudes. Concentration was on creating awareness about women's potentials and increasing self-confidence and self-esteem. Participants had the opportunity to define the importance of freedom, independence and equality in women's lives. They were eager to create networks among themselves and with the International Family Planning Association and its chapters for effective follow-up and development.

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

Unheard Voices

Iraqi Women on War and Sanctions

by Bela Bhatia, Mary Kawar, Mariam Shahin
of the International Study Team on The Gulf Crisis

Wars were made in the minds of men - but their impact was on women who have had no say in their making. They have neither been asked, nor given their consent to the war, or to the militarization of their country, which diverts resources. Then women bear the brunt of keeping society - not just families - going. For the effects of sanctions, of economic deprivation, of war damage, are never neutral; nor is grief, or seeking refuge, or the rebuilding of lives and community.

This contains both moving and personal testimonies from the unseen, unheard victims of war, but also the scientific evidence of the International Team. Available in March. Thinkbook VII £3.90.

Source: News from Change in 1992.
Change. P.O.Box 824, London SE 24 9JS, UK.

Both Right and Left Handed

Arab Women Talk about Their Lives

By Bouthaina Shaaban

Both Right and Left Handed consists of a set of interviews with Arab women of different classes from Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Algeria. The idea for the interviews came to the author, Bouthaina Shaaban in 1982, a period characterized by intense military activities in the region. Hence, she soon noticed that these women defied every stereotype of the passive, compliant Arab woman. My purpose was to let all these women speak for themselves, and to reveal, if they would, their truest innermost feelings. I hoped by this means to enable other Arab women and Western women to hear for themselves the voices of these women - fighters

and professionals, politicians and peasants, devoted wives and faithful mothers of martyrs. (p.2). Shaaban also indicates that her book is not a sociological study and does not analyze the political, social or historical place of women in the Arab world. It is a personal book, an attempt to enable a number of women caught up in a burning moment of history to share their experiences with others.

Bouthaina Shaaban, **Both Right and Left Handed: Arab Women Talk About their lives.** London. Midland Books Edition. 1991. ISBN 0-253-35189-8

Women in Saudi Arabia

Ideology and Behavior Among the Elite

By Soraya Altrorki

In a study of continuity and change among elite domestic groups in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, the behavior and ideology of three generations involving thirteen families are studied and compared. The dimensions of the elite status weighted by generations are: reputation, descent, piety, wealth and individual achievement. The book includes a brief history of the city, Jiddah, a description of the people living there, the roles of women. Aspects of household life are discussed as they reflect the segregation of women from men in these families. Moreover, the institution of wafa (i.e. pattern of social visits between women, mutual

support and assistance, exchange of gifts and favors between friends) is examined as a mechanism for reducing isolation and insecurity of elite women. Marriage strategies are discussed from a cultural, social and economic point of view. Finally, the articulation of social changes with ideological changes constitutes a major underlying point in this study. A major contention of this book is that ambiguities and contradictions within sets of concepts (anger/contentment) have permitted women to make the changes they have initiated.

The basic aim of this book was to study continuity and change of

domestic groups in an urban Saudi society. We cannot know what the patterns of relationships will be in the future, but the changes that have already occurred will not be easily reversed. Thus, the fourth generation of women will be the inheritors of the reinterpretations of ideology and modifications of social relations that have been examined in this study. (pg. 164).

Soraya Altrorki, *Women in Saudi Arabia, Ideology & Behavior Among the Elite.* New York: Columbia University Press. 1986. ISBN 0-231-06182-X.

The Veil and the Male Elite

A Feminine Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam

By Fatima Mernissi

" " Can a woman be a leader of Muslims ? " I asked my grocer. " I take refuge in Allah ! " he exclaimed, shocked, despite the friendly relations between us."

All the monotheistic religions are shot through by the conflict between the divine and the feminine, but none more so than Islam, which has opted for the occultation of the feminine, at least symbolically, by trying to veil it, to hide it, to mask it.

It is not a work of history but it is intended to be a narrative of recollections, a vessel journeying back in time when women had their place as " unquestioned partners " in a revolution that made the mosque an open place and the household a temple of debate. This attitude is surprising since the Prophet encouraged his adherents to renounce the veil as representatives of the *Jahiliyya* and its superstitions. This contradiction led the author to question whether or not Islam's message had a limited and

superficial effect on deeply superstitious seventh-century Arabs who failed to integrate its novel approaches to the world and to woman. Mernissi raises many questions and analyzes various issues in a very interesting and descriptive manner.

Fatima Mernissi. *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam.* New York. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc.

Tunisiennes En Devenir

The Becoming of Tunisian Women

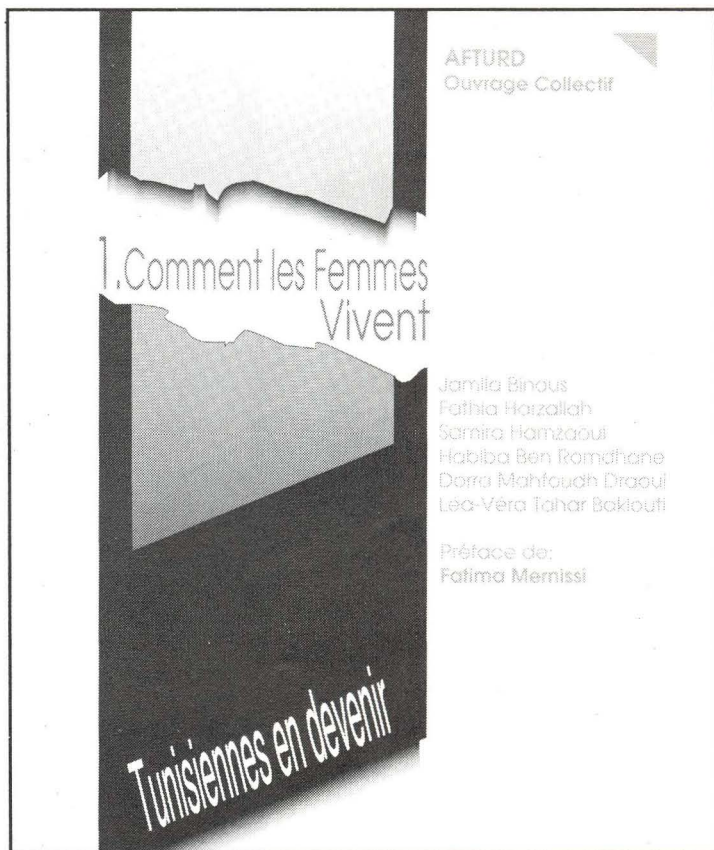
Collective Writing

Fatima Mernissi, the famous Moroccan feminist instigated a dozen of Tunisian feminists to express themselves in writing. United under the auspices of L'Association des Femmes Tunisienne pour la Recherche et le Development (AFTURD) - The Association of Tunisian Women for Research and Development - they gathered in a writing workshop. Hence, they produced two volumes (in French) of a series they called *Tunisiennes en Devenir* - *The Becoming of Tunisian Women*.

The first volume entitled *Comment Vivent les Femmes - How Women Live*,⁽¹⁾ concentrates on patriarchy in general, illustrating traditional status and oppression. It includes the story of a midwife who also witnesses female circumcision. Another chapter portrays the male/female dichotomy by describing love in the (traditional) feminine context i.e. submissive and responsible for cultural preservation of men's honour. In another chapter, yet, we are called on to discover the link between the richness of the kitchen and erotic joy, thus implying that the kitchen and the table are women's domain to power. The last chapter tells of the life of a wife-mother whose conflicts soon explode in writing.

The second volume entitled *La Moitie Entiere - The Entire Half* is an invitation to a journey through individual thoughts and paths. It enlightens Maghreb's destiny and

describes the bonds between women, ideologies, and society in Tunisia. Perception of "feminism" by men has resulted in a dynamic ideology of national revival. Furthermore, women today have decided to take charge over their own destinies. The first part of this book describes the feminine model as stated in the dominant ideology present since the independence of Tunisia. The second part shows that the woman who we think is spared from crises and enshrined in an unaltered spatiality and is almost sacred is in motion and under the risks of material and social conditions which do not tread her paths. A series of texts on feminism show that the Tunisian woman has emerged from a real and symbolic seclusion to reexamine her singularity and to trace a path for a new feminine model at the height of her aspirations.



(1) Jamila Binous, Fathia Harzallah, Samira Hamzaoui, Habiba Ben Romdhane, Dorra Mahfoudh Draoui, Lea-Vera Tahar Baklouti and Preface by Fatima Mernissi. **Comment Vivent Les Femmes. Tunisiennes En Devenir** - AFTURD, Ouvrage Collectif. Tunis Ceres Productions. 1992. ISBN 9973-700-77-5 or 9973-700-74-0(1).

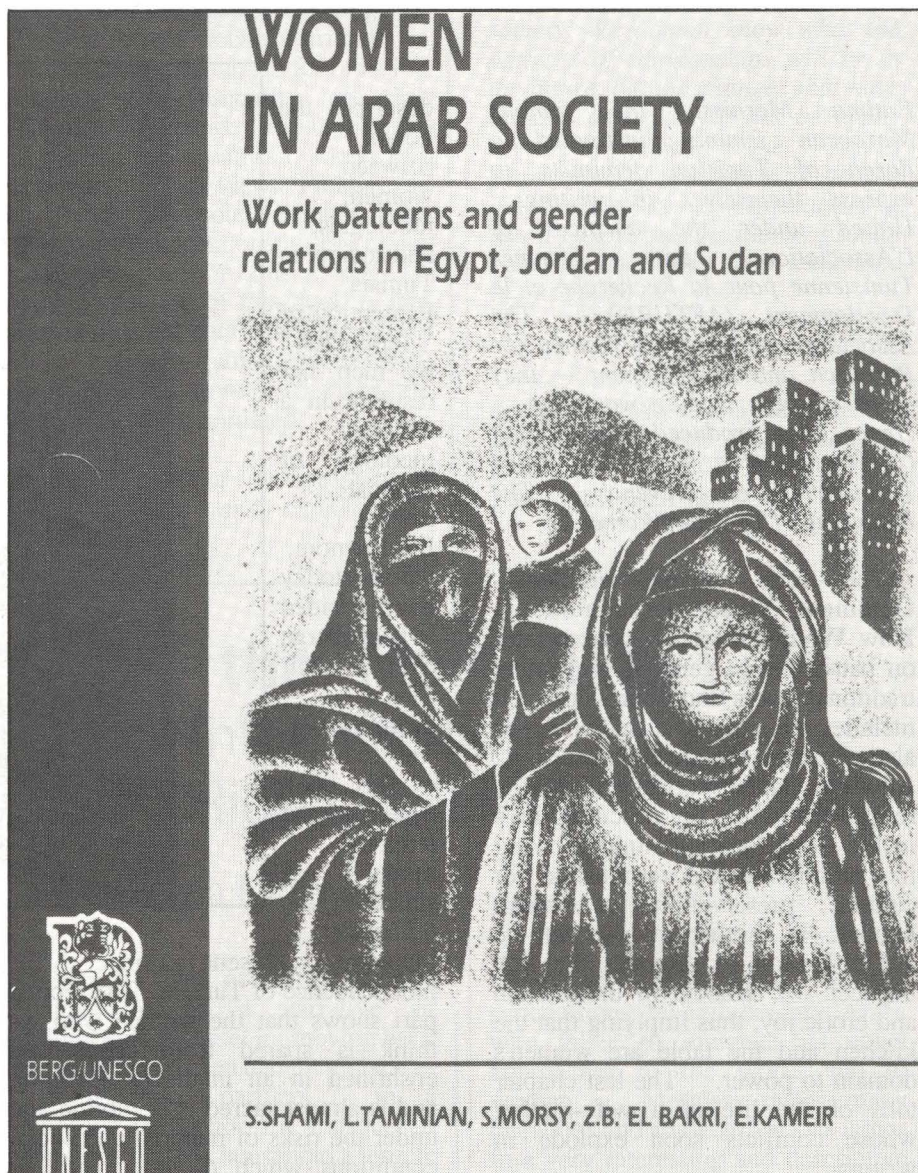
(2) Zeina Ben Said Chemi, Amel Ben Aba, Souad Triki, Hayet Gribaa, Rachida Ennaifer, and preface by Fatima Mernissi. **La Moitie Entiere. Tunisiennes En Devenir.** - ISBN 9973-700-75-9 (2)

Women in Arab Society

Work Patterns and Gender Relations in Egypt, Jordan and Sudan

By S. Shami, L. Taminian, S. Morsy, Z.B. El Bakri, E. Kameir

The studies in this book are the result of a cross-cultural research project based on the recommendations of the Unesco Regional Working Group on Women's Participation in Public Life in the Arab States Region organized in co-operation with the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, Yarmouk University, Jordan. It examines the impact of the oil economy and the effect which racial, social and economic changes have had on patterns of women's work and on value systems concerning their position in society. The women's situation is studied in rural and urban settings. Empirical analysis is combined with life histories to demonstrate the complex dynamics of gender relation in the Arab states. The results reveal that 'traditional' patterns of relationships have in fact been reinforced by 'modern' forces of labour migration and market-oriented production, while women's entry into the labour market has not automatically led to empowerment and emancipation. The picture, however, is not one of powerless beings. It reflects an image of resourceful women engaged in daily and longer-term survival strategies for their family, kin and community, thus rejecting rigidly quantitative approaches which view the importance of women's work simply in terms of economic contribution. This book will be of interest to policy-makers, the scientific community, universities, women's associations, and non-governmental organizations at the regional and national level.

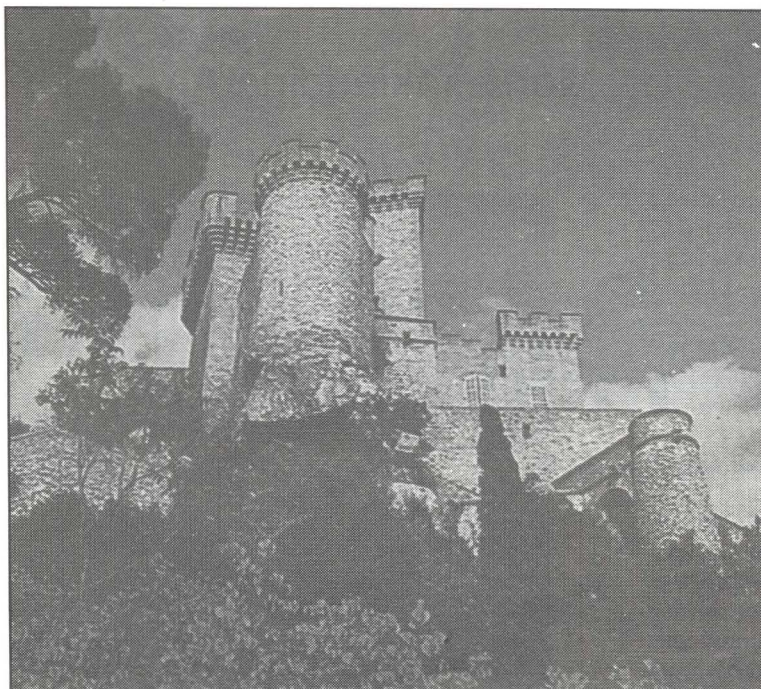


Setaney Shami, Lucine Taminian, Soheir A. Morsy, Zeinab Bashir El Bakri, El-Wathig Kameir. **Women in Arab Society: Work Patterns and Gender Relations in Egypt, Jordan**

and Sudan. New York: Burg Publishers/Unesco. 1990. ISBN:0-85496-724-9 or 92-3-102655-0 Unesco
Review taken from Inside Jacket.

The Castle

Aida Farrag Graff



A year later, they brought his body home
Battered and beaten, bloated and black.
Through this crumpled, mangled mass,
The mother recognized his pyjamas,
And what remained of her careful darning,
A token of times past when he teased her
Amid her pots and pans.

They murdered you, hope of my heart, hope of my
hopes.
They turned your sweet breath into putrefaction.
Your laughter gone, the gleam of your eyes glazed
over,
By God only knows
What wrenching of nails,
Burning of parts,
Stretching of arms,
Blowing of bellies.
For we have heard, your father and I,

The screams from the castle,
Fearing every night they might be yours.

They were yours and others',
The screams of all our sons,
Battered and beaten, bloated and black.
And here you lie crumpled, death of my heart,
While your father pays army men
Their bill of lading, your cost of residence.
For the castle, they say, takes good care of sons,
And it was all an unfortunate accident.

Aida Farrag Graff
Toronto, 1992

* Dr. Aida Farrag Graff is an Egyptian Canadian born in Japan now living in Toronto. She is quite involved in women's issues and has lectured in Canada and the U.S.A. on Women in the Middle East.

Re-Opening of The Beirut Theater in Ain-el-Mreysseh

Dr. Mona Takieddine Amyuni

For the support of creativity and culture; for giving back to Beirut her role as a Lebanese and Arab cultural center; for the creation of a polyvalent scene in which plays, films, children's programs, musical concerts, poetic recitals, art exhibitions and conferences, will be offered.

This is what the first brochure of The Beirut Theater encapsulated when it was distributed to fans last October 1992. We felt, indeed, that we and our city were coming back to life, the kind of cultural life we knew in the key-days of pre-war Beirut and the Beirut of the sixties. Owned by Said Sinno, Cinema Hilton was then converted into a theater in 1965 and was animated by our best playwrights and producers. It created a dramatic tradition which added a special dimension to the rich Ain-el-Mreysseh area, rich in its beautiful mixture of a mosque, old Lebanese houses with brick roofs, plush restaurants, modern buildings, a fishery and small shops along the beautiful seafront. The pillars of theater life in Lebanon wrote plays and performed in The Beirut Theater in that epoch. The names of Roger Assaf, Jalal Khoury, Shakib Khoury, Raymond Gebara, Nidal al-Ashkar and many others come to mind.

The Theater closed its doors when war tore our country apart and it remained closed until the Summer of 1992, when six people put their efforts together, moved by deep love for Beirut and for culture. They rented the theater for three years and



Scene from Siham Nassir's play *Al Jayb al-Sirri - The Secret Pocket*



Man Qatafa Zahrat al-Karif - Who Cut the Autumn Flower by Raymond Jebara

renovated it. Thus, Ghassan Tueni, Vasso Salam, Hoda Sinno, Ilyas Khoury, Marie-Claude Akl, and Nawaf Salam started on an exhilarating adventure, and were clever enough to quickly involve the public. One hundred fifteen couples paid annual membership fees which allow them to attend all openings, and FransaBank sponsored the venture for one year.

The Theater opened its doors early in October. The first night was very special and quite surrealistic! The elegant Beirutis parked their cars on garbage heaps in the neighboring area, which was just coming out of the war, and flocked into the theater hall that had been turned into an old-fashioned type of Saloon. Champagne was generously offered, people fell into each other's arms, kissing and hugging friends they had not seen for long. A real happening before the curtain was raised! Slowly, during the first trimester of the year, the area became much cleaner and its population took part in the life of the

theater, welcoming us whenever we arrived, obviously happy and proud to own, in a way, this cultural center.

We have been offered so far, four plays; one Tunisian ballet, two painting exhibitions by Amin el-Basha and Mahmoud Zibawi, a sculpture exhibition by Nada Raad, one poetic recital of Mahmoud Darwishe's latest collection of poems and another one by Adonis. This rich variety of programs has been very well received and I shall select to discuss briefly three plays hoping to trigger the interest of the reader in The Beirut Theater.

Raymond Gebara's play *Man Qatafa Zahrat al-Kharif - Who Cut the Autumn Flower* opened the season. The play mirrored the shabbiness and despair of life for two Lebanese men stranded in Paris during the war. Laughters and tears mixed on stage and Camille Salameh's superb acting was particularly remarked.

The Algerian play *Fatmah* was very good. It was a one-woman show

brilliantly performed by the well-known actress Sonia, who used Arabic and French on alternate nights. For two hours, Sonia held our breath as she reproduced a satire of the socio-political plight of the Algerian man and woman since independence, bent down and crushed by all the isms of our epoch.

Similarly, Siham Nassir's play *Al-Jayb al-Sirri - The Secret Pocket* struck us as a very painful but very clever image of man, woman and society in times of war, a fragmented, disfigured and ugly image, indeed. Strikingly well done, in the absurdist rein, it won its author the first prize for Experimental Plays in the Cairo Festival of 1992. Siham Nassir is Professor of dramatic art at the Lebanese University and her students performed the play in excellent style proving they had a solid dramatic tradition guiding them.

Finally, I tried to get a feel of what goes on behind the stage and spoke with Hoda Sinno, the Directing



Recent Play "Shi Mithl Alaska - Something Like Alska, by Julia Kassar

Beirut Theater venture a successful one. The odds are numerous, of course. The financial aspect is the main problem for such cultural enterprises, which are normally supported by the State. Unfortunately, this is not the case for the The Beirut Theater. The public is

not large enough, and the cultural scene needs to be enriched by the commitment of a handful of people in Lebanon who genuinely love the arts.

Through such a commitment, a support group will grow and will really help in consolidating the Beirut Theater. It will then reach its aim and

become a dynamic cultural center for Lebanon and the Arab world •

Dr. Mona Takieddine Amyuni is Assistant Professor at the Civilization Sequence Program at the American University of Beirut and an alumnus of Beirut University College.

Questionnaire

Evaluation Questionnaire

With this issue Al-Raida completes its first year in the new enlarged format and its seventeenth year of publication. In order to examine your opinions, requests and comments and in order to assess to what extent Al-Raida serves its purpose as an Arab women's newsletter, we kindly ask you to answer following questionnaire. Kindly complete and return the form to the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University college, P.O.Box 13-5053, Beirut, Lebanon. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. How long have you been receiving/subscribing to Al-Raida? _____ years

2. What subjects in al-Raida interest you most? (Rate in order of preference starting with 1 for most interesting)

- _____ Conferences
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3. How is Al-Raida usefull to you and to others around you?

- _____ Keeps me informed about Arab women
- _____ Serves as a reference for data and research in women's studies
- _____ Is a good networking tool between women's groups
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- _____ Other, specify: _____

4. What subjects do you think Al-Raida should cover more?

5. Comments on topic and subjects covered in Al-Raida

Positive: _____

Negative: _____

6. This is the 4th issue celebrating the end of the first year of the new enlarged Al-Raida? To those who received Al-Raida before 1992 how do you evaluate the change?

- a. Is the new layout more attractive? ___yes ___ No
- b. Are the pages crowded with text? ___yes ___ No
- b. Do the additional pages cover additional topics? ___yes ___ No
- c. Is coverage more comprehensive? ___yes ___ No

7. Do you have any problems with subscription fees and payments? If yes, explain.

8. Do you have any problems with mailing services? if yes, explain.

9. Please state any additional remarks and comments in the space below.

Al-Raida
**Your contact with women
in the Middle East and the Arab World**

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1993, Subscription fees (outside Lebanon) : \$25 including postage

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Special fee for students: \$15

Payment must be made to the order of the Institute For
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at the following addresses:

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Enclosed is a check in the amount of _____ as subscription to ***Al-Raida*** for the year 1993. Please add my address to your mailing list.

Address:

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW)

was established in 1973 at the Beirut University college. The Institute started modestly with a grant from Ford Foundation with Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr as its Director. An Advisory Committee of seven social scientists assisted the Director. In 1977, the Institute began publishing its newsletter, Al-Raida.

Objectives of IWSAW

- To serve as a data bank and resource center to provide knowledge on subjects pertaining to Arab women and children.
- To assess the impact of change on the role of women.
- To develop awareness among women as to their potential and help them develop it.
- To improve the quality of life for women and children in Arab countries.
- To serve as a catalyst for policy makers.
- To promote better understanding of Arab women and children.
- To promote and facilitate communications among individuals, groups and institutions concerned with women and children in the Arab world.
- To enhance Beirut University College curriculum.

IWSAW Projects

Documentation: IWSAW's Documentation Center houses a unique collection of over 5000 books and 2000 periodicals, individual articles, bibliographies and unpublished papers in Arabic, French and English. The material relates to the various aspects of women in the Arab countries and in other parts of the world. The Documentation Center, located and incorporated with Stoltzfus Library of Beirut University College, is a pioneer in this respect.

Publications

On Women Several books about women in the Arab world have been published in English and Arabic. A series of Monographs discuss Arab women and education, work, industry, economic development, literature, art, image of women in textbooks, contemporary women's movement in the Arab world, women in religion, legal rights and others. Please note that these publications may be ordered from IWSAW.

On Children Seven children's books with illustrations and a guide for setting up children's libraries and writing and illustrating children's books have also been researched and published.

Teaching and Action Programs

Women's Studies In collaboration with the Humanities Division of Beirut University College a course on Arab women was instated. Presently, the Institute's proposal to offer additional courses in Women's Studies has been approved by the College.

Basic Living Skills Project (BLSP) To combat social literacy, a non-formal integrated educational program for semi-literate and illiterate women was devised. The content of the kit consists of eight units in health, environment, home management, sex education and family planning, nutrition, child care, civic education and legal rights of women. They are written in simple Arabic, accompanied by audio-visual material.

Income Generating Project In answer to the painful cry of needy and war-stricken families, a variety of Income Generating workshops are administered and implemented. The objective is to teach women a skill which would help them generate income for themselves. Training is complimented with instructions in the various issues from the BLSP. Thus far, 200 women have benefited from the project; some have become trainers and others are employed in leading establishments or are free-lancing.

Additional projects by IWSAW include a **Portable Library Project** for children's. A **Puppet Theater** travels presents puppet shows to children at local schools. **The Rehabilitation Program for Children's Mental Health** and **Teaching For Peace** are new IWSAW projects.

Conferences, Seminars and Lectures

Conferences have included a regional conference on Women and Economic Development, a national conference on Women and the Environment. Another regional conference on Arab Women and the Environment is under way. The Institute conducts an annual event on the occasion of International Women's Day. Furthermore, a number of informal lectures and seminars on women's issues are conducted in addition to Early Childhood and Special Education.