

A quarterly journal

AL-RAIDA

**Arab
Regional
Preparatory
meeting for
Beijing**



**Edward
Said
lectures in
Beirut**



**File:
Women And Education In Lebanon**



Coucher de soleil sur la route de Yarze
Rima Amyuni, 1995, huile sur toile, 178 cm x 121 cm.

International Women's Day At IWSAW And LAU

On March 8, 1995 Gulbenkian Theater, Lebanese American University opened its doors for the Lebanese community to come and join in the celebration of the International Women's Day. The usual lectures and panels were replaced by sketches depicting the changes in women's roles and images through history; that were performed by professionals and amateurs who skillfully portrayed the oppressions and dire circumstances under which Lebanese women lived. These sketches were inspired by the writings of May Ziade, Gibran Kahlil Gibran, Tanious Chahine, Nadia Tweini, Toufic Youssef Awwad and other prominent writers and poets. The show also included a dance expressing women's feelings and their need for security, faith and stability. The setting

was very modest and the scenes served to portray the domination of women by the males in their family namely the father, brother, husband..... Moreover, some moving

scenes were exposed and the solution was an angry and outrageous outcry to revolt. The audience included LAU faculty, staff and students as well as friends of the Institute.



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, Lebanese American University (Formerly BUC), P. O. Box 13-5053/59, Beirut, Lebanon Tel. (01) 867 618 ext. 288 Fax (01) 867 098; or c/o Lebanese American University (Formerly BUC), 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 Lebanese American University (Formerly BUC). 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.

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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.

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Cover-Illustration by Rima Amyuni.
Les Mimosas (detail), Oil on Canvas, 1994
First Prize, Salon d'Automne, Sursock Museum,
Beirut. Private collection of the museum.

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Editorial

Editors Come and Go

But Al-Raida Remains

Al-Raida has been a wonderful experience for me during the last 4 years and eight months. It is, however, time for me to move on. I will be moving into another dimension of social development. With me I take, not only the good memories of my time at the Institute but the conviction and commitment to the improvement of women's status and conditions wherever I may be. Through Al-Raida, I learned that there can be no development without women.

As I sat to write this editorial, I looked at previous issues and could not help but acknowledge to myself the improvement it has made over the last few years. Yes Al-Raida is a platform for Arab women, and for change. It has grown against great odds since its creation in 1976. It is thanks to the dedication of the Director of the Institute for Women Studies in the Arab World, and its staff members throughout the years that Al-Raida has survived. We are proud of the contributions that Al-Raida has made for women in the international and Arab communities.

Only yesterday, John-Gay N. Yoh, a Sudanese student at AUB, who had written an article for us entitled "Tradition versus Modernity: Urban Southern Sudanese Women" (Vol. X, #56, Winter 1992) paid me a visit to tell me how the article culminated more research and interest in Sudanese women. Thus, when his article was published we received a letter from a German woman-scholar inquiring about material on Sudanese women. We referred this letter to John, who kindly answered it. He now tells me that eventually, our reader made it to the University of Khartoum in Sudan, conducted more research and is preparing a book for publication.

Hopefully this is but one of the few contributions of Al-Raida that have been reported to us. We hope that our input will generate more interest and change in the lives of women throughout the world and in the countries that receive Al-Raida.

As I leave the post of Editor-In-Chief, I am particularly grateful to Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr for her support and constant encouragement throughout my stay at the Institute. I thank her for believing in me even when I was in doubt. I will miss the laughs and the good times as well as the not-so good times I've had with my colleagues: Ms. Mona Khalaf, Research Associate; Ms. Anita Nassar, Officer; Ms. Afaf Akhras, executive secretary; Ms. Hania Oseiran, and Ms. Myriam Soufiar, Assistants at the Institute.

The members of the Advisory Board: Dr. Mona Amyuni, Dr. Nadia El-Cheikh, Ms. Adele Khudr, Ms. Mona Khalaf, Ms. Wafa Stephan Tarnowski, in addition to previous members, have been most cooperative, helpful, and are essential for the continued success of Al-Raida. Their dedicated efforts, regular attendance of meetings, diligent editorial reviews, and support in networking with contributing scholars are invaluable.

The Administration of the Lebanese American University (Formerly BUC), has been no less supportive, especially as we constantly proposed expansion, and additional funding. In a recent meeting with members of the University's administration, the Institute for Women Studies in the Arab World received a good recommendation for Al-Raida and a commitment of support.

As I said in a previous editorial, Al-Raida is yours! It will continue to serve its purpose and achieve its goals as long as you read it and use it well. Editors come and go, but the issues remain, and the need for networking expands if we are to progress. Therefore, Al-Raida remains.

Randa Abul-Husn

AL-RAIDA

About (IWSAW)..

IWSAW - The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World was established in 1973 at the Lebanese American University, formerly BUC. 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 Lebanese American University (Formerly BUC).

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 LAU. 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 on 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.

For Beijing

Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting Adopts Plan of Action for Advancement of Arab Women

The Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women adopted "Peace" as its aim for the achievement of development and equality, according to Dr. Sabah Bakjaji, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Executive Secretary of ESCWA. "Peace will allow resources formerly utilized for war to be channeled to development and to achieve the three goals of the conference: providing women with health services and opportunities for education and work, on an equal footing for men" he said at the opening of The Arab Regional Preparatory meeting on November 6-10, 1994, in Amman, Jordan.

The Arab Regional Preparatory meeting that took place between November 6 - 10 at the Philadelphia Hotel in Amman, Jordan, was organized into two groups: The First Segment consisting of an Expert group met between November 6 -8 to finalize the Draft Regional Plan of Action for the Advancement of Arab Women to the year 2005 which will be pre-

sented at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

The last two days of the conference (November 8-9, 1994) formed the High-Level Segment whose aim was to identify obstacles to the progress of women as well as critical areas for Arab women.

This serves to formulate a plan of action for the

coming stage at three levels: governmental, non-governmental, and regional and international.

This five day Arab Preparatory Meeting was sponsored by HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal, chairperson of the Jordanian National Committee for Women, Head of the Official Jordanian Delegation to Beijing and Member of the Advisory Group of Eminent Persons for the Fourth World Conference on Women established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations; and by H.E. Ms. Gertrude Mongella, Secretary General of the Fourth World Conference on Women; and was co-organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the League of Arab States (LAS), and the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), opened on November 6 at the Philadelphia Hotel, in Amman. Delegations of the following ESCWA members states participated in the meetings:

According to Dr. Sabah Bakjaji of ESCWA, Peace will allow resources formerly utilized for war to be channeled to development

Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Non-ESCWA delegates and observers also came from Algeria, Djibouti, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and Lebanon.

The First Segment (November 6 -8, 1994).

The Draft Regional Plan of Action for the Advancement of Arab Women to the year 2005 discussed by experts in the First Segment aims to reflect the issues and concerns of Arab women taking into account the special conditions of each Arab state within the framework of the value system of Arab culture. Issues related to equality, development and the right of Arab women to participate in power and decision-making structures and mechanisms were discussed. That draft document said that despite the desire of Arab governments to improve the status of Arab women in power structures, women's participation is still below the target of the level set by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, which is to achieve a women's power structure of 30 percent by the year 1995. Some delegates objected to a paragraph recommending that all Arab countries ratify the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women as a means to help women reach power and decision making bodies. These delegates argued that adopting the UN convention was redundant as Islamic Shari'a already guarantees women's "full rights"

in society.

Changes to the draft of the Regional Plan of Action for Arab Women were recommended by delegates and observers. The modifications include replacing the term "Regional" with the word "Arab" whenever it appears in the document. They also recommended that the phrase "awareness of human rights of women" be changed to "awareness of women's rights as human rights" in an effort to counter the general perception that women's rights are separate and subordinate to human rights.

The third and last day of the First segment conferred on issues of economic power, achieving self-reliance, coping with the effects of wars and armed conflicts and violence against Arab women. It was noted that changes in life styles that would reflect a positive attitude towards working women has not been achieved in the Arab World despite some positive changes and increases in levels of employment and education. Delegates and observers stressed that women should not be obliged to work but should have the option and right to employment if they so choose. The document urges governments to enact laws and establish basic rules that guarantee equal rights for men and women in the workplace, such as equal recruitment and employment opportunities and equal social security and pension, in keeping with customs and traditions.

On the issue of coping with the effects of war and armed conflicts the

document said women should participate in peace negotiations and in the settlement of conflicts. Environment and violence against women were added to the document to ensure protection for women, and prevent women's exposure to violence in its various forms through preventive measures, education and awareness.

The High-Level Segment, (November 9-10).

The High-Level Segment accepted the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Arab Women to the Year 2005, which was reviewed by the First Segment, as the region's contribution towards the formation of the Global Plan of Action to be adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The Plan of Action was accepted after it was finalized by senior officials, joint national preparatory committees for the women's conference, intergovernmental and non-governmental organization (NGOs), United Nations agencies, and experts who reviewed and assessed the status of Arab women and evaluated the progress achieved in the past decade.

The Plan of Action, which is based on international covenants relating to human rights and religious values that respect the rights of women as human beings, includes the objectives, policies and measures aimed at enabling women to exercise fully their rights and assume the responsibilities within context of the Global Platform for Action, which

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Left: Mona Khalaf IWSAW - LAU, Lebanon.
Right: Maha Khatib UNIFEM National Project Manager, Amman.



Lebanese women experts invited to attend the Regional Preparatory Meeting.

emphasizes the elimination of the remaining obstacles to the integration of women in the sustainable development process.

The meeting also adopted a statement in support of Algerian women which was submitted by the head of the Algerian delegation. The statement expressed support for Algerian women who "are facing fierce attacks targeting their existence, beliefs, education and rights." The statement added that extremists and backward forces were trying to deny women their right to participate in the advancement and development of their country. According to the statement, extremists "who have opted for the language of violence, guns and terrorism rather than dialogue, have carried out hideous crimes against women and children in order to achieve their aims of destroying Algerian women's gains and shattering the achievements of the Algerian revolution." The statement continues that "women were effective participants who made sacrifices and became models for other Arab women struggling for the freedom, advancement and stability of their nations." All delegations, except that of Sudan adopted the statement.

At the close of the meeting, participants chose Princess Basma to head a proposed follow-up committee to coordinate among Arab states in order to ensure that the Global Plan of Action reflects the region's aspirations for the advancement of women.

Source: Press Release by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), November 6-10, 1994.

Art and Freedom

Rose Ghurayyib

History tells us that slavery existed from early times in ancient Mesopotamia, Pharaonic Egypt, ancient Greece and other cradles of civilization. It continued throughout the Middle Ages and the modern period, during which it diminished, beginning in the United States of America with the Civil War (1861-1865) that abolished black slavery. Although the efforts of the United Nations has somewhat succeeded in eradicating this evil in other parts of the world, slavery continues to exist in a variety of forms such as the trafficking of women and children in Thailand, India, south Asian and other countries in the world. Prostitution and rape, which may also be considered as historical forms of slavery, whereby women are subjugated to a lower existence, continue to thrive in many parts of the old and new worlds.

In the Middle East, women slaves existed in pre-Islamic Arabia and other neighboring countries as erotic dancers and singers. There were thousands of such women at the courts of the caliphs and other rulers in the Arab empire particularly during the Abbasid period, 8th-12th Century A.D. Slave dealers would recruit them from all over the Empire, train them in singing, dancing and lute playing and then sell them at high prices to

wealthy men and women.

Unlike the so-called 'free women' who were kept inside their homes and forbidden contact with men other than their close relatives, slave women did not have to wear the veil. They were free to mingle, and to sing and dance in cafes and other public places. Many of them became famous for their skills of entertainment. In addition to singing, dancing and lute playing, they recited poetry. They could improvise original poems and dances, as well. A book on the history of Arab singers, called "al-Aghani" by al-Isphahani, gives detailed information about distinguished women singers and musicians in the Omayyad and Abbasid periods, which saw the florescence of Arabic music. Up till now, women in the Arab and Moslem world, are encouraged to learn and practice dancing and singing, even if they do not become professional performers.

Why have the above artistic skills been emphasized and encouraged more strongly than the plastic ones like painting, sculpture, designing and architecture for women? On one hand, it would seem that the latter do not comply to women's sub-serviant roles towards men, including entertaining them. On the other hand, painting and sculpture

did not flourish in Moslem countries, except in Persia (Iran) where Persian miniatures attained a high degree of development. Like the Jews, the Moslems did not encourage the crafting of portraits of people and nature from fear that the people might grow to worship images.

Times have changed. We now live in an age of freedom. Women and men in the Arab and Moslem world are encouraged to develop in all the fine arts without restriction. Art in all its forms continues to develop and to be a source of enjoyment. Modern art is undergoing a drastic evolution which, to some people, seems to be shocking. It does not accent enjoyment, relaxation or 'catharsis', but requires deep thinking, meditation and interpretation. Obscurity and suggestiveness supposedly form its chief constituents. If you ask a modern artist about the trends of modern art, he or she will tell you it is primarily based on creativity, which requires complete freedom. In other words, it is a complete revolt against the past. In poetry, it means pure inspiration, and freedom to write about any subject in any form.

Only in an atmosphere of freedom can art and science, the two pillars of civilization, develop and flourish.

Unlike the
so-called
'free
women' who
were kept
inside their
homes
slave
women did
not have to
wear the
veil.



Edward Said

Lectures in Beirut

Wafa Stephan Tarnowski

Edward Said, author of the controversial book "Orientalism" and one of the most versatile Arab/American intellectuals, gave two dazzling lectures at the American University of Beirut campus on the 3rd and 4th of January 1995.

Both lectures drew packed audiences. The first one was a retrospective on his famous controversial book "Orientalism" while the second was on Critical Theory; theory which now encompasses the realm of women's studies.

Defending his book "Orientalism," Said said that it was mistakenly read as an anti-Western work bent on perpetuating hostility between East and West while in fact it was criticizing the discourse of traditional orientalism which looked at the complex heterogeneous "east" from a "western" dominant discourse. Said believes there are no fixed homogeneous categories of "Orient" and "Occident" but rather constructions of traditional Orientalists who have had a "chronic tendency to deny, suppress and distort the Orient." What he regrets is readers merging his anti-Orientalist view with a pro-Islamic one, which simplified the issues discussed and equated his criticism of Orientalism with him being a supporter of fundamentalism.

Said called for people to practice "crossing from one culture to another"

while maintaining a "visceral connection" with their own culture. He also called the audience to view cultures as hybrid and heterogeneous rather than homogeneous and see themselves as "mongrels" - i.e. products of various cultures and bloods. He believes that any attempt to force people into distinct breeds and entities is "false". In sum, Said doesn't like gloating and uncritical nationalism but is very interested in alternative discourses, the discourse of minorities, of women and anyone who was considered for a long time as "lower people."

Women's Studies as Alternative Discourse

According to Said the most interesting writing done nowadays is the one written by people "outside the centers," the marginals, the women, the minorities. He reiterated this belief in his second lecture on the broad spectrum of critical theory which includes nowadays:

1. Cultural studies specializing in contemporary culture and purport
2. Gay and lesbian studies
3. Feminist studies
4. Post-modernist studies

Again Said welcomed the appearance of these "minority discourses" and the "translated works" of authors of different backgrounds and cultures. He emphasized the importance of feminist discourse in trying to understand the "Other" and praised the works of the founders of feminist discourses like de Beauvoir, Friedan, Millet while criticizing also "the parrots and the mimics".

In fact, in his latest book **Culture and Imperialism** (Vintage, London, 1993) Said mentions that since independence was gained by the ex-colonies, "new and imaginative reconceptions of society and culture were required in order to avoid the old orthodoxes and injustices" (p.263). In his opinion, the women's movement was central for the reconception of post-colonial society and for using their struggles to fight "the unfair male practices of concubinage, polygamy, footbinding, sati etc.

Said comes across as a very passionate and committed scholar with an extraordinary range of knowledge as varied as literary criticism, history, musicology and critical theory.

Moreover, it was amazingly refreshing to listen to this man praising again and again the importance of women's studies and the women's movement in the world.

According to Said the most interesting writing nowadays is the one written by people "outside the centers," the marginals, the women, the minorities.

Does Education Empower Women?

Randa Abul-Husn

Women's education has increased substantially in the Arab World during the last decade or two. Statistics indicate that the male-female ratio of enrollment in secondary school and higher education is diminishing and in some places like Lebanon it is suspected that the number of women university students is higher than its male counterpart.

Nevertheless, the relevant question concerning women's education in the world in general and in the Arab world in particular remains the same: Has education empowered women in the labor market and in the home?

We do know, based on various studies and discourses, that an increase in women's education is followed by an increase in their participation in the labor force. We also know from similar studies about 'women and work' that women lag behind men in decision-making positions and surpass them in jobs in the secondary market.

This, nevertheless, does not mean that increase in women's education did not improve women's status in society, because it has. It is a fact, after all, that women are moving in larger numbers into the productive and dynamic spheres of public life. It does, however, indicate that women are replacing men, maybe not where it counts, but where it is convenient for men to move into the next level. Hence, scholars attest that jobs given to women quickly become de-skilled, and lower in wages (see article entitled Empowerment of Women Through Education and Training (December 11, 94)).

In the home, the impact of education on women, is seen in terms of an improvement in the quality and efficiency of home and family management. However, no matter how educated a married woman is or how hard she works for the career she may have or aspire to, she is not relieved of her duties as a home-maker and house-keeper. She is primarily expected to fulfil the duties dictated to her by the patriarchal system. In other words, traditional roles, values and norms persist despite structural changes in society.

The above questions are raised and discussed in an informal panel discussion organized by the Institute for Women Studies in the Arab World. The discussion meant to raise various descriptive and analytic aspects of women's education, including, increase in female enrollment in schools and universities; effect of education on work; and the relationship between structural changes in society and gender roles including the double burden on women. The content of the discussion is hereby transcribed in this FILE of Al-Raida.

The File also includes a feature article that discusses various aspects of women's education in a number of Arab countries notably Egypt, and Lebanon. Moreover it comprises a research paper that examines the image of women in children's school books, highlighting processes whereby gender roles are standardized. Children's education is addressed in a second article which reviews a recent publication for children.

Last but not least, our present file presents some of the views of a well-known Arab-American scholar, Edward W. Said, on education, and women's movements. Said recently addressed the university and intellectual communities of Beirut in a series of appearances where he discussed his prominent book, *Orientalism*, and other aspects of social developments in the world and the Arab World. On more than one occasion,

Empowerment of Women

Through Education and Training

Panel Discussion: December 11, 1994

Empowerment Through Education is the first in a series of lectures that addresses *empowerment of women in Lebanon and the Arab World*. The series consist of informal discussions between audience and panelists who are specialists in their field. Future panels will discuss **empowerment through the law, through history, through work, and through the media**. The panelists of Empowerment Through Education were Drs. Julinda Abu Nasr, Director of IWSAW; Huda Abdo, Chairperson of the Education Department, and Paul Tabar, Chairperson of the Social Science Division, both at the Lebanese American University (Formerly BUC). Dr. Adnan Al-Amin Professor of Education at the Lebanese University, the American University of Beirut and author of two recent books on the status of education in Lebanon served as moderator.

The discussion covered a number of determinants of women's education in Lebanon and analyzed the relationship between education, work and family. Abdo, a psychologist and educator emphasized that traditional value systems are more powerful than expectations and aspirations for women. Education and work, she noted do not overrule traditional patriarchal values and norms. Women are themselves raised to think that marriage is the optimum for them, asserted Abu Nasr. Tabar explained that market systems in-

fluence women's development in education and consequently, the labor force, depending on the characteristics of the market and the times. Al-Amin, on the other hand, noted that women have achieved and continue to reach higher levels of education and participation in the Labor force. This article consists of a review of some of the important points that were made during the panel. We include some of the input that came from the audience.

Abdo: Women's education and employment is largely regulated by value systems and expectations that give priority to marriage, motherhood and home making for women.

Amin: Demands of the labor market compose another point of entry into the analysis of women, education and work. Hence, markets are changing whereby the demand is no longer for manual skills but for administrative and mental skills. It is, therefore, safe to say that if the labor market is in demand for skills which require degrees, and if women are getting higher education, then women can compete with men unless traditional norms and values prevent it. In Lebanon, Bahrain, Qatar and other urbanized countries, you find a large number of women in the service sector, thus in administration and teaching. This, however, has a perverse effect on women's status in the labor market because the effect of feminization has been a devaluation of wag-

es. Everytime a woman enters a certain sector, the wages for that job and those skills decrease.

Tabar: What you have just described could also be seen as a deskilling of jobs due to changes of the capitalistic market. For example, the job of a clerk in England was considered important and was held largely by men (up to 90%). With the introduction of typewriters and other technologies it was deskilled and became less important. Men were eventually replaced by women (90% of the clerks are women today). The same applies for computer operators while computer analysts are men, the latter requiring considerably more mental skills than the first. I, therefore, feel that the economic structure is the primary force behind this gender-related change.

Amin: Looking at the last 10 years, you notice that the majority of jobs in modern markets require training and skills, and women are getting higher education and degrees. The relationship between a degree and employment is strong especially among women, because opportunities are directly related to educational qualifications. The difference between men and women in this respect lies in a larger variety of occupations, jobs and opportunities that are accessible to men in any country or any system.

Abul-Husn: Employment does not simply mean holding a job, but includes getting promoted and growing. Experience is an

important variable that comes into play if we are to discuss job mobility and continuity for women. Women suffer from less experience than men due to interruptions caused by family needs, i.e. maternity, delivery, etc..

Khalaf: Women's work follows a bi-modal model. Women do not work on a continuous basis and their participation in the labor market is interrupted as a result of women's duties as home-makers, and child-rearers. Women enter the market at one point in their life, leave at another and may return later, and so on and so forth. This is why women are more concentrated in the secondary market rather than in the primary market.

Tabar: If so then the issue at hand is not whether women have the choice between working or not, but the problems accumulating from a double burden of work and family. **Khalaf:** Yes, it is imperative here that we differentiate between a career woman and a working woman. A career woman is someone who is willing, by hook or by crook, to compete, get ahead and persevere. In reality, however, the bulk of women are still working women. The fact that a woman joined the labor market does not empower her.

Khalaf: What I am trying to say is that because women perform more than one role, they simply cannot join the primary labor market the way men do. What are the characteristics of the primary market? It is a market where there is systematic promotion, where labor unions play a very important role, and where continuity and experience are basic for promotion. By virtue of double roles,

women somehow do not have continuity in their jobs in most cases. Where labor unions are concerned, a very small percentage become union leaders mostly because meetings take place in the evenings and women cannot leave their homes and families after having been away all day. Thus, even if a woman is working, she has that other role that forces her into the secondary market. If a woman is out of the labor market for five years, there is a big gap between her and a man who had started out with equal qualifications. His job was not interrupted like hers because she had three kids. By that a woman loses the chance to join the primary market and ends up joining the secondary market. Along with the secondary market comes lower wages. Furthermore, whenever a woman rejoins the labor market, after having left it, she is forced to accept lesser pay and jobs that have become de-skilled because she has lost part of these skills.

Amin: We have so far made two important observations about women's participation in the labor force: 1) Women tend to join some professions more than others, despite more tolerance to relatively new fields, and 2) promotion and mobility is subject to constraints because women have another domain of work that is putting pressure on them, i.e. the family. Hence, although education increases chances and opportunities for both men and women, it is still lower for women.

Abul-Husn: Whenever a woman rejoins the labor market, after having left it, she is forced to accept lesser pay and jobs. Principal role expectations re-

main traditional whereby men are providers and women are provided for.

Osseiran: Not any more! I feel that men are confused about what role they should play. You will notice that especially from looking at our commercials: men are portrayed as sentimental, docile and soft, instead of the old macho and hoarse look. Men are confused.

Amin: Yes, you will notice that the image of the hero in our modern society is not the strong but the intelligent one, who can be either a man or a woman. This is changing the image of the sexes and the issue is becoming more complicated. Hence, the classical model is being challenged, and increase in women's education is the major factor affecting these changes. Hence, by virtue of higher education, and consequently participation in the labor force and earning a living, women's power has increased in the home as well.

In Conclusion, it would be safe to say that the panel on **Empowerment of Women Through Education** deduced that education has changed the lives of women. Despite the fact that macro and micro-social and economic factors interact to assist women in added participation in society, the powerful predominance of traditions on the lives of women in any society play an important role in the conflict between work and family. Education changes expectations and needs of women. Roles, expectations, needs, skills, and participation of women in society are all subject to the psychological, mental and intellectual forces as well as awareness and empowerment through education.

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Women and Education in Lebanon

Mona Khalaf

A Brief Survey

Women access to education has not been an issue in Lebanon. Literature on the subject indicates that as far back as the end of the nineteenth century, girls have been given the same educational opportunities as boys. According to Toufic Touma, there were 142 schools in the Mutassarifya of Mount Lebanon and the coastal cities - run essentially by missionaries and Lebanese monks - half of which were girls' schools. The same situation pre-

vailed also in the public sector. Ismail Haqqi Beyk, Mutassarif of Mount Lebanon at the time, wrote in his educational report: "In 1916-1917, 104 public schools were established in Mount Lebanon, 52 schools for girls and 52 for boys" (as quoted in Beydoun, 1993 in Arabic)

Following World War Two, the educational public sector went through a lull period and its share in the country's total student enrollment dropped to 14.8% in 1932 (Bashur 1988, in Arabic). It is

worth mentioning here that there was some resistance on the part of the Lebanese to send their children to public schools; their preference went to religious schools whenever they could afford them. It is only at the end of the decade that followed Lebanon's access to independence that the educational public sector picked up again. Its share in total national student enrollment increased to 40% in 1959; out of which only one third were girls; while in the private sector

Table 1 Distribution of Students by Sector and Gender

Sector and Level	1973-1974			1982-1983 *			1993-1994		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Public									
Pre-elementary	15284	12937	28221	8582	8621	17203	11202	11289	22491
Elementary	99110	79612	178722	61744	60661	122405	53478	54230	107708
Intermediate	55811	33765	89576	35873	43032	78905	34270	45785	80055
Secondary	14012	6625	20637	13882	18679	32561	11339	142271	25566
Total	184217	132939	317156	12001	130993	251074	110289	25531	235820
%	58.1	41.9	100.0	47.8	52.2	100.0	46.8	53.2	100.0
Private									
Pre-elementary	57869	50154	108023	47974	43553	91527	65554	60355	125909
Elementary	140613	129200	269813	116649	103070	219719	131985	121165	253150
Intermediate	42506	39258	81764	43877	41218	85095	58955	58387	117342
Secondary	13884	10868	24752	18010	17268	35278	19230	19148	38378
Total	254872	229480	484352	226510	205109	431619	275724	259055	534779
%	52.6	47.4	100.0	52.5	47.5	100.0	51.6	48.4	100.0
Grand Total	439089	362419	801508	346591	336102	682693	386013	384586	770599
%	54.8	45.2	100.0	50.8	49.2	100.0	50.1	49.9	100.0

* The year 1982-1983 was chosen because no statistics are available for 1983-1984

Source: Al-Amin, Adnan, *Education in Lebanon*, (in Arabic), 1994 and Center for Educational Research and Development, Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts.

the number of girls' enrollment was almost equal to that of boys (28.7% and 31.6% respectively) for the same year (Beydoun 1993, in Arabic).

By 1970, girls gained additional grounds both in the private and public educational sectors where they represented 44.9% of the students enrolled in private schools and 43.5% of those in public ones (Al Amin, 1994 in Arabic) This upward trend was maintained and accentuated during the civil war period and the post war years as will be shown in the following facts and figures.

Facts and Figures

The educational sector in Lebanon is quite large and involves one third of the Lebanese population. It is characterized by the predominance of the private sector at all levels of education; a fact that has been accentuated by the civil strife that plagued the country for seventeen years. This is clearly evidenced by Table 1 which presents the distribution of students by sector, level of education and gender at the school level. Students registered in private schools in 1993-1994 represent, in fact, more than two-thirds (69.4%) of total national student enrollment, compared to 58.0% in 1973-1974.

As far as gender distribution is concerned we notice a steady increase in female enrollment in the public sector from 41.9% in 1973-1974 to 53.2% in 1993-1994; while the female share has maintained itself more or less at the same level in the private sector over the same period (47.4% in 1973-1974 and 48.4% in 1993-1994). This could be

Table 2 Student Enrollment in Major Universities by Gender

University	1973-1974			1982-1983 *			1993-1994		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Lebanese University	10756	4070	14826	14312	12835	27147	16918	19585	36503
American University of Beirut	3224	1395	4619	2922	2033	4955	2606	2329	4935
Arab University	20036	4852	24888	22352	6640	28992	10021	5397	15418
Saint Joseph University	1982	994	2976	2485	2686	5171	2282	3281	5563
Lebanese American University **	0	347	347	880	965	1845	2272	1807	4079
Holy Spirit University - Kaslik	247	109	356	1577	1244	2821	1101	1319	2420
Other Universities	1149	836	1985	1299	822	2121	3561	2331	5892
Total	37394	12603	49997	45827	27225	73052	38761	36049	74810
%	74.8	25.2	100.0	62.7	37.3	100.0	51.8	48.2	100.0

* The year 1982-1983 was chosen because no statistics are available for the year 1983-1984.

** The Lebanese American University (formerly Beirut University College) was still at the time a girl's college.
Source: Al-Amin, Adnan, *Education in Lebanon*, 1994 and Center for Educational Research and Development, Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts.

The educational sector in Lebanon is characterized by the predominance of the private sector at all level of education

partly accounted for by the prohibitive rise in costs of education resulting from inflation and

the fact that if parents can afford to pay for the education of one child only in a private school, they

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prefer to send their son rather than their daughter to this school.

At the university level the share of females to the total number of student enrollment has also increased from 25.2% in 1973-1974 to 37.3% in 1982-1993 to 48.2% in 1993-1994 as indicated in Table 2. A closer look at the percentage figures presented in Table 3 clearly shows that the greatest expansion was at the Lebanese University. This is understandable on two counts:

- first, being a state university it charges a minimal registration fee, thus enabling girls from lower income brackets to pursue their university education;
- second, the opening of branches in all the Lebanese regions has made university education more accessible to females by enabling them to stay home and pursue their education, rather than settling in the capital on their own.

This drastic increase in female enrollment at the university level has not led, however, to any change in the disciplines they study (see Table 4). They still cluster essentially in literature and humanities, information and documentation, education and social sciences.

It is worth mentioning, however, that the number of professional women in Lebanon is steadily increasing as is apparent from their enrollment in syndicates which is a

University	Percentage Increase in Female Enrollment in Major Universities		
	1973-1974	1982-1983	1993-1994
Lebanese University	27.4	46.8	53.6
American University of Beirut	30.2	41.0	47.2
Lebanese American University		52.3	44.3
University Saint Joseph	33.4	51.9	59.0

Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts.

Lebanese women have easy access to education. This education has not, however, enabled them to reach decision-making positions

sions in order to acquire a skill and to enter the labor market.

Future Outlook

It is clear from the above that Lebanese women have had an easy access to education.

must if they are to exercise their profession.

As far as technical and vocational training is concerned it does not seem to attract a large number of females. The latest available statistics for the year 1993-1994 show that females represented only 35.8% of the total number of students in this field. They are more inclined to join short-term training ses-

This education has not, however, enabled them to reach decision-making positions, be it in the political, economic or social sphere. In fact, the proper aims of educating women were not clearly defined and when they were they always related to another person i.e. becoming a better mother, a better wife William A. Soltfutz, President of the American Junior College (presently the

Lebanese American University) wrote in his 1938-1939 annual report that "the primary mission of the College is to broaden the intelligence and spiritual outlook of the women who in their homes and society carry the responsibility for the social, cultural, and religious life of the country" (Roberts, 1958)

The drastic changes that have taken place in the Lebanese economy, as a result of the war, have forced women to join the labor market to insure a decent standard of living for them and their families and have helped in focusing on the appropriateness of the education women receive. This appropriateness is of prime importance if we want

Faculty	1982-1983	1993-1994
Literature and Humanities	65.0	68.9
Law, political science		
Public Administration	33.1	33.5
Sciences	40.4	40.8
Business	45.4	52.4
Information and Documentation	74.0	77.9
Education	34.8	87.0
Engineering	11.7	16.3
Social sciences	54.9	60.4
Fine Arts	39.5	39.3
Public Health		88.1
Agriculture		45.2
Medical Sciences		41.8

Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts.

The drastic increase in female enrollment at the university level has not led to any change in the disciplines they study

more Lebanese women to become agents of change and development.

Profession	1972 (in %)	1993 (in %)
Medical doctors	6.8	14.3
Dentists	5.5	17.2
Pharmacists	24.2	26.8
Lawyers	6.4	19.7
Engineers	0.6	6.7

Source: National Commission, *Lebanon's National Report* submitted to the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995.

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Women and Education in Some Arab Countries

Literature Review

By Adele Khudr

Education of females is still a topic of interest in many countries, for despite the decrease in illiteracy rates and the rise in education levels in developing countries, there is still much to hope for. I will attempt, in this article, to shed light on female education in three countries of the Middle East region, notably Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iran. The three countries represent different models and approaches to female education: Egypt is at present known for its secular outlook at education after the revolution of 1952 and the gradual integration of women into higher education and the labor force; Saudi Arabia has always had and continues to have a religion based approach towards female education, emphasizing strict separation between males and females; Iran, through the Revolution has come to develop a new outlook at female education, embracing both strict religious Islamic values and involvement of women in education and public life.

Egypt: the secular character of education and the systemic reforms

Education in Egypt dates back to the early days of settlement in the Nile Valley in 3110 B.C. At that time, education was confined to the clergy and a few of the fortunate elite. In the mid seventh century AD, education was introduced to the popula-

tion in a formal manner. Under the Quranic system, the "kutab" (writers) or Quranic schools and the "Madrassa" (school) were the only educational institutions. Under this system, women were almost entirely excluded from education in schools. Exceptions existed only when wealthy families provided private tuition for their daughters at home; but even then, females were restricted to ethical aspects of education only.

Mohamad Ali, the founder of a dynasty in Egypt that ruled until the "Free Officers' Revolution" of 1952, established a public and secular educational system in the country. This system, motivated by Mohamad Ali's need for a modern army, was parallel to the traditional religious-based system. Educational reform in favor of girls took a positive turn in 1923 when Egypt adopted its First Constitution. One of its articles called for free and compulsory education for all Egyptians, male and female, in public schools, starting at the age of seven for a five-year cycle.

The 1952 revolution brought about a new philosophy and approach to education. The revolutionary regime preached uniformity, equity, equal opportunity, and access for all at all levels of education. The prevalent type of schools at that

time was the public elementary school. In 1956, the Constitution of Egypt stipulated in article 51: "Education is free and compulsory at the elementary cycle in all public schools". The impact of religion however continued to exist, since the new Constitution of 1971 stated that "Religious education is a basic course in the general curricula". In 1980, the amendment of the Constitution guaranteed equality of educational opportunity for all Egyptians by stipulating education to be free at all levels.

The successive modifications of the Constitution and the changing attitudes towards education after the Revolution of 1952 reflected positively on illiteracy rates. Thus, while 61.8% of Egypt's population aged 15 years and above were illiterate in 1976, this rate dropped to 51.6% in 1990. Among females, illiteracy dropped by 17.2% from 77.6% in 1976 to 66.2% in 1990.

Not only did illiteracy rates drop in general and among females in particular, but women's educational achievements at various levels improved as well. Table 2 represents a comparison of educational levels among Egyptian females from 1980 to 1990.

Hence, the improvement in female education in Egypt was not only noted in terms of decrease in illiteracy rates, but rather

an improvement in female education at all levels as shown in table 2.

The improvement in female education is not only seen in terms of general trends, i.e. higher numbers of educated females, but also in the embracing of different specialties by females, especially those not traditionally associated with women. Thus, the specialties of commerce and business administration, natural sciences, math and computer, engineering and agriculture that have been considered traditionally male-dominated fields included in 1990 quite a significant proportion of females as can be seen in table 3.

Thus, it can be concluded that in the case of Egypt, the secular and compulsory character of education have had a positive impact on female education. The secular character guaranteed that both males and females alike are entitled for education, while the compulsory character has implied gender equality with no favoritism to males. The amelioration in female education in Egypt can be considered as being a by-product or an integral part of the reform of the educational system as a whole, that came out as a result of the 1952 Revolution and its aftermath.

Saudi Arabia: the impact of the religious element and the continuation of traditional values.

In Saudi Arabia, all aspects of social life are imbued with a religious element. Before 1960, there was no public formal education for women in the country. Some of the rich

Year	Illiterate, total	Illiterate, male	Illiterate, female
1976	61.8%	46.4%	77.6%
1986	51.7%	36.4%	68.6%
1990	51.6%	37.1%	66.2%

Year	First Level			Second Level			Third Level		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1976	78%	90%	65%	54%	66%	41%	67%	79%	54%
1985	91%	100%	82%	66%	77%	54%	79%	89%	69%
1990	101%	109%	93%	81%	90%	73%	91%	100%	83%

families educated their daughters at home by private tutors, while the daughters of poorer families could attend informal 'kutab' schools where they were taught to read the

Quran by a blind religious man 'motawa' or a religious woman 'motawa'a'; yet the majority of girls did not receive any formal education at all apart from what they learned at

Field of study	Total, Number	Females, Number	Percentage, Females
Education	80,591	37,783	46.9%
Humanities and Religion	83,996	39,250	46.7%
Fine and Applied Arts	7,313	3,215	43.9
Law	87,464	17,891	20.4%
Social and Behavioral Sciences	5,397	2,326	43%
Commerce and Business Administration	146,910	44,150	30%
Mass Communication	1,727	926	53.6%
Home Economics	2,273	1,709	75.2%
Service trades	1,099	724	65.8%
Natural Science	26,770	8,838	33%
Math and Computer	1,095	294	26.8%
Medical-Health Related	53,465	21,093	39.4%
Engineering	53,726	6,866	12.8%
Agriculture	42,386	13,696	32.3%

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home. It is to note however that in 1941, pilgrims who had come to Mecca from Indonesia and Malawi opened the first private school for girls.

The subject of females' education was addressed for the first time in the public arena by King Saud in a formal speech given in 1959. This was triggered by two main phenomena that had been taking place over the preceding two decades: the first was the establishment of a number of private schools by pilgrims who had come from Africa, and the second was the increasing number of Saudi men who were marrying foreign females, because they felt that Saudi females were not educated enough and hence were not appropriate spouses for them. In his speech, King Saud declared that the more open attitude towards female education was the result of the religious men 'ulama's' desire to open schools to teach girls the science of Islamic religion from the Quran, as well as 'fuqh' (religious instruction) and other sciences that are in line with Islamic religious beliefs, such as home management, home economics and child rearing. A committee of important 'ulama' was formed to organize schools for girls, develop the program and oversee its implementation.

The committee was called the General Presidency of Girls' Education. It assumed and still bears, to the present time, the responsibility for the education of girls at all levels with the exception of university education. Consequently, the first four public schools for girls were opened in 1964. In the same year, the first secondary school was also opened with the goal of preparing girls for their domestic roles as wives and mothers and also for university studies.

However, traditional values related to gender continued to prevail and were disseminated in schools. Thus, women's freedom in countries of the West was not pictured as being positive elements. Moreover, differences continued to exist between male and female curricula: hence, physical education and sports were replaced, for girls, by home economics and embroidery.

The first women's college was opened in 1970. Its students had completed secondary education and were interested in becoming teachers. Universities opened their doors to females only after 1975.

As a result of the promotion of female education in Saudi Arabia in the 1960s and 1970s and

the increasing number of schools, enrollment ratios for females at first, second and third levels increased significantly from 1980 to 1990 as shown in table 4. Yet, in terms of the educational system, men and women remain segregated in the schools and in universities. Women do not frequent the same libraries or laboratories as men. In universities, they are mostly women professors while male professors may only lecture through the medium of a closed circuit television. This method is, however, negatively evaluated by most Saudi female students because it does not offer free communication nor does it leave room for open group discussions.

The adoption of female education at large scale in Saudi Arabia did not imply a full-fledged change in the educational status of women. Traditional values continued to prevail and permeate all aspects of Saudi life. The case of Saudi Arabia represents an illustration of the non-systemic changes towards female education, one in which educational reform did not form part of the reform of the social system as a whole.

Iran

Women in Iran of the Shah had acquired quite high levels of education. The Revolution of 1978, that called for religious

Table 4 Gross school enrollment ratio in Saudi Arabia 1980, 1985, 1990

Year	First Level			Second Level			Third Level		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1980	63%	75%	50%	30%	37%	23%	7.3%	8.8%	5.0%
1985	67%	74%	59%	41%	49%	32%	56%	64%	48%
1990	77%	82%	72%	46%	51%	41%	63%	68%	58%

revivalism and traditional values, was expected by many to leave negative repercussions on female education in Iran. The basic point behind this argument is that secularism brings about many ameliorations in the status of women while it is believed that a system that relies on sacred values, such as that of post-revolutionary Iran, limits the aspirations of women. On the other hand, many proponents of the Revolution in Iran claim that this was not the case.

In an article entitled "Women in Iran: the Revolutionary Ebb and Flow", NESTA Ramazani, argues that in post-revolutionary Iran, women "were targeted as an important social force."

In the early years of the Revolution, segregation between males and females was the common practice in universities. Women were banned from certain fields of study. However, with the reformist government of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, progressive measures were taken to "improve the status of women" as Ramazani says.

In 1988, Rafsanjani announced that in Islam, "there are no barriers to the education of women in any field". The spiritual leader Ali Khamenei argued in 1991 that an "Islamic environment cannot tolerate even one illiterate person." Zahra Mostafari, the daughter of Ayatollah Khomeini, who has a Ph.D. in philosophy argues that her father was a strong advocate of female education. Great efforts were exerted under the leadership of Zahra Rahnavard, a university professor and writer who

strongly defends Islamic reform, to open the doors of many specialties to women. At present, women in universities are allowed to major in nineteen academic disciplines. Females are admitted to dentistry, physiotherapy, audiology, statistics, radiology and radiotherapy. Yet, disciplines such as engineering and agriculture remain to a large extent undesirable for women. In addition to opening up the different disciplines to women, it is worth noting that in 1992, 42% of Iran's university graduates were females and one third of them had doctoral degrees.

The involvement in religion and religious teaching is generally clas-

sified in the public field, thus closer to males. In Iran, women today have access to and are more involved in religious education. Thus, in the past, female 'mujtahids' (religious scholars) and 'qaris' (reciters of the Quran) were very limited occupations among female, restricted mostly to certain social categories such as daughters of clerics, tutored at home by their fathers. Post-revolutionary Iran witnessed the establishment of a 'hozzeh-ye Islami,' a higher theological school, to train women in theology and jurisprudence, and hence the creation of new opportunities for women from many backgrounds to study the Quran and Islamic law.

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Table 4 Students by field of study in Iran in 1990

Field of study	Total, Number	Females, Number	Percentage, Females
Education science	52,552	15,217	28.9%
Humanities and Religion	11,373	4,945	43.5%
Fine and Applied Arts	2,058	963	46.8%
Law	3,430	559	16.3%
Social and Behavioral Sciences	14,054	5,577	39.7%
Commerce and Business Administration	5,748	1,793	31.2
Mass Communication	860	387	45%
Home Economics	604	450	74.5%
Service trades	19	9	47.4%
Natural Science	11,283	4,450	39.4%
Math and Computer	5,709	1,861	28.9%
Medical-Health Related	31,262	13,863	44.3%
Engineering	36,967	1,861	5%
Architecture	2,009	521	25.8%
Trade, Craft, Industry	551	160	29%
Transport	50	1	2%
Agriculture	5,751	373	6.1%

Image of Women in Children's Textbooks

A Content Analysis

Julinda Abu Nasr and Zinat Diab Batrouni

Interest in the concepts of masculinity and femininity, which was an outgrowth of the women's movement, has focused on sex role stereotypes and the potential adverse effect they have on personality development. It is well documented that sex role definitions of a society are learned through the process of socialization.

According to the social learning theory, sex-typed behavior is mostly acquired through 'observational learning' or 'identification'. Mischel (1970: 29) reports that "observational learning behavior may result from watching what others (models) do, or from attending to symbols such as words and pictures." Mischel goes on to say: "Undoubtedly, T.V., movies, books, stories and other symbolic media play an important part in transmission of information about stereotyped behavior ..." (1970: 45).

Based on the assumption that books are influential in introducing models to children, it becomes necessary to familiarize ourselves with the type of models that are being advocated in their story books through the symbols of words and illustrations.

Methodology

The present study examines the image of women and the sex roles attributed to them in Arabic children's story books. The sample consists of 100 books, written in Arabic for children between 3-14 years of age and printed between 1977 and 1993. The authors are of both sexes and from different

Arab countries. The general themes include everyday activities, nature and fiction.

The analytical framework was designed to include the following areas: female sex roles, identity, sex role traits and functions. All these conceptual terms were defined and data were exposed to

quantitative and qualitative analysis. In this presentation, we will restrict our discussion to the written word only.

Women's Roles

The majority of the roles given to the female characters in children's story books seem to converge on the nurturing and dependent qualities of women in the family. Table 1 shows the frequency of occurrence of each of the roles, namely, mother, wife, little girl (age = less than 14), young girl (age = 14 or more), princess, working woman, witch, and others including sister, grandmother, aunt, neighbor, etc. The woman as **mother** appeared in 55 books or 55 times followed by the **little girl** which occurred 38 times. It would seem that both roles reinforce the nurturance and obedience in female children connoting these qualities with goodness, and purity.

Gender related roles in children's story books tend to promote female dependency on the male through a high recurrence of the roles wife and princess. In our sample, the role of **princess** came to pass 31 times and that of **wife** 28 times. The princess is portrayed awaiting her prince in shining armor and the wife attending to her husband's needs with devotion.

The next category of roles was that of the

Table 1

Female Sex Roles in Arabic Children's Story Books
(n = frequency of occurrence in 100 books)

Mother	Little Girl (less than 14)	Princess	Wife	Young Girl (14 & more)	Working Woman	Witch	Other
55	38	31	28	25	16	12	29

young girl, which appeared 25 times. One might notice that the frequency of occurrence of this role and its importance in the process of child development follows that of already established and formed roles in society like those of the mother, the little girl, the princess and the wife.

The **working woman** appeared sixteen times. The **evil witch** was almost as frequently mentioned, i.e. 12 times and a variety of other roles like **sister, grandmother, aunt, neighbor**, etc., surfaced 29 times.

Identity

Women's identity as revealed by the character's name, age and physical qualities appears in Table 2. The mother is not given an individual identity, but appears as a symbol and is mostly identified by her role as a mother, i.e. in 66.7 percent of the cases. Her physical characteristics are rarely noted, 13.3 percent. In less frequent cases, 11.7 percent, she is introduced by her personal name or by her eldest son's name, 8.3 percent, i.e. the mother of Karim. Her age is largely ignored and left out. This practice is deemed necessary to protect her modesty and family honor, which are important variables in determining family status in traditional Arab culture. The same pattern of identification applies to the presentation

of the wife's identity (see Table 2).

Little girls are identified most of the time by their personal names having a 57.8 percent rate of occurrence. Their age and physical attributes are also discussed in detail. Thus, there are fewer restraints in talking about little girls than mothers since they do not represent a threat to family honor.

The **princess**, being a fairy tale character, is generally identified by her physical characteristics, notably those of beauty, charm and purity. Thus, the physical traits of the princess are detailed in 40 percent of the cases where she appears in the story. Whereas, the working woman largely identified by her active status in 72.7 percent of the relevant stories. So is the witch in 55 percent of the cases, when her character was included in the story. Sixty five percent of the other characters are mostly identified by their sex roles.

Sex Role Traits

Stereotypic traits were also apparent in the stories. Mothers and wives are represented as tender, protective, loving, caring, kind, affectionate, self-sacrificing, hard-working and good housewives. In the traditional code of "modesty", Hilal (1971) and Chamoun (1967, 1974) have stated that women are expected to be

"self-denying" and their femininity is synonymous with self effacement. This attitude is changing but supporting data are lacking.

Little girls and young girls are described as obedient, helpful, quiet, well-mannered, shy, polite, passive, sensitive, and caring. **Working women** are depicted as dependent on male professionals in the same occupational categories.

Princesses are always beautiful. They are passive and obedient and accept the husbands chosen for them by their fathers. However, suitors have to pass tests and engage in superhuman feats before they are granted the honor of marrying the princess. **Witches** are portrayed as evil, hateful, bad and harmful.

Female Functions in Arabic Story books

The majority of functions are traditionally expected and accepted. These are functions that endorse the duties of a **mother** such as child rearing or that of the wife such as housekeeping and cooking, or the obedient daughter learning her duties from her mother, or the **working women** who are engaged in traditional professions, which are an extension of their household chores.

For the sake of further clarity, we differentiated

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between traditional domestic functions and traditional occupational functions. It was noticed that traditional domestic functions were more prevalent than the traditional occupational functions in our stories. Thus, more than 75 percent of the functions assigned to the characters of **mother, wife, and young girl** are traditional domestic functions as if to emphasize the importance of domestic skills for the female in society. Traditional occupational functions were more relevant to the roles of **little girl**, i.e. being a student and working woman amounting to more than 50 percent of attributed function, such as **teacher, nurse, hostess, dressmaker**. The princess and witch, being fictional characters were not heavily engaged in domestic functions.

The most frequent functions assigned to mothers were having babies, feeding, and raising children. What is utterly amazing is their super-ability to skillfully prepare a meal immediately when their husbands come home with unannounced guests. Another frequent function that mothers perform is housekeeping. Child care is also considered one of the mother's natural duties. The little girl takes care of younger siblings at home and assists her mother in cooking, housekeeping and purchasing things. However, her main function is that of a student. There are other tasks that keep her busy, but they are not identified in our sample of stories.

Table 2

Female Image in Arabic Story Book Illustrations (n = frequency of occurrence in 100 books)

	N	%
Does not Apply Regularly	259	41.
Exclusion	46	7.3
Under-representation	27	4.3
Females in Passive Situations	81	12.8
Performing Traditional Domestic Functions	108	17.1
Performing Non-Traditional Domestic Functions	6	.9
Performing Traditional Occupational Functions	60	9.5
Performing Non-Traditional Occupational Functions	37	5.8
Other	8	1.3
Total	632	100.0

Princesses have no other function but to sleep, look through the window or walk in the garden of the castle.

It was interesting to note the small percentage of women engaging in non-traditional functions. In the last decade, the impact of war and the economic condition has been and is the main incentive for women to seek employment. Nevertheless, this does not appear in the story books reviewed. The danger here lies in reinforcing the traditional image portrayed in the models.

Illustrations

Female images are largely absent in 41 percent of the illustrations in Arabic story books. When they appear, the females are shown performing domestic functions, i.e. 17.1 percent of the time. Females appear in passive situations in 12.8 percent of the illustrations.

Conclusion

The results from the above survey indicate that women in the Arab world and especially in Lebanon are actively involved in

many areas of education and work. They attend universities, work as directors, artists, writers, journalists, doctors, lawyers, judges, government officials and others. What we read in story books is not the real image of today's woman. It is the traditional stereotyped role that has been attributed and assigned to women for a long time.

Restricting women's activities to domestic functions reflects the low status assigned to them. Other indices of their status include their exclusion from intellectual endeavors, the labor market and decision-making positions. The working woman is also restricted to traditional domestic and occupational roles of housekeeping, dressmaking, agricultural work and teaching.

Since books are vehicles for learning, they should be used to expand the horizons of children rather than confine their imagination to prescribed roles and role-definitions. So, a new outlook is needed to eliminate stereotypes and to replace them with more realistic models of women in the environment.

A Poetic Rediscovery of The World: Written Images

By Nada Moghaizel Nasr

Reviewed By Mona Takieddine Amyuni

The English Romantic poet Blake asks for a "cleansing of the doors of perception". The broadly cultured Nada Moghaizel Nasr may or may not have read Blake, yet she is asking for a similar "cleansing". She looks at the world afresh, opens the doors of perception and penetrates into the magical world of children's drawers, "extensions of their pockets", "imitations of their voices", with textures similar to their pinky cheeks "which call for the caress of our lips", and "the softness of brown hair under our touch", Peals of laughter come out of children's drawers, notes Nada in **Written Pictures**. Her "pictures", in fact, awaken all our senses as they play with paradox, ambiguity, and shock surprises. Made up of about sixty vignettes of one or two pages each, the book adopts children's games in its shape, playfully picks up one idea or one image, unfolds it, allows it to run its course as on a stage, then drops it, leaving behind the "curtain" a hug, a tender smile, or a zeal of laughter. Senses are made alive, sensibilities sharpened, when we read in the table of contents titles such as: "We swim in their drawers; Boredom is fun for them; Because a six-year old can see the wind; Legs ache in homes without mothers;

Our footsteps in Beirut, and identity;" and others.

Thus, Nada picks up an idea, a feeling, an impression, an image, tries it out, exposes it, takes us along, and teasingly leaves us to catch the shimmers

and the echoes behind its footsteps. She cultivates paradox to shake us out of our routines ("Habit, says Beckett is the cancer of time"), and force us to look "poetically" at the world, in the wake of the Sur-

Boredom is Fun for Them

Naturally, his parents thought he was bored. They planned to make him join a summer camp so that he would take up some activities, so that he would learn a few things.

What he wanted, however, was to stop learning. He wanted to idle away time, to stop being solicited, to reach a degree of vacuity just like when you fall asleep, that degree of vacuity where one begins to create, to invent, to foreshadow things. All he wanted was to stop being solicited. The great boredom, the marvelous boredom of the summer, such creative boredom.

Three months to allow imagination to be born again. He would want to give himself up to the slowness of gestures, to the rhythm of the body. To have breakfast in the afternoon, sleep later than his parents, read throughout the day forgetting meals. To live in "time without clocks"

That time when one was left on his own, time which anguished parents. Who has ever seen parents lost in a bird's flight?

Summer camps are made for them, surely. Kids have so many schedules invisible to parents.

Kids have lots of fun in the midst of boredom (pp. 11-12)

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realists of our epoch. The vignette entitled "*Boredom is fun for them*" is a case in point. It illustrates well Nada's world vision for it does not stop at children's needs and perceptions but reaches out to incorporate a transmutation of daily life into a renewed experience of walking into the streets of Beirut, for example, which becomes an act of allegiance, a rebirth of one's individuality, a renewed sense of identity and belonging.

As for living in times of war, it becomes a short cut between us and ourselves, us and the others. The slowness of the war teaches us to go to the essential, shed trivial problems and anxieties, define our real needs, feel so light compared to such heaviness. War breaks up time and we rediscover the present. We recreate the moment and enjoy it fully. When war dogs us down, we discover hidden treasures within us and become far more creative. In short, we become again the children we have always been under Nada's spell. Below is a foretaste of the book all would enjoy. Finally, under Nasr's spell we rediscover ourselves and the others, we pick up the conversation and carry on, aware of the preciousness of dialogue. We relish the audacity of meeting again as if "all has changed" instead of the security of "nothing has changed". We meet again with neither prejudice, nor nostalgia, creating a space for new

footsteps. We go back to what will be and not to what has been We love those stories children demand, and to which they listen differently each time (pp. 117-118).

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Book - Beirut, Editions FMA, 1994
a collection of short "images" in French. Excerpts are in Mona T. Amyuni's translation.



Afaf Zurayk

Interviewed by Nadine Touma

I walked in a space that expressed a body through which i painted an image that carried me to the spirit and soul of this genuine woman, Afaf Zurayk.

A child, a woman, a student, a teacher, a painter, a poet, an art critique, a daughter, a friend and an aunt. Together, we brushed over different events of her life and these are some of the paintings that we came up with. I hope that words are expressive, colorful and three dimensional enough to express moments of feelings and thoughts, and to interpret the resplendence of life and its littleness, its brightness and its darkness.

Painting 1

**DREAM DOORS MIXED
LETTER ON PAPER 8"x
8.5**

Description: A white rounded space, with no doors, sunlight, trees and a woman with red finger nails. Angular and circular spaces that curve in and out around the sketchy figure. Trees become hands, hands become trees. Keyholes, a separation of self that merges in space. Ink, watercolor and crayons expressing a lightness of touch.

Interpretation:

Yenekomichian's building in Beirut. Afaf spent a very happy and full of love, childhood and youth in that house. She felt surrounded with light. The

red finger nails are an expression of her watching her mother's friends smoking and taking pieces of tobacco out of their mouth with the delicacy of a feminine touch. At AUB where she got her BA. She belonged mentally and spiritually, she had a lot of friends from different cultures which enriched her experience.

Lebanon was prosperous and open. She was happy but in our talk she expressed a discomfort with her physical appearance and her body, a struggle between the inner and the outer self that dragged itself in her until another struggle of the Lebanese war came, so we see her figure dominating and at the same time sketchy, present but not invasive. An insider and an outsider, like all of us. A feeling that almost every Lebanese feels after the war. Now, pensive, contemplative, she pours past out on paper with a subtlety of colors and media, and an extravagance of meaning. She finally feels resolved and comfortable with herself, accepting and forgiving. A painting that expresses a Lebanese state that crosses all the boundaries of time, culture and space.

Painting 2

**RECOLLECTIONS
MIXED LETTER ON
PAPER 8.5" X 8.**

Description: "... An oval face is almost imperceptible beneath a blizzard of multicolored gestural strokes in chalk and oil

pastels and black ink (Wilson, Washington Post.)" The colors are sharp and dark. Sudden strokes of light appear like a flash, emerging from a somber mood.

Interpretation: *It was after Afaf finished painting her series, and did not look at them for a while, that she noticed the presence of the oval staring faces behind a thick layer of color. She worked on her painting late at night, early in the morning. In a whirling moment of Brahms Music extasy, she swung her hands and exposed a truth of the morning, and a violence of being. Why these medias i asked? Because i was living in my basement and painting there, i couldn't use anything with a harmful smell. The erect feeling i got from these paintings was alleviated with the subliminal faces. Were the paintings trying to say something back to Afaf? It is true she said that she forgets herself when she is painting, and forgets the painting when she finishes them. When she is ready she comes back to them. She feels, sees, touches, smells, understands and is surprised.*

The third painting is ours. It has to do with the sweet conversation that Afaf and i had about her coming back, her womanhood and what she would like to tell our readers, especially our female readers. Afaf decided to exhibit these series in Lebanon after a lengthy absence. She felt that these series spoke

A painting
that
expresses a
Lebanese
state that
crosses all
the
boundaries
of time,
culture and
space.



Regarding
women's
issues, Afaf
believes
that there
is no
separation
of the sexes



to the people that could feel them and embrace them sadly but willingly. And that is what she felt when the viewers expressed themselves. I am happy, they got through.

Regarding women's issues, Afaf believes that there is no separation of the sexes and that females and males should work together in making our world a better place to live in. She spoke of the oppression of men, and the pressures that work against them and choke them. No Separation.

After breaking out of the mold that she was in, and becoming untroubled with her body, Afaf latest series is of nudes depicting her fascination with the human body. She is very happy with the paintings and hopes to have them in Lebanon. As for her final Painting message, it is her niece's poem, The Bus.

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thinking of what he did wrong,
He never did remember
the words of his song.

Shireen Tawil
(who is 13 years old and
Afaf Zurayk's niece)

Dream Doors

As a child I lived in a
house with no doors.
Thoughts, drenched in
sunlight, wandered
through its spaces.
They lived in the
round.
They dreamt.

In time the sunset
erected doors.
Visions recoiled from
touch as angles replaced
circles.

The house, organizing
itself into neat thoughts,
closed in on itself.

I drew keyholes
And
One eyed men.

Morning grew softly.
Petalled nuances drew
from recesses, doors
breathed, and bodies
joined trees to give
shape to light.
Like a bowl, the house
embraced its thoughts.

Paintings became
passages
And
I became a dream.

Afaf Zurayk

The Bus (excerpt)

The old man sat, his eyes
twinkling on a stone.
He grunted and let out a
moan.

His hair had grown
white, and his beard had
grown long
He was tired and failed
at his song.

Then suddenly, out of
nowhere
As if God answered his
prayer
Came a bus
So the old man rose and
waited for it to pause
But it just roared on by
like a tiger

So the old man sat
wearily down
And his smile plunged
into a frown
And so there he sat

The Politics of Verbal Conflict

Evelyne Accad's

Blessures Des Mots: Journal de Tunisie

Cynthia Hahn

"There are so many injuries, so many scars on the words, so many wounds in the dance, rhythms of a silent, deaf earth. Grieving for this pain, I gather life in."(1) In this excerpt from *Blessures des Mots: Journal de Tunisie*, the "I" is Evelyne Accad as politically engaged writer, metaphorically 'gathering life' from the sorrow of suffering. This novel, as well as Accad's other fictional and critical works, is structured around the expression of a personal politics. (2) "Maux" (injuries) in the French text, is poetically associated with its French homonym 'mots', in this passage linked to 'wounds' and 'scars'. "Mots" and "maux", or the association of language and suffering, are omnipresent in this novel, confirming its principal themes of verbal conflict and the possibility of conflict resolution through self-expression. This conflict of language is referred to in one poetic text in the novel in which the narrator calls forth women of various towns in Tunisia, generalizing the source of conflict: "...all these women, each with scars in their words, open wounds in their heart, tears in their writing, cries in their song, voices which call out, grow stronger, tear, pierce the indifference of heaven, light a thousand fires of rebellion and hope" (p. 25, my translation). The progression in this poem from individual "scars" in the

women's words representing past suffering to the resulting "fires of rebellion and hope" is a positive political statement about societal transformation growing out of women's expression of suffering, through song and in writing.

'Gathering life in' for Accad is a process which involves writing about painful experience in order to transform the injury into an expression of truth and with it, to emphasize the power of self-expression to heal the self and society. In the novel, she juxtaposes examples and interpretations of injustice with examples and discussion of the ideal, inserting her political view which promotes cultural tolerance and a non-violent reconstruction of social identity. Accad's fictional work contributes in this way to the development of a political discourse which validates literary examination of the personal experience and links it to the resolution of personal and societal conflict.

For the Lebanese author and scholar, Evelyne Accad, "the personal is political"(3). Accad's political views, expressed in *Sexuality and War: Literary Masks of the Middle East*, can be summed up as the need to counter Western liberal particularism (4) by combining the concepts of na-

tionalism and feminism to recreate a Lebanese cultural identity. These concepts, "Lebanism" ("...electing to belong to a culture conceived as pluralistic, and as accepting of other's differences"), as well as 'femi-humanism' (a movement of societal rebuilding with the participation of men and women, "...working with a reformed nationalism stripped of its male chauvinism, war, and violence..."), form the basis for a political agenda found in Accad's fiction and critical writing (*Sexuality*, 25-26). Accad's juxtaposition of the personal experience with discussion of issues of collective importance strengthens her fiction by contextualizing the political within the dimension of the personal. As in her other novels, the author of *Blessures des Mots* constructs a multidimensional narrative incorporating poetic, descriptive, interpretive and dialectical voices to express multicultural intolerance and gender-based societal and interpersonal conflict.

Evelyne Accad attests to the autobiographical nature of the "Journal de Tunisie"; she has stated that her first two novels are also based on much personal experience.(5) The firsthand account invites reader empathy by personal identification, while Accad chose to maintain some narrative distance through the use

*'Gathering
life in' for
Accad is a
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There is a strong contrast between the growing solidarity of close women friends in the novel, and the mounting atmosphere of suspicion and rupture in the group.

of third person narration in all of her novels. The use of the third person also provides the reader with the distance necessary to see the characters in a larger political context. The main character, Hayate, like Accad, is a Lebanese and American professor of feminist literature, who conducted research in Tunisia in 1984-5. Her support of cultural tolerance, "Lebanism", is sharply contrasted with the intolerance of different cultures and perspectives she witnesses among Tunisian feminists in *Blessures des Mots*.

Tunisian feminists have also recognized the destructive nature of intolerance expressed in their society. Tunisian psychologist Emna Bel Haj Yahia, along with Nadia Omrane, in their article entitled "Balayer devant sa porte" for the second issue of *Nissa*, express their dismay that discrimination continues even among feminists of their society who do not often recognize and fight against the cultural intolerance they have learned: "That we are the designated victims of discriminatory attitudes does not protect us from adopting them as well, and our denunciation of this discriminatory against us loses all credibility if we are incapable of taking a critical look at ourselves and fighting against the intolerance that remains inscribed in our laws, is written in our newspapers, shows itself in our streets or takes place behind closed doors."(6) Diversity and plurality of perspective, though publicly endorsed by Tunisian feminists in formal debates and articles in their new journal, *Nissa*, is shown (through the novel's ac-

count) to be difficult to apply. *Nissa* published just eight issues, and in the novel, Accad notes the internal dissension of members, a leading cause of the demise of this publication and ultimately the women's group altogether. Their expressed desire for multicultural tolerance which is often not achieved, is witnessed through the story of dissolving relationships in Accad's novel and historically confirmed in published articles on the subject by the same feminists.(7)

Difficulties involved in expression of the self, through written and spoken language and dance, is at the heart of this novel. Internal squabbles regarding the creation of the new women's publication, *Nissa*, one character's short-lived self-destructive foray into creative writing and her critique of Hayate's work, the unsympathetic, critical atmosphere of a conference on feminism in Tunisia, discussion of Arab universities' research restrictions, heated debates concerning current world conflicts, group criticism of one character's original skits on a sexual theme, verbal arguments, gross stereotyping and slander, Hayate's difficult deposition of a formal complaint of assault against her landlord, problems with telephone communication... even the title, *Blessures des Mots*, emphasizes that the main conflict in this novel is expressed through language emphasizing the intolerance of difference.

We can interpret this latest novel in light of the political concepts outlined in *Sexuality and War*, de-

spite the fact that *Blessures des Mots: Journal de Tunisie*, is not set against the background of war in Lebanon, as are Accad's other novels. References are frequently made to Lebanon and the Israeli-Syrian war in the third novel, in order to compare and contrast Hayate's perspective with that of Tunisians she encountered. For example, whereas Hayate advocates a march for peace such as one planned in Lebanon, one of the Tunisian feminists, Nayla, interprets this call to action as a protest march at the Syrian embassy in Tunis. Hayate's explanation of her point of view falls on deaf ears:

I would have liked to organize a march for peace and not a demonstration against a regime... I understand your denunciation, don't think that it will have a real impact or lead to a solution for Lebanon, for those suffering there, on both sides...peace marches...have united people, calmed them. They have filled a crowd of desperate civilians with love and hope...they promoted the belief that the country can be reborn for its ashes. In the current absurd chaos of Lebanon, a success albeit symbolic, is a great step forward. So won't you join us? (p. 122, my translation)

The political opinion expressed by Hayate is one of cultural tolerance; she calls for an end to suffering on both sides and promotes unification and the rebirth of a country. She advocates the power of planned political action, its symbolic importance which can be used to fuel hope and love involved in rebuilding a peaceful society. Hayate's growing experience of personal estrange-

ment from others in Tunisian society is paralleled with references to the growing internal dissent of communication due to a general fear of others and intolerance of individuality as the basis for every interpersonal and societal conflict mentioned. The tension created reminds us of the forementioned concepts of cultural tolerance and the non-violent establishment of cultural identity which are emphasized by Hayate's contrasting voice of pacifistic, non-judgmental interaction and action she proposes.

The journal *Nissa* in the novel gives a framework to the debate of varied political perspectives. One of these debates contrasts the reaction of two women to the war in Lebanon. Imane praised by Hayate, had organized a march for peace along Beirut's line of demarcation. The march, supported by both men and women, did not take place due to excessive bombing. It then became a symbol of collective unity, demonstrated by the signatures of thousands on a long banner for peace, stretched along the line in their place. Hayate concludes: "On peut tuer les gens mais ni les mots, ni la foi" (p. 91). Some Tunisian feminists in the novel interpret this as a failed initiative and laud instead the action of Sana, a seventeen year old Lebanese woman who sided with the Syrians and threw herself against Israeli tanks in a suicidal act that gave her martyr

status. The Tunisian population in the novel celebrates her act, as the media claimed it to be an effective public display of selfless attachment to a worthy political cause. Hayate's story of Imane which demonstrates non-violent political action balances this attitude by providing specific alternatives to the continuation of death and destruction. This example then gives rise to a dialectical discussion of the larger issues -- the male-controlled media which celebrates acts of violence and ignores the less dramatic peace initiatives (p. 92). The power of public opinion, which causes self-censorship even within the pages of *Nissa*, is a controversial issue.

There is a strong contrast between the growing solidarity of close women friends in the novel, and the mounting atmosphere of suspicion and rupture in the group caused by misinterpretation of or lies about Hayate and others, with the emphasis on the latter, hence the title, *Blessures des Mots*. The character Aida in the narrative is abstracted in Accad's poetry to a symbol of the politically engaged, self-aware Tunisian woman, "Femme de Tunisie... criant la rage de vivre, la soif de liberte..." (p. 10). Hayate's relationship with Aida is one example of the political principles Accad supports -- cultural tolerance and the non-violent affirmation of cultural identity. Rima, another character who agrees with Hayate's perspective,

comments: "Things change slowly; it has to start with the women among themselves. The support that we give each other is a strength that allows us to have an impact on areas dominated by men. Progressively, we will change things, influence public opinion" (p. 93-94). Evelyne Accad's emphasis on the possibility of positive change through self-expression perhaps best characterizes her writing; despite the verbal conflicts of this novel, we know that the novel itself is an expression of suffering resolved through the power of the written word. She writes of her character Rima: "You have given a voice to her pain/ Through words anguished and innovative/ you have described the woman who dared / the march reconciliated the irreparable" (p. 119). Giving a voice to the pain links "maux" to "mots" and accomplishes a reconciliation through the dual action of "grieving" and "gathering life in," a process for personal and societal transformation.

— Dr. Hahn is Assistant Professor of French at Lake Forest College. She teaches Accad's works in courses on Women's Studies or as sections of francophone civilization. She recently translated (from French to English) Evelyne Accad's third novel *Blessures des Mots* to be published by Heinemann Press in 1995.

- (1) *Blessures Des Mots: Journal de Tunisie*. Paris: Indigo and Cote-femmes, 1993, p. 63. Hahn's translation
- (2) Major work include *L'Excisee*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1982; *The Excised*, Burner, Wash. D.C. Three Continents Press, 1994; *Coquelicot du Massacre*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988; *Sexuality and War: Literary Masks of the Middle East*. N.Y. New York University, 1990; *Des Femmes, Des Hommes et La Guerre*. Paris: Cote-femmes, 1993 (Prix France-Liban, 1994).
- (3) Personal interview. Urbana, IL, 1989.
- (4) Accad's "écriture engagée" counters Western liberal particularism, a form of cultural relativism Kathleen Barry refers to in the preface to Accad's *Sexuality and War*, p. ix.
- (5) Evelyne Accad confirmed this in a personal interview, September 2, 1994, Milwaukee, WI.
- (6) See Emma Bel Haj Yahia and Nadia Omrane, "Balayer devant sa porte", *Nissa*, No. 2, May 1985, p. 8, my translation.
- (7) Already in November of 1985, four of *Nissa*'s founders resigned due to internal conflicts. Their statement in issue 4 documents this. Azza Ghanmi, Zeineb Guehiss, Nadia Hakim and Neila J'Rad, "Nissa: Notre desillusion... l'expérience de 4 co-fondatrices du journal", *Nissa* (No. 4, November 1985), p. 3. Also see Rachida Ennaifer, "Les Femmes au pays de Saladin," *Tunisiennes en devenir*, 2. *La Moitié Entière*, AFUJRD, Collection Enjeux, Tunis: Ceres Productions, 1992, p. 171. The first Tunisian women's group formed in 1939, called today the National Union of Tunisian Women, U.N.F.T. The women's group of the Tahar Haddad Club was founded in 1978. It is no longer active and their journal *Nissa* lasted but one year (April 1985-April 1986). Also see the articles in *Al-Raida*, Volume 3, No. 33, August 1, 1985: "Women at the Tahar Haddad Club" p. 7-8. "Nissa, A New Women's Journal", p. 8-9. "The National Union of Tunisian Women," p. 9. The most sweeping reforms for Tunisian women occurred in 1956, when President Bourguiba did away with the veil and polygamy, while adoption, abortion, contraception and mutual consent divorce were allowed as part of the new Personal Status Code. According to Tunisian feminists I spoke with in 1993-94, because of these reforms, which to date are still more comprehensive than their North African neighbors, the government is able to turn a deaf ear to women's demands for more rights. They also fear the growing conservatism due to the influence of Islamic Fundamentalists. Some women experienced repercussions this election year (1994) for signing a petition against political injustice in Tunisia.

AL-RAIDA

Future topics in *Al-Raida* include Arab women in agriculture; Arab women in creative design; Arab women in the media, in addition to a look at Arab women's preparations for the World Summit in Beijing.

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

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Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East

Edited by Donna Lee Bowen and Evelyne A. Early

Reviewed by Wafa Stephan Tarnowski

A very important point raised in this collection of texts is the relationship between the Middle East and the West and the threat posed by Western thought and technology to traditional Muslim scholarship and belief systems (p. 6). Islamic education is centered on adherence to the Sunna and Hadith, while Western education focuses on empirical knowledge. This "collusion of reason and faith," says the editors produces an intellectual dilemma (p. 6). They ask a crucial question: How does a tradition of faith compete in a world based on rationality? Especially that this rational Western World is associated with colonization and humiliation (Arab-Israeli wars).

Middle Easterners, say Bowen and Early, are ambivalent about the West, opposing it and at the same time trying to emulate its technological achievements and to avoid its "failures" which are: materialism, family breakdown, drugs, consumerism and loss of religion (p. 7). As for Westerners, Bowen and Early say, they tend to lump all Islamic groups together under the banner of "Islamic Fundamentalism," which is a western description that does not exist in Arabic but comes from Christian terminology. Moreover, this religious "fundamentalism" has been associated with po-

litical violence, which is not true of all Muslim parties. Some Muslim groups focus on religious learning and are not politically motivated, the editors say (p. 7).

Finally, the Middle East with its varied geography, increasing urbanization, industrialization and population growth is a changing place. Its infrastructure is changing and the entire traditional system of operating is being challenged. How do Middle Easterners keep going ask the editors? What values guide them nowadays and what do they worry about most? This collection of articles aims at answering these questions.

The anthology is divided into five parts. The first one dealing with family life, and life passages from birth, to circumcision, to marriage and death. The second deals with gender relations, women and sex, the dilemmas of adolescence, personal status law and the veiled revolution. The third part deals with home community and work, the rites of hospitality, the concepts of lying and honor, and the Suqs of the Middle East. The fourth part deals with the popular expression of religion, excerpts from the Quran, the sound of the Quran being recited and the Hajj, accounts of minor pilgrimages and new year's day customs at a

holly shrine. The last section deals with performance and entertainment in the Middle East, with humor and humorists, films, filmmakers and singers, and of Bedouin women's sad songs and entertainment in the market place.

The focus of our analysis in the remainder of the paper will be gender and the articles in the book that raise the issue of gender relations or cover some aspects of women's life in the Middle East. Most of these articles of course are found in the section two of the book, however some very interesting issues on the way Muslim women are carving themselves a niche in religious celebrations, are found in section four, entitled "Popular Expression of Religion".

The most interesting article in my opinion is that of Elizabeth Fernea on the "Veiled Revolution" where she challenges the western assumption that those who are veiled "suffer from the same exclusion as those of us who look at the veil" (p.119). Fernea says that we have no right to make such an assumption because much depends on who makes the decisions to wear the veil, i.e. whether it is imposed by patriarchy or chosen by women as a statement. Fernea also says that for centuries the veil has been used for political, religious and social purposes to

Middle Easterners, say Bowen and Early, are ambivalent about the West, opposing it and at the same time trying to emulate its technological achievements

donate the chastity of women and their exclusion from political and social life, except within the family. Now the veil is used for a different purpose: it is a clear statement by women of their respectability, a return to Islamic values rather than Western ones, a protest against Westernization that did not bring the desired results and most importantly, a way women can reenter mosques not just as worshippers but as students of the Koran. These points are stressed in Fernea's documentary on the Veiled Revolution where she shows how women in Egypt are not returning to their old traditional dresses of the "milaya" and the long black dress worn by "baladi" women but are designing their own modern modest style dresses and this style implies "new expressions and new implications" she says (p.120).

The expressions suggest that it is a middle and upper-class phenomenon rather than a working class one, that most of the wearers are young educated women whose grandmothers revolutionized society by taking off the veil in the 1920's. It is also a political statement, a "non-violent protest against the establishment and its policies, as well as against the West" (p. 120). It is an individual choice that comes from "inner religious conviction and it relates to the individual's sense of her own identity" (p. 121). Islamic dress has practical advantages says Fernea because it allows women greater freedom of movement and circulation since families implicitly lower their vigilance over girls who wear

it. She quotes a woman saying that "people respect you if you wear it and my family trusts me now that I wear this dress." (p. 121)

The veil then is a complex symbol that has multiple implications and different impacts, says Fernea (p. 122) In one way it can become a symbol of conservatism and in another it can become "the symbol for an Islamic approach to the solution of both old and new problems" (p. 122). Thus it means different things to different people within the society and it means different things to Westerners than it does to Muslims.

Another fascinating account on the role of women in local pilgrimage in Iran is written by Anne Betteridge, who observed women's "ziarat" to shrines in Shiraz. She observed that first of all women make pilgrimages to local shrines more often than men, which enriches their lives both spiritually and socially. Second, women's local pilgrimages have a cultural aspect that reveal to us the way these women view the world. Moreover, says Betteridge, local pilgrimage "is regarded basically female in character, it is a suspect and beloved ritual practice, not totally orthodox but to which many Iranians have a deep-rooted emotional attachment" (p. 239).

One of the attractions of visiting local shrines says Betteridge is that its not being a formal highly structured religious activity. Women in general have traditionally had a marginal role in the life of a mosque (same point raised

by Fernea); going to a "ziarat" allows women to find their own patterns of religious behavior rather than integrate themselves into the male pattern where they are often assigned the role of spectators and kept on the ceremonial sidelines (p. 241).

Shrine visiting, says Betteridge, allows women to get involved in their own forms of religious activities such as preparation and serving of ritual meals, listening to sermons recited by and for women, attending classes for women and girls. On these occasions, says the author, women are not relegated to peripheral positions and passive roles (p. 241). Even when men are attending, women are not cut off from participation, says she, because there is no formal activity involved, such as a sermon, from which they might be excluded.

Most importantly says Betteridge, while shopping or visiting (both traditional forms of female activities outside the house) women might be frowned upon by extra strict husbands or families, visiting shrines can hardly be objected against. Also women go to shrines for emotional comfort from fellow women visitors and friends and find great solace from female saints with whom they might form a special lifelong relationship.

Finally, Betteridge quotes a young man saying that much of the behavior at a shrine, such as expressing deep emotion and stating one's needs and shortcomings publicly, "is not in keeping with notions of manliness" and seems to fit better with the traditional view of

women as "emotional creatures"(p. 244-245). Thus, concludes the author, much of what takes place in a shrine "involves a female mode of behavior regardless of whether the pilgrim is a man or a woman. It is these 'female' aspects of the pilgrimage which are often called into question" (p. 245). Therefore, just "as the men's behavior suits the character of the 'official religion', so do women behave in a way more consonant with 'the religion of the shrine'." (p. 246)

So the fact that women are associated with local pilgrimage in Iran is neither accidental nor incidental says Betteridge. Men are associated with the mosque, religious texts, reasoned theological discussions, formal ritual assemblies..... and women are bound with things of the heart, "the troubling aspect of life which questions, unsettles and answers obliquely" (p. 246). In sum, "Ziarat" allows both men and women to express their feminine side, and allows women especially "to grieve and wail in an approved setting and to celebrate joyously with others" (p. 247). A form of Muslim female solidarity equivalent to the Western women's empowerment groups I would add.

I have chosen those two articles as most enlightening in the book and richest in material for thought that could lead to endless discussions. The other articles, although interesting did not give me much new insight into the condition of the Muslim women in the Middle East but are valuable for Western students who know very little about that part of the world from which I come.

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Reviews the impact of literacy on the lives of women in Third World countries. Discusses women's status, health, environmental protection and economic activities. The book includes details on preparing literacy activities for women; a guide to education and action; a useful bibliography, including film and video material; and a list of relevant organizations.

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Nixon, John and Ranson, Steward (eds.). 1994.

Citizenship for Democracy: The Educational Task.

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The notion of citizenship is now firmly established. This book argues that much of the literature in this area presents a restricted understanding of citizenship, reinforcing the idea of students as passive recipients of knowledge. It is a collection of specifically commissioned papers, which present a critique of existing practice and thinking and a new definition of citizenship.

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