

A quarterly journal

AL-RAIDA

IWSAW

**wins the
Asahi
Reading
Promotion
Award
1994**

**Western
Stereotype
of Arab
Women**



**File:
BATTERED WOMEN IN LEBANON**

Spring/Summer 1994, Vol. XI. No. 65/66



Julinda Abu Nasr Receives the Asahi Reading Promotion Award, 1994, for the Portable Library Project

Bologna, Italy. April 8, 1994.

On behalf of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University College, Julinda Abu Nasr, Ph.D. receives the Asahi Reading Promotion Award for The Portable Library Project.

The Asahi award recognizes a group or an institution that has made a significant and lasting contribution to children's reading through a successful book promotion program. Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr received this award for devising and administering a Portable Library Project.

The Portable library carries 150 carefully selected children's books. During the war, the portable library played a major and constructive role in taking books to children. It provided library service to especially needy and disadvantaged groups in war-torn Lebanon. More than 75 portable libraries were distributed to bomb shelters, refugee camps, hospitals for terminally ill children, as well as centers for the handicapped, maimed, orphans and delinquents. Today, books are sent to remote rural areas where few reading materials are available.



Members of LEBBY



IWSAW staff, left to Right: Randa Abul-Husn, Anita Farah Nassar, Julinda Abu Nasr, Afaf Akhrass

The Institute has also trained writers, illustrators, librarians and published 8 Arabic story books, and one music book. These may be ordered from the Institute.

Members of LEBBY

Julinda Abu Nasr
Wafa Abdel Nour
Zahra Awada
Feyrouz Baalbaki
Zeinat Batrouni
Leila Beydoun
Leila Bissat
Dania Bitar
Marie-Rose Geha
Nuha Hammoud
Haifa Hijazi
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Hiba Kobeisy
Aida Naaman
Anita Farah Nassar
Yolande Nawfal
Shahina Osseiran
Huneida Saadeh
Afifé el-Sayyed
Hiba Shami
Adla Shemail
Maha Tarabay

Correction

AL-RAIDA (Winter 1994, #64) unintentionally failed to acknowledge the hard work and diligence of Ms. Siham Jbeily who was the coordinator of IWSAW's conference on Arab Women and the Environment (Nov. 25-27, 1994).

The proceedings of the conference will be available at IWSAW in the Fall.

AL-RAIDA

About Al-Raida...

The purpose of Al-Raida:

Al-Raida is published four times a year (quarterly) by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University College, P. O. Box 13-5053/59, Beirut, Lebanon Tel. (01) 867 618 ext. 288 Fax (01) 867 098; or c/o Beirut University College, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 1846, New York, NY 10115, USA. Tel. (212) 870-2592, Fax. (212) 970-2762.

Purpose and Content: To promote networking between Arab women and women all over the world; To research and examine the conditions of women in the Arab world, social change and development; To report the activities of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World and Beirut University College. Each issue includes a File discussing a particular theme, in addition to articles, studies, interviews with prominent women, book reviews, art news, bookshelf, and a news-brief page.

Reprint Rights: All unsigned articles may not be reprinted without proper reference to Al-Raida. Permission to reprint signed articles must be secured from the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University College.

Submission of Articles: We seek contributions from anyone engaged in research, analysis, and study on Arab Women. Contributions are not to exceed five double-spaced pages. Please send diskette and hard copy. We reserve the right to edit as needed, in accordance with our space limitations and guidelines. Contributions should not have been published elsewhere.

Subscription: Annual subscription fee to Al-Raida extends from January - December. Upon payment of subscription fee of \$25, subscribers will receive regular issues in the mail.

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Cover-painting: "Solicitation" 1993, by Nidal Haddad, BUC graduate

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Editorial

Always Changing

Again, there are changes! In the beginning of 1994, this combined issue of AL-RAIDA was set as the target for a series of developments which involved giving it a new look and enriching its content. The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW), producer and sponsor of AL-RAIDA, is determined to make it a quality publication. Initially, IWSAW requested additional funding from Beirut University College (BUC), to finance the costs of these basic improvements. We take this opportunity to thank the BUC administration for the support that made it possible for Al-Raida to move on. The first set of changes focused on the layout design and adding more colors and pages. Without further ado, we will let our new look speak for itself. Furthermore, realizing the need for research and statistical data, we added a new section, a special **File**, which will appear in each issue from here on. The File will have any of the following sub-headings: studies, articles, surveys and other writings on a specific theme for which AL-RAIDA will solicit articles from specialists and engage in some research itself.

The File of this issue addresses the topic of violence against women and focuses on **Battered Women in Lebanon**. It is introduced in two feature articles relaying the testimonies of battered women. One recounts real stories of Lebanese women suffering from battery and the other addresses forms of psychological violence that women endure at home. For the section on studies, IWSAW solicited research on battery in religious courts and hospitals, in order to examine the real situation and the facilities that are available to women. Hence, leading religious figures in four of Lebanon's religious courts and staff members in the emergency rooms of nine hospitals were questioned about the procedures and laws that they follow with cases of battered women. Additional research includes screening of three leading Lebanese newspapers for reported incidents of violence against women. The File also includes an interview with a highly influential Moslem Shiite learned man in Lebanon, Sayyed Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah. Following the File, which has a main focus on Lebanon, is a study on domestic violence against women in Jordan and newspaper clippings of various incidents there. Evelyne Accad shares with us an in-depth comparative analysis on gender and violence in Lebanon and Yugoslavia. Other than File-related material, AL-RAIDA offers various articles, interviews, book reviews, and a bookshelf section.

Future Files will feature studies on topics related to women and health, women and education, women and agriculture, women and the media, women and syndicate activities. We, therefore, encourage independent scholars who have conducted their own research in Lebanon or in any other country in the Arab World to contact IWSAW and AL-RAIDA for the possibility of networking.

— Randa Abul-Husn

AL-RAIDA

About (IWSAW)..

IWSAW - The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World was established in 1973 at the Beirut University College. It began with a grant from Ford Foundation with Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr as its Director.

Objectives of IWSAW: To serve as a data bank and resource and advance a better understanding of Arab women and children. To promote communication among individuals, groups and institutions concerned with women and children in the Arab world. To improve the quality of life of Arab women and children through educational and development projects. To enhance the Beirut University College curriculum.

IWSAW projects:

Conferences: The Institute organizes local, regional and international conferences, seminars and lectures to discuss issues of concern to women in the Arab world.

Women's Documentation

Center: IWSAW houses the Center, in the Stoltzfus Library of BUC. It holds books and international periodicals.

IWSAW publications on women include books, and the status, development and conditions of Arab women in addition to Al-Raida. Eight children's books with illustrations and two guides, one for setting up children's libraries and the second for writing and illustrating children's books have also been published.

Income Generating Project consists of workshops and job assistance to women in war-stricken families.

The Basic Living Skills Projects is a non-formal integrated educational program for semi-literate women to be used in development projects.

Additional projects include: The Rehabilitation Program for Children's Mental Health; Teaching for Peace, and The Portable Library Project that received the Asahi- Reading Promotion Award in 1994.

In cartoons,
 movies,
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 and popular
 fiction,
 Arab
 women,
 when not
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 as veiled
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 are depicted
 as
 seductive,
 scantily
 clad belly
 dancers.

The Western Stereotype of Arab Women (1)

Samir Abu-Absi

Two women, veiled in black, with the one facing the camera peeking through narrow eye-slits, appeared on the cover. The caption read, *Women and Islam: the title of the story in the July, 1993 issue of the publication of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association.* The image conformed to the stereotype of Arab and Muslim women as mysterious, marginal, faceless entities who have been enslaved by a tyrannical religion and abusive culture. In contrast, the text of the article itself deals with Muslim feminists and portrays ways in which women activists all over the Middle East are pushing for rights beyond those which have already been attained in many countries. The story includes a number of photographs showing Arab women in modern western dress, presenting a very different impression from the one conveyed by the cover picture.

It seems that the traditional stereotypical image on the cover was too powerful to resist in spite of the fact that it contradicted the content of the story.

The October 1987 issue of the **National Geographic** featured a cover story, *Women of Arabia*, by Marianne Alizera. The cover photograph shows a woman on a beach with a long *qafstan*, head covering, and facial veil standing next to a young

girl on a swing. The story sensitively deals with historical and social conditions and with the efforts of Saudi women to improve their lives. The pictures on the inside include that of a Bedouin woman driving the tribe's water truck, a woman clad in western clothes who operates a contracting business in Jeddah that employs 40 men, a woman physician examining a baby, and Saudi women in leotards at an aerobics class.

The article quotes a professional Saudi singer proclaiming, "We women have stretched our boundaries to the limit!" It contains an account of several Saudi women speaking for themselves about their lives and changing roles and concludes with a debate in which one woman states, "And I don't like the condescending attitude of some who say 'You poor women here, you can't drive; you poor women, you can't talk to a man; you poor this or that.' I wouldn't change for millions, and who asked them? It's my world and I accept it." (2)

The cover picture, instead of presenting an image of Arabian women as educated, articulate, agents of change, appeal to the comfortable stereotype that readers are familiar with. Similarly, a story by Thomas Aber-combie, *Ibn Battuta: Prince of Travelers*, in the December, 1991 of **National Geographic**, featured on the cover the picture of a woman's head completely covered except for one eye peeking out from under a white veil. The story dealt with the travels of the famed 14th century Muslim scholar through Africa and Asia. The cover photograph, which has no direct connection to the substance of the story, represents a gratuitous use of a distorted image

which has been unfairly propagated in popular culture.

Another less blatant example perhaps, but no less offensive, appeared in *Vogue* (April, 1992) and some other fashion magazines. A **Bijan** perfume advertisement portrays, on adjoining pages, the picture of a woman, presumably Arab or Muslim, veiled in a *Hijab* and a casually dressed woman the reader can easily identify as being American by the American Flag in the corner of that page. The caption under the picture of the veiled woman read, "women should be quiet, com-

negative labels, the veil was used as a symbol to be contrasted with the American ideal of fun, freedom, and liberation.

One reason stereotypical images of Arab women seem to be accepted at face value has to do with the introduction of these images in textbooks and other educational materials when children are at an impressionable age. Once such images are accepted, they become difficult to challenge, particularly as they are reinforced in popular opinion in a variety of ways.

Studies of text books used in the United States



posed, obedient, grateful, modest, respectful, submissive, and very, very serious." Accompanying the American woman's picture, who sported a **Bijan** baseball cap, was the caption, "women should be bright, wild, flirty, fun, eccentric, tough, bold, and very **Bijan**."(3) The advertisement created a contrast between two different women and, by extension, two different cultures. Thus, without the use of any explicitly

have uncovered the existence of biased, inaccurate and false information regarding the Arab world. One such example concerns a sixth grade social studies text book entitled **People and Culture**. The chapter on the Middle East, which contains pictures of camels, tents, and veiled women, includes statements such as, "Traditional Muslim girls do not go to school... Women cannot own property or vote... A man can divorce his wife

by saying three times 'I divorce you.'" these statements are then followed with the rhetorical question "Would you like to be a woman in the Middle East?"(4)

Another example is found in **The Oxford Children's Reference Library**, The Arab World volume. The author, Shirley Kay, asks, "What is an Arab?" Among the answers one finds the following: "a peasant... who rides a donkey, while his wife, in a long black robe, walks behind carrying the bundles." She adds, "Teenagers are not expected to have fun,... In fact in some parts of the Arab world if a girl thought to have behaved badly, her brother may kill her, and the neighbors will admire him for doing his duty."(5)

In cartoons, comic strips, movies, television programs, and popular fiction Arab women, when not portrayed as veiled nonentities, are depicted as seductive, scantily clad belly dancers. Such contradictions do not seem to matter as situations and plots are contrived to reinforce these images. Below is an example of an episode entitled *The Surrogate* from the popular television series, **Trapper John, M.D.**, as quoted in Jack Shaheen's **The TV Arab**.(6) The scenario concerns a patient, an Arab sheikh, who offers his daughter Aliya as a gift to Dr. Gonzo. Gonzo returns to his trailer to find Aliya waiting for him in a skimpy "harem" costume. The following dialogue takes place:

Aliya: My father, the

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(1) I would like to thank my wife, Lucy Abu-Absi, and my friend and colleague at the University of Toledo, Janet Bradley, for reading an earlier version of this article and offering valuable criticism.

(2) **National Geographic**, October 1987, p.453.

(3) I am indebted to Leila Gorchey, Media Coordinator for the American-Arab-Anti-Discrimination Committee for bringing this example to my attention. See **ADC Times**, June 1992, p.33.

(4) Ayad Al-Qazzaz, Ruth Affi, and Audrey Shabbas. *The Arab world Notebook: A Handbook for Teachers*. **Najda**: Albany, California, 1978, p.5.

(5) Jack Shaheen. "The Influence of the Arab Stereotype on American Children." **ADC Issues**, Issue #2, p.5.

(6) Jack Shaheen. **The TV Arab**. Bowling Green State University Popular Press: Bowling Green, Ohio, 1984, p.69.

(7) Janice J. Terry. **Mistaken Identity: Arab Stereotypes in Popular Writing**. Arab American Affairs Council: Washington, D.C., 1985, p.25-26.

(8) **Al-Raida**, Spring, 1992, p.9.

(9) **Al-Raida**, Fall, 1992, p.3.

Even though Arab women, like women all over the world, have not yet attained equality on a number of fronts, they have certainly carried out their struggle in an admirable fashion.

sheikh, has sent me here. I am yours.

Gonzo: My what?

Aliya: Your wife, maid servant, slave. Whatever you wish. My father has given me to you as a gift.

Gonzo: That's one hell of a gift. Don't you have anything to say about it?

Aliya: Your will is my will. (She begins to remove Gonzo's clothes.)

Gonzo: C'mon. I'm taking you back.

Aliya: No! My father would be highly insulted.

Gonzo: Aren't you insulted by this kind of treatment?

Aliya: You don't know my father. He's capable of terrible things.

In analyzing the Arab stereotype in popular fiction, Janice Terry observes that "The plots of popular novels often focus simultaneously on the alleged mistreatment of women in the Arab world and on the provocative, cunning nature of Arab women. The juxtaposition of contradictory traits, in this case submission and treachery, has already been noted as a technique common in racist and sexist propaganda." Terry goes on to say, "Although Arab women, like their Western sisters, are victimized by male chauvinism and prejudice,

they are by no means as subjugated or oppressed as most Western popular literature would indicate. (7)

It is doubtful that any popular work of fiction contains a more blatant stereotype of Arabs than Leon Uris' **The Haj**. A significant portion of this viciously negative stereotype is devoted to Arab women, who in one sense are victims of rape, incest, adultery, polygamy, prostitution, female circumcision and a myriad other physical and mental abuses. Women are ignorant, powerless, humiliated, sexually frustrated, oppressed, dirty, lazy, and superstitious. They are obsessed with revenge against their husbands, who are not capable of love or intimacy, and continually plot to turn their children against their father. This state of affairs, according to Uris, is to be blamed on the Arab culture and the Muslim religion. While one hopes that readers would see through this attempt at creating a grossly distorted picture of a whole culture, the reality is that the perpetuation of such negative stereotype reinforces already existing prejudices.

The popular Western image of the Arab woman suffers the double burden of belonging to two groups which have traditionally been associated with negative stereotypes: Arabs and women. Arabs have been stereotyped as

backward, militant, blood-thirsty, greedy, and anti-Western. Women, in spite of recent gains on a number of fronts, have been stereotyped as sex objects who are weak, emotional, and irrational. Arab women are doomed to endure both of these stereotypes. They are never heard from, although they are constantly being talked about. When they are not marginalized as insignificant, faceless, voiceless creatures, they are portrayed as the objects of oppression of Arab males who veil them, abuse them and make them suffer the indignity and cruelty of sharing a husband with at least three other wives.

In spite of the existence of good scholarly works on Islam and Arab culture and history, very little of that information has filtered into the media and popular culture. It is difficult for the average Westerner to accept the fact that historically Islam improved the status of women and preached fairness and equality. Islam limited the pre-Islamic practice of polygamy, required the testimony of four witnesses to prove a woman's adultery, and made Adam and Eve equally responsible for their sins. Early Muslim society had many prominent women and the Arab world today is full of women who do not fit the stereotype: artists, writers, journalists, scientists, physicians, nurses, teachers, and politicians.

AL-RAIDA

Future topics in Al-Raida include Arab women's educational status; women's health care and habits in the Arab world; income generating activities and credit for women in the Arab world; women in agriculture.

We invite you to submit articles and share information if you feel you can contribute.

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Even though Arab women, like all women all over the world, have not yet attained equality on a number of fronts, they have certainly carried out their struggle in an admirable fashion. There is tremendous diversity—which exists among Arabs and Muslims depending on the country of origin, level of education, and family structure. It would undoubtedly come as a surprise to Western readers of *Al-Raida* that women comprise 25% of the Syrian Parliament and 40% of the professors at the Syrian University (8) and the highest number of votes in the last Lebanese parliamentary elections went to two women: Bahía Hariri and Naila Mouawad.(9) And although most Americans recognize Hanan Ashrawi's name and admire her eloquence and diplomatic skill, I suspect that they think of her as an aberration, a rare exception to that deeply ingrained image of the Arab woman.

The sad reality is that racism and sexism exist, to varying degrees, in all cultures. Fortunately, even the most powerful stereotypes are subject to change. This required time, concerted effort, and a great deal of education. The image of Arab women as portrayed in the examples above, particularly the photographs of the veiled women, is disturbing and hurtful. But in spite of the stereotypical pictures, the content of some of the stories I discussed was fair and presented a balanced characterization of Arab women as agents of change who are taking responsibility for shaping



their own destiny and that of future generation.

— Dr. Samir Abu Absi,
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Gender, Culture and Human Rights

Suad Joseph

In Lebanon, people carry their family relations into the public arena, civil society, and the state. Both political leaders and lay people privilege kin.

Most human rights movements have rightly focused on the state as a mobilization site for change. The family is an additional site of contestation for human rights and particularly for women's human rights. Without addressing its structure, culture, and dynamics, neither women nor men will be freed of relations of domination.

Family as a site of human rights

I suggest we look at the family as a site for construction of notions of rights and as an arena in which rights are continually contested and re-worked. The family, however, is not an arena separate from the state. We must challenge the public/domestic dichotomy as dangerously misleading in understanding the enactment of rights, particularly women's human rights. Violations of women's human rights are often hidden by their presumed association with family and domestic affairs and the presumed separation of public and domestic arenas.

The Lebanese Case

I make a case for bringing family into the arena of Arab human rights debates and activism based on my work in Lebanon.

While it would be unfounded to argue a Pan-Arab paradigm, the specificity of the pattern in Lebanon may raise similar issues for other Arab countries. The relevance of this research may be enhanced by the fact that my research site, the Greater Beirut urban working class municipality of Borj Hammoud, has residents from Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq of all religious sects.

In Lebanon, people carry their family relations into the public arena, civil society, and the state. Both political leaders and lay people privilege kin and idiomatic kin (acting as if someone were kin) relationships in the public domain. Therefore, family structure, culture and dynamics have been a central part of the political process of enacting rights in civil society and the state in Lebanon.

Relational Rights in the Family

The family is a crucial site which embeds, in early formative years and throughout one's life time, notions of entitlement and what gives a person their sense of rights. Who gets what, when, and who must give it to them are learned in early childhood in family settings. Among persons with whom I have worked, the predominant sense of rights were relational, not contractual or individualist. Persons have not felt that they had rights that inhered abstractly and unconditionally in their own personhood. Rather, persons' rights were embedded in sets of relationships.

That is, among urban working class people in Lebanon with whom I have worked for over twenty years, I have observed that persons felt they had rights to access in an agency or in an arena because they had relationships with specific people in that agency or arena. They had relationships of obligation and reciprocity that they call upon. Often they were either kin or idiomatic kin relationships. People often had relatives in public agencies. Alternatively, they created temporary or long-term social relationships that were modeled on kinship that allowed them to call each other in

kin terms (brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts) and to claim the expectations and obligations of kinship either directly or indirectly through networks or brokerage (wasta).

Not Collective Rights

This, however, was not a collective notion of rights that I observed. It was not by membership in a collectivity that one obtained access to rights or a sense of entitlement, but rather by having specific relationships of mutual involvement with specific persons from which obligations and reciprocities flowed. I observed a relational construct of rights in which relationships were fluid, changing, and continually contested. The rights that flowed from these relationships were thus also fluid, changing and continually contested. Rights were therefore not experienced as inherent, absolute, or embodied in the self among these urban working class persons and families in Lebanon. Rights were experienced as flowing from relationships of significance, primary to which was kinship and idiomatic kinship.

Patriarchal Relational Rights

Given the patriarchy of the family system and social order, however, these relational rights privileged males and elders. Given that patriarchal family relationships flowed mutually between family, civil society, religious institutions, and the state, then the privileging of males and elders was mutually reinforced in multiple arenas. The

rights of males and elders, though, were also relationally embedded. Males and elders, therefore, experienced their rights as shifting, fluid, and contested.

Dilemma for Women's Universal Human Rights Movements

Why are these issues important for developing analyses and strategies for women's human rights? The human rights movement has posited itself on an individualist construct of personhood and the assumption that rights inhere abstractly, contractually, and universally, in an autonomous, bounded self. This concept of rights developed as a notion that boundaries must be created to limit the power of the state. The notion of rights conceived as a boundary (Nedelsky, 1990) to state power. This notion of rights carried a bounded, autonomous entity.

I am not interested in advocating either relational rights or individualist rights at this point. Clearly, there are different and multiple notions self, personhood, and rights at stake. Each has roots with complex historical and cultural bedding that require separate analysis. I simply suggest that we must identify, recognize, and understand the different constructs and experiences of rights in order to figure out how we can build the ground on which to stand together to advocate human rights and women's human rights. This suggests that what is at stake in the human rights movement is a profound contestation over the nature of self-

hood -- what it means to be a person, what it means to be a human being. The process of contestation is itself creating, shaping, and reconfiguring selfhoods.

Since a crucial site of cultural creation, self creation, and creation of rights is the family, then the family must be site of contestation over human rights and women's human rights. In this struggle, it is important for us to recognize what ground to stand on when we fight and who occupies the ground. If someone fights on a ground that we do not occupy, we may sympathize with their struggle but not be able to join it. If someone struggles on the same ground and shares visions, we may join hands in the struggle. If someone stands on the same ground, struggles over the same issues and tries to dislocate us, silence us, co-opt us, or incarcerate us, then we must fight.

Culture and family occupy a ground which women cannot relinquish to any reactionary forces. In the process of struggling over family and culture, we not only create our own agencies, but we humanize the cultures we live in and make them ours.

— Dr. Suad Joseph
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USA

**Culture and
 family
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 ground
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 reactionary
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Huguette Caland

Painter, Fashion Designer

Individual Exhibitions

- 1970 Dar al-Fan,
Beirut
Caland Atelier,
Kaslik, Lebanon
- 1973 Galerie Contact,
Beirut
- 1980 Galerie Paris,
Paris
- 1986 Le Portrait a
Roulettes,
Salses, France
- 1992 Gallery 5, Santa
Monica,
California.
Toepel Gallery,
Kirkland,
Washington.
Bella Interiors
Gallery, Santa
Monica,
California
- 1994 Gallerie Janine
Rubeiz,
Beirut, Lebanon

I was excited about meeting Huguette Caland. Her background was very intimidating, being the daughter of a previous President of the Republic, a renown painter whose paintings have been exhibited in highly reputed galleries in Paris, Rome, Washington, Barcelona and Lebanon, a designer who created hand-woven silk gowns conceived and realized a fashion line for the Pierre Cardin collections of haute couture, ready-to-wear and environmental design.

In my interview I wanted to talk about her paintings. I was curious about her obsessive attention to bodies and notably the woman's body. So I asked.

Q. Why is your art so woman-oriented?

A. They usually accuse me of being male-oriented. I paint women because I am a woman. I have the problems of women. I think change will come through women. Maturity is already here. Repression was strong for centuries, except for the exceptions of some women. There are always exceptions.

Q. Why bodies?

A. I had problems with my body.(1) I had to cope with it and I can; therefore, relate to other bodies. But, I never think

of it [the body in the painting]. It is part of life. Sexuality is a miracle. It doesn't work all the time. But, when it works, it is a miracle. It is something very deep and we can't treat it with lightness. It is doing and touching everything. I never focused on it, but it emerged.

Q. Do you write?

A. Yes, I write. I usually write in French. I am now writing in English. I chose painting because it was important. I thought I could hide much more in painting than in words.

Q. What did you want to hide?

A. I wanted to hide everything. I did not want to be obvious.

Q. Why?

A. To try to be decent. But, I never succeeded. So, I stopped trying very quickly [stopped trying to hide].

Q. Do you paint women from a particular culture?

A. I carry myself on my tip toes. I don't have the intention of painting anyone specifically. I don't think I am folkloric or ethnic.

Q. You have lived in Paris and, presently, in Los Angeles. You are on a visit in Lebanon. How do you perceive of women and their issues?

A. We share the same problems even in different cultures. But, still there are differences. In the United States, they do not solve their problems as we do. They are more lonely. Their femininity becomes more aggressive because they are competing with men and with other women. There is a big struggle. It is strange to find that the struggle of women is greater in industrial countries than in Third World countries. They will move to a point when they will be more efficient in their struggle. It is im-

Al-Raida extends special thanks to Ms. Nadine Bekdash of the Gallerie Janine Rubeiz for making this interview possible, providing us with pictures of Caland's paintings, and for helping us make contact with prominent women artists.

portant to know how we want the kids to be. I don't think we should copy other cultures and fall into a pattern of imitation. Let's aim at being creative. Economically, Arab men treat women better. They give them and buy for them, but keep them under control. I don't think men should be undermined, because we will lose them and we need their support. We need them and need to be complementary.

Q. Does your painting entitled *La Femme Amputee* speak about violence?

A. When I drew it, during the Lebanese war, I felt it was an uncivil war, not a civil war.

Q. This interview will appear in our issue on violence against women. What is your understanding and perception of violence?

A. Violence is not the same for men and women. Woman can be very violent. We have other methods of torture, far more subtle. There is a huge potential for cruelty. Violence is also creative. The worst can be with a smile. It is the most efficient.

Huguette Caland went on to discuss her views on women's empowerment and their participation in development.

I am very concerned a-

bout women and power. I am concerned about the ways and the methods they can use.

Municipalities, community services should be handled by women. Men have failed. Women are better because they are housewives and are better in administration. I wouldn't say it that way. The daily problems of countries are very similar. Very few countries make political decisions. You don't have five, you don't even have two countries which actually do politics. Daily problems which concern our lives are common everywhere. They are the same as women's problems, at home.

We should not try to change the politics between France and China for instance. We have to



Painting by Huguette Caland

The physical reality of bodily contact is inextricably from the work of Lebanese artist Huguette Caland. Be they dancing or defensive, agitated or reclining, the bodies of Caland's paintings serve a metaphoric language that voices the forgotten mutation of our morphology - the sensations we feel, the sensuality we express through our corporeal being. The female body is her primary vehicle. Her depiction of the feminine in all its aspects - undulating breasts, curvaceous hips, the pubic triangle - daringly defined yet simultaneously ambiguous. Body parts drawn in ink, pencils, pastels or paints, convey a monochromatic tension; supple and organic yet deceptively simple. The viewer knows not if they stand revealed in their most minimal form or are characters of disguise.*

know the facts and work according to them. We lose time trying to ana-

lyze the situation, and must work on getting out and moving on.

* Write-up by the International Council for Women in the Arts exhibiting Caland's painting in their traveling exhibit. See al-Raida, #64, Winter 1994.

(1) In a previous interview with Helen Khal, Huguette Caland says "You know, as a young girl, I weighed 112 kilograms. I was grotesquely huge ... and that was another kind of battle I had to contend with.

Khal, Helen. 1987. **The Woman Artist in Lebanon**. Beirut: Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University College. p. 130.

A Hymn of Compassion and Love
**The Scarlet Poppy:
 Massacre in Beirut (*)**

by Evelyne Accad

Reviewed by Mona Takieddine Amyuni

*The line breaks down mending the separation
 "I love you," she murmurs with some reserve.
 She fears to put him off. Her revelation may drift back to the demarcation line, the heart of rupture. (p.5)*

Evelyne Accad starts her war novel in this fashion. She dramatizes a love scene by the beach which does not end in separation as the woman, who is not yet given a name, had feared. When she expresses her true feelings, he starts worrying. He wants her to go back with him to the world of daily chores, of work and responsibilities. She muses, *what is the meaning of work, of a road, of a life without love?* They walk side by side, separated now. A wall stands between them, silence prevails. Communication, suddenly, becomes impossible. She runs in the wind, the tempest carries her to the sea, far from the shore. He stands behind. He calls her with all his strength. In vain! It is too late, he has lost her.

The scene expands at the end of this first episode. The demarcation line now separates not only the first couple we meet, but Accad's countrymen, as well. Her heroine attempts to understand the real causes behind so many walls erected between men in her own country, Lebanon, which had been torn apart by a bloody war since 1975, but also in the world at large.

Musically, in "theme and variations" technique, Accad probes into the issue of violence through different scenes situated mostly in Beirut, but also in Chicago where her first heroine lives. We learn later in the novel that she is called Hayat (Life) and she stands, indeed, for the will to live, to struggle, to construct. Hayat, a professor of Psychology, tries to analyze, to understand, to change people's mentalities, to

show her friends how much we are all subjected to the folly of men so long as we accept to erect walls between us, demarcation lines of so many types, sexual, sectarian, political, etc...

Thus, the demarcation line lies, graphically, at the heart of *Massacre in Beirut*. It draws to it, in centripetal fashion, the threads of the novel constructed on several stories which dramatize the lives of several protagonists under conditions of extreme duress: Amal and her young child who try to cross the *death bridge* which cuts war-torn Beirut in two bleeding halves; Najmé, the bourgeois university student who commits suicide with an overdose; Amal's old music teacher who lives in the shambles of the city near the *death bridge*, and who guides mother and child across the bridge with her beautiful song.

Other people also inhabit Evelyne Accad's world. They represent a large sample of the Lebanese society who have refused to submit to the order of hatred and violence. Good, compassionate and generous, they really stand in this novel for a traditional system of values that have allowed Lebanon to survive in spite of a savage war often called a civil war. Yes, a handful of brothers turned enemies have killed each other for long years, across demarcation lines. The majority of the Lebanese, however, resisted in action sometimes, in silence some other times, but they constantly helped each other, unconditionally.

Accad's
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Thus, Accad's war novel is punctuated by gestures, rituals, music and songs, which preserve human beings' basic fraternity and their will to overcome walls, barricades, and demarcation lines constructed by men's folly. Accad's theme is held in tension between the two poles of love and hatred, of the will of country and people to live and build up in the midst of so much violence and destruction.

Mother and child, significantly called Nour (Light) and Raja (Hope) occupy much space in *Massacre in Beirut*. Their attempt to cross over the *death bridge* sums up Accad's above mentioned theme. We first meet them in the midst of an air attack. Children and mothers scream, bombs fall like rain, panic and chaos prevail. Raja shakes all over, his face distorted by fear. Nour is agitated, she cannot control her heart beats. But her mind is set. She will try to cross the death bridge and find refuge at her brother's who lives on the *other side of the city*, quieter at this stage of the war: *Will they reach the other side, she wonders with anguish. Will they succeed in crossing over the demarcation line, which cuts the city in two, this no-man's land, the empire of terror, of destruction and death?* (p.25)

Nour knows well that many people before her had been killed, sniped at or kidnapped on that bridge. But with great courage, she sets out holding tightly to Raja by the hand. When the shelling increases in intensity, they throw themselves into the entrance of a half-destroyed house. A woman calls them in, and the first series of heart-warming rituals begins as the two women immediately get busy preparing a meal for the big family. With hardly any food left, they manage to cook the traditional *moujaddara* made of lentils, rice, and fried onions. The scene is so vivid that the reader's senses feel it, smell the cooking, and taste the dish. The meal, for a moment, neutralizes the violence outside.

Early the following day, Nour bids her hosts good-bye and gets ready to cross over with her child. Each of the people gathered around her, says farewell with a simple gift and send messages of love to the people out there: tell them we want to resume the good life we've always lived together (p. 63).

Accad's dramatic title *The Scarlet Poppy: Massacre in Beirut* is inserted for the first time in this moving scene which, in contrast, speaks of communion and brotherhood. Her host offers Nour two *mankoushi*, traditional loaves of bread soaked in olive oil and covered with thyme. While the scarlet poppies of Beirut feed on the blood of its citizens, the hands of Nour and the man she hardly knew, are united and olive oil drips from the soaked bread into their fingers. Accad captures, thus, a sacred moment of harmony through the atavistic symbol of the *mankoushi*. We, of course, have all been given bread soaked in olive oil and thyme by our mothers in difficult moments of stress, be it exams at school, or later, in times of mourning.

Elsewhere, during the same trip less than a kilometer long but infinitely stretching out in people's psyche, Nour finds her former music teacher, a majestic figure in the novel, simply called A. (as in all?...). Ritualistically, both women sip coffee and reminisce. Later A. sings for mother and child. Her voice fills the ruined neighborhood sustaining Nour and Raja who walk away: *Let's walk together to erase fear. Let's walk together to erase forgetfulness. Love will allow us to start again...* (p. 71)

The melody penetrates into the ruined walls, the buried corpses, the ashes, the dried-up blood over the stones: *I love you shining in the night. I love your faith in a better world...* (p. 72). The voice extinguishes the bombing, covers up bullets and canons. Hatred and violence are replaced by a melody which speaks of love, tenderness, and harmony.

Some would say Accad's message is naive. But the world fares much better with such messages conveyed through ritual, poetry, and song. Shakespeare knew it well when his demarcation line was erected between those who had music in their souls and those who had not.

Nour and Raja will reach the other side of the demarcation line. The Nours, Rajas and Hayats of Lebanon will destroy the line and rebuild the country, affirms Accad.

Will they reach the other side, she wonders with anguish. Will they succeed in crossing over the demarcation line, which cuts the city in two, this no-man's land, the empire of terror, of destruction and death?

— Dr. Mona Takeddine
Amyuni,
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(*) The original French title: *Coquelicot du Massacre*. (Paris: L'Harmattan, "Ecriture Arabe", 1988). excerpts and paraphrases from the novel are in my translation. *Massacre in Beirut* is the abbreviated form in which the title of the novel appears in the body of the paper.

Beirut Fragments

by Jean Said Makdisi

Makdisi sketches the slick process that violence plays on the psyche, morale, and values of the middle class non-militant Lebanese.

How can I write about Beirut? How can I collect it all into one volume: the years of pain; of watching a world collapse while trying to stave off that collapse; the layers of memories and hopes, of tragedy and even sometimes comedy, of violence and kindness, of courage and fear? Above all, how can I express my strange love for this mutilated city; how to explain, both to myself and to others, the lingering magic of the place that has kept me and so many others clinging to its wreckage, refusing to let go, refusing to abandon it? (p. 19)

In **Beirut Fragments**, Makdisi's writing about coping with war is perceptive and entails a vision that is worthy of the dignity of a people who have survived glory and defeat, life and death during the fifteen years covered in the book. She sketches the slick process that violence plays on the psyche, morale, and values of the middle class non-militant Lebanese. Thoughts, feelings, questions and decision-making processes involved with every encounter of war violence are skillfully described. Cues are noted starting with little adrenaline-loaded moments such as listening to the opening tune of a news bulletin, to the trembling of the earth caused by shelling of her home while she, her family and other tenants of the apartment building hid in the shelter. Of the most interesting descriptions are those recounting discussions that search the words and ideas of others for an assessment of the violence and its potential increase or decrease. You can almost hear the exhaustion and the giant efforts to ignore as well as cope with the conditions.

Jean Makdisi's style discloses inner thoughts and feelings heartfelt by those who witnessed the war. Makdisi pays special attention to language used during the war. There are terms that took a critical dimension in saving the lives of many Lebanese and ordering their socio-political and demographic perceptions of survival. **Beirut Fragments** also includes a detailed chronology of the events.

Jean Makdisi has an outstanding way of describing the atrocities of war and; therefore, presenting a case for peace without actually touching on politics, giving the concept, the personal is political yet another dimension. Through her personal account, Makdisi traces migration and violence inherent in the history of the Arabs without addressing politics. It is a real life account of educational and multicultural experiences, which takes the author from Palestine to Cairo and, then, to Lebanon, passing through Western countries, notably the United States.

Beirut Fragments is an exploration into the lives of those who have experienced war. It takes you into the macro and micro dimensions of every day life, of survival. It is truly a woman's perspective, which reveals Makdisi's inherent struggle to save her sanity and virtues in the midst of violence.

It is a timelessly crafted portrait of life in a war torn city (The Kansas city star). an impassionate cry against indifference (New York Times Book Review) and its greatest accomplishment is that, through Makdisi's eyes, it is possible to rid one's mind of all the cant and rubbish that has been spoken about Beirut (Los Angeles Times Book Review).

— R.A.H.

Honour and Shame

by Sana al-Khayyat

Book Summary by Wafa' Stephan Tarnowski

Sana al-Khayyat is an Iraqi journalist living in the United Kingdom. Her book is the result of interviews with fifty Iraqi women in the year 1982, during the war between Iraq and Iran, at venues ranging from schools, literacy centers, offices and people's homes. Only married women were included in her sample and all the interviews were held in Baghdad. These women involved illiterate wives, teachers and higher professionals such as heads of departments, lawyers, lecturers and so on.

The ideology of honour and shame

According to al-Khayyat to understand how behavior is regulated in Iraqi society, one must understand the Arab concept of honour which is generally linked to the sexual conduct of women. If a woman is immodest or brings shame on her family with her sexual conduct, she brings shame and dishonour on all her kin. The concept of honour for a man, by contrast, is only related to an upright general behavior.

Thus, there are two words for honour in Arabic: one is *sharaf* which means honor in the wider sense, and the other is *'ird* which is directly related to sexual conduct and chastity. The author quotes an Arabic proverb saying "al bint tala' la-umha", which means "the daughter takes after her mother, (morally)" to illustrate how the purity of the daughter reflects that of her mother. It also explains that while the family's economic status or *sharaf* depends on the father, aspects of shame or *ird* derive from the mother.

al-Khayyat mentions another term associated with honour, *aib*, which can be translated as immodesty. For instance, a woman who speaks loudly or wears see-through clothes would be considered *aib*. Thus, girls must learn to control themselves and behave properly in order not to embarrass their families.

They must learn what is *aib* and what is not at an early age.

Gossip as a form of social control

According to the author, gossip operates as one of the strongest forms of social control in policing women. Women are very conscious of gossip and suffer from constant feelings of guilt without necessarily having committed any dishonorable act. Fear of gossip, for instance, makes parents spy on their children. It makes parents over-protective of their female kin. It makes them afraid of people's talk, *kal-am in-nas*. By this, al-Khayyat means not "how people will evaluate and judge each other" but "how they condemn and distort." (p.24)

Blood is stronger than marriage

If an Arab marries a woman outside his family kin group, says al-Khayyat, his wife will remain a stranger to him and his family until she bears children. If the wife were to misbehave, or commit adultery, she is not punished by him but by her brother or father, uncle or cousin. If a husband is allowed to punish his wife, this would eventually reduce and diffuse the control the family has over its members. This behavior is effective as her male kin will try and ensure that she is well treated by her husband. If a woman divorces, she is accepted back into her own family. In return, a woman has to behave in a re-

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spectable manner at all times and under all circumstances. According to al-Khayyat "an ideal woman is a married woman who is a mother, but who is virginal in mind and feelings." (p. 26)

Growing up female in Iraq

By tracing the stages of a girl's life, says al-Khayyat, we can see that a girl is unwelcome from the moment of birth. "Compared with her brothers, she grows up relatively neglected." (p. 36). When she reaches puberty, her family imposes a list of compulsory behaviors, which regulate her every movement both inside and outside the home. This isolation of girls within the family, says al-Khayyat, prevents women from seeing their lives in relation with each other. Hence, collective movements do not emerge and "Iraqi society itself can change little because each individual will think she is on her own with her own grievances." She quotes one of her interviewees as saying: "I didn't have a choice in my marriage." (p.37)

Other chapters of **Shame and Honour** include the relationships between members of the family such as

mothers and daughters, parents and daughters, women and their children, traditional and contemporary marriages. As shown above, al-Khayyat, through her interviews, reviews women's experiences and perceptions of the various relationships in the family putting gender roles into perspective. According to al-Khayyat, although the factors such as education and work for women are giving them more choice among suitors, the importance of moral values, family origins and reputation remains very great (p. 78). The author sees the life of an Iraqi woman as a series of conflicts. The conflict between wanting to be independent and having a career and the wish to appear dependent and weak. And although the Iraqi system encourages women's participation in every sphere of government, the low number of women in high posts is insufficient to influence decision-making.

It is interesting to note that these interviews were conducted in 1982 and the material could only be published ten years later. Have things changed since then?

— Wafa' Stephan Tarnowski
Journalist



Awards

Rabat, Morocco. April 21, 1994.

Andrée Chedid, writer, was awarded the Hassan II of Four Jurists Prize for her French books. Andree Chedid is Lebanese, born in Cairo and lived in Paris since 1946. She published various books of poetry, theater scripts, essays and eleven novels(*). Her style reflects her Franco-Egyptian-Lebanese background. Chedid's most recent book and one of her most prominent ones is **Job's Wife** which is inspired by the Bible (see Al-Raida, #64, Winter, 94). The Four Jurists Prize was founded 35 years ago and is awarded to a writer who has received at least one of the four leading literature awards namely, Goncourt**, Renaudot, Interallié, Femina.

*List of André Chedid's books: *Les Nombres*, 1968. *l'Autre: Roman*, 1969. *Le Monteur*, 1969. *La Cité Fertile*, 1972. *Nefertiti et le Reve d'Akhnaton*, 1974. *Ceremonial de la Violence*, 1976. *Fraternite de la Parole*, 1976. *Les Corps et le Temps, suivi de l'Etoile Peau*, 1978. *Les Mouches de Sable*, 1981. *Visage Premier*, 1972. *La Femme de Job*, 1993.

**The Goncourt Award in 1993, was granted to a leading Lebanese author, Amin Maalouf, for his recent novel, *Le Rocher de Tanios*.

Sana al-Khayyat. 1992. *Honour and Shame: Women in Modern Iraq*. London: Saqi Books. ISBN 0-86352-050-4.

A Choice Between Violence and the Family

Battered Women in Lebanon

On-going wars in the Arab world have made violence the rule and a part of daily life for many. Nevertheless, other forms of violence are also common to Arab societies and receive their share of legal provision. Systematic information about them is scarce, particularly when related to gender. Tradition, in most of these Arab countries, has clearly confined women's issues to the family. In fact, when faced with two threats: being battered or breaking up the family and losing the children by leaving, women in the Arab world tend to favor battery. It seems like the only plausible choice for these women in the absence of support from society and the government. When AL-RAIDA decided to tackle the problem of domestic violence in general and battery in particular, the persistent question was: "What constitutes battery? Is it limited to brutality, or do other mild violations, such as a slap on the face, fall within the criteria?" The second interrogation that was raised focused on women's coping methods, followed by the legal and social facilities battered women can resort to, to protect themselves and their rights. Consequently, private and confidential testimonies of victimized women to friends, doctors or lawyers represent the bulk of evidence for battery. Documentation and official record keeping on the subject are not available, judging from our experience in preparing this special File.

The general inclination is to convince the woman to bear the situation rather than humiliate her family with a public scandal and protect the children from a broken home. There is little to indicate that Arab governments, legislators, and academe are concerned with domestic violence against women. Activists in different Arab countries try to assist battered women with legal advice and psychological support. Some of the prominent ones are listed below.

The Tunisian Association of Democratic Women has a crisis center for women victims of violence. It offers legal and psychological advice and support to women. The Association has gained power and coverage through its activities, and brought the problem to the attention of the Tunisian Women and Family Ministry. In November of 1993, The Association organized a three-day conference to identify the problems of violence against women, and to discuss strategies to assist women who suffer from it. (For more information contact: Association Tunisienne des Femmes Democratres, c/o Nawla Darwish, Arab Women Center, 44 Rue de Pologne, Bab Saadoun, Tunis, Tunisia).

In Lebanon, a group of women activists created an Association to assist battered women by publicizing their problem and calling for the ratification of the UN Declaration for the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women (for more information, contact: Nazik Saba Yared, c/o Humanities Div., Beirut University College, P. O. Box 13-5053, Beirut, Lebanon).

As it stands, such organizations compose the only support system for women who suffer from domestic violence. Even so, their effectiveness is limited to helping women cope with family pressures. Practically speaking, Arab women must chose between family and battery.

— R.A.H

Their Stories

Nazik Saba Yared

Unfortunately, people in Lebanon do not realize how many of their women are battered at home. They are women of all religions, backgrounds and social classes. Sadly, many non-battered women are not empathetic to the fact that others are beaten by their husbands, brothers or sons. Over and again, I am shocked by the reaction of some women friends and acquaintances when I explain the problem to them hoping they would be motivated to contribute to our efforts to help victimized women. Their replies are as follows: these women deserve to be beaten; or like to be beaten; otherwise, why do they accept it.

They are oblivious to the fact that economic and social factors, and mainly the presence of young children forces these battered women to bear it all. Our laws are not very understanding either, and tend to reinforce the helplessness of battered women. Hence, a mother is not given custody of her children once they are of a certain age, usually set around seven, no matter how violent the father is with his children.

Furthermore, and if proverbs are an indication of the mentality of a people, then our proverbs reflect our society's contempt for women. I shall only translate a few:

A house bossed by a woman will surely deteriorate.

Women are unbearable: if you don't oppress them they will oppress you.

Women are a calamity, you have to bear if you cannot do without them.

A woman is like a Persian rug: the more you beat her the better she becomes.

Some of our folk-tales illustrate the situation very clearly. This inferior attitude towards women, which is not that of Arab or Eastern men alone, is current in the West as well, as I have come to realize from reading books about battered women in Europe, Canada and the United States. But, now there is living proof of this among the men and women we live with.

Most of the stories I collected in these testimonies and interviews were told to me by people who are close to the victim or by lawyers who were representing them. The battered women themselves are reluctant to speak up. They hide their plights for many reasons, including social pressure, shame, or the fear of being more brutalized if things came out into the open. Their silence is further reinforced by feelings of hopelessness in the absence of laws that protect them or permit them to keep their children should they decide to leave their husbands. These women are either Christian, Muslim or Druze, a fact implying that religious affiliation is not a determining variable. Only one of the battered women mentioned here agreed to discuss her situation with me. She has already divorced her husband and has had to give up her children in the process.

X. is a beautiful woman and a university graduate who holds a very good position, professionally. She did not marry young having waited for "the man of her dreams". This man turned out to be a violent husband. He would beat her savagely if, for example, he found her talking on the phone and she refused to tell him who was on the line. She finally left the house, although they had a baby, and is

trying to see what she can do about a divorce.

N., is a Druze woman, who was married to a successful engineer. They have three children. He would beat her for any and all reasons. For instance, he would beat her if one of their children lost a pair of scissors; if she was late in coming home; if she opened the front door without first asking his permission. He would throw at her anything within his reach: a shoe, a jug, a chair. She was a beautiful woman and he was extremely jealous. She bore the savage beating for seven years and until her face became disfigured. N., then, obtained a medical report and filed for divorce. The divorce was granted, but she was given custody of her young daughter only, until the child reaches the age of seven. N.'s parents forbade her to remarry hoping to get her children back should their father remarry and his new wife mistreat them. She never got her children back, and can only see them on weekends.

F. is a Muslim woman whose husband was a doorman. He spent all his earnings on gambling. She, therefore, had to work as a cook in order to provide for their five children. When F. refused to give him money, he beat her violently. When she could no longer bear the beatings, she divorced him. He did not want to take the children, so she kept them. He never paid her a penny of child support, which forced her to marry off her two eldest daughters at early ages, and abandon the other three with her mother-in-

law. She, herself, had to leave the country.

Another battered Muslim woman, is L.B. She is Palestinian and married to a Lebanese. L.B. is illiterate because her parents sent her out as a maid from the age of six on. Her income was used to pay the tuition to medical school for one of her brothers, who later traveled to the U.S. for further specialization. This same brother, then, forced his sister to marry a taxi driver against her will because he did not want people to say that his sister was a maid. L. and her husband have two daughters, the eldest of which is fourteen, and a son, who suffers from a mental disability. When her father-in-law died, her husband inherited a large sum of money, gave up his taxi, refused to work and took to beating her and the girls. He would beat her in front of the children. L.B. strongly suspects that he also became a drug addict. Once, she called the police, but they did not help her because he bribed them. Then, L.B. sought the protection of some armed militia-men during the war. They threatened her husband and, even, beat him up, so he stopped hitting her for while. He then started to beat her again. L.B.'s daughters could not study at home and L.B. had to work very hard to pay for their food, clothing and education. Her disabled son is enrolled in a special school free of charge. Although L.B. filed and obtained a divorce, it was never implemented, her husband having bribed the Sheikh involved in the decision. Naturally, the divorce papers dis-

appeared and she was forced to return home. Her only hope to get rid of him is to have him imprisoned. She cannot afford a lawyer to file for another divorce. She is afraid to leave her children alone with him because he beats them and mistreats the disabled one. Once he went as far as to throw her out of the house and hide the children for nine months. L.B.'s only hope is to have him jailed.

G., a Christian, fell in love and married a university graduate and very rich business man, even before graduating from university. Although she has a strong personality, he began to beat her as soon as they were married, hoping to subjugate her. With time the battering became more savage. He sometimes uses a leather strap leaving deep marks on her body. They have three children, and he beats her in front of them. Sometimes, he beats her, even, when she is carrying her little one who screams in terror. He does not beat the children because he hardly sees them. His son, however, is also violent and abuses his younger brother. G. has always lived an atmosphere of violence which explains everybody's unwillingness to help her. Her father used to beat her mother and her violent husband is a battered child. Her family hushes up her plight and refuses to help her, afraid of "what people will say". Her in-laws defend their son, telling her she must put up with him. They stress his so-called good qualities as a husband, i.e. that he is faithful, and does not drink nor gamble. They claim that his only vice is that of beating

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Battered Women In Lebanon

her, but that otherwise he loves her. G., of course, does not love Tim anymore, but she cannot leave him because of the children and because she has no profession or degree to be able to support herself.

Another battered Christian woman is K. who was married off before sitting for her Baccalaureate at eighteen, to a friend of her family who was ten years her senior. It was not a happy marriage from the start. If she scolded the children because they dirtied the house he would humiliate her in their presence and scream saying: It is your duty to always clean-up after them. What else do you have to do?! If she had to buy a pair of shoes, he would profusely repeat that he was bestowing on her a favor by giving her the money. They lived with his mother who was a despotic, domineering and cruel woman. When K. once complained to her husband about harsh treatment his mother, he slapped her on the face so hard that he cut her lip. On another occasion, while she was entertaining one of her friends, he asked her to get him something. As she left the sitting room she overheard him tell the guest: You see, I can do with her whatever I want. He was also very jealous of her love for their children. Every evening he would invent a reason for contention and end the argument

by beating her up. She once contacted her lawyer friend and his wife when he wounded her face. Instead of helping and defending her, the lawyer told her not to exaggerate the matter and to go back to her husband. Then, her husband chose the evenings when the children slept and could not see him hit her. One evening K. became enraged when she noticed that their youngest son was awake and watching his father beat her. Consequently,

she attacked her husband, scratched his face with her nails and left the house the following day. She had hesitated to stop him for six full years and strove to cope with that unhappy marriage for seventeen years. Her children were 16, 15 and 7. Being Maronite she was denied custody, since custody is not granted to a mother if the children are over two. She asked for a divorce, but her husband decided they should see a psychiatrist first. She was ashamed to tell the doctor that he beat her. She also discovered during the session that he cheated on her and had several mistresses. When they left the clinic the husband said to her: *You didn't tell the doctor that I hit you because you enjoyed being beaten!* This was the last straw that broke the camel's back. They were finally able to divorce, but, she had to give up any claim over her children, inheritance, alimony and even the furniture and jewelry that belonged to her. She broke down after her divorce and received treatment from a psychiatrist during eight months to regain her self-esteem and self-confidence and overcome her fear of her husband. Only, then, could she keep him away and forbid him from seeing her.

*You didn't tell
the doctor that
I hit you
because you
enjoyed being
beaten!*

These are a few of the hundreds of stories and cases battered women do not dare tell publicly. The problem is there and we have to do something about it. Let us not say: We have so many other problems! Violence against women generates violent behavior in children. And nobody more than we Lebanese have known and seen what violence can do. It has ruined our lives and ruined our country ... for how many generations to come?

— Dr. Nazik Saba Yared,
Professor of Arabic, Writer,
Beirut University College

Time, A Gift of Love

May Majdalani

Much has been written about wife abuse, battering, and specifically about physical violence. It exists in Lebanon, but I cannot document it. I can document, however, the existence of psychological violence as I encounter it more and more in my practice with women being treated for depression or anxiety. Each eventually complains of the same thing: a consistent grinding down of their sense of identity by well-meaning partners.

It is a process that leaves them baffled, lost, doubting their self-worth, reaching a point where even minor decisions take major proportions of anguish and despair. Do these subtle or not so subtle attacks happen only to women? I do not think so. Other people or groups of people who are in a position of weakness suffer from the same problems for one reason or another.

I have chosen to talk about women for the problem seems of increasing magnitude in an age where more of them seek the freedom and autonomy they never sought before because they were told that it was not part of their roles. It is important to talk specifically about women since their productivity is affected when subjected to this kind of abuse.

Sometimes their behavior becomes disruptive to the couple and detrimental to the psychological development of their children. They may also miss opportunities in domains where their contributions would have made a significant difference.

The aim of this paper is to mobilize awareness about the psychological health of women. Should psychologically abused women recognize any of the behaviors that are described below they will be able to evaluate their real faults and those they are wrongly blamed for. They need to know that help is available.

Violence according to Webster is *A use of force so as to injure or damage; An unjust use of force or power as in deprivation of rights; Desecration - Profanation.* Physical violence

is all of these directed against the body of the other individual. Psychological violence is also all these, but directed against the feeling of identity, the soul and the self-worth of the other. One must also keep in mind that violence is perceived differently by different countries and from one cultural context to another. How does psychological violence manifest itself? What are its short-term effects? How can it be explained, or better, how do women subjected to it try to explain what is happening to them? What are some ways to manage it? These are some of the issues this article attempts to deal with along with examples taken from real life situations.

The forms of violence that are inflicted on the psychology of women are numerous.

Constant criticism, and verbal abuse are common. They embody comparisons that are demeaning to the victim, which usually refer to other members of her immediate family or close friends. *Why can't you keep as fit as your sister who has had five children and the body of a model.....Why does your rice always look so sticky and the food extremely unappetizing?....Why don't you shut up when you see me watching the news?.*

*How does
psycho-
logical
violence
manifest
itself?*



*How do
women
subjected to
it try to
explain
what is
happening
to them?*

Battered Women In Lebanon

It is important to note that these statements do not cause much harm if said "en passant" or as an occasional angry reaction. It is their repetition that causes damage, just like a drop of water falling on a rock may slip away but the constant drip will eventually cause a dent, crevice or valley on even the most solid rock.

Degrading or belittling the woman in front of her children, her family, relatives or friends; denigrating her achievements, attacking her properties and her family are additional forms of psychological violence.

Don't listen to your mother kids, she's hysterical How can you pretend to be a teacher when you are not even patient with your own children They must be keeping you out of pity in that school where you teach. Your whole family is a bunch of villagers who don't even know how to socialize properly, no wonder you can't entertain decently in our house.

Sexual criticism, abuse, isolation, are also inflicted in statements like *how can I keep looking at you when you have gained so much weight. Why don't you go look at yourself in the mirror.*

Having intercourse just to satisfy his needs, without expressing previous signs of affection is often encountered in psychological abuse of women. If she refuses he threatens to go elsewhere.

Totally ignoring his wife is also common. In this case he has no sex, no communication, not even eye-contact with her. It al-

so includes episodes of silence so dense it could be cut with a knife.

Control over her freedom and feelings including how she spends money, who her friends are, what her activities should be, takes place. Control over her thoughts and feelings are expressed in a variety of ways:

- Getting angry and screaming if she is not at home when he comes unexpectedly.

- Forbidding her to see some friends or family members because he does not like them, or threatening not to accompany her if she chooses outings including them.

- Putting down some of her ideas, readings, interests, activities and most of all preventing the woman from complaining about his constant ill treatment of her, calling her ungrateful because she does not appreciate the fortune of having him, trying to turn her into the perfect being he would like her to be.

Between threats, and terrifying screams, the woman gradually starts wondering what is going on, who or what is to blame and doubt sets in.

The first stage involves rationalization of his behavior. Hence, the woman justifies his misbehaviors with statements like *I can understand. No one likes to be argued with. After all he has all these responsibilities at work to deal with..... Men are brought up by their mothers to have their own way.*

In the second stage feminine values like patience and understanding are tried. Slowly the woman sacrifices her own

pleasures and interests to please her partner or in order to avoid and escape the fights and screams. Those screams that leave one terrified, wanting to hide, fearing for one's life, screams that often frighten the children who are the most important people to shield in this event.

Soon, the wife finds herself walking on eggs, not knowing what to do in order to please her partner and finding herself unable to do anything whatever she tries. In fact, as many women have confided, it is the unexpectedness of the quarrels and the complete shift from charm to fury for no apparent reason that becomes exacting on the nerves. It happens during happy times that appear to be undisruptable. At this point, many women start to ask questions and rebel only to find that even their own understanding of the situation, perceptions, and memories are put in doubt. Events are reshaped and rewritten for them, mostly by their abuser, family members or values and norms that dictate submission. Now, they start to doubt the accuracy of their own perceptions, their general adequacy and become more submissive. In fear, they begin to lie about minor things, justifying behaviors that otherwise should have been considered a part of their inherent rights.

Consequently, the woman's self-esteem starts disintegrating and a process often called "identification with the aggressor" emerges. Women perceive themselves and other women the way their partner does, i.e. as in-

capable of rational, purposeful, and productive thinking and/or decision-making and planning.

Self-doubt increases as their tyrant acts charming, entertaining, agreeable, generous, humorous with strangers and acquaintances who are distant from the family. The contradiction between the two images arouses feelings of confusion *Am I right in my negative assessment or is it a product of my imagination?..... Perhaps it is I who demands too much and I who is the selfish one as HE says.* HE becomes the point of reference for her own self-perception. Another factor that reinforces doubt is society and the family's attribution of blame on the woman for her lack of method, patience, femininity. Other times the woman rebels. She sees clearly and attempts to correct her perception of events. She searches for possible reasons that trigger actions like the ones described above. For more illustration here is an extract of a conversation between two women who are successful in their careers and who have had their abilities repeatedly put down by their spouses: *Are they threatened by our success even if it is on a small scale? Do they feel that they get smaller if we get bigger? Are they afraid they might lose total control over us if we assert and find ourselves?*

Un-answered questions often lead to unhealthy results. They begin to disrespect their partner and exercise manipulation. Thus, the relationship deteriorates as a result of this disrespect and yet the

continuity of the marriage persists for social, familial and other reasons.

This psychological war has a detrimental effect on the fate of the children watching. They are torn in deciding which parent is right and who they should side with. They eventually acquire verbal aggression as one problem-solving mechanism and define their gender roles accordingly rather than learn new definitions.

If women can be professional and perform jobs that equal men's, why can't men and women have equal rights, equal pay, and share home duties? Men feel off-balance and struggle arbitrarily to defend their turf when they feel that their roles are challenged. Consequently, women who maintain the values of

normality and equality that they were taught by their mothers or in their parental homes begin to doubt the validity of their demands.

It seems to me that in the absence of a uniform redefinition of roles and responsibilities in society, each person, each couple, each family has to define its own roles and find its own balance. It can be achieved through communication, respect, tolerance, understanding and consideration for each other's needs. It requires a sensitivity that can only be acquired by observing, asking, answering and explaining. All this takes time, a rare commodity in our age. Perhaps, this is one reason to consider time one of the important gifts of love!

— May Majdalani



Painting by Doris Mukabaa. 1986.

**The
woman's
self-esteem
decreases,
and she
begins to
identify
with the
aggressor**



**Events are
interpreted
for them by
their
aggressor**

Reports from Newspapers

November 1993 - March 1994

Randa Abul-Husn

Violence against women, especially battery, remains relatively marginal in the responsible coverage of human tragedies. Violence against women receives little attention, whether in the formal or informal sectors of the Lebanese society. Although it would seem that we are beyond establishing whether it exists or not, mainstream media does not contribute to understanding and evaluating the situation. Furthermore, as this survey will show, there is an evident shortage in valid and reliable data needed to endorse and produce action.

In a preliminary attempt to investigate reported violence against women in Lebanon, we screened the section on security reports in Lebanese newspapers. This study consists of analysing reported crimes against women in three leading daily Lebanese newspapers, Al-Nahar, Al-Safir, and Al-Diyar, covering a period of six months: November 1993 until March 1994.

The investigation aimed to detect trends, if any, in the kinds of violence inflicted on women, their frequencies, reasons, and existing legal procedures. After reviewing the security breaches of the day, incidents in which the victim was a woman were coded according to relevant content categories.

These categories included details about the victim as well as the aggressor such as their ages, occupations, educational levels, the relationship between them, if any, and the reported or alleged reasons of the crime. Additional data included the kind of violence, the weapons used, the region in which the crime occurred, whether legal action was taken against the aggressor, and if the victim received medical attention.

Information about legal action and medical attention to the victim were almost inexistent because the report focused on the available details of the crimes themselves. The areas were evenly spread between urban and rural

regions, with a slightly higher occurrence in cities, notably Beirut, where security reports and police patrols are more prevalent. It is to note that newspaper reports of crimes are mostly incomplete and publish only preliminary data about the nature of the crime and the victim. As will be shown in the following tables, little is reported about domestic violence, which seems to remain a private family matter.

A total of 113 incidents of violence against women were reported in a period of six months. More than one form of violence was inflicted on some of the victims totaling 134 acts which explains the discrepancy between the total in Table 1 and the other tables presented here. These forms of violence include rape, killing, mugging, kidnapping, beating, attempted rape, incest and attempted killing. As shown in table 1, rape was the most frequently reported crime (30.6%) followed by murder (25.4%) and mugging or burglary (12.7%) which sometimes included kidnapping, imprisonment, rape and/or murder. Beating represented only 6.7% and was related mostly to domestic arguments. The aggressors in these cases were an ex-husband or a member of the extended family who

coerced the victim for transfer of property or real estate, an insurance policy, or for other financial matters. One particular case involved the brother-in-law of a widow beating and raping his victim after she refused to marry him and then refused to endorse her deceased husband's insurance policy.

The reasons for the crimes were mostly unknown or not reported, i.e., 80 out of the 113, the equivalent of 71% of the sample (see Table 2). Family related conflicts, although small, formed the second largest category in the examination of reasons given by the aggressor reaching approximately 11%. In one of the cases of unwanted marriages, the father and the brother killed the victim because she wanted to marry someone from a different religion. Three crimes of honor were reported, two of which involved the killing of the victim, and the other was an unsuccessful attempt at murder. The category for other reasons (see table 2) includes violence resulting in burglary, sexual assault cases where the victims claim force and the aggressors deny it, political conflicts, burglaries, and a 'joke' that got out of hand.

The majority of reported cases, 52.2% (see Table 3), did not contain information about the relationship between the aggressor and his victim, most likely because they are unknown. Together, members of the immediate family form 28.3% of the total number of perpetrators. If members of the extended family are added they total 37.2%.

Table 1**Reasons for Violence**As reported in three Lebanese newspapers
November 1993 - March 1994

Forms of Violence	Total Number of Incidents	Percentage
Rape	41	30.6
Killing	34	25.4
Mugging / Robbery	17	12.7
Kidnapping / imprisonment	13	9.7
Beating	9	6.7
Attempted Rape	8	6.0
Incest	8	6.0
Attempted Killing	4	2.9
Total	134	100.0

Table 2**Forms of violence Against Women**As reported in three Lebanese newspapers
November 1993 - March 1994

Reasons for Violence	Number of Incidents	Percentage
Unknown / Not reported	80	70.8
Family reasons (domestic, inheritance, insurance, money, honor, religious differences, etc.)	12	10.6
Drugs / sexual assault / psychological disturbances	8	7.1
Other reasons	13	11.5
Total	113	100.0

Table 3**Relationship of Aggressors to Victims**As reported in three Lebanese newspapers
November 1993 - March 1994

Relationship	Number of Incidents	Percentage
Males in the nuclear family (father, brother, son, including one sister)	19	16.8
Husband / Ex-husband	13	11.5
Members of extended family (brother-in-law, nephew, uncle, step-son, aunt's husband)	10	8.9
Others (boyfriend, friend, employer, neighbor)	12	10.6
Unknown / Not specified	59	52.2
Total	113	100.0

Reports per
Newspaper
Al-Nahar = 52
Al-Diyar = 39
Al-Safir = 22
Total = 113

Battered Women In Lebanon

Women victims of violence are largely defenseless given their youth and consequently, their vulnerability to coercion by older males. A large proportion of the victims were reported to be below the age of 15 (Table 4), whereas their aggressors were between 21 and 30. We would have liked to examine the link, if one does exist, between the kind of violence and the age of the victim in light of the relationship between the aggressor and his victim. Such an analysis would have shed more light on the assumed sexual/incestuous nature of the crimes given the fact that a large number of the victims are below 15. The absence of a complete set of data for each case and the high range of the unknown/not reported category did not allow for statistically significant tabulations and deductions.

According to a study published in *Al-Nahar*, it was reported that the rape of minors in Lebanon total 2,671 between 1988 and 1992. Of this total, there were 970 females and 1,701 males. Further-more, the aggressors were teenagers and/or kin to the victim, such as brother or father. (1)

In addition to the existence of more than one form of violence per incident and victim, some involved more than one aggressor. According to our content analysis,

117 aggressors were involved in the 113 incidents appearing in the other tables of this report.

More in-depth investigation is needed to access the determinants and variables of the situation on violence against women in Lebanon, despite the relevance of the data presented in this study. Violence against women remains an extremely peripheral problem in Lebanon. Despite the fact that media indulge in scandals and shock stories, violence against women, especially if related to sex and do-

mestic battery, seems to remain highly linked to honor. People feel that reporting any actual or suspected violation of that honor -- whether it is of the woman's doing or is inflicted on her -- may cause more harm to the entire family. Therefore, it is not perceived as a public issue or as a social problem, but a private one. When reported, it seems as if it only concerns people and women from the lower brackets of society or who have been abandoned by their families, work as maids, or are dead.

Table 4

Age of Women Victims of Violence

As reported in three Lebanese newspapers
November 1993 - March 1994

Age of Victim	Number of Victims	Percentage
Less than 15	26	23.0
16 - 20	13	11.5
21 - 30	16	14.2
More than 30	12	10.6
Unknown / Not specified	46	40.7
Total	113	100.0

Table 5

Age of Aggressors

As reported in three Lebanese newspapers
November 1993 - March 1994

Age of Aggressors	Number of Aggressors	Percentage
up to 20	7	6.0
21 - 30	20	17.1
31 - 40	14	12.0
More than 40	10	8.5
Unknown /Not reported	66	56.4
Total	117	100.0

(1) Ibrahim al-Samsamani, *Incestuous Relations*, *Al-Nahar*, Saturday April 23, 1994.

FILE

Are Battered Women Hospitalized?

Eva Bu Melhem

By surveying hospitals in the Beirut area, we hoped to collect systematic data on the number of battered women who come to the emergency rooms. Our interest was to gather information on the socio-economic class they belong to, their physical condition, and the person who brings them in for help.

The hospitals contacted are located in various parts of the city, Beirut, and cater to people from different religious groups and socio-economic brackets. The sample includes nine hospitals: Al-Rassoul al-Aazam, and al-Sahel in the Southern suburbs, a densely populated Moslem Shiite area; Barbir Hospital and Makassed Hospital in a Moslem Sunni part of town; Jitawi, St-Georges and Hotel Dieu de France located in the eastern side of Beirut in quarters that are populated by Christians; the American University Hospital and the Middle East Hospital in the more cosmopolitan parts of the city.

The researcher approached the Emergency Room (ER) as the department most likely to admit cases of violence. The hospitals resisted giving out data about the issue despite reassurances that our interest was purely academic. Furthermore, when it was furnished, the data was based on the observation of the re-

spondent rather than in reference to hospital files. It is interesting to note that psychological disturbances were reported as being more frequent than physical injuries among women seeking medical care in emergency rooms. Nevertheless, the causes of illness did not seem to concern those reporting it.

Women who are treated for injuries of domestic violence, in the Rasoul-al-Aazam Hospital, include wives, mothers, daughters. A sixteen year old girl who attempted suicide after her father attempted to rape her, was reported as one of the cases of violence treated in the ER. The hospital called her father to double check the story. Naturally, he denied it. It was also reported that the ER of the Rassoul-al-Aazam Hospital treats three to four cases of depression among educated women, every week, and a few suicide attempts.

In the few cases of domestic violence in the ER of al-Sahel Hospital, battery cases are the most frequent. The battered women, who are brought in by neighbors, suffer from bruises and severe emotional trauma. They belong to all social and economic classes, and their ages range from sixteen to forty. Cases of attempted suicide, often, involve younger female patients. These are admitted into observation

for twenty four hours and then referred to a psychiatrist.

At the Barbir Hospital, there were no records of violence against women and a limited number of hysterical cases were reported.

At the Makassed Hospital, three cases of physical violence against women during the year were reported. The victims were brought in by parents or husbands who seemed apologetic and afraid. The patients were in the thirty year age bracket. A particular case that was treated in the hospital five months ago, was a five year old girl who was raped by her grandfather. She was brought in by her parents who were in a state of shock and her father swore that he was going to kill his own father.

The Jitawi Hospital reported very few cases of battery. The most common illness that women who come to the ER suffer from is nervous hysteria. *There is an average of ten cases a month.*

The St-Georges Hospital was unwilling to give out any information. After repeated negotiations, a nurse said: "We do not ask patients about their personal lives."

At Hotel Dieu de France, the information collected from different staff members in the ER revealed that no cases of violence were treated during April 1994. There were 10 hysteria cases

and one case of attempted suicide. The patients were brought to the ER by their parents. Their physical condition was loss of consciousness and their psychological states included neuropathic and hysterical crises.

The American University Hospital, provided little information as well. An ER staff reported a few cases of violence against women and none of rape and sexual abuse. Suicidal attempts are seasonal increasing just before the winter, the staff member noted. The female victims are young between eighteen and twenty five, and the injuries resulted from drinking parathione, demole or other poisonous products.

At the Middle East Hospital, the information was as scarce as the other hospitals. Very few cases of women suffering from injuries incurred from domestic violence were reported. Suicidal and nervous illness were more frequent and an average of 10 cases of attempted suicide are treated a month.

The resistance of hospitals to report information for determining the situation of psychical, and psychological violence against women illustrates the general reluctance of society to address the issue. Hospitals are afraid of being associated with a controversy like violence against women, which can be strongly mobilized if supported with precise numbers from their files.

— Eva Bu Melhem,
Journalist in a Lebanese
radio station

Religious Courts

Nayla Khodr Hamadeh

Husbands who physical abuse their wives are not a rare phenomenon. In fact, this type of domestic violence exists in all societies and social strata. This paper investigates the matter through interviews with Lebanese religious authorities who are familiar with relevant court cases.

Four interviews were carried with: Father Suleiman Sammour of the Catholic church, Father George Dimas of the Greek Orthodox church, Sheikh Mohammed Kanaan from the Sunni religious court and Sheikh Suleiman Ghanem from the Druze religious court. They all agree that cases of battered women exist and are not rare; however, their proportion to the total number of cases involving domestic problems varies. It ranges from being low (Catholics, Druzes) to existing in around 50 percent of court cases (Greek Orthodox) or in most court cases (Sunni).

In trying to explain this type of domestic violence, Father Sammour relates it to the oriental mentality which claims that the husband is the master of the household and thus can act as he wishes. This is not true. The wife is an equal partner in marriage and should be treated accordingly. Yet, is it in man's nature to beat his wife? No, says Father Dimas, there are always

circumstances that lead to violence and the wife is not always innocent. Many times she instigates it. The war has also had its effect on family relations. According to Sheikh Ghanem, cases of battered women presented to the Druze religious courts almost always involve at least one partner suffering from psychological problems that they (the couple) relate to the pressures, tensions and effects of the war.

It is known that not all women who suffer from battery by their husbands take their cases to courts. What are the common backgrounds of women who do? When do they address the courts? What do they seek by doing so? What are the different religious legislation that deal with these cases?

There is a common misconception that domestic violence is prevalent among the lower socio-economic classes. Hence, many assume that poverty -- being associated with

unemployment, addiction, stealing, alcoholism, and ignorance -- leads to physical violence by frustrated males. However, according to the four religious authorities, battered women who address the courts belong to all social and economic backgrounds. Rich or poor, educated or illiterate, women suffer from battery. Yet, as Sheikh Kanaan puts it, the upper class tries to hide these realities in any way they can.

It is only when the situation at home becomes unbearable and life impossible that women address the courts. It is, as if, by doing so, they cross the point of no return. What do they seek by doing so? How do the various courts and legislation handle these cases?

Among the Catholics, women usually address themselves to the Reverend Priest, who tries to reconcile the couple. Father Sammour stresses this pastoral role of the church. *We try to reconcile, and to give time to the couple to re-evaluate their marriage. When reconciliation fails, the woman files a complaint to the court. The other party (husband) is summoned, and we hear the two sides of the story. If she insists on going beyond mere complaint registration, she files a suit and asks for*

separation. To do that, the woman has to prove, through witnesses (e.g., neighbors) or through an official medical report, that she is being beaten. However, even if she does, she cannot ask for "permanent separation" or "divorce" because *physical violence, unfortunately, is not enough ground for divorce in the Catholic church unless the life of the woman is considered to be in life threatening*. She can only ask for a temporary separation, unless she has other reasons that are considered valid for divorce.

The procedures are not very different among the Greek Orthodox. Women usually address the court to register a "complaint". The religious authorities must then try to reconcile the couple and work out the differences. *This is our main job, says Father Dimas, we act first in a pastoral way*. Sometimes, reconciliation fails, and the woman pursues her suit and asks for separation. This usually happens when her life is threatened. At this stage, like in the Catholic church, she has to prove that she is being physically abused by her husband by presenting witnesses or an official medical report. In the Greek Orthodox church, too, *being battered is enough for divorce when and only when the life of the woman is in danger*, says Father Dimas.

Battered Sunni women, in most instances, address their religious courts to ask for *Nafaqa*(1) for their children and themselves. Yet, many times, it is also to ask for separation and hence the right to keep their chil-

dren. According to Sheikh Kanaan, *a battered woman can file a court suit against her husband and ask for separation (divorce) even if the Usma(2) is in his hands*.

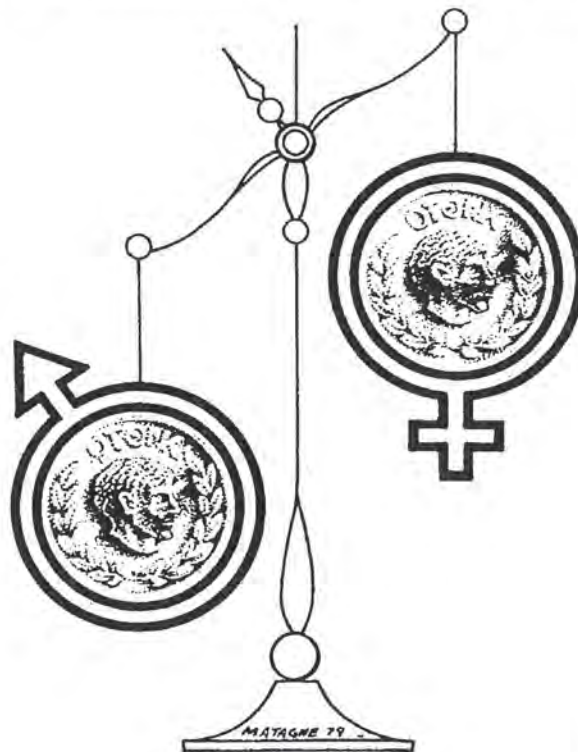
Among the Druzes, the woman usually addresses the court after physical separation has already occurred. Usually, her aim is to register a complaint and ask for *Nafaqa*, especially when there are children. This, according to Sheikh Ghanem, is in most instances, the first step towards complete separation, i.e. divorce. In the Druze religious courts, physical abuse presents enough ground for the woman to ask for divorce and the husband takes all the responsibility meaning that she gets all her rights. It is interesting to note that, for the Druze, the only legal form of separation between husband and wife is an irrevocable di-

vorce, unlike other Lebanese sects which allow for annulment, temporary or permanent separation.

Among Sunnis and Druzes, battered women have to prove, through witnesses and medical reports, that violent abuse is occurring, in order to pursue their court suits.

To sum up, it seems that among the four sects involved in this study, a woman has to prove battery in order to file a suit against her husband. Even when she does, this does not mean that she will eventually get separation. It is only among the Druzes that battery, when proven, is considered enough ground for divorce. A question raises itself at this stage: Is the situation the same among other Lebanese sects? This remains for future research to determine.

Nayla Khodr Hamadeh



**There are
always
circumstances
that lead to
violence
and the
wife is not
always
innocent.**

(1) *Nafaqa* is the financial obligation of the husband towards his wife from the day of their marriage through the divorce and until the *Idda* or the three months period following the divorce are over.

(2) *Usma* is the right for divorce. The one who holds the *Usma* is entitled to initiate divorce proceedings.

An Islamic Discourse

With Sayyed Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah

Adele Khudr

A colleague pointed out that Sayyed Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah said *The husband has the right to beat his wife*, in his book *Islamic Contemplation About Women*(1). Shocked, I decided to probe into the matter. After reading the book, an interview seemed necessary with this eloquent and learned Moslem Shiite figure who believes that discourse is a primary condition for consolidating our beliefs and that no topic is too 'sacred' for discussion. Sayyed Fadlallah was sure to provide explanations about the tenants of Islam related to the husband's right to beat his wife. It is important to note that the specific issue at hand examines the conditions whereby the Islamic Shari'a, according to a Shiite interpretation, justifies physical punishment of an 'uncooperative' wife. Lack of cooperation refers to the wife's refusal of having sexual intercourse with her husband or, what Sayyed Fadlallah calls, rebellion against her husband.

To Sayyed Fadlallah, the issue of violence against women reflects all other forms of violence in the world; a world where force is inflicted on the weak by the strong. Hence, historical trends in the evolution of violence have culminated in discerning women as weak and inferior and men as strong and superior. Violence against women, therefore, is not limited to a specific culture or eth-

nic group. According to Fadlallah, the violence that men inflict on their wives emulates a universal aspect of women's subordination. He associates subordination with ambiguous situations that women put themselves in, as a result of their passive dependence on men. Using the example of the media, the Sayyed notes that women reinforce their own subordination by as-

certaining sexually suggestive images. Hence, excessive emphasis on the female and lesser attention to the male body suggest inequality, and one feels that they are totally dependent on men.

When it comes to how Islam interprets violence against women, Sayyed Fadlallah, said beating is permitted only under one strict condition: **When the wife does not respond to her husband, sexually, and rebels against him; when she refuses to have intercourse, which she should comply to at all times, unless she has an excuse or any circumstances, which prevent her from doing it.** It is worth noting that, according to Sayyed Fadlallah, a woman has the right to abstain from intercourse in certain situations. She has the right and the authority to specify these conditions in the marriage contract. Consequently, the husband will have no authority over her. Sayyed Fadlallah explains that this provision is not, however, widely used because very few are aware of it, creating, thus, another discrepancy between theory and practice in Islam.

Dwelling further on the husband's right to beat his wife, Sayyed Fadlallah warns against interpretations which overlook the two inherent aspects of

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the situation: first, the existence of rebellion by the wife and second the means available to the husband for dealing with it. He explains that culturally and historically, patterns of male sexuality are known for being plural and multiple while those of women are monogamous. Hence, their sexual drives differ, men's being more immediate like the need for food and drink, whereas, in women, it is regulated by other circumstantial

mechanisms and conditions. Therefore, the instinctual drive of men being stronger than that of women and marriage being the only legal social and religious institution that satisfies and regulates sexual matters, women must respond to their husbands' request for sexual fulfilment.

Hence, what is a man to do when his wife rebels against those duties that are meant to protect the marriage and the family? asks Sayyed Fadlallah. What are the means available to a husband for dealing with the situation if his wife rebels, refusing to satisfy his sexual needs? The husband has a number of alternatives before resorting to beating his wife, which is the last course of action. The first is based on verbal communication whereby the husband reminds and lectures his partner about her role and duties as a wife. The second involves punishing her by rejecting her both physically and psychologically. If these al-

ternatives do not resolve the problem, the solution being that the wife recants her rebellion and listens to reason, the husband has the right to beat her. The following verse from the Koran indicates: And admonish those you fear may be rebellious; banish them to their couches and beat them. If they obey you, look not for any other way against them (Surat al-Nisa', verse 34). Interpretations of the Koran stress that the beating



should not be violent, should avoid the face and should not cause bruises (al-Zamakhshari, al-Khashaf, vol. 1, pg. 507).

Sayyed Fadlallah mentions other courses of action, which may sound more conventional to us. But, as he listed them, he indicated that they are not solutions as such. For instance, the husband may decide to take a second wife, which, according to the Sayyed, does not solve the problem should the

other wife develop the same attitude. Or, the husband may take the matter to (religious) court, which is not likely to interfere in what it considers a personal and intimate matter between spouses. He may resort to divorce, which is more of an escape mechanism than a solution. Sayyed Fadlallah explains the inadequacy of these alternatives saying that a solution should be based on realistic grounds for preserving and protecting the marriage.

Sayyed Fadlallah presents also another argument which authorizes the husband to be the decision-maker, by virtue of his role as the financial provider, the husband has the right to use force in order to preserve the marriage. By so doing, he is protecting it from a worse kind of violence, that of ruining the lives of those affected by the conflict. Sayyed Fadlallah considers that, in this sense, Islam uses a realistic approach to the problem of violence between husband and wife.

I then proceeded to ask Sayyed Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah about the difference between violence against women in the Western world and the Third world. According to him, the West concentrates on publically condemning forms of violence against women while it continues to live in a general atmosphere of violence. This is evident in the increasing number of reported rape, murder and domestic abuse, he says. Whereas, the Third world, in general, and the Arab

What is a man to do when his wife rebels against those duties that are meant to protect the marriage and the family?

(1) Sayyed Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah. 1993. **Islamic Contemplations About Women: Ta'amulat Islamiyah Hawl al-Mara'**. Beirut: Dar al-Kalima.

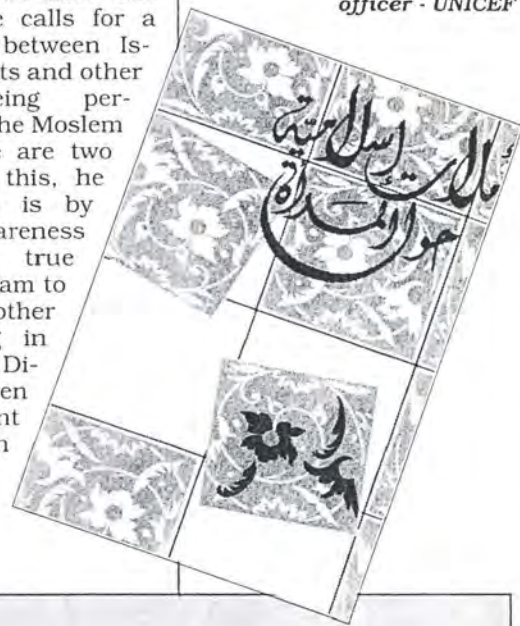
world, in particular, do not use force against women, arbitrarily. Often it occurs within specific traditional paradigms. Hence, women are beaten and even killed by a father, brother, son, nephew, or husband when they violate specific norms and values related to family honor.

Sayyed Fadlallah goes on to deliberate about Islam and the women's liberation movement. He stresses that Islam, contrary to what is believed, perceives of the woman as an independent human being. It is not decreed that she must obey a man because she is a woman. A woman has the right to refuse or accept to marry

the man. She is culturally independent and Islam does not prohibit her from working. Sayyed Fadlallah strongly stresses that the moral values and principles of Islam are the same for both men and women. He calls for a comparison between Islamic concepts and other notions being perpetuated in the Moslem world. There are two ways to do this, he says. One is by raising awareness about the true outlook of Islam to women; the other by engaging in discourse. Dialogue between the different trends, both

religious and secular, is the only constructive means for understanding the different concepts.

— Adele Khudr,
Anthropologist,
officer - UNICEF



Sayyed Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah

Sayyed Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah was born in 1936 in Najaf, Iraq. He is originally from the village of Ainata in South Lebanon. His father, Sayyed Abd al-Ra'ouf Fadlallah was a reputable religious leader. The Fadlallah family came from the holy city of Mecca and its lineage dates back to the Imam Hasan son of the Imam Ali bin Abi Taleb.

Sayyed Fadlallah attended primitive schools known as al-Katatib for two years, before moving into the tutorship of leading Islamic Ulamas, such as Sayyed al-Khou' and Sayyed Mohsen al-Hakim. He received the degree of Ijtihad at twenty eight. He then returned to Lebanon, and founded a school of religion, in the quarter of al-Nabba' in Beirut. He moved to the southern suburbs of the city, where he continues to reside, after the siege over Nabaa' during the civil war in Lebanon. In the suburbs he created a popular

Islamic movement that promotes dialogue, discourse and creates awareness among different classes and groups of people. Through the movement, Sayyed Fadlallah emphasizes the need to raise an educated and cultured youth and generation of Moslems.

Sayyed Fadlallah has over forty publications, of which the explanation of the Koran is the most important. He is also the founder of a philanthropic association, known as "Jamiyat al-Mabarat al-Khairiyah," which acts as a umbrella over at least ten smaller associations for the welfare of orphans and the education of the youth.

To many, Sayyed Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, is political recognized in association with the Hizbollah, the Party of God. However, his public appearances focus on socio-religious issues.

Domestic Violence Against Women in Jordan

Arwa Aamiry

A Jordanian weekly recently reported that a man surrendered to the police and confessed to slaughtering his daughter 'like a sheep'. He killed her because she was pregnant, even though the lover was willing to marry her. As soon as the father found out about the pregnancy, he went home, asked the visitors present to leave, took a sharp knife from the kitchen and dragged his daughter to the roof where he slaughtered her.

What is of relevance here is not the fact that honor crimes are still common in Arab society at the end of the twentieth century, but that the verdict of the courts does not seem to sanction such practices. Her lover was not considered guilty since she had accepted his advances. The father was found guilty of killing his daughter, but since she had violated traditions, values and customs, and got her father 'beyond himself', his punishment consisted of six days in prison starting with the day of her death and the confiscation of the murder weapon.

Thus, not only was a woman slaughtered like a sheep, not only did tradition condemn her behav-

ior, but also by the legal system, lawyers and judges. For most people, particularly for women and children, 'the family is the most violent group to which they are likely to belong. Despite fears from the contrary, it is not a stranger but so-called loved ones who are most likely to assault, rape or murder' (Dobash and Dobash, 1979, p.7).

The aim of this article is to present research findings on family violence in Jordan conducted in 1988, by the Center for Women's Studies at the University of Jordan. The aim of the research was to compile data that would stand as evidence for the existence of domestic violence and support strate-

gies for raising public awareness on the issue.

Members of the center searched for evidence of the existence of violence in the Jordanian family. However, as is the case in many countries, facts were not available. There were only indications of one or another form of violence in the family. Women are generally unwilling to speak up. They are often ashamed and blame themselves thinking they had provoked the men. Women also want to project a good impression about their marriages and therefore prefer to keep silent.

However, in spite of the silence that surrounds family violence, the members of The Center for Women's Studies did find indicators upon talking to psychiatrists, lawyers, hospitals and the police who confirmed the existence of domestic violence, but none had any data on its extent or severity.

A questionnaire was distributed to 56 students at the University of Jordan. Violence was defined as: 'any behavior that aims at subjugating and controlling another person through intimidation, threat, psychologi-

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85 murders were reported in 1989 in Jordan. The killer was identified in 75 cases, including 72 men and 3 women. The victim was a woman in 31 of the 72 cases.

cal, verbal or physical means.' **The Power and Control Wheel** (the figure on the next page) specifying type of abuse was included to help respondents recognize the type of violence occurring in their home, if applicable. An enclosed matrix also served to help them identify the violator and the victim.

Eighty six percent of the students answered in the affirmative to the question: 'Is there abuse of any kind in your family?' Intimidation was the form of violence that prevailed among 75 percent of the students. The second most common form of violence was emotional abuse, which 40 percent of the students claimed was practiced in their families. Physical abuse was reported by 33 percent. It is important to note that the same student/person is often subjected to more than one form of violence. Abuse of the mother was ascertained by 50 percent of the students and it reached the point of physical violence in 21 percent of the families.

These data are similar to the ones published in a report of a group of experts meeting to discuss the issue of violence against women. The meeting was set by the United Nations and resulted in recognizing that violence against women in the family and society is pervasive and cuts across income levels, class and cultural lines.

When the matrix was filled, the hierarchy of abuse became clear: the father abuses everybody,

the mother abuses the children, the male children abuse the female children. In 1989, my students and I looked into homicide cases in the family. The Jordanian society is known to be safe, and non-violent. It did not surprise the police that only 85 murders were reported in 1989. The killers were identified in 75 cases, and included 72 men and 3 women. The victim was a woman in 31 out of the 72 cases. In all of these crimes the killer was a close member of the family, namely the father, the son or the husband.

The important conclu-

When the matrix was filled, the hierarchy of abuse became clear: The father abuses everybody, the mother abuses the children, the male children abuse the female children.

sion to be drawn from this research on homicide is 'that an extraordinary proportion of killings take place in the home and that women are much more likely than men to be slain in their roles as wives or inmates than men as husbands' (Dobash and Dobash, 1979, p. 17).

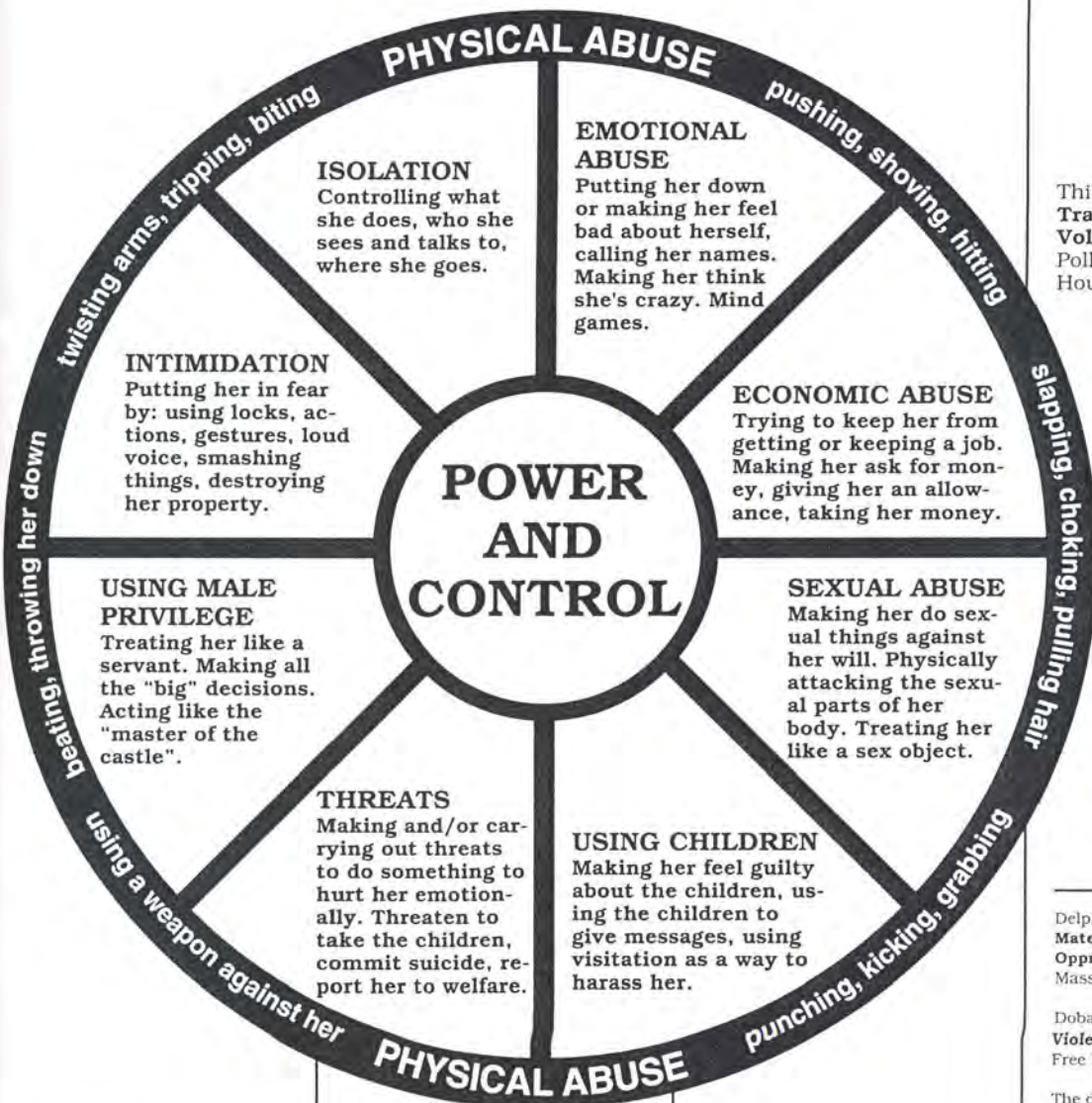
It is important to reiterate that the findings of this study should be treated with caution because the sample is relatively small and the data are based on the children's accounts of violence in the family, and not that of the mother. More comprehen-

sive research is needed to determine, more accurately, the prevalence of domestic violence.

It is also incorrect to say that only social misfits abuse members of their families. 'Seeking the causes and sources of violence and crime through emphasis on pathological individuals or deviant relationships has been an important activity of those who would ignore that violence is endemic.' (Dobash and Dobash, 1979, p. 17). The fact that 86 percent of the families on a group of students at the University of Jordan witness abuse in their families indicates that violence is a norm not an exception. Subjugation of women to accept, internalize and, in due time reinforcing the corresponding social norms takes place early in their lives.

Acts of violence can be understood only in the context of the hierarchy of family authority. That the socio-cultural patriarchal system uses violence to maintain its order became a public issue recently. American Judge William Sweeney posed the question: 'Why do we have so many victims of battery?' Answering the question, he stated: 'This society, historically, presumes men's superiority. If you grant this presumption, then superiority has to be validated if challenged. How do you validate it? Ultimately with physical force' (Sweeney, 1981).

Power differentials between men and women, which are internalized



This figure is taken from **A Training Manual for Volunteers** (p.32) by M. Pollock, 1984. Woman House, St. Cloud, MN.

Delphy, C. 1984. *Close to Home: A Materialistic Analysis of Women's Oppression*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Dobash R.E. and R.P. Dobash, 1978. *Violence Against Wives*. New York: Free Press.

The data reported in this paper are similar to the ones in a report that was presented to an expert group on violence against women in a meeting set by the United Nations office at Vienna. **Center for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, Division for the Advancement of Women**. Vienna, November 11-15, 1991.

Ilawi, M.J. 'A Father Confesses to Murdering his Daughter in Defense of his Honour.' *Shihan*, Weekly Political and Social News. p.39. No. 499, May 14-20, 1994.

Sweeney, W. **The Need for Policy Development in Domestic Assault Cases**. March 11, 1981. Conference on Duluth Criminal Justice Intervention in Domestic Assault Cases. Cited by Ellen Pence, 'The Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project.' *Hamilton Law Review*. 1983. 6, p. 247-275.

maintained and perpetuated by the women's silence. Something must be done to stop the abuse of women in the home.

— *Dr. Arwa Aamiry,*
Professor
Department of
Psychology
University of Jordan
Amman, Jordan

through socialization of both sexes, is the primary variable that preserve inequality. It is reinforced by the patriarchal rule, which is essentially a social structure of subordinating women to men (Delphy, 1984).

The function of the patriarchal system has been and continues to exert a strong influence on the persistence of battering women in the family. It is

Man stabs divorced sister in fit of anger

By Rana Husseini

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN -- A 25-year-old Wihdat woman was stabbed by her brother Friday and was listed in critical condition, according to the Civil Defence Department (CDD) and family sources.

The woman, identified as Taghrid A., had had an argument with her husband, who immediately divorced her the same day (Friday).

The woman, a mother of two, sought refuge at her brother's house, according to family sources.

A Family member told the Jordan Times, an argument erupted between the brother, identified as M.A., and his

sister regarding Taghrid's fight with her husband.

According to the family member, the brother asked his sister to return to her husband's house. The woman refused, the source said, and when the argument reached a deadlock M.A. drew a knife and stabbed his sister in the stomach several times.

The woman was rushed to Al Bashir Hospital for treatment. Hospital sources told the Jordan Times that the woman's condition is critical.

According to relatives, the woman's brother is being held by police pending further investigations.

Police refused to give details of the incident.

Victim of incestuous rape killed by second brother

By Rana Husseini

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN -- A 16-year old girl Monday was stabbed to death in Jabal Hashemi Shamali by her 31-year-old brother for adultery with another brother in Al-Zagult suburb, according to police and family sources.

The woman, identified as Kifaya D. received several stabs to the neck and chest, inflicted by her brother Khalid, who surrendered to police shortly after the killing. A close relative of the victim told the Jordan Times Tuesday.

According to the relative, Kifaya was raped by her younger brother Mohammad, (22) six months ago, and he threatened to kill her if she told her family.

Two months later, Kifaya discovered that she was pregnant, the relative said, adding that she was then obliged to explain her condition to her family and reveal that she had been raped by her brother.

When her brother Mohammad heard that his sister revealed the rape to the family, he tried to kill her by cutting her wrist, said the relative.

Another family member Khalid, in his testimony to police, he said family and relatives urged him to kill his sister to "cleanses the family honour because she had been raped by her brother."

The relative said Khalid told police he went to the family house at about 1:00 a.m. Tuesday, took hold of a kitchen knife, found his sister and asked her to pray to God before stabbing her to death.

The next door neighbour went out to check what was happening, he said he saw Khalid waving a knife in the air and shouting. "There I have cleansed my family's honour."

The neighbour said that Khalid's relatives, who gathered to witness the event, started ululating and praising Khalid.

According to the neighbour, a family member told Khalid, "you have done a good job, well done."

Another witness told the Jordan Times that Kifaya's body was mutilated, and some parts of her stomach were removed and scattered about her.

Police confirmed the killing and said both brothers were in custody pending further investigation into the case. By they declined to release any further information.

Kifaya is the 12th woman to be reported killed in a "crime of honour" in Jordan this year.

Kifaya was one of ten siblings in a family where the father had abandoned the mother, said a relative.

Woman found dead in Zarqa

Jordan Times

A 35-year-old woman was found dead Monday with eight bullet wounds to her body, according to Civil Defence reports.

The woman identified as S.I.A., was a resident of the Masoum suburb of Zarqa.

A civil defense official told the Jordan Times that the woman was killed in a crime of honour by her uncle, identified as I.A.

Police declined comment on the crime.

Clippings from Jordan

June 1, 1994

15-year-old girl killed in 'crime of honour'

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN -- A 15-year-old shepherd girl Friday was shot and killed by her brother in Jiza, a small town near Queen Alia International Airport, according to family sources.

Khawla M., was shot several times by her 25-year-old brother Ibrahim M., who surrendered to police immediately after the killing, the mother of the girl told the Jordan Times.

According to the mother, Ibrahim received an anonymous letter saying that his sister was having an affair with someone. She said, her son, "without investigat-

ing the letter or finding out its source" showed it to his father.

The mother said her husband gave Ibrahim his licensed gun and asked him to go kill his sister to "cleanse the family honour." The mother said she was baking bread outdoors Friday evening when she heard several gun shots. The woman said she rushed into the tent where she lived with her 18 children and husband and found her daughter lying in a pool of blood.

The woman expressed anger over her daughter's death because, she said, Khawla was a well-behaved girl.

"I don't have any idea who would send such a letter to my son, because my daughter never saw anyone, and she did not have any enemies," the mother told the Jordan Times.

"But I also believe in fate, and my daughter's fate was to die, and we can't question God's wishes," she added.

According to the woman, the family buried the girl on Saturday, while her son was still in police custody for further investigation in the case.

Police would only confirm the incident, and declined to give details.

May 8, 1994

Mother of 14 children killed by brother - CDD

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN -- A 37-year-old Jerash woman Saturday was shot and killed by her inebriated brother in Burma, a small town of Jerash, according to Civil Defence Department (CDD) reports.

The woman identified as Layla M. A., was shot seven times by her brother Nawaf M.A., who surrendered to police shortly after the killing, a CDD official said.

The official said the victim, the mother of 14 children was accused two years ago of adultery, and her husband divorced her.

The woman was acquitted of the adultery charges a year-later and was reunited with her husband, the CDD official said.

Later, said the official, the husband again divorced the woman, and she was obliged to live with her brother.

According to the brother's testimony, said the CDD official, the suspect (42) said that someone told him that his sister was seeing a man in Jerash town.

The brother said he went out and got drunk, returned home and shot his sister.

According to CDD the report the woman died instantly of bullet wounds to the chest.

Her body was taken to Jerash Military Hospital and was later transferred to Al Bashir Hospital for an autopsy.

Jerash police declined to comment on the crime.

April 3, 1994

Brother kills sister, drops nephew in the street

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN -- Zarqa police have revealed a murder case which involves the divorced mother of a reportedly missing child.

Zarqa police have detained a suspect in connection with a crime that was committed two weeks ago and involved a wandering child whose whereabouts had been advertised in the local papers by the police on Dec. 15. The two-year-old was found in the Zarqa streets on his own.

Police sources said that after placing the advertisement with the boy's picture

in local newspapers, a Zarqa citizen was able to identify the boy and told the police that he knew the child lived with his father abroad.

Acting on the information from the witness, police started investigating the case and learned that the brother of the mother had committed the crime.

A police source the Jordan Times the brother confessed to having killed his sister because she was frequently leaving the house without his knowledge and he suspected she was seeing somebody. That made him kill her.

The brother, who has not been identified, told the po-

lice on Dec. 10, he killed her. He went with his sister (the victim) by the Zarqa stream and after an argument about her suspected behaviour he picked a sharp object and hit the victim with it several times on her head. This caused her death. The suspect then buried his sister at the scene of the crime and took the two-year-old child to the city market in Zarqa and left him there. He was later picked up by the police.

According to a police official in Zarqa, the child is being held at a child care centre in Zarqa until the investigations are over.

Many important studies by women and men in the last few years depict a link between sexuality and national/ international conflicts.

Gender and Violence in Lebanon and Yugoslavia

Evelyne Accad

The connection between admired masculinity and violent response to threat is a resource that governments can use to mobilize support for war.

It has become a matter of urgency for humans as a group to undo the tangle of relationships that sustains the nuclear arms race. Masculinity is part of this tangle. It will not be easy to alter. The pattern of an arms race, i.e. mutual threat, itself helps sustain an aggressive masculinity.

Bob Connell, "Masculinity, Violence and War."

I would like to examine some of the connections between issues of gender violence and illustrate them with specific examples from Lebanon and Yugoslavia. Both countries have, in the last few years, experienced some of the most dramatic forms of war and violence. I would also like to consider peace as an alternative, more specifically: non-violence and social change, peace activism, human rights, disarmament, international peace organizations, various resistance and peace movements as they are expressed in the spe-

cific geographical areas of this study. Hybridity and plurality are also seen as real alternatives to violence. For this presentation, I refer, extensively, to the issue of *Mediterranean Peoples on Yugoslavia (Peuples Méditerranéens: Yougoslavie / Logiques de l'Exclusion, no. 61, oct-déc. 1992)*. It contains articles by women and men from Yugoslavia establishing the connection between gender, violence and war, in addition to my own work on *Sexuality and War: Literary Masks of the Middle East* (New York, New

York University Press, 1991).

Many important studies by women and men in the last few years depict a link between sexuality and national/international conflicts. For example, Jean-William Lapierre sees a "deep connection between masculine predominance and the importance of war." (1) According to him, most civilizations are based on conquest and war. The importance of hunting, then of war in social existence, in economic resources, in cultural models (which valorize the warrior exploits), are at the roots of masculine domination and of women's oppression." (2) He explains how in so-called "modern" societies, politics, industry, business, are always a kind of war where one (mostly men, and sometimes women imitating men's behavior) must be energetic and aggressive to be powerful. It is not only capitalist societies which "carry war like clouds carry the storm, but productivism in all its forms, including the so-called 'socialistic' one. In all societies in which economy and politics re-

quire a spirit of competition (while its ethic exalts it) women are oppressed."(3) In her preface to a compilation of articles on "Women's Struggles and National Liberation", Miranda Davies states that "as they begin to recognize and identify the specific nature of their double oppression, many women in the Third World realize that, when needed, they may join guerrilla movements, participate in the economy, enter politics and organize trade unions, but at the end of the day they are still seen as women, second-class citizens, inferior to men, bearers of children, and domestic servants"(4). And Zarana Papic in "Ex-citizen of Ex-Yugoslavia," (5) notices how women's condition in ex-Yugoslavia worsened because of the war. Their absence from all decisions, even those directly concerning themselves, such as abortion and other rights, is dramatically noticeable. In the elected parliaments, they make up 13% in Slovenia, 4.5% in Croatia, 4% in Montenegro, 3.3% in Macedonia, 2.9% in Bosnia Herzegovina, and 1.6% in Serbia. On the other hand, they have become mothers of refugees by the thousands. And Helke Sander in "A Male War to the Extreme,"(6) remarks that women in the Yugoslav war are not organized, their opinion is not taken into account, they do not express their views and are not represented politically.

Nationalism is a difficult notion about which much is written. In both East and West, old and modern concepts, nationalism is a complex com-

ponent of revolutionary discourse. It can move among all the various facets of political power. For example, nationalism in one extreme form can be fascism. In "Fascisme et mystification misogynne," Therese Vial-Mannessier gives us a summary of Maria-Antonietta Macciocchi's analysis of fascist ideology in Italy from and throughout the feminine universe. The collective irrational is at work in all human groups. Conscious and unconscious forces led the masses to fascism from a transcendence of the individual ego into total allegiance to the Italian Nation. First victims of this racism, women adhered to it through a masochism ready for all possible sacrifices.

While nationalism has been necessary for the young Arab states gaining their autonomy from colonialism, it nevertheless, like fascism, "reclaimed many of the most patriarchal values of Islamic traditionalism as integral to Arab cultural identity as such."(7) Mai Ghousoub in "Feminism--or the Eternal Masculine--in the Arab world," states that "the political rights of women, nominally granted by the national state, are in practice a dead letter. Thus, they are military dictatorships of one kind or another, in which the suffrage has no meaning. "Her analysis explains how:

Colonialism was lived by the Arabs not simply as a domination or oppression, but as a usurpation of power. The principal victims of this complex were to be Arab women. For the cult of a grandiose past, and the

'superiority of our values to those of the West', inevitably led to a suffocating rigidity of family structures and civil codes. Everywhere, under the supposedly modernizing regimes of 'national revolution', the laws governing the domestic and private sphere -- marriage, divorce, children --continue to be based on the Shari'a. The justification of this relentlessly retrograde nexus is always the same.

Helke Sander notices how in Yugoslavia, the strongest and dominant parties express extreme forms of nationalistic ideology, which reject other models." They are activists, traditionalist, patriarchal, sexist in their programs, their models of organization, their language, their accents, their omissions, their blind spots. " (p. 208) Civil society is the first victim of this *totalitarian domineering nationalistic ideology*. Ex-Yugoslavia which used to be, like Lebanon -- a country where various ethnic, cultural, religious groups lived in tolerance and relative autonomy and harmony compared to their neighbors--has become a country in which human rights, and specially women's rights are threatened. Women are looked at almost exclusively as reproductive bodies. "We are, she says, in presence of the primitive scene which destroys and pushes away all notion of women's freedom because men are on the battlefields and women with their children are elsewhere sheltered from the shooting."(pp. 209-210) Sander goes on to explain how the incredible irrationality at work is a rational manipulation to accept the dom-

(1) Jean-William Lapiere et Anne-Marie de Vilaine, "Femmes: une oppression millénaire," **Alternatives Non-Violentes: Femmes et Violences**, (no. 40) p. 21.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 22.

(4) Miranda Davies, **Third World Women: Second Sex** (London: Zed, 1983) p. iii.

(5) Zarana Papic, "Ex-citoyennes dans l'Ex-Yugoslavie," **Yugoslavie, Logiques de L'Exclusion/Peuples Méditerranéens** no 61, oct-déc. 1992, p. 207.

(6) Helke Sander, "Une Guerre de Males à l'Extrême," **Yugoslavie, Logiques de L'Exclusion/Peuples Méditerranéens** no 61, oct-déc. 1992, p. 201.

(7) Mai Ghousoub, "Feminism--or the Eternal Masculine--in the Arab World," **New Left Review**, 161, London, p. 8.

Women
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 ence"
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inant exclusive nationalistic ideology. She asserts that all "nationalism with their political, military strategies are built and depend on aggressive, dominant masculinity turned towards violence... all ideologies and nationalistic strategies are founded on that type of aggressive masculine, sadistic, 'virile' to the degree of crime; it is the main source of recruitment of males capable of committing all imaginable and unimaginable atrocities." (p. 210) And Rada Ivekovic asserts "the fundamental hypothesis that radical nationalism is a mechanism of binary oppositions which, in the long term, invariably leads to war. Because women are less anguished about their internal frontiers and the limits of their bodies, they are more peaceful concerning outside (political) frontiers, all this having to do with identity and the way the subject (the one who acts) is built. Women are biologically and socially more open to the acceptance of the Other in themselves (the sexual act and pregnancy)." (p. 189)

Other analyses see nationalism as closely connected to national economy. Thus, it is given a transnational dimension through multinational corporate domination. A whole issue of *Peuples Méditerranéens* is devoted to these relations. It questions whether we are witnessing "The End of the National?"--title of the issue--(8) moving into the era of the transnational? Is a world polity conceivable? What is the connection between development and consumption as a new way of relating to the

world, the urban as a universal form, the intensification of migrant workers and the national? What do the State, the nation and their specific articulation of the previous Capitalist period of development become? Isn't a new bipartition of the world, crossing all social formations, substituting the old center/periphery division? Several authors answer these questions and bring to light some important aspects of the national. In "From a transnational order to a world polity?" Paul Vieille sees the nation -- a solidarity group led by a State aiming at defending the interests of its members against other NationStates --being replaced by transborder solidarities, such as Moslems, disinherited, poor, the urban masses of the periphery. This transnational is not yet structured but works in the feelings and imagination of the masses. The role of a State is no longer to organize a nation against other nations, but to manage the relations between the fractions of the periphery and the transnational. Whether we, or the Third World countries, want it or not, this is what is happening now. The national works against the transnational, the national remains the geographic space, the social symbolic of movements struggling against transnational economy.

In the Middle East and elsewhere, nationalism and feminism have never mixed very well. Women were used in national liberation struggles -- Algeria, Iran, Palestine, to name only a few -- only to be sent back to their kitchens after "independence" had been gained.

(9) As Monique Gadant expressed in her Introduction to *Women of the Mediterranean*:

Nationalism asked of women a participation that they were quick to give, they fought and were caught in the trap. For nationalism is frequently conservative, even though it appears to be an inevitable moment of political liberation and economic progress in which women need to advance along the path to their own liberation...What does it mean for women to be active in political organizations? The example of Algerian women is there to remind all women that participation does not necessarily win them rights. From the point of view of those women contributors who have grown up after a war of liberation, everything is still to be done.(10)

It would seem that we need to redefine nationalism rather than dismiss it as a corruptive force. In the case of Lebanon and Yugoslavia, countries mosaic in ethnic groups and religions, what political entity could help bring them unity? If nationalism were to mean belief in one's country as an entity to be loved for itself, left to develop and flourish outside of selfish interests, if it meant love for the earth without ownership and possession. If all the various parties trying to dominate small pieces of territory were to unite under this love, I believe we could move toward a solution. And this is where I see feminism and nationalism blending.

To those who believe that it is utopia to think that the two, feminism

and nationalism, can ever mix. I would like to suggest first, that it has never been tried since sexuality has never been conceptualized as being at the center of the problem. Second, if an analysis of sexuality and sexual relations is truly incorporated into revolutionary struggles, then nationalism can be transformed into more revolutionary strategies. If women were to demand their rights, a transformation of values and roles in the family at the beginning of national struggles, and if national struggles were conceived with different aims that do not perpetuate domination and ownership, we would move toward a different concept of revolution. If this is utopia, I gladly go along with Jean-William La-pierre's beautifully expressed concept of the role of utopia in general, and more specifically in social life. He convincingly says that "utopia is the exploration of the possible."(11)

How is sexuality articulated and mixed in the violence and wars we have witnessed and are witnessing in Lebanon and Yugoslavia? Arab society in general, and Lebanese in particular, have always taken pride in the *za'im* (leader, chief, hero). The *za'im* is the macho man par excellence. Not only does he embody all the usual masculine values of conquest, domination, competition, fighting, and boasting, but also that of *shatara* (cleverness). *Shatara* means to succeed and get what one wants, even through lying and perfidy. *Za'im* and *shatara* are concepts much valued in tribal society. The Lebanese war has trans-

formed the *za'im* into the *askari* (military-man). The *askari* has technical training, and his goal is the "self-preservation" of his group. In addition to his military role and his economic-social function, he played and continues to play a role that is violently destructive of his country, and therefore of his sexuality. He uses weapons of war to destroy and seize control of one region or group. He participates in looting to benefit his clientele or family and to extend the range of his influence. Given the extension of his influence, he builds a system of wealth distribution and gains even more power. Material goods and gains are obtained through his gun and other war arsenals. It is a "primitive" system and a viciously destructive cycle, rather than a self-preserving one. The more men desire omnipotence and control of others, the more weapons are used. The means of conquest are given a value in proportion to their success. The gun, the machine-gun, the cannon -- all masculine sexual symbols which are extensions of the phallus -- are put forward and used to conquer and destroy. For Adam Farrar, there is a kind of *jouissance* (means pleasure in a sexual sense, has no equivalent word in English) in war:

One of the main features of the phenomenology of war is the unique intensity of experience. War experience is exactly the converse of alienation. In war, the elimination of all the norms of intersubjectivity produces, not alienation, but the most intense jouissance. The machining of

events on the plane of intensity (to use the Deleuzian image), the form of desire, is utterly transformed. Power no longer consists in the capacity to redeem the warrants of communicative intersubjectivity. It consists in the ability of the spear, the sword, the gun, napalm, the bomb etc. to manifest 'in a blast of sound and energy and light' (or in another time, in the blood of a severed limb or a disembowelled body), the merest 'wish flashing across your mind like a shadow'. (12)

Farrar continues, quoting an article by William Broyles in *Esquire* entitled "Why Men Love War," that it is at some terrible level, for men, the closest thing to what childbirth is for women: the initiation into the power of life and death.(13).

Elisabeth Badinter makes the same connection between the experience of childbirth and war:

The word ponos, designating endured pain, applies as much to a young man learning to harden himself as to the pains of childbirth. In this struggle, the woman inverts certain signs of virility. 'In order to confront war and to gain access to the status of citizen, the Greek man buckles up; while a woman in labor, on the contrary, loosens her belt..... Nevertheless, even reversed, the sign connecting maternity to combat is there.' In both cases, man and woman suffer and risk death. Enough to raise themselves to the same level of transcendence. Enough to make the resemblance win over the differences. Across two activities ap-

- (8) *Peuples Méditerranéens* (Paris, 1986, nos 35-36). See in particular "The double aspect of the transnational category," by Yann Moullet-Boutang, p.5; "The production of dictatorships in the Third World," by Laënnec Hurbon, p. 13; "The national metaphor: from independence to alienation," by Hele Beji, p. 27; "Transnationalization and the reinforcement of the State order," by René Gallissot, p. 49; "The disappointments of the International New Economic Order and economic transnationality," by Serge Latouche, p. 83; "Human rights, the transnational order and women," by Christine Fauré, p. 179; and "From a transnational order to world polity?" by Paul Vieille, p. 309.
- (9) See Davies' *Third World: Second Sex*. "The Role of Women in National Liberation Movements," pp. 61-96, in particular Soraya Antonius' "Fighting on Two Fronts: Conversations with Palestinian Women", p. 63; "The Experience of Armed Struggle," pp. 97-124; "After the Revolution," pp. 125-172, in particular "Iranian Women: The Struggle Since the Revolution," by the London Iranian Women's Liberation Group, p. 143; and "An Autonomous Women's Movement?" pp. 173-194, in particular "Why an Autonomous Women's Movement?", by the Paris Latin American Women's Group, p. 175.
- (10) Monique Gadant, "Introduction," *Women of the Mediterranean* (London: Zed, 1986) p. 2.
- (11) Lapiere, "Femmes: une oppression millénaire," *Alternatives Non Violentes: Femmes et Violences*, No. 40, printemps 81, p. 25.
- (12) Adam Farrar, "War, Machining Male Desire," *War/Masculinity* (ed. Paul Patton, Ross Poole, Sydney: Intervention) p. 66.
- (13) *Ibid.*, p. 61.

René
Girard,
when
analyzing
the
relation-
ship
between
violence
and
religion,
saw that
the roots
went back
to
sexuality.

parently opposed, men and women live a common experience which unites them in the same concept of Humanity rather than isolating them in their sexual specificity.(14)

What Badinter does not pick up is the fundamental difference between creating life in the act of childbirth and destroying it in that of war. Relating the two within a human concept is not a valid explanation. Even if the two experiences could be brought together, they would divide rather than unite man and woman.

The meaning and importance given to a military weapon and to the sexual weapon are equal. Man uses his penis like he uses his gun: to conquer, control, and possess. The whole macho society must be unveiled and condemned because in the present system, one tries to obtain material goods and territory, not in order to enjoy them, not out of need, but to enlarge one's domain and authority. Similarly, sexual relations in Arab societies in particular, are not built on pleasure, tenderness or love, but on reproduction, the preservation of girl's virginity (so-called 'honor' of the family), the confinement and control of women for greatest male prestige, and the overestimation of the penis. Lapierre has shown that this phenomenon exists in almost all civilizations, and that hunting followed by war is at the root of women's oppression.(15) And Bob Connell sees a relationship between masculinity, violence and war. He says it is not by chance that the great majority of soldiers are men. Thus, 20 million,

of the 22 million people under arms in the world in 1976, were men. "Most of the police, most of the prison warders, and almost all the generals, admirals, bureaucrats and politicians who control the apparatus of coercion and collective violence. Most murderers are men. Almost all bandits, armed robbers, and muggers are men; all rapists, most domestic bashers; and most people involved in street brawls, riots and the like."(16) But such connection should not be attributed to biology because it would absolve masculine responsibility, i.e. men's violence associated to some human "destiny". It should rather be seen as part of social and cultural factors.

It is very important that much of the actual violence is not isolated and individual action, but is institutional. Much of the poofster-bashing is done by the police; much of the world's rape is done by soldiers. These actions grow readily out of the 'legitimate' violence for which police forces and armies are set up... The state uses one of the great discoveries of modern history, rational bureaucratic organization, to have policy-making centralized and execution down the line fairly uniform. Given this, the state can become the vehicle of calculated violence based on and using hegemonic masculinity. Armies are a kind of hybrid between bureaucracy and masculinity.(17)

For Connell, it becomes a matter of urgency to analyze and understand how masculinity is entangled in all that threatens the survival of humanity. "Vi-

olence is not just an expression; it is a part of the process that divides different masculinity from each other. There is violence within masculinity; it is constitutive."(18)

Susan Brownmiller in **Against Our Will** has shown how rape is a conscious tactic of warfare. (19) Michel Foucault has written a great deal on the connection between death, sex, violence and male sexuality.(20) Wilhelm Reich has analyzed how repressed sexuality based on authoritarian family patterns is at the root of sadistic murders, perversions, psychological problems, social and political conflicts.(21) And Farrar notices that: "War is a paradigm of masculinist practices because its pre-eminent valuation of violence and destruction resonates throughout other male relationships: relationships to other cultures, to the environment and, particularly, to women. If the 'masculinism' of war is the explanation for its intractability, then we must follow this path to its conclusion, wherever that may be."(22)

Wars are no longer fought in the name of a ruler to be defended; they are fought in the name of the existence of us all; entire populations are raised up to mutually kill each other in the name of the necessity for them to live. Massacres have become vital. Sex well deserves death. It is in this sense, but strictly historical one notices that sexuality is today crossed by the death instinct.(23)

Zarana Papic notices how in ex-Yugoslavia men who fight (and are terribly

frightened by it) are not individuals but belong to a nationalistic, aggressive, criminal community. In order to be accepted by this "nation," they must kill as many people as possible, notably those who belong to the other "nation." It is a masculinity belonging to a community that looks up to the great chief, i.e. the father who best knows what the community needs:

This tribal patriarchy (at war with its greatest enemy), puts women in their resigned roles of mothers, wives, and keepers of refugee children. Some of them have identified with the 'great cause' and have been part of the battles, the shooting, the military life style. They have been accepted as such, as equal to the warriors; often, they are also media stars. But the most obvious is that in these tragic times, women are completely without importance and invisible, except in their roles as mothers and wives. They are not seen nor heard as possible subjects with a right to say what they think, and a voice in the events. War is a man's world.(24)

René Girard, when analyzing the relationship between violence and religion, and examining how it is expressed in various human groups which often need a scapegoat to avoid annihilation, saw that the roots went back to sexuality:

The close connection between sexuality and violence, common inheritance of all religions, leans on an impressive body of convergence. Sexuality frequently starts in concert with violence, and in its

immediate manifestations: kidnappings, rapes, deflorations, sadisms, etc., and in its far away consequences.(25)

Issa Makhlouf, in his impressive analysis of the Lebanese tragedy which he sees as a collective fascination with death and destruction, describes Lebanese males as thirsty for killing:

War is a feast, a kind of total drunkenness, an orgy. War unveils the joy of destroying, of annihilating, of killing to the bitter end.

They feel like giants, because for a time they have gone beyond what could not be transgressed: death. Through killing, they compensate for their own fear of death...They kill because they are afraid, an immense fear without any object. They kill to exorcise it.(26)

Throughout the ages, men have been fascinated with war. At some very deep level, it has been for them a way to prove their existence, an expression, according to Adam Farrar of "male desire." (27) Desire as closely linked to sexuality and the death instinct has been studied by famous (Freud, Lacan to name only a few) and lesser known authors. Sexuality being connected to war, oppression, power, aggressiveness was also analyzed by a great many authors ranging from Reich, Bataille, Foucault, Laborit and Girard. More recent works are by men linking masculinity and war (Connell, Farrar, Poole, among others) to the whole body of feminist writing (Reardon, Dwor-kin, Barry, Enloe, Woolf, Brownmiller, Badinter, Houston, Chod-ow,



Showalter, Hi-gonnet, among others). How these issues can be articulated in today's societies and what avenues can be found for non-violence and peace has been the work of a number of other writers, such as de Vilaine, Waring, Morgan, Charara, Ben Ghadifa, Corm, Duvignaud, Lapierre, Mu-ller, Mendel, and others.

The difference between the male theorists--Lacan, Freud, and Bataille among others--and the feminist ones--Brownmiller, Dwor-kin, and Reardon among others--is that the connection between sexuality and violence of the men does not indicate a need to change men, women, objectification, or the dominant/submissive sexuality. In fact they celebrate it, while the women and a whole recent body of Australian male theorists--Connell, Farrar and Poole--want to change these conditions of female oppression and male domination.

A body of male Lebanese authors and their male

(14) Elisabeth Badinter, *L'un est l'autre: Des relations entre hommes et femmes* (Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, 1986) p. 245.

(15) Lapierre, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

(16) Bob Connell, "Masculinity, Violence and War," *War/Masculinity*, op. cit., p. 4.

(17) *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

(18) *Ibid.*, p. 8.

(19) Susan Brownmiller, *Against our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Bantam, 1976)

(20) See in particular Michel Foucault, "Tales of Murder," *I, Pierre Rivière* (Penguin, 1978)

(21) Wilhelm Reich, *L'irruption de la morale sexuelle* (Paris: Payot, 1972, first published in German in 1932).

(22) Farrar, in *War/Masculinity*, op. cit., p. 59.

(23) Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*.

(24) Zarana Papic, op. cit., p. 211.

(25) René Girard, *La violence et le sacré*.

(26) Issa Makhlouf, *Beyrouth ou la fascination de la mort*.

(27) Farrar, op. cit., pp. 68-70.

Rada Ivekovic, develops the notion of mixity concerning Yugoslavia says that symbolically, women, more than men, represent a space of meeting, and mixing.

characters all seem to concur that death and destruction are an expression of or a substitute for sexuality and a fear of women. They live a schizophrenia, torn between East and West, tradition and modernity. War comes as a liberation from this tension, a cure to the sickness they are in.

Are there any solutions/actions to violence and war? Have they been expressed theoretically? And have any been tried? In Lebanon, disarming all the various fighting factions as a way -- immediate and efficient -- to remedy, seemed obvious but not sufficient to get at the roots of the problems. Disarmament on an international level and the stop of the sale of weapons worldwide could equally bring immediate unforeseen results.

In Lebanon, peace marches, hunger strikes, sit-ins, petitions, appeals to international and national peace organizations, conferences and talks between the various communities were ventured. They brought about some relief and hope. Lebanese women and some men were very active in this domain. Lebanese women often stood between the guns and tried to stop the kidnappings. Wafa' St-ephan documented how "they tried to appease the fighters by paying visits to refugee camps and military headquarters and putting flowers in the nozzles of guns."⁽²⁸⁾ Women one day tried to eliminate the militia checkpoints where people were being kidnapped. Going from East Beirut to West Beirut, from Phalangist check-

point to Progressive checkpoint, they were speaking in the name of spouses, mothers, and sisters. They wanted the butchery to stop. They had built homes, but contrary to what an Arab proverb says about boy's positive contribution to home and country, the sons had started destroying the homeland.⁽²⁹⁾ The women blocked the passageways dividing the two sides of the capital, organized all night sit-ins, and stormed into local TV stations to interrupt the news in order to have their demands broadcast.⁽³⁰⁾

Numerous delegations were sent to various conferences throughout the world and to the United Nations. Numerous vigils, sit-ins, conferences, peace marches were organized inside and outside the country. Accad personally witnessed and participated in one of the actions for peace on May 6, 1984, when she taught at the Beirut University College and participated in the activities of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World of the , located in West Beirut. The action was initiated by Iman Khalifeh, a young woman from the Institute who worked in the nursery school of the College. She woke up one day, telling herself: "Enough! Enough of this useless butchery!" She worked with the population of both sides of the city. The march was to carry as its sole slogan: "No to war, no to the 10th year of war! Yes to life!" It was to unite both sides of the city at the only cross-point, known as the Museum passage or demarcationline. Thousands of people were to participate. Unfortunately, the march

was stopped by a "blind" shelling (the word "blind" in Lebanon designates any shelling which does not appear to have precise aims or targets, but which according to many studies knows exactly what and why it is hitting) which resulted in many victims--dead and wounded--on both sides. Iman has declared: "I was not introducing an original thought--it was not a new idea. But it was the cry of the "silent majority" voiced aloud by a people that suffered and endured nine years of ugly war and by a people who carried no arms to defend themselves but struggled to avoid death, violence and ruin in order to live, to build and to continue to be."⁽³¹⁾

Another significant march was that of the handicapped, organized and carried out by Laure Moghaizel, a woman lawyer and activist in the Non-Violence movement and human rights in Lebanon, during the summer of 1987. Asked what she meant by non-violence in an interview, Moghaizel replied:

I am not a pacifist. I am revolted, revolted against injustices and violence. This is why I use the term non-violent. There is a nuance. Pacifism is a form of passivity which Non-violence is not. It is a movement which wants peace and which is making itself known through an opposition of unconditional disarmament... Non-violence is a struggle and who says struggle also says activity, dynamism...It is a political action sustained and energetic which refuses to exercise violence. But it should not be confused with love for the other. We are not in the era of Love. When

there is conflict, there is struggle. Non-violence is a theory very little known in Lebanon.(32)

She went about explaining the origins of the movement with Gandhi and Martin Luther King--to cite only the well-known names--and the differences and similarities in Lebanon. They were ready to suffer but martyrdom is not the aim of non-violence. Their objective consisted in eliminating violence through non-violence. With dialogue, persuasion, they hoped to modify the actions of human beings.

These are some of the positive actions at work in Lebanon. They may appear weak, simple and utopian in front of the destructive and violent forces of politics and of History. But History has also shown that the actions of a Gandhi or a Martin Luther King did have an impact on society and on the world. The theoretical framework for the change we are proposing, lies in a blend of nationalism, feminism and non-violent active struggles.

If nationalism--in the way I have already defined it--could unite all the various factions under a common aim and belief for the existence and the survival of their country, it could move towards a real solution. But if nationalism remains at a sexist stage, and does not transcend ownership and possession as final goals, the cycle of violence will be repeated itself. In Lebanon, both nationalism and feminism--in a femi-humanist way to be defined--are necessary: nationalism in order to unite Lebanon,

and feminism in order to change the values upon which social relationships and thus unity, are created and formed. The work must begin at the most personal levels: with changes in attitudes and behavior toward one's mate, family, sexuality, and ultimately one's community and society. From such a personal beginning, at least some of the internal conflicts might work towards resolution. With a stronger nationhood, rather than possession and domination, the strength of Lebanon might be able to push out the external influences.

What we will formulate is a radical change, a whole system to be rethought and conceptualized. To use Betty Reardon's words:

What I am advocating here is a new world order value, reconciliation, and perhaps even forgiveness, not only of those who trespass against us, but primarily of ourselves. By understanding that no human being is totally incapable of the most reprehensible of human acts, or of the most selfless and noble, we open up the possibilities for change of cosmic dimensions. Essentially this realization is what lies at the base of the philosophy of nonviolence. It we are to move through a disarmed world to a truly nonviolent one, to authentic peace and justice, we must come to terms with and accept the other in ourselves, be it our masculine or our feminine attributes or any of those traits and characteristics we have projected on enemies and criminals, or heroes and saints.(33)

People's attitude must

undergo profound transformations--radical changes in the way they perceive power and love:

The fundamental willingness to use violence against others on which warfare depends is conditioned by early training and continuous socialization in patriarchal society. All are taught to respect authority, that is, fear violence....Boys and men are encouraged to become more fierce, more aggressive when they feel fear. Fear in men is channeled into aggression, in women into submission, for such behaviors are necessary to maintain patriarchal authoritarianism. Aggression and submission are also the core of the basic relations between men and women, accounting, many believe, for women's toleration of male chauvinism. Some assert that these behaviors are the primary cause of all forceful exploitation, and account for perhaps the most significant common characteristic of sexism and the war system: rape.(34)

The notion of mixity, hybridity, creolization, however one wants to look at it, is also what could bring about a solution. Rada Ivekovic develops it concerning Yugoslavia. She says that symbolically, women, more than men, represent a space of mixture, meeting, mixing. It is this feminine principal created by women through mixing which is being attacked by those who want to purify their origins, "liberate" themselves from the Other, negate the Other.(35)

— Dr. Evelyne Accad,
University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign

[28] Wafa Stephan, "Women and War in Lebanon," *Al-Raida* (Beirut University College, no. 30, 1984) p. 3.

[29] Polly-Charara, op. cit., p. 15.

[30] Stephan, op. cit., p. 3.

[31] Leila Abdo, "Iman Khalifeh receives 'Right to Livelihood Alternative Nobel Prize for Peace,'" *Alumni Bulletin* (Beirut University College, 1985) pp. 15-16.

[32] May Makarem, "Avec la non-violence Laure Moghalzel, l'autre visage du Liban," *L'Orient-Le Jour* (Beirut, March 16, 1988) p. 4.

[33] Betty Reardon, *Sexism and the War System* (New York/London: Teacher's College/Columbia University, 1985) p. 94.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

[35] Ivekovic, op. cit., p. 191.

Alternative Approaches to Conflict Resolution in Lebanon

George Irani and Sami Baroudi,

Peace cannot be equated only with the cessation of military hostilities. It entails a firm commitment to conflict resolution in a manner that meets the interests of all. This issue is of substantial significance in Lebanon now that military confrontations have ended.

BUC, Byblos, April 14-16, 1994

Keeping this in mind, Beirut University College (BUC) organized a conference examining non-military and non-political approaches as well as dimensions of conflict resolution. The conference's focus was reflected in its title: **Acknowledgment, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation: Alternative Approaches to Conflict Resolution in Lebanon.**

The theme of the colloquium centered on the premise that purely political approaches to conflict resolution in Lebanon are inadequate; they ought to be supplemented with cultural, anthropological and psychological approaches. Attention was devoted to a careful examination of these alternatives and their applicability to Lebanon. Some of the approaches discussed are indigenous to Lebanese and

Arab culture; others (while developed in a different cultural context, namely North American) are adaptable, perhaps, after significant modification, to the Lebanese condition.

One approach that stems from our Lebanese tradition is the time-honored method of **Sulha**

(peace making) still practiced within certain communities and in certain religiously mixed regions where multiple religious groups coexist. *Sulha* is used to resolve even multi-communal conflicts.

Acknowledgment and forgiveness are essential components of the *Sulha* tradition. For *Sulha* to



Left to Right: Dr. Riyad Nassar, Ms. Lori King-Irani, Dr. Merle Leskoff, Dr. George Irani, Dr. Nabeel Haidar

Forgiveness is an essential component of the Sulha tradition. For Sulha to work, conflicting parties must be willing to forgive.



work, conflicting parties must acknowledge each other's rights and be willing to forgive. To forgive, however, does not mean to forget past injustices and pain or to allow others to inflict more pain in the future. Through the process of acknowledgment and forgiveness, the *Sulha* tradition is chosen so that participants can overcome the victimization syndrome.

Psychological approaches to conflict resolution include more than acknowledgment and forgiveness. On the conference's second day, Dr. Merle Lefkoff, an internationally acclaimed facilitator, led two consecutive workshops designed to increase communication between parties that hitherto had not had meaningful dialogues. The morning workshop focused on how to conduct negotiations successfully and participants were asked to practice active listening. They were encouraged to identify common interests that could

make it possible for them to move away from preset dispositions. The afternoon workshop was designed to help participants open up to others and frankly discuss their problems. On the last day of the conference, a number of conference participants planted an olive tree to underline their commitment to seeing lasting peace emerge in Lebanon.

Conference follow-up has begun in earnest. The first activity involves revising and updating some of the academic papers of participants dealing with the **causes and consequences of the Lebanese conflict and the relevance of acknowledgment, forgiveness and reconciliation**. The second includes research to be conducted by two task forces that have already been formed: one is charged with investigating perceptions of others and stereotyping in post-war Lebanon; the other concentrates on the problems of the physically chal-

lenged. These task forces will submit their reports in six months. The tangible product will be production of an edited publication (George Irani and Laurie King-Irani, editors) including the main papers of presenters, the reports of the task forces and proceedings of the conference.

In a follow-up evaluation of the conference one of the comments read as follows: *Women seemed better able to understand and adopt the concepts of acknowledgment and forgiveness.* George Irani also stated that he thought that if Lebanon was to be "saved," it would be the women who would do it.

— *George Irani,*
Assistant Professor,
Social Science Division,
Coordinator of Conference

— *Samir Baroudi,*
Assistant Professor,
Social Science Division

On the last day of the conference, a number of participants planted an olive tree to underline their commitment to seeing lasting peace in Lebanon.

Adnan, Etel. 1993.

Of Cities and Women (Letters to Fawwaz).

California: The Post-Apollo Press. ISBN 0-942996-21-6

Upon the request of Fawwaz, Etel Adnan writes about Feminism through letters from various cities as she is visiting them. They are "letters to cities and women - that we, women and men alike, might eventually, before it is too late, find the right geography for our revelations." Adnan notes.

Adnan, Etel. 1993.

Paris, When It's Naked.

California: The Post-Apollo Press. ISBN 0-942966-20-8

Adnan explores the French colonialism in her, in her country (Lebanon) and its history. "A highly personal, life enhancing masterpiece in a deathly age of impersonality (Morgan Gibson).

Mernissi, Fatima. 1991.

The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam.

Translated by Jo Lakeland. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Moghadam, Valentine M.

(editor). 1994.

Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies.

London: Zed Books published for the United Nations University UNU/WIDER. ISBN 1-85649-246-X

The authors explore women's experiences in the Algerian national liberation movement and most recently the fundamentalist FIS; similarly their involvement in the struggle to construct a Bengali national identity and independent Bangladeshi state; the events leading to the overthrow of the Shah and the subsequent Islamization of Iran; revolution and civil war in Afghanistan; and the Palestinian Intifada. The book argues that in periods of rapid political change, women in Muslim societies are in reality central to efforts to construct national identity.

Baron, Beth. 1994.

The Women's Awakening in Egypt: Culture, Society, and the Press.

New Haven: Yale University Press.

Arebi, Saddeka.

Women and Words in Saudi Arabia: The Politics of Literary Discourse.

New York: Columbia University Press. Demonstrating that contemporary Saudi women writers use their work as a way to gain control over the rules of cultural discourse in their society. Arebi analyzes the work of nine of influential women writers, presenting excerpts of their writings.

Toubia, Nahid. 1993.

Female Genital Mutilation.

New York: Women Ink. (to order contact: Women Ink. 777 United Nations Plaza, 3rd Fl. New York, NY 10017 Tel. (212) 687-8633, Fax (212) 661-2704.)

Female Genital Mutilation summarizes what is known about the global prevalence of clitoridectomy and infibulation. It is a simple straightforward account of the medical and health implications of women who have been scarred physically, mentally and emotionally, by its practice which is mainly performed on children, most often without their consent. Dr. Toubia outlines legal, religious, social and political steps to be taken to eradicate this practice.

Millet, Kate. 1994.

The Politics of Cruelty: An Essay on the Literature of Political Imprisonment.

New York: Norton.

Schuler, Margaret (editor) 1992.

Freedom From Violence: Women's Strategies from Around the World. UNIFEM.

Freedom from Violence tells the stories of women organizing to combat gender violence in Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Thailand, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Mexico, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and the United States. From a cross cultural perspective, Freedom from Violence shares their sources of inspiration and common threads of agreement about what needs to be done to confront violence in women's lives in all its aspects: physical, social, economic, cultural and legal. The book is an inspiration for anyone engaged in the struggle to end violence against women.

Tucker, Judith E. (editor). 1993.

Arab Women: Old Boundaries, New Frontiers.