



The Year of the Child the Year of Hope

Millions and millions of dollars and pounds are being spent on war and armaments all over the world. But how little is being spent on "peace"!

It is vain to speak of the Children's Year in the shadow of canons and bullets. Violence like fire is spreading everywhere and threatening the world with extinction. And all of us are responsible for this degradation. All of us should endeavor to prepare for our children a better world in which to live. Children are the responsibility of the whole society, as well as that of their parents. Without a chance for normal growth it will be impossible for them to become useful citizens. They should be taught to avoid the blunders that brought misery and death for their fathers and mothers. They should be inculcated with the belief that nothing can deprave human souls and turn civilized people into wild beasts like war.

The United Nations Organization devotes for the children of the world a large share of its activities. The UNICEF, for example, has been very active in providing for some of their immediate needs. The FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) assigns to needy children a large portion of its aid. Recently the U.N.O. has published a long declaration, in 10 points, of the international rights of children.

There is one thing the U.N.O. has not been able to provide; one without which all help will be in vain: Peace. The right of the child to grow in a peaceful atmosphere has been forfeited. Peace requires world cooperation, which the U.N.O. has failed to bring about.

Renewed efforts for peace should be the main objective of all those who participate in the International Year of the Child. Let us spend on peace one tenth or at least one hundredth part of our expenditure on war.

If men have created war, women and children who make more than two-thirds of the world population, should become the force of Peace.

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U.N. Declaration of the Rights of the Child

The Right to:

1. affection, love and understanding.
2. adequate nutrition and medical care.
3. free education.
4. full opportunity for play and recreation.
5. a name and nationality.
6. special care if handicapped.
7. be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster.
8. learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities.
9. be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood.
10. enjoy these rights regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national or social origin.



THE PURPOSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

The International Year of the Child (IYC) is concerned with all children in all countries, especially young children. Its major aims are to:

- * encourage all countries, rich and poor, to review their programmes for the promotion of the well-being of children, and to mobilize support for national and local action programmes according to each country's conditions, needs and priorities;
- * heighten awareness of children's special needs among decision-makers and the public;
- * promote recognition of the vital link between programmes for children on the one hand, and economic and social progress on the other;
- * spur specific, practical measures — with achievable goals — to benefit children, in both the short and long term on the national level.

The Year should also provide an opportunity to emphasize the intellectual, psychological and social development of children, in addition to their physical welfare.

Since 1979 is the 20th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the IYC is an opportunity for each country to increase its efforts to implement those rights.

Special attention should be devoted to particularly disadvantaged children. Among the most vulnerable groups, for example, are young girls where they receive unequal treatment, slum children, children of migrant workers, abused children, orphaned children, refugee children, children of unwed mothers, children in poor rural areas, children exposed to drugs and crime, physically and mentally handicapped children, and the vast category of children suffering from malnutrition.

While programmes of national and local action remain the focal point of the Year, IYC should also stimulate new research on the needs of children and the widespread gathering and dissemination of research on child-related issues.

THE CHILD IS DEAD

*The village has been emptied
Of all the fighters.
Riveted to his machine gun
Whose blind fire-blasts
Have killed the child,
The killer shakes with fear
In the shade of an old wall.*

*All is clear around:
The sky,
The sea,
The laughing summer,
The pines.*

*The killer has hurled far away
Beyond the hills,
His dress and his arms,
His history and his laws,
And he lay weeping
At two steps from a fountain,
In the shade of an orange tree.
Near the corpse of the child.*

Andrée Chédid
(trans. from French)

Recent Children's Literature in the Arab World

Books written for children in the Arab World have undergone a good deal of change since the thirties and forties, when Kamel Kaylani produced his pioneer works which achieved a large degree of success at the time.

The style of the more modern productions for children has evolved in the following ways:

1. The sentence is less burdened than before with connective words and emphatic clauses. It has become simpler, shorter and nearer to the child's understanding.
2. The sentence is equally freed from superfluous synonyms, unnecessary repetitions and other forms of verbosity.
3. Concrete expression has replaced abstract forms; traditional, stereotyped sentences have given way to new, original, modern ones.
4. The written language has become nearer to the colloquial. It has assimilated a number of words and expressions used only in informal conversation or common speech, such as arabized foreign words, and expressions derived from the new environment and the modern way of life.
5. Simplification of the language has led to the simplification of illustrations, which show more emphasis on color and a certain stylization in line. The pictures are more lively and more representative of the child's imagination.
6. Though Kaylani's books present a good deal of variety, today's output contains stories taken from real life, from our present environment, while all of his stories were taken from Arab or world classical and folkloric heritage.
7. Our recent production classifies children's books into three stages while his classification was vague or in-existent.

Against these evidently beneficial changes, the recent works for children still present a good many defects:

1. Some stories are too short to sustain the interest of the child or to satisfy his liking for a developed topic or chained events. Other stories relate an insignificant event, or adhere to the traditional expression which has become obsolete.

2. Among the unsuccessful stories we may mention those that have no plot leading to a climax and denouement; those that contain a series of confused events which baffle the child's thought: those that depend on tedious description and neglect vivid action.
3. There are also the stories that fail to consider the facts in depicting animal behavior. The modern trend in children's literature tries to inculcate in them a love for nature in all its forms. It advocates telling them the truth about animals, plants and other living creatures. Defects should not be exaggerated and be made an object of scorn. Qualities should be brought out as well as the possibilities for improvement and change. In this way, we lead the child to adopt a positive, optimistic attitude toward nature and society.
4. There is also a type of story that distorts reality by presenting only the rich and prosperous class of society. The characters, young or old, are represented as wearing rich, ornamented clothes, indulging in delicious foods, living in luxurious surroundings, the children having at their disposal heaps of toys and playthings. Such stories do not faithfully reproduce life when they neglect the toiling class which plays an important role in society.
5. In the category of unsuccessful stories we may range those quoted from the folkloric heritage and related without any modification which may seem necessary for the improvement of the story or for the eradication of the elements of terror that it may contain, such as the ogre slaying his daughters or the ending that makes the evil triumph over the good.
6. In some of the new story books, the illustrations have been given the form of caricatures or of surrealistic pictures. In other cases, the colors have been heaped in a way that overshadow the content or wipe it out.

Finally we note that this production in spite of its large size, lacks variety. Stories dealing with history, biography, science and daily life are few or lacking. Equally lacking are the works treating other literary arts than fiction: plays, poems and songs for children. These works are neglected, probably for financial reasons, though badly needed.

Book Exhibition for Children

Within the activities connected with the International Year of the Child, a joint committee made up of the "Child Welfare Association" in Lebanon, Beirut University College and the International College, presented at B.U.C.'s Sheikh Zayed Hall an exhibit of reading books for children and young people, which lasted from March 24 to March 30.



The picture above represents a section of the exhibit.

Child Care in Bahrain

Since the year 1979 has been declared the International Year of the Child by the U.N., the Bahrain State published in no. 16 of its "Periodical Issue" of Jul.-Aug.-Sept. 1978, a report on projects carried out and decisions taken by the ministries in Bahrain aiming at the implementation of the ten principles stated in the "Declaration of the Rights of the Child."

The following is a brief account of this report:

1) Health Program

The Ministry of Health provides health centers where the children of Bahrain receive, without any form of discrimination, adequate hygienic care and spiritual guidance. It provides other centers for expectant mothers and pre-school children. Responsible trainees are in charge of using preventive measures against epidemics and contagious diseases.

2) Education

Free education for children is provided and increase in educational budgets is encouraged to meet new needs. Special grants are given to brilliant children on both the elementary and the secondary level.

3) Right to Protection

Homeless children are entrusted to the care of substitute families.

Needy families receive financial help.

In case of crises, the law gives the child first right to help and protection.

The law decrees a penalty to be inflicted on parents who neglect their children. It also requires the minimum age of 14 for working children, and provides measures for protecting children from all kinds of cruelty and exploitation and from the evils of religious and racial discrimination.

4) Care of the handicapped and delinquents

The "Khamees Reformatory" is considered one of the government institutions accommodating a certain number of juvenile delinquents.

New plans for taking care of this group & the like are the following:

1. Creation of special institutions for delinquents
2. Establishment of rehabilitation centers for the handicapped and the mentally retarded among children and young people.
3. Training leaders in directing children's recreational activities.

CHILD WELFARE IN EGYPT

COOPERATION YIELDS GOOD RESULTS

The following is a summary of a talk given by Mrs. Saneya Saleh, researcher at the American University Social Studies Center, Cairo, at the Social Welfare Conference held on December 27 – December 31, 1978.

This talk reports on a pioneer project planned by a group of women volunteers interested in child welfare, successfully carried out with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education and the American University of Cairo.

The project was started in June 1977. Its aim was to provide elementary school students in the needy and overpopulated quarters of Cairo with adequate means of improving their social, hygienic, cultural and educational conditions.

A preliminary step taken by the initiators of the project was to hold at the school selected for the experiment (The Salam School in Bulaq), periodic meetings with the parents and teaching staff for the purpose of studying the problems on hand and finding out the best way to tackle them.

The project aroused unusual enthusiasm and response among the various groups. The success it achieved during the first year of its implementation convinced everyone of the fruitfulness of joint action between government authorities and volunteers from the people.

Here are the chief results achieved after one year of cooperative work:

1. Providing each of the 2500 students of the Salam School with a daily meal.
2. Keeping the school and its environment clean and tidy.
3. Giving all students a medical exam which showed their physical needs.
4. Encouraging sports activities and providing adequate space for them.
5. Organizing cultural trips.
6. Creating a children's library and a music room.
7. Creating summer camps for children and parents and giving them opportunities to perform recreational activities and learn certain manual works and crafts.
8. Studying the social needs of the children by making field visits to their parents.
9. Organizing entertainment programs and sports contests.
10. Arranging evening study hours for students who lack a quiet place at home and for those in need of help in their school work.

While performing their activities, the workers were careful to carry out studies aiming at the evaluation of the work and finding out the best methods to improve it.

The project is expected to serve as a model for other schools to follow. Already another school in Bulaq, where the project was started, has taken the necessary steps to adopt it in 1979.

"This is a small beginning, of course, but it carries a great significance, because we expect it to spread and cover within a short time the whole Bulaq area and, in the year 2000, all the schools of the unprivileged quarters of Egypt. 'The 1000 miles' trip begins with one step', says a Chinese proverb. Our women have already performed several steps."

CHILD WELFARE IN LEBANON

Before the Lebanese war which started in 1975, private social organizations in this country attained relatively large proportions. This reflected a high degree of social consciousness among the population, especially among women, and a desire of each of the multiple Lebanese communities to participate in general development.

As early as 1936, the "Child Welfare Association" was created as a committee sponsored by the Lebanese Women's Council. In 1946, though it remained affiliated to that council, the Association assumed an independent entity. In 1963 the Lebanese government, in recognition of its services, issued a decree by which it was granted the status of a public welfare organization.

Convinced that the human element forms the most precious wealth of a country, the Association worked hard to awaken public opinion to the importance of preparing for children the right atmosphere for normal growth and adequate development.

Child Care Centers & Nursery schools

In 1937, the Association established a center whose function was to give semi-literate mothers fundamental instruction in child care. It included a nurse, a maid, a physician and 20 children who were taken care of while their working mothers were away. The members of the Association did not exceed 17 women. In 1972, the number of child care centers and nursery schools reached 32. Distributed in the various Lebanese districts, they took care of about 1200 children. The Association members counted no less than 400, actively involved in the projects of their respective committees.

For their finances they depended on government support, municipal council's help, private contributions, National Lottery gifts, and money collected on the Annual Day and the Annual Week of the Child.

Main Achievements

Besides services offered by its 32 child care centers, the Association was able between 1936 and 1975 to make the following achievements:

1. Creating courses in sewing and dress-making for young women and housekeepers.
2. Founding six centers for teaching reading and writing to children beyond school age.
3. Training a number of nursery school teachers in cooperation with the "Social Development Service".
4. Organizing annual contests for school children in various arts, and supervising the distribution of prizes to winners.
5. Ensuring permanent cooperation between private and public welfare organizations; carrying to the government authorities the demands and suggestions of the various central and regional societies; organizing annual conferences for the purpose of coordinating the various branches as well as other sister organizations.

Annual Day of the Child (March 22)

One important achievement of the C.W.A. (Child Welfare Association) was the establishment, in 1962, of the International Annual Day of the Child, recognized by the Lebanese government as a national day and sponsored by the president of the Republic.

The Annual Day was extended to the "Annual Week of the Child" (which sometimes lasted a whole month), during which programs were presented for the purpose of spreading awareness and arousing general interest in the needs of children. Between 1967 and 1971, seminars and conferences were organized for presenting and discussing children's conditions and needs in the fields of health, education and general welfare.

Two of the conferences sponsored by the C.W.A. deserve acknowledgement. The first, held in 1970, presented studies on the topic of the "Retarded and Handicapped Children" in Lebanon and ways to rehabilitate them. Several institutions already existed for this purpose but they could not accommodate more than 10% of the whole number. It is possible that one of the results of this conference was the creation, in 1973, of the "Rash'in Center for the Handicapped", mainly financed by the President's wife, Iris Frangieh, whose name was attached to the Center.

The other conference, held in 1971, presented studies made by individuals or by delegates of various welfare organizations, about the delinquency of children, its predisposing factors, prevention and treatment. The conference gave reports, statistics and proposed projects for the handling and rehabilitation of delinquents in Lebanon.

The above brief account is based on the yearly books published by the C.W.A., reporting on its activities, projects and future plans.

The War Years

During the 4-year war in Lebanon, most of the Association's former activities were suspended. New problems arose and new activities were imposed, such as first-aid to war victims, and medical and financial help for the displaced, the refugees, the wounded and the distressed.

The Association shared in numerous relief projects, both private and public. Its social centers were used to accommodate refugees, to give first-aid to casualties, to offer help in money or in kind to needy people, to whatever group they belonged.

Impact of the War on Children

In 1977, the C.W.A. organized a conference grouping delegates from various social organizations in Lebanon, to discuss the impact of the war on Lebanese children and adolescents.

This conference forms the subject of the next two articles.

Impact of War on Lebanese Children and Youth

"The impact of war on Lebanese children and youth" formed the topic of a conference organized by the Lebanese Child Welfare Association which was suggested by Mrs. Zahia Salman, head of the Association (1). It lasted two days, 7th and 8th of December 1977, and a large number of organizations participated in it, some of which were: The Educational Center for Research and Development, the Lebanese Red Cross, Beirut University College — IWSAW, the American University of Beirut, and the Lebanese Family Planning. The following brief accounts try to summarize the studies presented by Dr. Jamal K. Harfouche (AUB), Dr. Ghassan Yacoub (ECRD) and Dr. Julinda Abu-Nasr (BUC), concerning the harm done by war to the physical and mental health of children.

Dr. Harfouche, in a 16 pp. study, presented documented facts about the impact of war on the children's health in Lebanon. After exposing the defects of health conditions in this country during the pre-war years and how they contributed to the general degradation during the war, she proceeded to an approximate evaluation of the losses which the war brought about in the number of children 1) who lost their lives, 2) who were physically injured, 3) who became permanently handicapped, 4) who contracted various diseases, 5) who died because of miscarriage, and 6) who became addicted to drugs.

Lost Lives

The statistics she gave were based on conjecture because, even now, accurate figures about the war losses are not available. The number of Lebanese children between birth and 15 years of age is approximately 1,350,000. She reckoned the number of those who lost their lives because of the war as reaching 13,500 (a proportion of 1%) or 6,750 (at the proportion of 1/2%) in a total of 3 million inhabitants. The total number of those who were killed, old or young, is estimated at 60,000, i.e. 2%.

Handicapped

The number of war-handicapped people in the whole population is estimated as 5-10% in addition to the formerly existing number of 3%. Thus the number of handicapped children and young people runs between 67,000 and 135,000.

Diseases which the war contributed to spread

They come in the following order: cholera, tuberculosis, jaundice, typhoid fever, venereal diseases, skin diseases

(mainly scabies) and diseases due to malnutrition.

All these diseases, except cholera, existed in Lebanon before the war but in relatively small proportions. Tuberculosis, for example, had been so successfully prevented that a number of TB sanatoriums were obliged to close.

Diseases due to malnutrition belong to the mild or moderate type but the frightfully ascending prices of food since the war may announce a gradual recrudescence of these diseases.

Drug addicts among young people

Since the sixties, educational institutions and mental health physicians have reported a rising degree of addiction to drugs in the new generation.

The war crisis and the general demoralization that followed contributed to increase this wave and to create a problem whose treatment consists in finding out and fighting its profound causes, which are moral corruption, unemployment and lack of security.

Dr Harfouche outlined the following possibilities for the provision of treatment:

Short-term treatment

1. Modernization of basic health services.
2. Application of the U.N. Charter concerning the Rights of the Child.
3. Mobilization of mass media for general health instruction through a plan elaborated by the Ministry of Health.
4. Carrying out a permanent cleanliness campaign throughout the country.
5. Creating a modernly equipped center for demography and other statistical information on drug addiction, war victims, epidemics, etc.

Long-term treatment

This consists of clarifying and unifying the general health policy, especially regarding children; creation of a comprehensive health plan including the training of human potentials, and reevaluation of the whole health sector in view of reorganizing its structures and its service programmes.

Psychic disorders resulting from war conditions:

Dr. Ghassan Yacoub, a researcher at the Educational Center for Development, presented a paper on this topic, ►

Impact of War on Moral Values in Lebanese Children

During the Lebanese War, 1975-1976, children were heavily exposed to various forms of violence. Starting with the well-known belief that children are greatly influenced by example and easily led to imitate older people, the IWSAW research group, directed by Dr. Julinda Abu-Nasr, decided to undertake a study attempting to determine the influence of war, not on children's behavior, but on their moral judgment or conception of right and wrong.

The idea was based on Piaget's theory that the moral development of the child occurs in stages paralleling the development of cognitive stages, depending on the role of adults in the process of the child's socialization. Other research, by Bandura and associates, states that aggressive behavior is more likely to be imitated than non-aggressive behavior, especially if the model is a male.

Methodology: The sample consisted of 72 children of both sexes, whose ages varied between 12 and 14 years, selected from 3 different social classes in Beirut and suburbs, representing different degrees of exposure to war.

The instrument for this study was based on Piaget's method for studying morality, namely: telling the children two stories, one depicting an everyday neutral situation and the other, a war situation. The stories dealt with six moral issues involving killing, stealing, lying, damaging property, cheating and rebelling. The child was asked to judge the behavior of the character of the story by confronting him or her with the conflict that had to be solved. Responses to the stories were classified as moral or immoral; the first was characterized by behavior in accordance with universally accepted norms, while the second was

considered as asocial, or moved by a desire for harmfulness and revenge.

Results: The children's responses in general indicated a change in their judgments from a neutral to a war situation. Carefully drawn tables, which space does not allow us to reproduce, showed clearly that the war situation evoked more immoral judgment than the neutral situation. In the children's judgment of killing, for example, 37 out of 72 gave an immoral response in a war situation, while their judgment of killing in the neutral situation was moral. A reverse trend of change from immoral judgment in the neutral situation to moral judgment in the war situation was not apparent.

This pilot study was designed mainly to test the instrument which proved to be effective in detecting change in moral judgment. The subjects studied seemed to tolerate behavior in the war situations which they did not accept in the neutral situation.

The pattern of change is more pronounced in reactions to killing and lying than to the stealing and damaging property. The explanation may be sought in the fact that the killing and lying stories dealt with situations in which parents, brothers and sisters were involved, while the relation between self and others in the other stories was remote.

The implications of these findings must be of great concern to educators and programme planners. War models which have so deeply influenced children should be replaced by models that have moral or universally accepted values, presented to them through living models or through books, films and other media.

based on a field study and interviews he conducted with children, parents and physicians.

He said that the concepts of war and death vary in the child's mind according to age. At the "syncretic" stage, 3-4 years of age, the concept is hazy. Between 5-8, he links death with a cause like shooting but he does not consider it a final end. At the third or "realistic" stage, 9-11, he knows that death is a final end, caused by damage to the vital organs like the head, the heart or the internal parts.

The psychic effects of war on the children in his study differed according to age and the degree of their exposition to the war dangers. Briefly enumerated, they were:

1. Fear and anxiety leading to anorexia, aggressivity, enuresis, insomnia, hysterical symptoms, frightful dreams.
2. Sadism and violence.

Dr. Yacoub recommended the following methods of treatment:

1. Developing the child's love for life and joy against a possible desire for destruction and delinquency. This implies the development of his creative talents, his artistic capacities, in any of the following: drawing, dancing, musical ability, music appreciation, acting, sports, nature study, manual work and so on.
2. Creating mental health centers in all Lebanese districts, particularly those that were subjected to attack and bombardment.
3. Training psychiatrists and mental health experts, capable of diagnosing the psychic troubles of children and adolescents and giving them the necessary guidance.
4. Using the mass media, particularly television and radio, for the transmission of instructive and entertaining programmes, which would succeed in arousing the children's interest and developing their mental faculties.

(1) See Al-Raida No. 3, p. 8.

Voluntary Social Organizations in Jordan

There are 222 Voluntary social organizations in Jordan. 211 are local and the rest are foreign; 40% of the local societies work in the Capital district, 60% in the other districts.

78% of the societies perform varied activities: vocational training, struggle against illiteracy, child care, directing nutrition centers, and orientation and guidance. The more specialized ones, 22% of the whole, serve well-defined aims like care of the handicapped and orphans, execution of hygiene programs, educational programs and so on.

The study was prepared by Dr. Salah Yacoub, from the Social Development and Human Implantations Section of the U.N. Economic Commission for Western Asia (Ecwa), in cooperation with the Department of Social Affairs and the General Union of Benevolent Organizations in Jordan. Its aim was to secure information about the aims and activities of the local and foreign associations during 1976, the difficulties they meet in performing their tasks, the nature of the social institutions which they control, the support they receive from unions and from the Dep. of Social Affairs, the attitudes of those benefitting from services offered by the associations, and their opinions concerning their geographic distribution.

The sample used for the study consisted of 32 of the 211 local societies, founded before 1965 or between 1965 & 1975, in East Jordan.

Their aims are distributed as follows, (each one may combine several aims):

	No. of Societies	Percentage
Vocational training	28	88 %
Aid to the mentally retarded	1	3
Aid to the mentally handicapped	4	12
Health service	9	28
Child Care	17	53
Helping the aged	1	3
Counseling & Guidance	14	44
Nutrition centers	25	78
Teaching	16	60
Pecuniary help to the poor	15	47
Other forms of help to the poor	6	19

Number of registered members in the societies: 2692, 70% of whom are men and the rest, women.

Concerning the services and activities of local societies in 1976, the study showed:

1) That most of the services were limited to the main towns and cities while the rural districts received a relatively small share.

2) That the main activities were concentrated on the creation of vocational centers for the teaching of sewing, embroidery and the like. This activity covered 22% of the entire expenses while the actual beneficiaries did not exceed 5% of the whole. The nutrition centers covered 23% of the beneficiaries and their expenses attained 24% of the whole sum of expenses, while the health services though relatively few in number covered 38% of the beneficiaries and their expenses were limited to 2% of the general expenditure.

3) The total sum of money spent in 1976 by the local societies on their various activities and services attained: 66,958 Jordanian dinars (a Jord. dinar = 3 dollars). The number of persons permanently benefiting from those activities: 13925. No. of non-permanent beneficiaries: 2138.

The foreign voluntary societies, of which 8 out of 12 were studied, though fewer in number than the local societies, spent about 386,000 J. dinars, mainly on the creation of nutrition centers or helping existing ones, subsidizing projects of school buildings, providing rural districts with drinking water & irrigation, building social centers, helping the handicapped and the mentally retarded and providing local societies with material aid.

Comments and recommendations:

The main difficulties faced by both local and foreign societies are

1) Financial needs and shortage of income 2) Lack of interest and consciousness among the population 3) Shortage of experts and specialists in social work 4) Inability of voluntary leaders to give their work a sufficient amount of time and effort.

While the above obstacles should be handled and eliminated as far as possible, the following recommendations are given by the author of the study:

1) Voluntary societies should prepare for their activities a well studied plan taking into consideration the local needs of the various districts, in order to avoid the duplication of their work by other organisations. The fact that they spend the larger part of their income on vocational centers, kindergartens and nutrition centers, which cover a relatively small number of beneficiaries, shows that there is duplication in the work.

2) Instead of distributing monetary aid to all societies, the Dept. of Social Affairs had better limit its aid to those societies which are socially active and succeed in covering certain local needs.

3) Some societies neglect the use of special records for their financial affairs; others have deficient records, kept by people with inadequate experience in these matters. Training sessions should be held for record keepers and leaders of societies should be convinced of the necessity of keeping accurate records of their finances.

4) A partial solution of the societies' financial problems consists in limiting the expenses on building and creation of centers and increasing those allotted to the development of actual voluntary work.

5) The Department of Social Affairs is expected to work for the provision of a sufficient number of trained workers and qualified specialists in the social-work field.

6) It is advisable that societies recognize the importance of public relations and direct contact with the population for mutual help and understanding.

7) The Department of Social Affairs should increase the number of social service counselors distributed in the various districts. Their general standard could be raised and easier communication be made available to them.

Image of the Mother in the Novels of North African Men

by Evelyne Accad

Taken from her book: *Veil of Shame: The Role of Women in the Contemporary Fiction of North Africa and the Arab World*. Sherbrooke: Naaman, 1978.

A number of North African men have attempted through their fiction to bridge the gap between the victimized female and the traditionally insensitive male. The social condition of women is an important thematic element in the fiction of such writers as Mouloud Feraoun, an Algerian Kabyle writing about lower class society; Mohammed Dib, an Algerian whose fiction depicts urban life among the upper classes; Driss Chraïbi, a Moroccan, who in bold and harsh language criticizes Islam for its dehumanizing customs; Albert Memmi, a Jewish writer from Tunis who describes the conditions of ghetto life; Abdel al-Karim Ghallab, a Moroccan who writes in arabic and who reveals the hypocrisy and brutality which underlie the veneer of piety and tradition in middle-class life; and Kateb Yacine, an Algerian whose creative contributions to the form of the novel are attempts to inspire symbolic solutions rather than attempts to present detailed analyses of social conditions.

The fiction written by these North African men is built around a central male consciousness and is frequently autobiographical. While the women novelists often concern themselves with the intellectual implications of various escapes from victimization, the male novelist tends to reveal other aspects of the situation. He leans more toward 1) rebellious condemnation of authority (Chraïbi) 2) depiction of how males are victimized by tradition (Mammeri) 3) rejection of women for their acceptance of victimization (Memmi) and 4) direct attack on apparent sources of social oppression, e.g., religion and social tradition.

In depicting the suffering which occurs through the absence of personal freedoms, these writers describe women in various relationships: familial (wife, mother, sister, aunt, grandmother) and illicit (adulterous lover, concubine, prostitute, slave servant). The fact that these relationships are almost invariably defined by the nature of a woman's connection with a man indicates the extreme degree to which the social status of North African woman is both male-centered and male-sanctioned.

It is not surprising then that "the mother" frequently plays a major role in the fiction of the seven male North African writers under consideration. The mother's identity is firmly in the grip of two sets of males. In order to attain motherhood she is dependent on having a husband and, to be truly honored in her status as a mother, she must bear sons. In addition to this important thematic consideration, there is also a structural reason for the preponderance of the mother figure. This arises from the autobiographical nature of many of these works. They are frequently structured around a boy's progression to manhood, a development in which the male's relationship with his mother is necessarily an important one.

In the following paragraphs, we will choose to analyze the most significant mother figures as presented in the most important North African novels written by men. In



Evelyne Accad, author of the article published in this issue, held on November 30, 1978 at BUC a panel attended by IWSAW members and some guests, in which she discussed the images of women in the contemporary fiction of North Africa.

La Terre et le sang (The Earth and the Blood, Paris, 1953) written by Mouloud Feraoun, Kamouma, Amer's mother, is portrayed as an emaciated elderly woman whose suffering is reflected in her eyes, which are marked with large, dark cataracts and framed with red eyelids. Her life has been the typical life of a kabyle woman: married very early to a man of her parents' choosing and shifting from her father's authority to her in-laws's tyranny. She had borne many children whom she had cared for until, one by one, she followed them to the tomb. Finally Kamouma found herself alone with no possessions, not even the family land because her husband had sold it before his death. Until Amer's return, she had lived upon the generosity of the village which, as Feraoun explains, is considered simply normal help among neighbours. It is significant that Kamouma's extreme poverty and dependence are brought about by the absence of a male element in her life. Her husband is dead, as are her sons with the exception of Amer, who is in a faraway foreign land. This condition is mitigated only by the slight status Kamouma achieves among the village women. She had opened her house to all of them and they came to her for advice.

The hard conditions under which many North African women live out their lives are also apparent in the early fiction of Mohammed Dib. As in Feraoun's novel, the mother is one of the central characters of Dib's **La Grande maison (The Big House**, Paris, 1952). Omar's mother, Aïni, is a widow who has three children to raise and a total of five persons to feed, since her mother lives with them. The despair which underlies Aïni's existence is quickly

apparent. The first time we meet her, she is cleaning roots for the family's main meal. Because of the urgency of his hunger, Omar continually asks when the food will be ready. Suddenly Aïni throws her knife at him, a gesture which in its homicidal overtones symbolizes the despair of a mother not able to feed her children. Hunger is at the core of the novel and it is Aïni's daily anxiety. Often, when she has nothing at all to feed her children she pretends to be cooking until they fall asleep from exhaustion, forgetting their hunger. Aïni herself shows the signs of severe deprivation in both a physical and emotional sense.

In comparison to such an existence death seems a peaceful escape to Aïni and her despair frequently takes the form of rage. Omar often observes her complaining about her fate and cursing her children as well as their father. But despite her despair and her inability to provide successfully for her family, Aïni is the central and most significant figure in the lives of her children.

The Moroccan writer Driss Chraïbi brings to his fiction a measure of open revolt in addition to the depiction of despair arising from untenable social conditions. In his first novel, *Le Passé simple* (*The Past*, Paris, 1954) as with so many works by North African male writers, the central figure of *Le Passé simple* is the mother:

My mother, tender and resigned, five feet tall, weighing ninety pounds and whose fate was to ignore even the act which could fulfill her.

In forty years of existence this is how she had been and not a whit more. (p. 34)

The autobiographical nature of the works is obvious from the centering of consciousness in the boy, Driss. He acutely observes his mother's behaviour as well as the way in which his father, *Le Seigneur* (*The Lord*) treats her. She must call him "maitre" (master) and her relationship to him is essentially that of a servant. She tells Driss that she does not want to go on living and wishes that he would find a fast and sure way for her to die. She can no longer tolerate the conditions of her existence: to be spat upon, to have her ancestors cursed and to be threatened with repudiation. Driss closely observes the hypocritical attitudes of his father, who pretends to piety while perpetrating gross cruelties.

While Driss sees his mother as a victim, he also blames her for blindly following old beliefs and superstitions. His anger surfaces one day when he sees her all dressed up with kohl on her eyes and henne on her fingernails. Although she has just lost a child, who died due to his father's

mistreatment, she is preparing to seduce her husband in order to have another child. Driss confronts her with the inconsistencies in her behaviour. In tears she replies: "He was my littlest one... Now I want to replace him." (p. 124). The implications behind this statement are both clear and poignant: not only is childbearing her only legitimate function in the eyes of society, the only way in which she can feel any measure of personal fulfillment, but, if she does not rapidly produce another child she may find herself fallen from her husband's graces.

No longer able to witness the degradation to which his mother is subjected, Driss leaves home. Shortly thereafter he learns that his mother has committed suicide. His father blames the boy and Western influence for her death because he himself does not want to face the fact that he is the cause of it.

Chraïbi's language, bold, sarcastic, harsh and biting, is one of the tools he uses to express his rebellion against the inhuman customs he observed in his native land. In his personal life, his rejection of these customs has taken the form of marriage to a Frenchwoman as well as emigration to France, where Chraïbi has lived since 1947. Many of Chraïbi's countrymen, who approve of neither his language nor his subject matter, criticize this personal retreat as an escape from the very problems of which he writes. While there may be a certain socio-political justification for this criticism, it is probably safe to say that there is little if any literary or aesthetic justice in it. Like many another artist, Chraïbi may simply have chosen to use the conditions of his social origins as a springboard to further achievements.

Most of the male North African writers considered in this analysis have managed to incorporate a substantial concern over the condition of women into their portrayal of their own anguish at the cultural — and, at times, economic — oppression in which they themselves were reared. That this is the case may suggest that the oppression of women is one of the single most characteristic features of North African culture, from both a social and an aesthetic standpoint. Put another way, the oppressed condition of women seems to have nearly as marked an effect on the upbringing of the North African male as it does on the women themselves. At times it is clearly evident that the oppressor is oppressed by his own oppression, and in any case the hypocrisy and double standards which result from the social code color much of the moral element of society. As in a Greek tragedy, it is impossible for society to escape the pollution of any of its members.

Lower birthrates in 10 Egyptian districts

In a recent training session held at Alexandria for heads and members of information and family-planning centers, a discussion took place concerning the accomplishments of these centers and their role in linking demographic goals with national development.

Reports revealed that between 1976 and 1977 a lowering of birth rates took place in 10 Egyptian districts, in a proportion varying between 0.2 and 4.0 per thousand.

They also showed that the practice of family planning in the same area has

been increasing from 5 to 50 percent, and reaching sometimes four times the initial figure.

(From "Family & Population" — "Youth's Science & Future" a monthly Ar. Publication: Egypt, Oct. 1978, No. 3)

A REVIEW OF "WOMAN'S IMAGE IN THE EGYPTIAN CINEMA" (1)

Woman and the cinema are two topics that have been frequently brought to light by sociology students and researchers during the last few years. The first, because of the increasing efforts made on an international level to secure her fuller participation in national development. The second, because of its growing importance as a means of entertainment, particularly among the masses.

If the cinema is one of the major sources of contact with the masses, the question of its authenticity and of its impact on them will readily arise. How faithful are motion pictures in reflecting the actual image and needs of Egyptian society? What effect, if any, do these pictures have on the spectators' thinking and behavior? .

In answering the second question, sociologists, psychologists and criminologists are not of the same opinion, some of them deny the existence of any relationship between people's conduct and the films they see. Another group emphasizes the effect of moving pictures on people's minds, using the following arguments:

- 1 - Movies influence the spectators' knowledge and behavior, regardless of their informative value.
- 2 - The spectators are induced to imitate the heroes or sympathise with them.
- 3 - They are affected by them in their opinions, tastes, tendencies and general outlook.

The third group of researchers adopt a middle course. They affirm the influence of the cinema on the individual's behavior but do not consider it the main cause of delinquency, though it might suggest the most up-to-date methods of crime.

We may conclude from the above points that the cinema, as an outlet for emotions, does affect the spectator. Under certain social and particular circumstances, it may be a secondary factor in inducing or encouraging misbehavior.

This conclusion carries us back to the first question raised: What has been the goal of the Egyptian cinema in handling social problems? How far has it succeeded in projecting a real image of society and especially of the Egyptian woman?

The study made by Muna S. Al-Hadeedy covers 410 films projected between 1962 and 1972, containing 460 women characters whose roles were distributed as follows:

	No of characters	Per- centage
No clear function	108	23
House-Keeper	102	22
Worker	94	20.5
Student	47	10.5
Artiste (Public entertainer)	44	9.5
Rural Woman	25	5.4
Delinquent	25	5.4
Other function	10	3.2
Total		100

It is clear from this table that the Egyptian film does not give a realistic image of the Egyptian woman's work, since it relegates to the role of dummies, or insignificant characters, 23% of the whole, i.e. 108 out of 460. These superfluous characters represent woman as frivolous, entirely given to selfish, pleasure-seeking activities, devoid of any responsibility toward her family or her environment.

While the percentage of 22 allotted to housekeepers is nearer to reality, there is still the objection that 68% of them are childless, thus eliminating the problems that confront the mother in bringing up her children and the difficulties to which the Egyptian family is generally exposed.

Divorced women are allotted 4% out of 22, in spite of the fact that divorce is one of the serious problems that the Egyptian woman has to face. Moreover, the problem is not presented in a positive, instructive manner. The divorcee is generally represented as a negative character, incapable of facing life by herself, with no other choice but delinquency as a solution to her problem.

Giving 20.5% to the working woman may involve some exaggeration which Muna Hadeedi attributes to certain technical and social factors. In the first place, the presence of the working woman allows her more opportunity for contact with the other sex, hence more chance for developing the action of the story. In the second place, woman's work outside the home has created a number of problems that the cinema has tried to explore but in an inadequate and not profound manner.

The student or unmarried woman is a popular character for film producers because she offers wide opportunities for the creation of emotional plots. But the cinema has often presented girl students in immoral situations, showing the university campus as the playground of moral degradation instead of an intellectual center. There are at least 6 films of this kind, projected between 1962 and 1971.

(1) Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation by Muna S. Al-Hadeedy, School of Information, Cairo University, 1977.

The remaining 3.2% films represent woman in traditional occupations like teaching, secretarial work, etc. In a few instances, she appears in very recent roles like engineering and film production.

Though the rural sector occupies a central position in Egyptian life, only 5.4% of the total has been allotted to it while the "artiste" or public entertainer has been given 9.5%. Film producers are evidently prompted by commercial interests when they give so much prominence to the artiste, who gives them opportunity to display the glamorous life of night clubs and cabarets. In general, it is the common dancer and singer not the genuine, brilliant actress who is put in the light.

Films dealing with the rural woman's life, in spite of their limited number, often carry a social or political message. Most of them are adaptations of novels by committed Egyptian authors like Toufiq Al-Hakeem, Yusuf Idrees, Tharwat Abaza, Yahya Haqqi, and Abdel-Rahman Shirqawi.

The rural woman occupies an equal rank with the delinquent woman: 5.4% though the former has much more importance in real life. It often happens that woman is presented as a mischievous character or a greedy creature who is ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of wealth. An example is the film: "Ash-Shaitan Imra'a" (Satan Is a Woman), 1971. In many cases, a delinquent woman is presented in a way that arouses the spectator's sympathy, when she is compelled to do wrong in order to secure the expenses of a sick mother or father, as for, example in the film entitled: "Asrar Ul-Banat" (The Girls' Secrets), 1969, and in the film: "Al-Qahira 30", (Cairo' 30), in which the young girl struggles to defend her guilty parents. Among other causes for a woman's delinquency, the Egyptian cinema points out frustration in love, where a woman is presented as a weak creature who is easily led into evil because she has lost her beloved or been betrayed by him.

The above have been the principal features of woman's image in the Egyptian movies during eleven years, 1962-1972. The author of this study, Muna S El-Hadeedi, has prepared a criterion by which we may judge a successful or unsuccessful presentation of characters. According to her, women characters may be presented under three images:

- 1 - One of complete conformity with logical behaviour and principles approved by society.
- 2 - One of complete opposition to reality, as when the character reacts in a violent and absurd manner, uses illogical means to solve her problem, otherwise she remains passive and insensible to what goes on around her.
- 3 - One that follows a middle course between the first and the second image, showing the mobility of the character between illogical and logical conduct, presenting a more true-to-life or round personality.

Judged by the above criterion, the Egyptian cinema has presented 233 women characters, i.e. 50.6% of the whole, with illogical or unrealistic behavior. Those whose behavior seems logical or realistic reach 23.7%, i.e. 109 out of 406 characters, while those in between count 25.7% or 118.

These proportions prove that the image of woman in the Egyptian films, except in very few cases, remains traditional, emphasizing woman's negativism and incapacity to face difficulty or to solve her problems in an appropriate manner. In most cases, she has been presented as a physically attractive creature who lacks intellectual ability and social consciousness.

Giving a more realistic image of woman in films, in children's textbooks and in other mass media, was one of the chief concerns of the Woman's International Year Conferences held in Mexico and elsewhere in 1975.

Condensed by Najla Husni
(IWSAW)

From: IYC (International Year of the Child)

Aug. - Sept. 1978 No. 12, p. 2

"In a world in which an average working man is made to pay in taxes the equivalent of two weeks' salary for armaments, the future of children is under a dark cloud of confusion, penury, malnutrition and the ever-present menace of total annihilation". p. 7;

"It is now estimated that 250,000 children are going blind in both eyes, as shown by recent studies conducted

in Indonesia, with extrapolation to other countries where the problem is even more severe. Blindness in children is linked with vitamin A deficiency".

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ghamil of Saudi Arabia, president of the "M.E. Committee for the Blind," said a cooperative regional programme for prevention of blindness has been launched."

LEBANESE WOMEN IN THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

The minister of the Interior in Lebanon, Dr. Salah Selman, addressed to the Administrator and other administrative officials in North Lebanon a note asking them to deliver him lists of names of competent persons, qualified to serve as members of municipal councils in towns and villages where they do not exist. The note made it clear that the new municipal councils should include women among their members.

("Le Réveil", 25 March, 1979)

THE ORIGINS OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN REQUIRE FURTHER RESEARCH

The course on "Women studies in the Arab World" offered by IWSAW at BUC (Beirut University College) held a panel discussion, 16 March 1979, on the topic: "Understanding Women". Three professors from AUB (American University of Beirut) and BUC presented papers on the biological and the psychological differences between the sexes. The following paragraphs try to summarize the material presented respectively by Dr. David King and Dr. Aimée Yaqtin on the psychological aspects of Womanhood.

According to Dr. King, there are three fundamental kinds of differences between males and females: the first kind is the obvious physical and morphological difference, including the uniquely female characteristics of menstrual functions and child-birth functions.

A second category of differences are those subtle and diffuse differences, also inherited, of potentialities and predispositions which seem to be manifested at the level of the nervous system and endocrine system. Thus we find sexual differences in the rate of body growth and maturation, language development and sensitivity to pain; in infancy, girls have less muscle tissue than boys and a higher proportion of fat to water; girls exhibit greater stability in physical and intellectual growth than boys; the latter show higher and more vigorous activity levels than girls; and so on.

The third category of differences, that of environmentally conditioned and/or culturally learned behaviors, is most important. It even plays a role in determining the direction of differentiation caused by genetic or innate factors. But here we should remember that there is no adequate body of scientific literature which allows us to sort out what behaviors are due to the nature of being "female" from those that are the result of "being made feminine". It is possible to mention a large number of behaviors and character traits that are considered "feminine". Many writers and researchers assume that women are more passive than men, more romantic than realistic, or more inclined to housework than to intellectual activities. But can we prove that these peculiarities are inherent to them and not caused by the different treatment they receive? Anthropologists and sociologists claim that the above mentioned traits are for the most part a product of culture and environmental influences.

What recent studies have shown

Dr. Yaqtin, the other lecturer on the same topic, stated that most studies conducted recently on young infants found a remarkable degree of similarity between the two sexes in the basic intellectual processes of perception, learning and memory.

In studies reviewed by Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) regarding the development of verbal abilities, whenever there was a difference, girls obtained higher scores.

Studies concerning level of performance in conversation, seriation and enumeration show a remarkable consistence in the performance of the two sexes. In a study on a group of 100 male and female A.U.B. students, mean age 20, conducted by Mrs. Yaqtin in 1979, results showed no difference in concept formation and reasoning between the sexes. In another study on a group of males and females from the lower socioeconomic class, males consistently scored higher than females.

In certain studies which have shown boys' superiority in math in high school years, the commentators attribute it to boys' greater interest in science, probably based on greater expectations that they will need to use math in their future careers.

On verbal tests of creative ability, no sex differences were found in the preschool and earliest school years. From about the age of 7, girls show an advantage in a majority of studies. In summary, research on the development of intellectual and cognitive faculties has found that the main sex differences are in 1) the verbal areas, girls showing superiority over boys in this field, and 2) in spatial and mathematical skills, boys obtaining higher scores.

Personality Characteristics

Studies indicate that the two sexes are similar in their achievement motivation throughout the high school years. However after finishing their formal schooling, girls' achievement seems to drop off sharply in all spheres except the domestic one (Maccoby and Jacklin 1974). Takla (A.U.B. research team) has found (1978) that Lebanese high school girls whose mothers have a professional job are more interested in continuing their studies, and eventually working, than those whose mothers have a non-skilled occupation.

Investigation regarding self-concept, or self-rating among boys and girls, reveal that girls and women have at least as much self-esteem as boys and men. Regarding confidence in task performance, women appear to have less confidence than men in their ability to perform well on a variety of tasks.

In anxiety, fear, and timidity, some observational studies do not show any sex difference. Other studies however indicate that girls are more timid and anxious than boys. It seems, according to comments made by researchers, that boys are less willing to admit to fear or anxious feelings, as they have higher scores on lie and defensiveness scales.

There is a strong evidence that males are the more physically aggressive sex while females tend to be less aggressive. It has been argued that the male, for biological reasons, is in a greater readiness to learn and to display aggressive behavior, at least partly due to the relationship between sex hormones and aggression (Maccoby and Jacklin 1974).

Conclusion

Dr. King and Dr. Yaqtin tried to survey the recent literature related to sex differences and found very few between the two sexes in terms of potentialities and personality characteristics. The question that should be raised in this respect is: Why then are women victims of discrimination in the fields of education, occupation, social activities, social rights and so on?

Dr. Yaqtin answers that the cause lies in the high proportion of illiteracy and ignorance prevailing among women, more particularly among those of the third world. Jacqueline Chabaud in an article (1970) declares that, given the right education and facilities, women can be on an equal footing with men. Takla (A.U.B.) demonstrated (1978) that, in Lebanon, the higher the level of education of the mother, the less traditional the sex attitude of her daughter. Dodd has also found (1968) that the level of education and positive attitudes toward women's emancipation are closely related.

In conclusion, Dr Yaqtin asked: What, if anything, are women going to do to remedy the situation?

Women's Social Welfare Activities in South Lebanon

The district of the South in Lebanon, more than any other district, has born the brunt of the war. It has been, and continues to be, the field of confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians.

Women of the South have been particularly active in voluntary social work and first aid activity. Two of these women volunteers have been interviewed by al-Raida. The first was Mrs. Fatima Khalifeh, a member of the "Social Committee of Jabal Amil Women" and an active worker in projects of assistance to the displaced and the refugees.

Q — What factors aroused your interest in voluntary social work?

A — It may have been a natural bent. In my childhood I enjoyed helping the needy. In 1957, when I was still a teen-ager, I volunteered to collect a sum of money to spend on a surgical operation needed by a poor young girl who had been accidentally shot in the throat. I also think that I owe particularly to my father my interest in public service. His house was always open to needy people and to social leaders who met to discuss ways of helping the public and solving general problems.

Q — What have been your main activities in social work?

A — I have been and continue to be a member of the "Social Committee of Jabal Amel Women", founded in 1970 and grouping a large number of women volunteers, including Mrs. Dunia Mroweh Munajjed. This society succeeded in founding 13 centers for health education, teaching local crafts and fighting illiteracy. In each center, a social worker and a visiting physician were secured, and a library was started. The most important achievement of the Society was the founding of the nursing school which offered a three year training course leading to a higher diploma in nursing. The Lebanese Government recognized the high standard of this school by taking charge of 80% of its expenses. All these projects were suspended because of the war...

Q — We would like to hear about some of your most rewarding experiences in the field.

A — Two years ago, when I discovered the spread of scabies among the displaced, I instantly started a campaign against this skin disease by organizing an advertising and information campaign in the refugee camps, and distributing gifts to those who kept their rooms clean. Another exciting experience was my trip to Egypt and my interviewing the first Egyptian Lady, Jihan el-Sadat, to ask her help for the admittance of two Lebanese handicapped children in the "Egyptian Institution



for the Handicapped." My request was granted and I had the opportunity to visit a number of flourishing social welfare organizations in Egypt.

After the meeting we had with Mrs. Fatima Khalifeh we met Mrs. Dunia Mroweh Munajjed, another prominent pioneer in the welfare projects of South Lebanon.

Mrs. Munajjed reported about the projects which the society had to give up because of the war. One of them was that of reviving the silk-worm-raising industry in the South, a vital project which caused her to effect a worthwhile trip to India where she obtained ample information on the production of natural silk and the use of machines for local silk weaving.

Q — Have you made any effort to resume some of the activities that the war has blocked off?

A — The nursing School will be reopened with the help of the St. Joseph University which has agreed to provide technical guidance while we take charge of the financial and practical needs. Some of the social welfare centers have been restored; they continue to offer health guidance, first-aid lessons and sometimes family-planning advice.

The project which we now expect to carry out is the training of local social workers who would gradually replace those coming from other districts, who have to face difficulties connected with lodging and adjustment. The YWCA has accepted to assist in training our girls; as to financing the project, we mainly depend on the "International Save the Children's Fund."

It is interesting to note here that Mrs. Munajjed who once taught journalism at B.U.C. and has been teaching this course at the Lebanese University, has a daughter who has majored in sociology and who will hopefully follow in her mother's steps.

"WOMEN OF THE FERTILE CRESCENT :
MODERN POETRY BY ARAB WOMEN" (1)

This anthology of modern poetry by Arab women compiles translated selections from the poetry of 13 contemporary women poets, representing 7 Arab countries: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia and Syria. The choice of the poets was probably dictated by the availability of their works. The editor, Kamal Bullata, who lives in the United States and who translated into English most of the Arabic poems of the collection and some of the French, made use of other translations already made by writers, critics and poets residing in America as citizens or as immigrants of Arab descent. Since he worked as contributor to the Arabic magazines, "Shi'r" and "Mawaqef", which appeared in Beirut and published modern Arabic poetry between 1956 and 1975, it was natural for him to depend on these two magazines both as a source of information about a number of the women poets included in the anthology and as a means of access to their works.

Though most of the poems are "modern" in the sense that the authors use the prose-poem or the free-verse as a medium of expression, they present a good deal of variety in content and in style. The Palestinian tragedy forms a central topic in poems chosen from the works of the Palestinian poets: Salma al-Jayyousi, Hanan Mikhail and Fadwa Tuqan. The same topic dominates the poems of Etel Adnan, a Lebanese poet. It is evoked in some selections by Nadia Tuéni, another Lebanese poet. Nazik al-Malaika, the Iraqi poet whose voluminous work revolves mostly around personal emotions and metaphysical meditations, devotes a few of her poems in the collection to promote national consciousness, as in the poem entitled "Jamila", or to attack social injustice perpetrated against women, as in "Insignificant Woman" and "Washing off Disgrace."

The problems of the Arab woman — her grievances, her enslavement to tradition, the harsh and possessive attitude of men toward her — are all vehemently attacked by nearly all of these women, especially those of the younger generation. Others like Nadia

Tuéni, Mona Saudi and Thérèse Awwad, whose poems do not carry a direct social message except in very rare cases, impart through poetry their intimate thoughts and dreams, their loneliness, their nostalgia for love or their pursuit of the unknown.

Andrée Chédid, on the other hand, insists on conveying a message in her poetry; a message of love, rebirth, fortitude, belief in man's unlimited powers and possibilities:

Man retains the bygone
Man detains the to-come
The fire which gave birth to language
Consumes him
Edifies him
Man breaks and traps himself
Man assaults the universe
Man is this man
Man is all man
Man — to-day.

(p. 5 in the anthology)

Though their ideas may be similar, these women express them in different ways, ranging from the clear and rational to the obscure and eccentric. Some of them, influenced by surrealism of "modernism", like Nadia Tuéni, give special emphasis to form, wording and fantastic expression. Others like Salma al-Jayyousi, Tukan, al-Malaika, Adnan, speak out their ideas clearly and emphasize content. The poetic images are in some cases inspired from local color as in the Saudian F. Abu-Khalid's ironical poems; or drawn forth from Eastern heritage, as in Etel Adnan's biblical tirades. Aisha Arna'out uses stories and tales borrowed from nature; Mona Saudi, in her vision of the future, resorts to universal archetypes; Hanan Mikhail, in a concise, picturesque style, describes actual scenes and recollections.

The value of the book is enhanced by the list of references and bibliography of Arab women poets and fiction writers, published at the end of the collection. It provides a helpful, though incomplete, bibliography.

This short review gives no room for evaluating the authenticity of the translations. Generally they succeed in bringing out the ideas, though at times they may not give a literal reproduction of the originals.

Profiles of Racinian Heroines

Profils des Héroïnes Raciniennes
(French) 260 pp.

by Emy Batache-Watt
Librairie C. Klincksiek,
Paris 1976

A well-documented study of Racinian heroines, consisting of a detailed analysis of their characters, their backgrounds and how they influence their behavior; their psychological troubles, their major and secondary complexes; the important roles they play in Racine's theater.

The author quotes Lanson's statement in his History of French Literature: "From Racine dates the empire of woman in Literature." Racine prepared the way for the Romanticists who in the 19th century highlighted the influence of woman as the symbol and inspirer of romantic love. But while the Romanticists depicted the sufferings endured by lovers with the aim of liberating them and asserting the freedom of love, Racine described the tragic consequences of passions with the aim of warning people against them. To him there is no love without agony, no passion that does not bring psychic trouble, worry and crushing anxiety. According to him, passion should be repressed as the main source of evil.

In concluding her remarkable analysis, the author points out the modernity of Racinian heroines by saying: "In the latent or evident violence of their temperaments, the majority of Racinian heroines belong to our time. Agressivity, subconscious or calculated, cruelty, subtle or intentional, which characterize a Hermione, an Agrippine, a Roxane or an Athalie, are currently prevailing traits in our world to-day."

(1) A writer of Lebanese origin residing in Australia. A BUC alumna, B.A. 1952.

"Handbook of International Data on Women"

by **Elise Boulding, Shirley A. Nuss, Dorothy Lee Carson and Michael A. Greenstein**
Sage Publications
John Wiley & Sons, 1976

This handbook tries to fill a need felt by all those concerned about adequate census-taking and evaluation of the breeding population and the labor force in each country.

"The failure of the First United Nations Development Decade to increase productivity and improve the standard of living of the third world was partly due to the failure to recognize that women are half the labor force, one hundred per cent of the reproducing force and one hundred percent of the food preparation force."

This book gives data on the following topics in 159 countries of the world:

- Economic activity of women
- Literacy and Education
- Migration and marital status
- Life, death and reproduction
- Political and civic participation

"A world overview is included, incorporating some information from other than United Nations sources that may be useful for analysis in connection with data on the position of women presented therein."

"Women's Work is..."

Resources on Working Women
 Edited by **Bobbi Wells Hargleroad**
Institute on the Church in Urban-Industrial Society
5700 South Wouldlawn Ave.
Chicago, Illinois 60637, 1978.

Women Studies Abstracts

— Issued quarterly—
 Winter '78 vol. 6, no 4.
 C 1978 by Rush Publishing Co., Inc.

Greenwillow News

Greenwillow books — Recently published books for children.
A division of William Morrow & Company, Inc.
105 Madison Ave. N.Y. New York 10016.

"Of Costliest Emblem"

Paradise Lost & the Emblem Tradition
 by **Shahla Anand**
 "A thesis exploring spiritual and temporal images and ideologies in "Paradise Lost" in relation to the English emblem books".
University Press of America
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Quest:

a feminist quarterly, vol. IV, no 2
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 P.O.Box 8843, Washington D.C. 20003

Message from the village

by **Perdita Huston**
The Epoch B Foundation
New York, 1978

Announcement

The first six numbers of Al-Raida which, as a result of the painful circumstances in Lebanon, were issued irregularly between 1976 and 1978, may be considered as vol. I.

Beginning 1979, we start vol. II and hope to have a regular quarterly publication. Missing numbers may be obtained from the Institute.

INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES IN THE ARAB WORLD

P.O.B. 11-4080
 Beirut University College
 Beirut — Lebanon
 Cable Address: BECOGE

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