Humiliation and Masculine Crisis in Iraq

Adam Jones*
Researcher in the Division of International Studies, CIDE, Mexico City

Introduction

The truth is that there are hundreds of thousands of angry, humiliated, frustrated, powerless young men in the Islamic world. And what we have done in Iraq is make ourselves accessible to them. – General Wesley Clark, November 2003

It is impossible to watch, as Iraq spirals out of U.S. control (I write at the end of April 2004), without noting the depth and combustibility of the masculine crisis that has taken hold in and around Iraq. The crisis is double-edged and dialectical; it has both Iraqi and American dimensions. The purpose of this brief article is to examine the parameters and political-military implications of this masculine crisis, which can be defined as the traumatic psychological and material consequences of the inability, or threatened inability, to conform to masculine role expectations.(such as cooking gas) has skyrocketed.

Gender and Economic Crisis in Iraq

In the year that has passed since the U.S. “coalition” invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, basic infrastructure has remained in shambles, and the crisis of subsistence remains generalized. Crucially, unemployment appears to have increased from the Saddam Hussein era (to between 60 and 90 percent of the workforce), at the same time as the infrastructure of subsistence food distribution has faltered, and the prices of many basic goods (such as cooking gas) has skyrocketed.

Thou female unemployment typically increases, relative to males, in times of transition, the picture in Iraq seems somewhat different. With the dismissal of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi soldiers, it may be that male unemployment has increased more dramatically than in the case of women. These mass layoffs also likely exacerbated the humiliation that many Iraqi men, including these soldiers, felt after Iraq’s rapid defeat on the battlefield. Furthermore, because of their suspicions about the political loyalties of Iraqi men, the occupation authorities have flown in contract workers from as far afield as Bangladesh and Nepal, rather than hiring locally. Economically desperate Iraqi men see this, too, as a humiliating slap.

For women, as well, growing unemployment and confinement in the home (exacerbated by the widespread insecurity in Iraq) represents an enormous and humiliating setback. Nonetheless, it can be contended that given patriarchal role expectations, a failure to find formal or adequate informal employment impacts existentially upon men-as-men to a greater extent than upon women-as-women. In any case, given men's domination of the public sphere, this masculine crisis has direct and profound political consequences. The ranks of demobilized soldiers were probably the key ingredient in the early months of the Iraqi insurgency, while the more recent Shi'ite uprising has mobilized predominantly poor and unemployed men and male adolescents. As the BBC put it: “High unemployment is not just a waste of Iraq’s enormous human resources, it also leads to trouble, with hundreds of thousands of young discontented Iraqi men finding they have not much to do – except perhaps confront coalition forces.”

The element of gendered humiliation that runs through this account seems vital to understanding the atmosphere of masculine crisis. American commentator Thomas Friedman defines humiliation as “the single most underestimated force in international relations.”

Norwegian social scientist, Eivin Lindner, has explored the effects of humiliation and its companion, shame, in what she calls “honour societies” – including those of the Arab Middle East. The most lurid face of shame and humiliation are perhaps the institutions of “honour” killing and blood feud that are common in the Arab World along with regions such as the Caucasus and South Asia. But their impact is more complex, subtle, and quotidian. Media reports have documented the central role of these quantities in fueling rejection of, and violent resistance to, the occupation. This is apparent also in the case of gender-selective victimization of Iraqi men by occupation forces.

Gender-Specific and Gender-Selective Targeting of Iraqi Men

Objective factors – particularly the socioeconomic ones just described – are vital in setting the contours of masculine crisis in Iraq. Also key, however, is the strategy of gender-selective victimization of Iraqi males that lies at the heart of U.S. occupation policies. The measures directed overwhelmingly at males include humiliation: humiliation before family members, mass roundups, incarceration, torture, selective killing; and denial of the right to humanitarian evacuation from besieged cities.

Gender-selective repression is particularly evident in the forcible depopulation of males in conflict areas – including boy children and very old men. According to the New York Times: “American forces are still conducting daily raids, bursting into homes and sweeping up families. More than 10,000 men and boys are in custody ...” [The military acknowledges that most people it captures are probably not dangerous.” As a result, “entire swaths of farmland have been declared off-limits – mothers, sons, brothers, cousins. There are no men to do men’s work. Women till the fields, [and] guard the houses ... Iraq has a new generation of missing men. But instead of ending in mass graves or at the bottom of the Tigris River, as they often did during the rule of Saddam Hussein, they are detained somewhere in American jails.”

This evisceration of the male population is often accompanied by the humiliating treatment of detainees in front of their families – forcing men to the floor and then placing soldiers’ boots on their heads is a prime example.

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*Adam Jones

Researcher in the Division of International Studies, CIDE, Mexico City

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File File File

Picture Credit: Reuters/Oleg Popov

Saddam Saleh, a former prisoner in Abu Ghraib prison, shows a picture of the torture, humiliation and abuse he endured, May 17, 2004.

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Volume XXI, Nos. 104-105, Winter/Spring 2004

AL-Raida

Volume XXI, Nos. 104-105, Winter/Spring 2004

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More masculine humiliation follows in the occupation of facilities themselves. On the very day that I write, shocking photographs have been published worldwide and broadcast across the Arab world, showing baroque acts of degradation inflicted on Iraqi men imprisoned at the Abu Ghraib prison west of Baghdad. The investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, one photograph depicts a female soldier, a cigarette dangling from her mouth, … giving a jaunty thumbs-up sign and pointing at the genitals of a young Iraqi, who is naked except for a sandbag over his head, as he masturbates. Three other hooded and naked Iraqi prisoners are shown, hands reflexively crossed over their genitals. A fifth prisoner has his hands at his sides. In another, England stands arm in arm with Specialist Graner; both are grinning and giving the thumbs-up on either side of seven naked Iraqis, knees bent, piled clumsily on top of each other in a pyramid. There is another photograph of a cluster of naked prisoners, again piled in a pyramid. … Then, there is another cluster of hooded bodies, with a female soldier standing in front, taking photographs. Yet another photograph shows a kneeling, naked, unshod male prisoner, head momentarily turned away from the camera, posed to make it appear that he is performing oral sex on another male prisoner, who is naked and hooded.

It is hard to think of imagery more likely to fuel the rage of Iraqis, and particularly younger Iraqi men. Indeed, we may look back on the release and widespread diffusion of these photographs as one of the most significant moments in the history of post-invasion Iraq. U.S. Senator Joseph Biden refers to the widespread diffusion of these photographs as "the single most significant undermining act that's ever occurred in a decade in that region of the world in terms of our standing."

Masculine Crisis and the U.S. occupation is a topic of concern in both the occupied and the occupying. In the other side of masculine crisis in Iraq, that of the invaders, led by a powerful public, whose public faces range from the sullen to the murderously hostile, the stress and isolation have increased, while discipline and sense of purpose have lessened. It is that once-or sometimes-stable masculinities have tilted towards abuse and atrocity.

**Conclusion**

This short article has contended that a multifaceted masculine crisis is central to understanding patterns of oppression and insurgency during the first year of the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq. Enormous material damage and psychological trauma has been inflicted on the children and women of Iraq. However, the specifically masculine crisis of the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq has direct and decisive political- and military implications. Economic hardship and unemployment have played a key role in fuelling anti-occupation sentiment among the Iraqis, leading them into the swelling ranks of the violent opposition. Likewise, the gender-selective repressive measures deployed by the occupation forces has spawned a gender backlash. A skein of masculine humiliation pervades all these phenomena, and is also highly relevant to the masculine crisis.

A more generalized comparative understanding of these phenomena provides powerful insights into dynamics of repression and resistance worldwide.
There's offered me a unique opportunity to reconsider the values whose student majority was non-Lebanese. The diversity multi-sectarian coeducational boarding school (in which the link with my family was broken when I joined a male coed?) afforded me the chance to engage in endless conversations in mutual visits between my maternal aunts, their relatives, and their friends. However, as far as the prospective husband for the family's young women was concerned, I noticed a disregard for their supposed social status. These conversations addressed existing couples, but also referred to other prospective ones in which the maternal aunts, their relatives, and their friends were involved. However, these new hypostases enabled one “to be” many things in order to contract a partnership instead of the need “to have” a family with high status, money, or beauty.

If I have attributed that quality leap in values and criteria to my own secondary school and university environment, this is because I had not perceived at that time that this period (most of which happened to fall during the first half of the 1960's) would be a preface to a time abundant with political events. In Lebanese society today, one observes a cohabitation of contradictory phenomena and a “peaceful” coexistence of discordant ideologies. Despite this, one observes some stability in the expanded presence of Lebanese women's new identity. This identity, whose prevalence we detect among female university students in the 1980's, was expressed in a self-concept not strictly limited to the traditional feminine model. In fact, this faction of Lebanese women attempts to transcend that model by integrating into their self-concept, masculine psychological features in addition to traditional feminine ones. These masculine features have been cast in the minds of both female and male undergraduates as more desirable for men than they are for women in Lebanese society.

There is no empty pocket for a man except his empty pocket.

The Issue and the Questions
The fundamental question that this paper will attempt to answer is: Do the features of the image that young Lebanese men seek in their future partners resemble the actual identity of their female coeds? Is there a link between the gender type of the preferred female partner's image and the gender attitudes of male undergraduates?

If the young man's image of the preferred female partner, for example, resembles the “New Woman” as she perceives herself, is his preference accompanied by unconventional gender attitudes? Would the opposite be true? Or are the two unrelated?

What about the female undergraduate? Has her transcendent quality of the traditional gender type affected her preference when selecting a male partner? Does her image of that partner resemble the self-image of the male coed?

The Sample
This paper offers an analytical discussion of some of the results of a preliminary survey conducted in Spring 2003 on a convenient sample of male and female Lebanese University students (First Branch of the Lebanese University). This preliminary survey was conducted as part of a field study in process. One of the study's preoccupations is a search for the features of the profile male Lebanese University students have of their prospective partners; and a search, as well, for the facets of similarity and dissimilarity between that profile and between the actual self-image of the corresponding group of youths. The study also aims at identifying the nature of the existing relationship between the profile of the preferred male/female partner and the gender attitude of university youth.
Thus, 84 male and female undergraduates completed an inventory designed to determine the extent to which they are characterized (according to their own estimation) by traits previously classified across four scales: 1) the masculinity scale (M); 2) the femininity scale (F); 3) the neutral scale (N); and 4) the masculinity-femininity (M-F) scale.

Also, 80 male and female undergraduates completed an identical inventory consisting of the same traits/scales but designed to determine the degree to which the students seek these features in their preferred future partners.

All the above — totaling 164 male and female undergraduates — completed a questionnaire designed to measure their gender attitudes.

Research Tool
At this point in our presentation, and in an attempt to give the reader a better understanding of the following discussion and the opportunity to assess the reliability of the results we obtained, we shall present, in what fol- lows, the mentioned inventories (our research tools) and their components.

The Gender Identity Inventory
This consists of four scales, the first for masculinity, the second being designated as “neutral”, the third designated as “masculinity-femininity”, and the fourth designated as “masculinity-femininity”. In this study, “femininity” and “masculinity” are empirical concepts, each consisting of a number of traits. We have obtained the traits that constitute “femininity” and “masculinity” by way of a preliminary survey. In this survey, two independent groups of male and female undergraduates selected socially desirable traits but ones that are more desirable for women than for men, and socially undesirable traits but ones that are more desirable for men than for women. These traits revolve around nurture (tenderness, love of children, sacrifice, understanding, sentimentality) and relatedness (tolerance, patience, kindness); others cast the person in a passive role (calmness, contentment, preserving tradition, modesty) while still other traits bear an ethical connotation (loyalty, etc.).

Similarly, two groups selected the “masculinity” scale, consisting of traits more desirable for men than for women. This scale consists of cognitive traits (analytical ability, organized thought, intelligence, creativity, eloquence), active traits (courage, ambition, strength, confrontational ability, readiness to help in a crisis situation, inclination to challenge difficulties), and a third set of traits that characterize the person in charge (productivity, bearing responsibility, etc.).

As for the neutral scale, its constituent traits are socially desirable, equally, for both genders. Among these are: the readiness to help, generosity, adjustment, religiosity, etc.

The masculinity-femininity scale consists of traits considered socially desirable for one of the two genders but not for the other. These traits include: the readiness to take risks and love of adventure (for men rather than women) and innocence and obedience (for women rather than men).

To complete the gender identity inventory, the respondent is asked to assign, on a five-point scale, the degree to which each of these traits describes his/her personal- ity. As such, each respondent receives a score on each of these scales, making it possible to classify him/her, in accordance with selected statistical principles,11 on the gender identity map. Regardless of his biological sex, the respondent is classified as either androgynous (characterized by both high masculinity and high femininity), feminine (characterized by high femininity and low masculinity, masculine (characterized by high masculinity and low femininity), or undifferentiated (characterized by low femininity and low masculinity).

As for the male/female partner inventory, it is exactly the same as the gender identity inventory, with the exception of the instructions in the beginning, which request the respondent to assign the degree to which each of the listed traits describe the preferred female/the preferred male partner respectively.

Gender attitude (or gender prejudice) measure is no different from other attitude measures. Here, we adopt a five-point scale to assess respondents’ agreement with the listed traits. This measure consists of about 50 popular sayings that judge the status of women and men, their roles, traits, relationships, and relationship-related values and connotations.12

Results
First: Partner and Co-ed: Similarity and Difference
Examining the features male undergraduates seek in their female partners and comparing them with those that female undergraduates attribute to themselves, one encounters many similarities. These similarities are not restricted to feminine traits but apply to masculine ones too (i.e., traits more socially desirable for men in our society than they are for women). It is true that men seek prospective female partners who are nurturing and relational and who have expressive skills. These young men even wish these partners to be somewhat passive, but they always wish them to be agentic and instrumental as well.

Despite this, the male undergraduate in our sample tends to attribute feminine traits to his preferred prospective partner to a higher degree than young women attribute such features to themselves. The most important of these features are beauty and attractive- ness. With regard to this finding, young men in our sam- ple are no different from men around the world! Men’s desire for a beautiful and attractive woman is one of the most persistent desires12 in western and cross-cultural research. Researchers on men’s mate selec- tion preferences. This persistence has prompted researchers to seek possible associations between those two features and between the instincts needed for the survival of the human race and its evolution, among women their ability to procreate; researchers suggest- ed that men perceive a woman’s beauty as related to procreation in view of its traditional association with youth. What is noteworthy in our sample is that men and women equally give themselves moderate scores on beauty and attractiveness.

The Lebanese male undergraduate seeks an innocent and obedient partner. Young men want their female partners to be innocent to the same extent that young women (their co-eds) attribute innocence to themselves. The paradox is that young men in our sample have a self- image that is more innocent than both their preferred partners and their co-eds. In any case, innocence is not desirable for men in Lebanese society. As such, the young men identifies with his masculine stereotype and does not violate its requirements. But the case differs with “obedience”. Young men require more obedience from their prospective partners than their female co-eds attribute to themselves. Instead, young women and young men were equal in indicating “obedience” as the feature least descriptive of their personality. This feature, like innocence, is desirable for women but not for men. But both distance it when describing themselves, although men retain this feature as desirable for their preferred prospective partners.

This double standard reveals itself, as well, in neutral traits desirable to the same degree for both genders in Lebanese society. Among these, for example, are those that carry conformist connotations (such as preserving tradition and religiosity) and other ethical connotations (such as frankness and adherence to morals). All these features are sought in the female partner to the same extent that the college female student attributes them to herself, but much more so than the male attributes them to himself.

Finally, we consider traits that are rejected by the young man in his preferred prospective partner. These are divided into two groups:

The first group of traits is socially desirable for women and not for men, and they are: accepting fate (fatalism) as well as sentimentality and sensitivity: young men do not attribute these traits in this group to themselves nor to their partners. The second group of traits, in contrast, is socially desirable for men and not for women. Male undergraduates attribute to themselves love of adventure and readiness to take risks but reject them in their partner; do these two features carry in their cognitive-cultural representation sex-biased or and as such conflict with their strong desire for inno- cence in their prospective partner? For all of love of competition and sense of superiority (can we assume, in accordance with different theories in psychology,13 that perhaps these traits - when attributed to a female part- ner - pose a threat to men’s supposed superior status over the female sex? These theories contend that the superiority threatened in this case is that guaranteed by men’s status in the existing patriarchal system and as such protected by the psychological as well as cul- tural preconditions of manhood.

Among the interesting traits are self-reliance and indepen- dence. According to the classifications based on the statements of Lebanese university youth in the mid-eighties,14 self-reliance and independence are masculine features while independence is desirable for men and not for women (class- ified thus on the masculinity-femininity scale). Although male undergraduates attributed 16 masculine features to their preferred female partner, they rejected attribut- ing “self-reliance” to her; the degree to which they wanted her to be “self-reliant” was less than their co-ed actually was. Is this because independence and self- reliance, in contrast to other masculine features, deprive the persistent image of Woman in our cultural repertoire of one of its most important components; i.e., her dependence on and “belongingness” to a certain man.
(the male partner in this case?); it seems that neither individual independence nor self-reliance are pertinent traits when discussing preferences for female partners’ features.

At this point, we proceed to examine the gender profile in its entirety and its relationship to the co-ed’s self-image as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Andro-Masc</th>
<th>Fem-Masc</th>
<th>Undiff</th>
<th>High-Masc</th>
<th>High-Fem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(F)</td>
<td>(M)</td>
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</table>

% of male students preferring a female partner of gender type:

- Androgynous: 24.2%
- Feminine: 42.2%
- Masculine: 9.1%
- Undifferentiated: 24.2%
- High masculinity: 33.5%
- High femininity: 66.6%

% distribution of female students according to self-image gender type:

- Female students preferring a male partner of gender type:
  - Androgynous: 50%
  - Feminine: 17%
  - Masculine: 10%
  - Undifferentiated: 23%
  - High masculinity: 60%
  - High femininity: 67%

* We note that the median adopted in order to classify high masculinity and high femininity in all the sample was calculated for the pooled scores of the male and female undergraduates who completed the female partner/male partner questionnaire respectively. Its value is different, then, from the median mentioned in Note 10.

Does this gap between “supply” and “demand” in their preferred partners’ features indicate from a hidden economic context?

- Footnote 10. A study of the above table reveals that the percentage of androgynous young women – those that attribute to themselves feminine traits to a high degree and distance masculine traits – are a minority; their percentage is prone to decline with time. Consequently, the percentage of male undergraduates (their colleagues) who prefer a feminine partner is higher. The “feminine” woman is the most preferred, statistically, among the four gender types.

Among these four gender types, the androgynous group totally prevails over the other gender types (50% of female students have an androgynous self-image) while only 24% of male desire such androgynous female partners. Also 66% of the male undergraduates in our sample selected a future partner with low masculinity while 60% of their co-eds are characterized by high masculinity; i.e., the percentage of women of high masculinity is almost twice that of men desiring high masculinity in their preferred partners.

Does this gap between “supply” and “demand” in women’s gender types and degree of masculinity imply potential emotional miscommunication between the two sexes in university youth?

The attempt to answer this question requires reference to studies that took psychological adjustment as one of their topics. These studies have always indicated the superiority of this gender stereotype, as opposed to others, in different indicators of psychological adjustment. Researchers have demonstrated that the androgynous young woman can, for example, adapt to different situations; she can respond to a feminine situation in a feminine way, and with equal competence, to approach a masculine situation with an appropriate masculine behavior.

If we assume that the male selection situation stimulates a behavior or inherent feminine trait in women, we can also assume, based on the findings of the studies mentioned above, that the feminine dimension in an androgynous young woman will be the most prominent dimension in that situation, while the masculine dimension will decline for the same reason, particularly if that young woman receives unspoken or spoken signals of the young man’s psychological or cultural/ideological perspective. We can expect the young man’s desires would be a constituent of the mate selection situation, calling for the prominence of her “femininity” and the retreat of the “masculinity” at the same time. This tendency to adjust to a “coupling” situation is - as documented by gender differences such because their roles as university students require for which a female begins training during adolescence and one that accompanies her into adulthood, particularly into the time of male selection.

Some studies have documented female undergraduates’ tendency to exaggerate in attributing masculine features to themselves, compared to other women’s groups or compared to male undergraduates. These studies indicate that these students tend to exaggerate as such because their roles as university students require instrumentality and agency, and even dominance and competition (these last two features are considered socially undesirable for women). These studies also indicate that masculine behavior in this situation does not detract from these women’s sexual attractiveness. These results are corroborated in a sample of androgynous female students since various studies – particularly those that adopted an evolutionary perspective - demonstrated that women characterized by masculine features were undesirable partners.

One of the reasons for the high masculinity in female undergraduates is, in addition to the above-mentioned reasons, is that the reference group (most probably consisting of women in traditional roles) on which these women rely upon to determine their gender identities is perceived as less masculine than themselves; this is what perhaps leads to the above-mentioned exaggeration.

Second: The Partner is Not the College Mate

A first glance at the features of the preferred male partner by the female undergraduate indicates that he is perceived to be more masculine than their male colleagues’ actual self-image; these male colleagues seem “deficient” with respect to the female’s exaggerated requirements. We do not find one feature on any of the 3 scales (masculinity, femininity, neutral) that characterizes the male undergraduate to a higher degree than that assigned to him as a prospective partner by his co-ed. Instead, we find her desiring a partner perfect in all respects, for her he must be: brave, capable of confrontation, strong, self-confident, devout in facing difficulties and pressures, and capable of decision-making and of high endurance; i.e., fearless and audacious, much more so (statistically) than he attributes fearlessness to himself. Female undergraduates also attribute to their preferred male partner qualities of intelligence, creativity, orderly thought, and eloquence in self-expression – these are attributes that constitute characteristics that the male undergraduate does not claim to possess the expected degree.

The exaggeration with which the female university undergraduate describes her preferred partner’s masculinity – as he perceives it – is a talent that he is no different from women in all cultures studied by researchers which are considered socially desirable for men but not for women). Male undergraduates attribute all these features (with the exception of the willingness to take risks), to a low degree, to themselves. It seems that both male and female undergraduates agree that extreme deviation from either stereotype is undesirable; they both severely distance themselves from their respective partners whose features socially rejected for those partners’ given sex.

We point to another group of features desired by each of the genders in the partner even though the young men and women actually view themselves as not possessing such features. These include “tolerance”, “patience”, and “modesty”. The male undergraduate, just like his co-ed, attributed to himself low scores on these traits. These features involve a pattern that does not suit, in our opinion, the expected roles of the university context, and this is what makes both male and female students unconcerned, perhaps, with “possessing” these features. Perhaps these features are considered complementary, viewed as necessary by each gender but mutually left for the partner to possess!

A descriptive analysis for the set of features discussed above leads to the following preliminary remark: a male undergraduate’s preference for his partner is stereotyped to a considerable extent. Yet further consideration of the four gender types reveals a more complicated picture: The exaggeration with which the female university undergraduate describes her preferred partner’s masculinity – as identified above in the analytical description of masculine
becomes evident from scrutinizing the scores of traits on women attributed high scores to themselves on that scale. Male partner, particularly since a high percentage of applied to both female and male respondents. The same whose influence researchers attempt to neutralize. If the be saturated with high masculinity. If the young woman whose exaggeration phenomenon results from the response style pro-

% distribution of female students preferring a male partner of gender type:

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Studies concerned with the topic of human mate selec-
tion indicate factors that are almost fixed in most soci-
eties (developing societies in particular) under study. One of these factors is that women prefer an older man while men prefer a younger woman. Could it be that the female undergraduate was not in fact describing her col-
league (the male undergraduate)? Was she describing an older man who has gone a long way in consolidating his masculinity, so that the male undergraduate, compared to the preferred male partner, seems deficient in his masculinity? The components of masculinity refer to a traditional situ-

trait - reappears in the table that reveals the distribution of female undergraduates (according to preferences of part-
ners' gender type) and that of male undergraduates (according to their gender identity). Two-thirds of the nerers' gender type) and that of male undergraduates

Another important issue is the representation of masculinity and femininity in the self-images of the young men and women. The masculine ones.

Perhaps the exaggeration phenomenon results from the following factors:

- The new male role model that young women's self-image tends to be saturated with high masculinity. If the young woman seeks a masculine partner, as do women generally, she will attribute to that partner high scores on the masculin-
tycale, in whole and in part, so as to make him masculine to a degree at least equivalent to that of the feminine masculinity. It is true that the sample of female undergraduates who selected their pre-
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ern researchers and which describes female youths in Lebanese society according to several studies. Hence, exaggeration – when compared to the woman's self-image – does not really turn out to be exaggeration after all.

Conclusion and Discussion

Lebanese university youth no longer possess a stereotyped identity. However, women's style in transcending gender stereotyping differs from that of men. While the gender identity of female undergraduates expands to embrace social and professional features for women and men, the feminine tendencies of both men and women (such as emotional expressiveness, relativity, nurturality) remain the most suitable when describing the male partner. One can therefore explain the preference for the preferred partner as a form of compensation for the lack of nurturality in the male partner. Perhaps the exaggeration phenomenon results from the following factors:

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tycale, in whole and in part, so as to make him masculine to a degree at least equivalent to that of the feminine masculinity. It is true that the sample of female undergraduates who selected their preferred male partner is different from the sample that completed the gender self-image questionnaire. Yet attributing high masculinity to oneself is, as mentioned above, a phenomenon observed in women, whose recurrence has been documented by western researchers and which describes female youths in Lebanese society according to several studies. Hence, exaggeration – when compared to the woman's self-image – does not really turn out to be exaggeration after all.

Studies concerned with the topic of human mate selection indicate factors that are almost fixed in most societies (developing societies in particular) under study. One of these factors is that women prefer an older man while men prefer a younger woman. Could it be that the female undergraduate was not in fact describing her colleague (the male undergraduate)? Was she describing an older man who has gone a long way in consolidating his masculinity, so that the male undergraduate, compared to the preferred male partner, seems deficient in his masculinity? The components of masculinity refer to a traditional situation where the male role was complementary to the female one. Early and Wood have found, upon conducting a meta-analysis of studies on this topic, a decline in the importance of the male partner as provider or as the older partner. This decline is consistent with the rise in the "Gender-Related Development Index" and the "Heaper Empowerment Measure" adopted by researchers in UN organizations. If the survival of the Human Race involves a division of roles among women and men for maximizing the conditions necessary for that survival (being an economic provider and its precondition for men, health and fertility related to youth in women), then the continuity of those conditions, despite the decline in their necessity, is nothing more than the per-
sistence of an ideology that loses, gradually, its material basis but that survives, as do all ideologies, much longer than its raison d'être. Finally, we would like to point out that 35% of female undergraduates prefer a male partner of high femininity. Some studies conducted in the 1980's demonstrated that the high degree of femininity in men (and women) is positively correlated with high marital satisfaction. One explanation offered by researchers is that the situation of emotional partnership stimulates, in both sexes, romantic associations. These associations, in turn, are linked to the feminine tendencies of both men and women (such as emotional expressiveness, relativity, nurturality) to the masculine ones.

Does asking the female undergraduate to describe her preferred male partner make her tend to refer to that romantic partnership and set off associations related to those feminine components? This holds true for 35% of female undergraduates only. Perhaps the most influential factor in the case of well-known economic and demog-
ographic conditions in Lebanese society is that a life part-
nership for university students has come to connote a life arrangement next to which romance becomes a luxury. As such, preference for masculinity – instrumentality and agency – is rising; in contrast, "demand" for femininity is declining. This applies even when both masculinity and femininity are independent and non-conflicting con-
structs, as is the case in the conceptual background and operational definitions that govern the research tool used here.

Lebanese university youth no longer possess a stereotyped identity. However, women's style in transcending gender stereotyping differs from that of men. While the gender identity of female undergraduates expands to embrace social and professional features for women and men, the feminine tendencies of both men and women in Lebanese society, their male colleagues tend to avoid resembling either of them. However, the above-mentioned transcendence does not reflect on mate selection neither in female nor in male undergraduates. Why did this transcendence, exhibited by the majority of university students both male and female, not reflect on partner preferences for university students? Psychologists, particularly those inspired by psychoanaly-
sis, tend to attribute to the above-mentioned partnership unconscious tendencies and representations most likely related to the personal history of the individual and that cannot be accounted for by changes of any kind in the real world. This renders generalizations derived from changes in social reality about partnership simplistic, par-
tial and hence incorrect. But, researchers in the field of Social Psychology affirm that contracting romantic part-
nerships does not occur outside the cultural/ideological, political, or economic context.
We did not have the opportunity to explore Arab studies that indicate about a quality change in the methods of mate selection. We refer, in this context, to the study by Mona Fayad in which she documented men-women partnerships based on traditional traits. This is due to the fact that Lebanon witnessed national liberalization movements (the 1960's and 1970's), an era when university students felt capable of actualizing their personal as well as their political dreams, when they experienced the possibility of having control over matters in both the private and the public spheres of life. At that time, men and women selected romantic partners according to conventional standards toward reality-based rationales? to defensive authoritarian personalities, ones “defeated” in their actual reality, and vice versa. This is because gender is related to the set of all biases: racism, sectarianism, religious fanaticism, and ageism etc. This is what some of our results have indicated upon analyzing the existing relations between gender identity and gender attitudes in this group of Lebanese youth? Is mate selection subject to the same consideration? Is a gender stereotyped mate preference linked to conventional stands toward men's and men's roles? And vice versa?

Analysis of the results of this study's Gender Attitudes Inventory does not indicate a clear direction in this regard: With respect to this issue, men and women were divided according to their sex and not according to the gender type of the mate they selected. Female undergraduates, irrespective of the gender type of preferred partner, are much more liberated from gender stereotype constraints, than their male counterparts and less accepting of men's and men's traditional roles and the legal and status-based consequences that follow from these roles.

We note that the group of male undergraduates who preferred undifferentiated female mates seemed moderat-ely less prejudiced than the other gender type groups of male students (yet they are much more prejudiced than female students in this sample). It is noteworthy that men who hold undifferentiated gender self image have been found to be the most prejudiced among all four self-image gender types. This indicates that the act of attributing traits to oneself is subject to a different mecha-nism than that of attributing traits to a female mate. This group is small in number (it totals 8), so one must accept this result with caution.

The aim of conducting this preliminary survey on gender profile preferences and its relation to the self-image of the corresponding members of the other sex among uni-versity students was to formulate possible answers (hypotheses) to the questions asked in the course of our search for manifestations of masculinity in Lebanese society. The results of this survey are indicators or keys that enable us to offer some answers but the results we have reached raise additional questions.

Isn't this what studies on humanity most often reveal: finding few answers embedded with further questions awaiting answers?

END NOTES

10. We used the median for the pooled of scores of both women and men.
11. A girl must guard her virginity until marriage.
14. Same as the reference in (5) and (6).
15. Same as (5).
25. Simone de Beauvoir had indicated in her book The Other Sex, that women's tendency to raise their partner's status towards equality at the same time because she assumes that this rising, and that reduction toward an equal status is rather sexual prowess.
26. Same as the reference in (5) and (6).
29. The ratio of men-to-women of marrying age (25-35) existing in Lebanese society, according to demographers, ranges from “a man for every three women” to “a man for every six women”! Same as (6).
30. Ibid.
33. Same as Footnote 8.
34. Ibid.
These pictures are taken at an extra special disguise party. The pictures first appeared in Cocktail magazine, No. 4, December 2003/January 2004 and are reprinted after permission was granted.
Every Saturday night, at around three o’clock in the morning, Music Journalist File File File Sardinia, Paris, London and Dubai. And when he’s in town, he dances before a ical and financial bigwigs across the globe, from the Sychelles islands, to Milan, stereotype masculine figure is characterized by high-gear testosterone-driven In a country dominated by a patriarchal system, where the legal system penalizes homosexuality , the right, setting off a series of sexually-teasing belly dance moves. The now roaring audience is glued to the sight of the dark, dense hair plastered backwards, the toned muscles rippling through tight-fitting jeans, and the heavy gold chains reaching down to the navel sway- ing over a fluid see-through top. The name of the belly dancer is Mosbah Baalbaki, better known simply as Mosbah, the famous male belly dancer act who combines sophisticated dance moves and a playful charisma, and who in the past few years has come to disrupt a long tradition of exclusively female belly dancing in the country.

In a country dominated by a patriarchal system, where the stereotype masculine figure is characterized by high-gear testosterone-driven personae to the point where the legal system penalizes homosexuality, Mosbah has succeeded, over and above the controversy of his act and image, in dancing his way through the deeply entrenched norms of masculinity. He has imposed himself as a respected public figure on the regional scene: every time Amor Y Libertad, a popular nightclub that had just opened. Around 700 people,” recalls Elefteriades’ production company, Elef Records, and Mosbah became officially a male belly dancer, gaining national fame a few months later.

Born some thirty years ago and growing up as an only son in Sidon, Mosbah has come a long way indeed, thanks to this “hobby” as he calls it. Belly dancing has allowed him to fulfill his childhood dream, which is star-dom: “Ever since I was a kid, I wanted to be a star, a celebrity of my own. I didn’t want to be like everyone else. Even when I weighed 120 kilograms and that is until I was 17, I dressed in daring, eccentric colors. I loved music and adored Egyptian movies. I was always telling my mother that I wanted to go to Egypt to become an actor. But she convinced me to get a college degree first. And she was so right, because when you’re educated and have self-respect, you can impose people’s respect.” At 20, Mosbah came to the capital to pursue a degree in communica- tion arts at the Lebanese American University. Upon gradu- ation, he traveled to Dubai for a few months where he worked as an assistant director before returning to Beirut to work as a fashion designer for a magazine. During one of his location hunts for the magazine, he met Michel Elefteriades, who owned at the time Amor Y Libertad, a popular nightclub that had just opened. “Michel invited me there one Saturday night. There were around 700 people,” recalls Mosbah. “He came up front to me and asked me if I would mind dancing Arabic. He had seen me dancing at another club. He told me to go up to the bar and dance. My first response was: Are you crazy? I can’t do something like that! What would my family, and my friends say? But I loved the idea. So I made my way through the crowd to the bar. When I tried to get on it, the bartender stopped me. Then Michel cleared it out. I danced to one song. It was crazy and I loved it.” This spontaneous episode turned into a weekly gig, two months later, a contract was duly signed with Elefteriades’ production company, Elef Records, and Mosbah became officially a male belly dancer, gaining national fame a few months later.

Off the scenes, Mosbah is just as picky with the details of his image as on stage; at the time of the interview with Al-Raida, which took place at a beauty institute owned by a friend of his, he was carrying along a checked red and white Dior purse to go with his red and white track suite, a white cap and wide-framed red sunglasses. “Just for the 10 minutes of the show, there’s a lot of work to do. I have to work out every day to stay in shape; I have to chose the songs, the fabric for my costumes, the set up,” he explains. Even the rebellious button of his tight-fitting jeans shirt, which he was clipping back on for the interview, seemed to be a deliberate choice serving to expose a perfectly hairless, olive skin chest.

“I’m not trying to provoke any- one. I don’t have anything to prove to anyone,” he says. But when he first started out, he did suffer from people’s reactions: “Of course, I saw the sarcasm, but didn’t pay heed to it. Rumors started circulating and they even reached my family. Luckily, my family and I are very close. They know what I am and what I’m worth. They didn’t buy into the talk. But I was hurt. I wanted to quit. I was almost about to stop dancing. But then Michel managed to convince me. I held on because I have faith in what I’m doing. I have passion for what I do.”

When asked whether he believes he contributed to a more homo- sexual-tolerant society in Lebanon over the past years, he gives a modest shrug, but then refers to the special report pub- lished in 2001 in the French maga- zine L’Express, in which he was identified as one of the 100 Lebanese personalities to follow. In a country and region, where deep intolerance of any deviation from the established norms of masculinity runs high, Mosbah has indeed man- aged to open a breach in these norms by imposing him- self as an artist and a cultural icon.
The social and hierarchical relationship between the sexes in Morocco is now in crisis because of the increase in the number of women in the education and employment fields, the decrease in fecundity, and the de-institutionalization of sexuality. These three unfinished processes are the main factors that define the unequal traditional relationship between sexes. Additionally, these processes redefine masculinity, which has been considered for a long time as a source of privilege and power.

I-Issue

Men are not participating enough in the different programs related to reproductive health despite the infiltration of Moroccan women into the domains of education, work, reproduction and sexuality. The Moroccan man refuses to renounce (totally and for good) his privileges, and considers that he has the right to oppose, in the name of the Islamic sexual ethic, the woman’s emancipation and considers that he has the right to oppose, in the name of the Islamic sexual ethic, the woman’s emancipation, which means a “danger”. Sexual liberation is considered, in the name of a patriarchal Islam, as debauchery, prostitution and fights for it in some cases, the ordinary man considers masculine domination as a natural and sacred religious fact. It is in such a man that we might find a deep-rooted masculine identity that resists egalitarian calls.

It seems to us that the minor civil servant best illustrates the ordinary man. A minor civil servant is a man who works in public administration and whose annual salary does not exceed 25 000 dirhams ($2500). Working in the office and occupying subordinate positions encourage this man to manifest traditional masculine qualities such as virility, courage, and the ability to support his wife. It is within this man “without special qualities” that a crisis in masculine identity is bound to be the most acute. The crisis of economic power drives the ordinary man towards a defensive and compensatory reaction. This reaction includes stronger attachment to preconceived notions of masculinity, which are compensated for by an increase of masculine values centered around honor. The Middle-Atlas (Khénifra) is the opposite of the Rif in that it is perceived as the place where a “primitive” sexual liberty for women is accepted and tolerated. Finally Rabat, which is the administrative and intellectual capital, represents both the domain of minor civil servants par excellence and the location of feminine/feminist associations.

When the Direction of Population at the Ministry of Health, supported by the USAID, took a look at our project, it suggested that we enlarge our sample to include three other cities that particularly interests the Ministry, especially for phase V of its “Family Planning Project and Maternal and Infantile Health in Morocco” (1964-2000). These cities are Agadir, Tanger and Tétouan. Thus, the investigation was enlarged to include minor civil servants of these three cities.

II. Methodology

The questions that this section tries to answer include those related to the inquiry’s population, the concerned administrations, the inquiry’s sites, and the obtained samples.

II.1 Population of the Inquiry

The inquiry has decided to target the “ordinary” man. A minor civil servant is a man who works in public administration and whose annual salary does not exceed 25 000 dirhams ($2500). Working in the office and occupying subordinate positions encourage this man to manifest traditional masculine qualities such as virility, courage, and the ability to support his wife. It is within this man “without special qualities” that a crisis in masculine identity is bound to be the most acute. The crisis of economic power drives the ordinary man towards a defensive and compensatory reaction. This reaction includes stronger attachment to preconceived notions of masculinity, which are compensated for by an increase of masculine values centered around honor. The Middle-Atlas (Khénifra) is the opposite of the Rif in that it is perceived as the place where a “primitive” sexual liberty for women is accepted and tolerated. Finally Rabat, which is the administrative and intellectual capital, represents both the domain of minor civil servants par excellence and the location of feminine/feminist associations.

The inquiry’s population includes three different sites: the Oriental-Rif (Khénifra), the Middle-Atlas (Khénifra), and the city of Rabat. Why such a choice?

Another reason for choosing these departments is because the ministries of education, health and agriculture, represented by the following ministerial departments: Interior, Agriculture, Equipment, Health and Education. This choice was made because of the importance of these departments in fact the number of personnel that these five ministries employ is 322 925 out of a total of 423 664 (76.2%), all ministries combined.

Another reason for choosing these departments is because the ministries of education, health and agriculture are involved, as institutions, in the reproductive health programs. Therefore it would be useful to see to what measure their minor civil servants are imbued with the reproductive health’s egalitarian sexual ideology. As far as the Ministry of Interior is concerned, it represents authority and power, an excellent field where masculine identity might be applied. The Ministry of Equipment, on the other hand, is associated with technical power still perceived as belonging to man.

II.2 Administrations

The data collection started on March 19, 2000 and finished on May 19, 2000. The team, which includes 4 researchers under my supervision, accomplished a one-week stay in each of the six chosen sites.

II.3 Sites of the Investigation

Despite many objections and death threats expressed by fundamentalists against the director of research (mainly in Khénifra and Oujda), 524 minor civil servants filled out a questionnaire (table 1) and 43 were interviewed (table 2). The size and the nonrepresentational aspect (in the strict sense) of the two samples imply that the results of this investigation should be considered as indicative and informative.

III. Results

Throughout this article, we will present the results related to aspects of masculinity and the role of sexual orientation and fecundity in the masculine reconstruction of masculinity.

III.1 Psychosocial Profile

In Agadir, masculinity is defined as “practical”, self-
control, ability to keep promises, seriousness, responsibility, decision-making, honesty, sexual temperance, and loyalty to the country.

In Khénifra, being a man is synonymous with being intelligent, intellectual, and reasonable. Man should be moderate, rather than aggressive, hypocritical, or traitorous, and despot. Man should keep his word, should behave well, take the right decision, and not be afraid. Man should be in charge of expenses. A health civil servant elaborates this “quality” by asserting that “if a man does not have money, he cannot be a man…the entire concept of masculinity means that one should have money”. Man should be the protector of the family, and its shelter. He is the woman’s soldier, and her bodyguard. All in all man should inspire respect and fear to his entourage.

In Oujda, to be a man signifies honor and courage. Man represents reason, a sense of responsibility, honor and dignity. He is the one who has an opinion and states it. Man, as already mentioned, is the one who keeps his word. Man is as well qawwam, which means the one who supports his wife and children because of the money he provides: “Perhaps man’s main characteristic is work… a lazy man is not a man”.

In Rabat, to be a man, is to have self-control and authority over wife and children. Man supports his family. He is the one who work anywhere, and the one who has a job, and money. He has a strong character and is reasonable; he also keeps his word, faces difficulties, does not reveal secrets, and does not run away from problems.

In Tanger, to be a man, is to know how to dominate a family and inspire children with respect. Man should keep his word, especially when dealing with money. He should use his reason, and be able to see beyond the limits of the present. Man must be stable and possess a strong personality, principles, and the ability to support his family.

Finally in Tétouan, being a man is being responsible for the house, having a strong personality, authority, irreducible decisions, and presence at home. Being a man means to be reasonable, delicate, wise, and always moving forward. To be a man is to take initiative, and be a leader. A man is the one who knows how to handle problems, who works hard, is tough and capable of handling hard tasks. Man should not be harsh rather than tender. He must be punctual and must keep his word. All in all, masculinity is about decision-making.

The characteristics associated with sexual behavior can be regrouped into four categories: psychological, moral, social, and political.

### III.1. Psychological Characteristics of Masculinity

The category of psychological characteristics (table 3) includes 16 characteristics that define manhood. These characteristics were mentioned 31 times. Reason comes first, mentioned in four sites, followed by courage, awe, authority and personality, all mentioned in three sites. No single characteristic was mentioned in the six sites. Tétouan is the city that refers to psychological characteristics the most, followed by Rabat. Among the psychological characteristics mentioned during interviews, are authority and toughness.

Those who define man as “commander”, represent only 4% of the interviews, whereas 24% of the interviews consider man as one who keeps his word, especially when dealing with money. He should keep his word, especially when dealing with money. He should use his reason, and be able to see beyond the limits of the present. Man must be stable and possess a strong personality, principles, and the ability to support his family.

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The characteristics associated with sexual behavior can be regrouped into four categories: psychological, moral, social, and political.
Table 5: Category of Social Indicators of Masculinity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Agadir</th>
<th>Khénifra</th>
<th>Oujda</th>
<th>Rabat</th>
<th>Tanger</th>
<th>Tétouan</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home supporter</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard-working</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has money</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting the family</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Agadir. Unlike Khénifra and Rabat, Agadir does not cite a single social quality that defines manhood.

III.1.4. The Political Qualities of Masculinity

The political qualities category (table 6) includes four traits (loyalty to the country, having an opinion...) that were cited four times. Each quality was cited on one occasion. None of the cities cited two traits. Rabat and Tanger did not cite any.

The distinction between the four traits that define man generate the following conclusions: As far as number and frequency are concerned, psychological traits head the poll of notions that define manhood, followed by moral and social traits. Political traits come in fourth position. On the psychological traits, reason (it is a psychological trait, because it implies moderation, equilibrium and prudence) and social traits. Political traits come in fourth position.

In all cities, the feminist attitude implying that the man is not better (than the woman) won the polls by a high majority. The city of Oujda realized the highest feminist percentage (86.5%). On the administrations’ level, education comes in the forefront of feminist attitude with 79%, whereas health comes last with 61%. All the administrative sectors reject the masculine superiority with an absolute majority.

Man should manage house matters without violence and through dialogue. In Rabat, the woman is identified as a better manager of domestic economy, and she is seen more and more as an equal partner. Even in Oujda, the city that realized the lowest feminist score, masculine authority has been softened. Man’s commandment cannot be blind, unconditional, and dictatorial. To command is to direct while taking the woman’s opinion into consideration. Therefore, there is a redefinition of authority, which is more and more considered as reasonable commandment. In the same way, physical force is not a “privilege”: “muscles, even the elephant has some”, some say with irony. Consequently, man is not defined as physical force (according to 46%) which should mean toughness, violence or despotic commandment.

III.2 Sexual Orientation

Despite not being spontaneously cited in the interviews, the sexual profile is central in the Moroccan social construction of masculinity. This profile is largely determined by the necessity of heterosexuality. “Being a man is being heterosexual”: this recurrent phrase signifi- fies the rejection of homosexuality because it is consid- ered as an anomaly that undermines masculinity.

III.2.1. Bisexuality, a Subject of Doubt

Regarding bisexuality, opinion is divided: 44% of interviewees agree that in every human being, there is both femininity and masculinity, whereas 41% reject it. The city of Oujda (54%) and the health administration (48%) adopt in the strongest way the patriarchal response (non-recognition of bisexuality), whereas the city of Agadir (51%) and the agriculture administration (51%) adopt mostly the feminist response. If bisexuality was recognized, the health opinion was, contrary to unexpected. In fact, the health civil servants are theoretically the most susceptible to accepting bisexuality. To be a man, one must be a better manager of domestic economy, and she is seen more and more as an equal partner. Even in Oujda, the city that realized the lowest feminist score, masculine authority has been softened. Man’s commandment cannot be blind, unconditional, and dictatorial. To command is to direct while taking the woman’s opinion into consideration. Therefore, there is a redefinition of authority, which is more and more considered as reasonable commandment. In the same way, physical force is not a “privilege”: “muscles, even the elephant has some”, some say with irony. Consequently, man is not defined as physical force (according to 46%) which should mean toughness, violence or despotic commandment.

III.2.2. Homosexuality, an Anomaly

The most tolerant social attitude explains homosexuality as a surplus of feminine hormones, but still considers it as an anomaly. Implicitly, this “scientific” explanation reduces homosexuality to the “called passive homosexuality. It is only the penetrated homosexual that is considered as homosexual. He is abnormal because he suffers from an excess of feminine hormones, which is interpreted as sickness.

In Khénifra, the homosexual is called chad, which means pervert, and the notion of chadouhd (perversion) signifies, in the everyday language, the “passive” homo- sexuality only. The hormonal surplus explanation does not excuse the passive homosexual. In Rabat, it is thought that the over-presentation of feminine hormones does not justify a man’s receptive sexual behavior.

In Oujda, the hormonal explanation leads to the hypothe- ses of sexual impotence: the receptive homosexual is a sexually impotent man because he has vitamins of female hormones. Because he is impotent, he lets himself be penetrated, like a woman. Nevertheless, “active” and “passive” homosexuals are both considered sick, vicious, perverse, and especially non-religious. Homosexuality is deviant and religiously illicit (haram). In Oujda and Tanger, the judicial Islamic sentence that states that homosexuals should be burned to death.

In Agadir, an unprecedented attitude has been noted and it consists in explaining homosexuality as sexual work. Homosexuality is considered as a trade of bodies, as a trade-alternative, since emplo- yment is affecting boys and girls. A young Moroccan is ready to play sexual roles depending on the client’s will. In Agadir, the questions regarding moral- ity with respect to homosexuality are declining, so are the “etiological” reasons in explaining homosexuality (hormones, impotence...).

III.2.3. The Homosexual: A Male? A man? sexless?

Does homosexuality weaken masculine identity? The empirical answers to such a question can be regrouped into five rubrics: 1) man stays a man because he is still a male; 2) only the receptive homosexual is not considered a man; 3) Whether being receptive or performing an...
intomission, the homosexual is not considered a man, 4) homosexuals are neither men nor women, 5) homosexuals are not considered human beings. Let us examine these responses one by one.

a. Being a Male, is Being a Man

In Khénifra and everywhere else, it is stated, “the first thing we look for in a person is the penis”. If it is found, the baby will always be a man, even if he later on becomes a receptive homosexual. To have a penis is enough to define masculine identity, regardless of sexual practices and orientations. Consequently even the receptive homosexual stays a man because he has a penis. Therefore, homosexuality does not undermine masculinity.

The same reasoning applies to a male who practices homosexuality to make money. In this case, pleasure is a commercial need. For 61% of interviewees, a man who was subjected to sodomy by another man is no longer a man. 67% of interior civil servants think so, as against 54% of Rabat inhabitants. It is at the town of Tanger where the sodomized is still considered a man by a relative majority of 42% (against 40%). On the national level, 24% think that sodomy does not undermine the sodomized masculinity, mainly because of the presence of the penis.

These results are in conformity with the paradigm of patriarchal sexuality: to have sex with the penis, to be active, to be masculine, to be virile, to be valorized. On the other hand, to have sex with the anus, implies being penetrated, implies being passive, being feminine, being depreciated. Masculinity is socially thought of as sexual penetration. It is said in Oujda that the penetrated man is only a male not a man. Hence to be a man is not enough to be a man. For certain interviewees, especially in Khénifra, active homosexuality symbolizes a “victory” of social class where the “poor” takes his revenge.

b. “Demasculinization” of the Receptive Homosexual

It is inconceivable to be a (sound) man and a receptive homosexual. Ther e is a distinction between homosexual practice and homosexual identity: to perform the act for money does not signify that one is a homosexual. In Khénifra, it is stated, “the penetra- tor and the penetrated both remain men” simply because they have a penis.

c. “Demasculinization” of All Homosexual Actors

This third attitude undermines the masculinity of all homosexual actors. It be homosexual because of a psycho-hormonal or a financial need, to be penetrated or to penetrate, is not considered manly.

The religious aspect is not foreign to this depreciation of all homosexual actors. It is stated that neither the penetra- tor nor the penetrated have a value: “Our religion forbids us from considering them as men”. Both should be condemned to death, because they go against reli- gion. The ideal Islamic city is perceived here as free from homosexuality.

There is a distinction between homosexual practice and homosexual identity: to perform the act for money does not signify that one is a homosexual. In Khénifra, it is stated, “the penetrating male and the penetrated both remain men” simply because they have a penis.

As a result, active homosexuality is implicitly more accepted because its actor respects the masculine para- digm of penetration. The penetrator has more value. He is called a man because he practiced sex with someone else. In fact, for 38% of interviewees, a passive homosexual (against 54%), to be a man does not only signify being heterosexual. A man practicing sex with another man is not only defined as man, but also as a non-homosexual. For 61% of interviewees, a man who was subjected to sodomy by another man is no longer a man. 67% of interior civil servants think so, as against 54% of Rabat inhabitants. It is at the town of Tanger where the sodomized is still considered a man by a relative majority of 42% (against 40%). On the national level, 24% think that sodomy does not undermine the sodomized masculinity, mainly because of the presence of the penis.

d. “Desexualization” of Homosexuals

Homosexuals are neither considered men nor women. The sodomite should not be considered a woman out of respect for her. This respect for women is shown in sev- eral places. In Khénifra, it is estimated that treating the penetrated homosexual as a woman is degrading to her. To reduce her to a sex object is to despise her for “cruel and at times, the woman partner”. In Oujda, it is specified that the receptive homosexual is socially more degraded, not because he resembles a woman, but because he has renounced his biological sex, his manhood. In Rabat too, the one who has been sodom- ized should not be compared to women: “A gay person does not deserve to be treated as a woman”.

e. Dehumanization of Homosexuals

Homosexuality as transgression of law, transforms the human being into an animal. Man becomes animal when he stops being religious, and stops being religious when he becomes homosexual. Heterosexuality is considered as an Islamic principle that defines the human being.

III.3 Sterility and Virility

Does man recognize masculine sterility? To what extent does he recognize the difference between fertility and sexual impotence? To what measure does man stay a man without having to be virile or fertile?

III.3.1. Dissociation Between Sterility and Impotence

A majority of men acknowledge masculine sterility (table 9). In fact, 76% think that masculine sterility is ingrained in the whole fact (against 15%). The woman cannot always be accused of being responsible for the couple’s infertility: “the husband can also be the cause”. But against all expecta- tions, 16% of health civil servants think that man can never be responsible for the couple’s infertility: 19% of equipment civil servant and 9% of educat- ion civil servant have the same attitude. Another paradox concerns one of the most feminine cities, Agadir, where the patriarchal attitude is the strongest in regard to this item: 20% of gadiri think that man is never infertile.

The recognition of masculine infertility does not lead to confusion between infertility and impotence. It is said that “The sterile man can make love with force, but be sterile, but it is his sperm that is bad”.

Table 10 shows that 79% of interviewees (against 16%) make the difference between masculine sterility and sexual impotence. It is the interior civil servants that dif- ferentiate the most: 37% of them think that a sterile man is sexually impotent.

The dissociation between masculine sterility and sexual impotence has an effect on the definition of fertility. To be fertile or sexually active does not mean being fertile. Fertility is no longer the visible sign and material proof of virility. The latter means only the aptitude to make love.

III.3.2. De-responsibility of the Impotent and Sterile Man

Facing sterility and impotence, the social explanation combines morality and science on the one hand, and magic and religion on the other. Science and morality tend to accuse man and make him responsible for his sterility since he carries microbes and performs debauch- ery. On the contrary, the magic-religious tradition was made to relieve responsibility from the sterile and/or impotent man and ensure his masculinity.

Such an explanation shows to what degree the layman is
familiar with biomedical knowledge and shows that etiology is largely ignored by culture. Hence, medicinal beliefs in spells can stop a man being man, meaning powerful and fertile. So, “we go see a clairvoyant in order to heal him.” In fact, the patriarchal logic still dominates the unconscious of the tribal man, creating a feeling of inferiority inside the sterile man: the sterile man cannot be “feel inferior,” says an education civil servant.

In case therapy (magical or biomedical) fails, a divine causality is invoked as a last attempt to reconcile the sterile man with himself. Most civil servants said that fertility and sterility, virility and impotence, are questions that depend on God. The ability to fertilize is independent of human will. Consequently "man should not fight against his destiny. Sterility does not weaken the masculinity of a man that believes in God: it is when men ignore God that his masculinity is in question." Furthermore, it is said that even if man is sexually impotent, he stays a man as long as he does not become a homosexual. The ethnocractic explanation of sexual impotence was expressed once in Agadir: "In my experience, civil servants said that the Arab man, the "Arab is sexually deficient". Being a Berber himself, this civil servant takes his revenge, since the Arabs are (ideologically) dominating.

Table 12: Masculinity and Masculine Progeny According to Cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Cities</th>
<th>Masculinity signifies Large Progeny</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Masculinity does not signify Large Progeny</th>
<th>No answer</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agadir</td>
<td>4,88%</td>
<td>3,25%</td>
<td>86,99%</td>
<td>4,88%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khenifa</td>
<td>20,65%</td>
<td>7,61%</td>
<td>71,74%</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oujda</td>
<td>4,05%</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>93,24%</td>
<td>2,70%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabat</td>
<td>2,83%</td>
<td>6,94%</td>
<td>93,40%</td>
<td>2,83%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangier</td>
<td>5,08%</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>93,22%</td>
<td>1,69%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tétouan</td>
<td>2,86%</td>
<td>4,25%</td>
<td>88,57%</td>
<td>4,25%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6,87%</td>
<td>2,86%</td>
<td>87,40%</td>
<td>2,86%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A man who has a lot of children is clearly accused of being the first cause of the economical decadence of society. In Tétouan, people who see a similarity between virility and large progeny are perceived as literates.

Synthesis

The analysis of man’s psychosocial profile leads to the distinction amongst four categories of traits and definition of masculinity. Because of their number and their frequency, the psychological traits come in the foremost position of definitional notions of man, followed by moral and social qualities. Political traits (loyalty to the country, personal opinion) come in fourth position. Reason (psychological trait), keeping one’s word (moral quality), supporting the family (social quality) come in the forefront position of man’s definitional notions.

The risks that masculinity is facing because of social evolution are felt and expressed. Financial difficulties are designated as responsible for the de-masculinization of

- **familial identity as virility, progeny or a large progeny.**
- **Tradition is rejected when it defines man as being virile.**
- **The patriarchal tradition is rejected when it defines masculinity with virility is clearly apparent,**
- **In the jahiliya period”, and we need to show that girls are actually welcome. Furthermore, we can feel a slight preference for girls. There is a reason behind this preference: girls are more tender, even when they are married; they continue to take care of their parents, unlike boys. It is also recognized that they can be strong and responsible. Tradition is finally rejected when it forces man to have a large progeny to be considered a man. As stated in table 13, 77,8% dissociate masculinity from large progeny.**
- **Traditionally, virility meant a large progeny because people used to refer to the animal model, which used to dominate the agrarian society. The large family model is itself conceived through the large herd model: number creates force. For the older generations, the one who does not have a lot of children is not a man. Hence, the male animal that succeeds in impregnating several females is always called “fiath”, which means virile. Man’s virility "fouhousla” was modeled on the animal model. But this social construction of the male based on the animal model is no longer dominant. People are now conscious that they cannot procreate without limits simply because they are virile. Financial considerations are starting to play a role in rejecting the definition of reproductive virility: “Knowing my salary, I cannot afford to have four or five children. It is not a question of virility.” An equipment civil servant admits that: “Nowadays, it is a good thing to limit births…times are tough… we should not make seven or eight children sleep in the same room, like sardines… a boy needs his own room at a very young age, and the girl as well…”

Table 13: Masculinity and Large Progeny According to Cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Cities</th>
<th>Masculinity signifies Large Progeny</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Masculinity does not signify Large Progeny</th>
<th>No answer</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agadir</td>
<td>12,20%</td>
<td>8,13%</td>
<td>74,80%</td>
<td>4,88%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khenifa</td>
<td>17,39%</td>
<td>7,61%</td>
<td>75,00%</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oujda</td>
<td>8,11%</td>
<td>5,41%</td>
<td>83,78%</td>
<td>2,70%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabat</td>
<td>14,15%</td>
<td>4,72%</td>
<td>81,13%</td>
<td>0,60%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanger</td>
<td>10,17%</td>
<td>6,78%</td>
<td>81,36%</td>
<td>1,69%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tétouan</td>
<td>17,14%</td>
<td>4,29%</td>
<td>72,86%</td>
<td>5,71%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13,36%</td>
<td>6,30%</td>
<td>77,86%</td>
<td>2,48%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Male Studies Perspective. This work combines feminist and Male Studies perspectives to examine how individuals deploy constructions of authenticity and masculinity. It provides a window into the life experiences of men who are gay, bisexual, or heterosexual, and it offers insights into how these identities are shaped by the social and cultural contexts in which they exist.

The 2004 Mudawwana Reform and the Problem of Moroccan Masculinity

In October of 2003, King Mohammad VI announced his intention to radically improve women’s rights by reforming Morocco’s Mudawwana al Ahwal al Shakhsiyah, or Code de Statut Personnel, and in January 2004, parliament unanimously accepted a series of dramatic changes based on his suggestions. The new set of laws, renamed the Mudawwana al Usrah, or Code de la Famille, promises to increase women’s power and authority in family and public life. Although some of these reforms have been met with resistance, they represent significant progress in the fight for gender equality in Morocco.

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Gender Complementarity/Gender Equality

According to sociologists and anthropologists who study traditional African marriage practices, the pre-amendment family laws are based on a logic of strategically maximizing procreation within the patriarhal while encouraging a certain fragility in the marriage bond, in line with the Maliki interpretation of shari’a dominant in the area (i.e. Mounira Char eradicate the dominant ideal of husband as provider and woman as pas
tive to the reforms, viewed as threaten ing the stability of the family and calling into question the pillars of Moroccan religious and cultural identity. Based upon a period of ethnographic fieldwork in Fes and Rabat during the time of the change, this essay combines feminis t and Male Studies perspectives to examine how individuals deploy constructions of authent ic Moroccan “male-ness” and “female-ness” in courses of opposition to the reform.

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changes, a set of reforms which "turns the law to its head", which came out in 1975 and which, given the fact that Morocco is a patrilineal society, greatly minimizes—although it does not completely erase—the differences between the sexes in the eyes of the law. The man is no longer the sole provider and legal representative, affirms Dr. Fatima Sadiqi, founder of the first Gender Studies department in Morocco (University of Fes), agreeing that the new Family Law places women in a position that is neither more nor less than what it was before, but which has changed the legal definition of what it means to be a husband and father in Morocco.11

Hanan and Sulta

For those who advocate a culturally specific form of justice based on sex-role differentiation, the pre-amended regulations are not seen as disadvantageous to women, but rather as giving men and women separate sets of rights and responsibilities most suitable to their respective human natures.20 Women are the source of the domestic universe, women ar e deprived of power and responsibilities most suitable to their respective human natures.20 Men as crystallized in two complementary essences: the man who wields authority within the family and whose existence outside that sphere is considered an anomaly, a transgression— are subordinate to men, while the man who wields authority within the family is described as the "head of the household" because he thinks with his heart, and the woman with hers.21 To a greater or lesser extent, I found that this opposition of hanan and sulta came into play in almost all discourses of opposition to the changes. It was most often invoked to critique the reform which gives women the right to contract their own marriages—which I found to be the least popular of the reforms.22 Following this logic, women are constitutionally unfit to independently choose their marriage partners because they think with their hearts and not with their heads, and thus are likely to make impulsive choices based on emotion.23 While men too may make choices based on emotion,24 women are seen as more vulnerable to manipulation by their partners because they think with their hearts and not with their heads.25 Yet, the structural dichotomy between men and women has changed the legal definition of what it means to be a husband and father in Morocco.26

The man's sulta, also rooted in biology, is described in contrast to the woman. Because man is not required to open the boundaries of his body in making love to a woman, in giving birth, or in nursing a child, he is thus constitutionally better suited to rationally protect his self-interest and that of his family. His family is constructed as an extension, not as an inversion of himself. Within relationships between men and women, the man has the right to be "the head of the household" because he thinks with his heart, not with his head.26 To a greater or lesser extent, I found that this opposition of hanan and sulta came into play in almost all discourses of opposition to the changes. It was most often invoked to critique the reform which gives women the right to contract their own marriages—which I found to be the least popular of the reforms.22

To justify resistance to all or parts of the reforms, many of my informants describe the basic nature of women and men as crystalized in two complementary essences: the man is the source of hanan and the woman of sulta. In her study, Mernissi examines the responsibilities of the archetypal male sole provider/head of the household and describes how systems of apparent "male-privilege" are grounded in everyday practice, offering the society a question about systems that compromise the quality of life for men as well as women. Men's Studies innovator Harry Brod encourages such an approach in the introduction to his The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies on "its explorations of the debilitating effects of various conceptions of masculinity on the lives, ... men's studies, demonstrates the connections between the pursuit of patriarchal power and various sorts of male self-denials" (Brod, 1987, p.9). In a feminist perspective, my work is committed to exploring masculine domination as a source of limitation for men as much as for women.

In this vein, Brod and the Veil, which came out in 1975 and which deals with male-female dynamics in Morocco, Moroccan sociologist Fatima Mernissi examines the responsibilities of the archetypal male sole provider/head of the household and describes how systems of current socioeconomic reality make this role untenable: "A respectable man is not simply someone who acquires some degree of economic power, but also who controls the sexual behavior of his wife, daughters and sisters. But this is possible only if he is able to control their movement, to limit their mobility and thereby to reduce their interaction with the strange men with whom they threaten to 'sully the family's honor'. Once again, money and sex are intimately linked in the definition of identity both for women and men" (Mernissi, 1987, p.149). Given the high rate of unemployment and difficulties of finding suitable work, the man does not no longer have a tendency to feel abandoned when his wife earns money, and sacrifice her own interests in favor of an empathetic bond with another human being. While this is a strength in the eyes of some individuals, it has been seen as a liability in the public sphere, where people are likely to take advantage of her trusting, giving nature.

The man's sulta, also rooted in biology, is described in contrast to the woman. Because man is not required to open the boundaries of his body in making love to a woman, in giving birth, or in nursing a child, he is thus constitutionally better suited to rationally protect his self-interest and that of his family. His family is constructed as an extension, not as an inversion of himself. Within relationships between men and women, the man has the right to be "the head of the household" because he thinks with his heart, not with his head. To a greater or lesser extent, I found that this opposition of hanan and sulta came into play in almost all discourses of opposition to the changes. It was most often invoked to critique the reform which gives women the right to contract their own marriages—which I found to be the least popular of the reforms.22

Follow this logic, women are constitutionally unfit to independently choose their marriage partners because they think with their hearts and not with their heads, and thus are likely to make impulsive choices based on emotion.23 While men too may make choices based on emotion,24 women are seen as more vulnerable to manipulation by their partners because they think with their hearts and not with their heads.25 Yet, the structural dichotomy between men and women has changed the legal definition of what it means to be a husband and father in Morocco.26

A Man is like a Diamond

Borrowing a useful term from sociologist Emile Durkeim,26 Mernissi identifies "anomie" or deep and persistent confusion about societal norms as the salient response to the sudden socioeconomic change that characterized her period of analysis, the 1970's. If, as Mounira Charrad claims, "Family law by definition embodies an ideal of the family and women..." (Charrad, 2000, p.55), it would be reasonable to ask how the advent of a new Mudawwana, which sanc- tions changes in the gendered breakdown of labor in con- tradiction to traditional ideals, would intensify such confusion. In light of this, many of my informants have been answering my questions about their views on the new Family Law by reporting on a "crisis of marriage" in Morocco, based on "complex causes that range from unemployment, economic hardship to the longer lifespan of women..." (Brod, 1987, p.14). In this vein, the man has the right to be "the head of the household" because he thinks with his heart, not with his head. To a greater or lesser extent, I found that this opposition of hanan and sulta came into play in almost all discourses of opposition to the changes. It was most often invoked to critique the reform which gives women the right to contract their own marriages—which I found to be the least popular of the reforms.22

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A Man is like a Diamond

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A Man is like a Diamond
of masculinity as a sort of emotional exile from the domestic sphere.

Paradoxically as it may seem... men’s public lives in an impos- sible tension between the demands of their personal lives, a shrinking rather than an enlargement of their spheres... [Richard] Ochberg writes: “Men may attempt to escape the dehumanizing-like souls fleeing diseased bodies—from their private lives into public ones” (Brod, 1987, p. 3). In the case of Morocco, the burden of masculinity carries it with a set of unten- able financial responsibilities and harsh emotional... the heavy burdens of the masculine predominant role compromise men’s opportunities for self- actualization and the opportunity to experience a full range of interpersonal dynamics, including vulnerability and mutual dependence with an intimate partner, studies of masculinities across different cultures and historical periods promise to collectively debunk the myth that “masculinity is a positive descriptor of male personal identity,” and reveal the “pernicious effects” (Brod, 1987, p. 2) of this belief upon the lives of both women and men.

END NOTES

1. For the full text of the speech in which H.M. King Mohammed VI announced the reforms at the opening of the Parliament Fall Session on October 10, 2003, see the Maghreb Arab Press website www.map.ma. Since its original drafting in 1957, direct- ly following the French occupation, the Code had been slightly reformed once before, in 1993. For a summary and evaluation of the reforms, see the article by Halka-Bernad’s 2003 article, “Le Code de la famille la Murawana, especially section 1.2 “La liberté des réformes de 1993” (Bernad, 1993, p. 69).

2. Of the 45 members of the royal consultative committee for drafting the reforms, elaborates “Le nouveau code de la famille est indiscutable en ce sens qu’il consolide les principes de dignité, d’égalité et de respect mutuel, et il préserve la spécialité de la famille marocaine en général. C’est une avancée des droits humains au Maroc car il concerne la protection des droits de la femme. Frappante parmi les plus vulnérables de la société, à savoir les femmes et enfants” (Bennani, 2003, p.1).

3. As detailed by Abderrahim Sabir, much of the public controversy surrounding the Murawana reforms has taken shape within the larger debate that raged over the adoption of Le Plan d’Action National des familles et ménages pour l’intégration de la femme au Développement (RAPFED), offic- ially introduced to Prime Minister Abderrahmane Housaïni in March 1999, at a time when general dissatisfaction and accumulated frustration had reached its crescendo. Sabir characterizes opposition to the plan, as a “fifteen-year-old, short-term phenomenon” (Sabir, 1999, p. 5). But much of the controversy over the Murawana reform has taken shape within the larger debate that raged over the adoption of Le Plan d’Action National des familles et ménages pour l’intégration de la femme au Développement (RAPFED), officially introduced to Prime Minister Abderrahmane Housaïni in March 1999, at a time when general dissatisfaction and accumulated frustration had reached its crescendo.

4. According to 1991 statistics, this percentage reaches 22.5 in the rural areas only... (Nessif, 2001, p.123) . . . .Nationally, the percentage of this type of household has increased from 11.2% in 1960 to 19.3% in 1991... . Most important is the strong probability of continued increase (West, 2001, p. 247). 17. Al Murwamaa al Jadda al-Urabi (Le Nouveau Code de la Famille) 2004, Art. 19 (2004, p. 19).

5. For a discussion of socioeconomic instability Moroccan... 23. Raja Rhouni, in her analysis of the cultural resistance to this measure, draws upon the work of A. Sabin... 24. Email communication 29 February 2004. 25. For a discussion of the ongoing... (Ikkaracan, 2003, p. 14).

6. As formulated by Harry Brod: “The most general definition of gender equality which is, according to them, a wondrous secular value that pro- motes the primary of the individual over that of the family. According to this outlook, both the culturally specific and the reli- gious importance of the family are disregarded by Moroccan pro-ponents of CEDAW-guided reforms (Btibouat, 2003, p.1). However, the King himself... in exchange for the man’s services to his family...” (Sabir, 1997, p. 148).

7. The costs and benefits... to capture how the heavy burdens of the masculine predominant role compromise men’s opportunities for self- actualization and the opportunity to experience a full range of interpersonal dynamics, including vulnerability and mutual dependence with an intimate partner, studies of masculinities across different cultures and historical periods promise to collectively debunk the myth that “masculinity is a positive descriptor of male personal identity,” and reveal the “pernicious effects” (Brod, 1987, p. 2) of this belief upon the lives of both women and men.

8. According to a survey conducted by the National Council for Human Rights... (Mernissi, 1987, p. 149).


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Masculinity as Violence in Arab Women's Fiction

Introduction

Feminist literary theorists have, until recently, focused on the treatment of women as Other in texts written by men. Although this is an extremely important project for feminists, especially because of the weight that men’s writing continues to have in the canon, I feel that in order to decentre men’s writing and to understand the roles men play in women’s lives, it is also important to analyze how women authors are representing men. In this paper, I have examined some of the writings by Arab women authors who have managed to be accepted into the Arabic literary canon and how men and masculinity are represented in their texts.

The most striking characteristic associated with men and masculinity in Arab women’s writing is violence. Men’s violence in these texts either be on a small-scale, aimed at individual women, or may reflect a larger violence toward ethnic or religious groups or indeed society as a whole. This violence may be organized and legitimized by the state, as in the case of war, or may be an unexpressed fascination with killing: it may be an isolated incident or a chain of violent acts; it may be enacted as a tangible incident of physical violence or it may remain as an omnipresent threat. But as different as the representations of violence may be, what is common is that the more masculine a man is, the more violent, and vice versa. Conversely women and femininity are represented as pacific, as resisting violence. While some individual men may be portrayed as more feminine, and there is still a strong association between men’s sub-culture and violence as masculinity. Because culture is dominated to a large extent by men, the culture of violence is pervasive and forces itself upon the female characters, who generally reject it. This connection between men, masculinity and violence can be witnessed in texts written by Arab women authors. Here I look at how this connection is constructed by looking at the depiction of individual men as violent, violent women, and men who resist violence, and then use the notion of the Other as outlined by Foucault and Cixous to analyze the significance of these representations.

I have chosen to look at texts that have been translated into English not only because the fact that they have been translated demonstrates the general importance of these texts themselves should they wish to continue the investigation, but also because of the fact that they have been translated demonstrates the general importance of these texts themselves should they wish to continue the investigation.

REFERENCES


- Beamish, J. & Tazi Benabderrazik, L. (2003). “The rising age of marriage in Morocco indicates that marriage during adolescence is becoming less common.” In 1960, nine out of ten young women ages 20-24 years and four out of ten ages 15-19 were married, whereas in 2002, only 17 out of every ten young women (39%) ages 20-24 and just over one of every ten young women (13%) ages 15-19 were married.” In Beamish and Abderrazik note: “A study of urban adolescents in 1999 found even more striking figures: less than 6% of women and 1% of men aged the age of 20, down from less than 18% and 3%, respectively, in 1994 (Beamish and Abderrazik, 2003, p. 6).”
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feminists have demonstrated in countless works that traditional definitions of violence do not adequately represent male violence against women. Because they ignore the systemic and pervasive nature of violence against women, these definitions, usually incorporating physical violence only, are too narrow. Like the feminists, sociologists and philosophers who have studied violence against women, I have adopted a wider definition of violence: that is, I am including as violent those behaviors or actions that occur within the context of the social order and do not act against women.

Violent Men

Masculinity is generally equated with violence and individual men are depicted as unrestrained and unyielding when it comes to women. Such depictions neglect the complex interplay of power in which violence and the consequences of violence are an integral part of social systems and the gender system in which violence occurs. However, women’s experiences of violence are not only through individual men but also through societal institutions that uphold the violent norms of masculinity. In this context, violence against women is often depicted as stemming from men’s inability to control their sexual desires. However, as Nadje Al-Ali writes, the authors “turn around the roles of victim and perpetrator by demonstrating how the real criminals are not the women of the prison, but those convicted of crimes committed by the inmates, which range from castration to murder, have occurred as a result of ‘the violation suffered by them at the hands of men’” (Manisty in Faqir, 1995, p.v). The male characters in the novel tend to be flat and essentially violent toward women.

The main character, Aziza is in prison for killing her stepfather who had sexually abused her since childhood. After the death of her mother, and fearing her abandoning her as she was an orphan, Aziza hires a career-criminal to castrate the former lover. Aziza was arrested for having had her ex-lover castrated. The prison who were charged with violent crimes similarly committed them against an arbitrary group of men, besides Aziza were murdered and two others had committed suicide.

The Golden Chariot, a novel set in al-Qanatir women’s prison, also tells the tale of a group of female criminals. They are not only abused by individual men (as in The Story of Zahra), but are victims of the masculine culture of violence as a whole. All of the women in the prison are there “as a reaction to men abusing their bodies, men being unfaithful, dishonest, exploitative and violent” (Faqir, 1995, p.v). In this context, the author of the women’s prison who were criminals committed by the inmates, which range from castration to murder, have occurred as a result of “the violation suffered by them at the hands of men” (Manisty in Faqir, 1995, p.v). The male characters in the novel tend to be flat and essentially violent toward women.

Violent Women

One might argue that there also exist violent women in the male world, women. Yet, upon closer examination, it will be noticed that in most cases the violence of women is represented as aberrant, abnormal, and not an essential characteristic of the women’s personality. Whereas violent men are represented as little more than their violent actions, violent women are represented as “natural” non-violent. They are only pushed into violent behavior, which is usually depicted as caused by men. In this way, as Nadje Al-Ali writes the authors “turn around the roles of victim and perpetrator by demonstrating how the real criminals are not the women of the prison, but those considered to be their victims” (Al-Ali, 1994, p. 63). The novel The Golden Chariot by Salwa Bakr demonstrates this.

The most striking characteristic associated with men and masculinity in A rab women’s writing is violence.

I tried to push his hand away, but he was set on having a fight. I forced him away...
and of whom she was afraid the man would take advantage. Despite repeated warnings, the neighbor continues to bother the girls. When one day he arrives at their apartment, Jameelah fulfills her threat and assaults him with the iron.

The only murderess whose victim was not her lover is Madame Zaynab. A member of the aristocracy, Madame Zaynab murders her brother-in-law, who, by various means, tries to acquire her inheritance after she is widowed. Although she puts up with most of his schemes to acquire her husband’s wealth, Zaynab turns violent when he manages to convince a court that she is an unfit mother by making accusations of sexual impropriety. When the court delivers its decision that the uncle should be given custody of her sons, Zaynab shoots the uncle.

Hinna is an elderly woman who murdered her husband. After several years of emotional and sexual abuse, Hinna can no longer be with the man who had “sex with her with no less than nine times on her wedding night, despite the terrible pain that she suffered and which made her beg him to desist from the pain that made her feel as though she was going to die” (Bakr, 1995, p. 35). At times goes by she begins to fear that he will take a new young bride to fulfill his insatiable sexual appetite, and fears that she will be thrown out of the home in her old age. In order to pre-empt this, she leaves the gas oven on overnight and kills her husband while he sleeps. All of the antagonistic characters are represented as passive and gentle, and their crimes as aberrant single acts that went against their nature and were only a direct reaction to the violence their victims inflicted upon them. Not one of them is represented as having violent or even aggressive personality. These acts are portrayed as solely situational, where anyone, no matter how naturally non-violent, would have the inclination to commit murder. In this way, the author identifies pacifism with men and violence with men. The mother appears to reject violence “naturally”, whereas Ismail’s pacifism is learned. All of the other men in the story accept the violent practice of blood feuds without question.

Ismail laments, “Mother, why did God make me a man?” (Abdallah, 1990, p. 335). Ismail does not necessarily question why society expects violent behavior from men and not women, but rather his own suitability as a man. In this way, the author identifies pacifism with men and violence with men. The mother appears to reject violence “naturally”, whereas Ismail’s pacifism is learned. All of the other men in the story accept the violent practice of blood feuds without question.

The Stone of Laughter, Bakr writes, “People found it impossible to imagine that a woman, this type of character is round and is likely a protagonist, and he is represented as abnormal. His relationship and resistance to violence is a struggle between himself and the person he feels he should be, that society wants him to be. Both the short story “Eight Eyes” by Suli Abdallah and the novel The Stone of Laughter by Hoda Barakat deal with struggle.

The “eight eyes” after which the story is entitled are those of men in an Upper Egyptian village that haunt the story’s protagonist. The young hero, Ismail, is expected by them to avenge his father’s death in a blood feud. Ismail, on her part, sees the violence as unnecessary and believes that “justice [has] run its course”. (Abdallah, 1990, p. 334). When he expresses this reluctance to the village men, Ismail feels that their eyes tear into him in judgment, saying, “The Young man is spineless….Hasanain did not have a son. He had two daughters: Hanja and Ismail.” In order to assert himself as a man, Ismail feels that he must fulfill the violent expectation imposed upon him. Ismail has a nightmare that he killed the intended victim, and wakes up with a scream to tell his mother: “His eyes were innocent, modest like two doves. Yet the eight eyes continued to chase me and burn my breast with their looks: Be a man, Ismail. Be a man!” (Abdallah, 1990, p. 335). His mother responds that she is proud of Ismail’s pacifism and asserts that she has taught him to behave like that, to behave better than the beasts. In this way, the author identifies pacifism with women and violence with men. The mother appears to reject violence “naturally”, whereas Ismail’s pacifism is learned. All of the other men in the story accept the violent practice of blood feuds without question.

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The Stone of Laughter even more explicitly equates masculinity with violence. The novel by Hoda Barakat traces the transformation of the protagonist, Khalil, from an effeminate mainly homosexual man to a powerful, masculine war-monger and rapist. Khalil begins as a man who embodies both feminine traits and behavior. He is physically slight and underdeveloped, and is described as an adolescent with “more female hormones in him than there should naturally be.” (Barakat, 1995, p. 75). The story is set against the backdrop of the Lebanese civil war, and while his friends (most notably Jamal) are busy demonstrating against the war, Khalil is concerned with housekeeping, his relationships, and his identity. All of his actions are those associated with housekeeping - cleaning, cooking, handcrafts, daydreaming, analyzing the actions of loved ones, and so forth. Furthermore, he compares himself to women several times throughout the novel: a housewife (Barakat, 1995, pp. 10 and 33), an old maid (Barakat, 1995, p. 10), a divaire “who sits, squat, and pudgy on a stone that has witnessed the befores” (Barakat, 1995, p. 23). Through the bulk of the novel, Khalil is portrayed in this effeminate way, and the metaphors he employs are associated with the female rather than the male. Amongst these feminine traits is Khalil’s aversion to violence. He is apolitical and sees the war mainly as a nuisance that affects the immaculately clean state of his apartment. Unlike all of the other male characters, Khalil’s main feelings for the war are for those he loves who die because of the war. He reveals, as is the case in many war novels with female protagonists written by Arab women, that “wars involve not only guns and ideologies in conflict, but, more essentially human beings”. (Amyuni, 1993, p. 10). In a world that is permeated by violence, Khalil manages for most of the story to remain a neutral pacifist.

Eventually, the reader begins to notice a change: it is almost imperceptibly gradual, and initiated by three crises. The first and second force Khalil to question his sexual identity and gender identity. The third occurs when Khalil’s main feelings for the war are for those he loves who die because of the war. He reveals, as is the case in many war novels with female protagonists written by Arab women, that “wars involve not only guns and ideologies in conflict, but, more essentially human beings”. (Amyuni, 1993, p. 10). In a world that is permeated by violence, Khalil manages for most of the story to remain a neutral pacifist.

After Naji was killed, Khalil’s body…began to get confused, the surface of his inhibitions was slit open and his suspicions dreams invaded him, they unfastened the ties by which he kept a grip on many intricate and ambiguous realities, he would have difficulty handling his erotic anarchy…which used to shake him like a violent storm. They would batter him with their sharp little hatchets and, after he woke up, he would struggle to gather up the fragments and rack him brain to analyze them, which helped a lot but did not completely wipe out his feeling of anxiety…Khalil knew that a fear of blood to the point of being afraid of having short legs, a slight build, strap chestnut hair and large eyes, all these things do not make a man a hermaphrodite, or effeminate, or make him any less the least effeminate. He knew that the temporary breakdown that he was suffering was only a psychological crisis that the mad world outside has imposed upon him… (Barakat, 1995, p. 75).”

During the second crisis, Khalil’s relationship with the novel’s protagonist changes. Because he is disturbed by his lustful feelings for his young cousin, Khalil finds himself encouraging the new object of his affection, Youssef, to join the fighting. This way, Khalil does not have to be tormented by Youssef’s presence and poisonous honey (Barakat, 1995, p. 81), but Khalil is disgusted with himself for pushing Youssef to be the man that he could not be and allowing himself to indulge in a feminine role:

The truth is, I’m using him to test things out... to see how to go back to the bosom of the group, to see what I’m not able to test for myself because I’m a coward…. I’m using him to test my nerves and feel my own nausea, so I don’t have to go out and do the dirty work for myself… All that toll because Youssef is beautiful and because I’m a wife of the wrong sex (Barakat, 1995, p. 115).

It is after this second crisis, when Youssef is killed, that Khalil begins to become slightly more masculine in his behavior and attitude. He stops cleaning his house, goes out more with his political friends, gets a job (which until this point he has resisted), forgets sentimentality and rents out Naji’s old apartment and sells whatever has been left behind.

The final crisis occurs when Khalil meets an older man, who guesses Khalil’s sexual orientation. Known only as “that Brother”, this man is a neutral pacifist, a leader in the war and in weapons smuggling. He expresses his desire for Khalil, thus giving Khalil the first opportunity in his life to contemplate his homosexual feelings. This confuses Khalil even more, causing mixed feelings:

Khalil realizes that what drew him to the Brother, what drew him like a magnet, was that he knew how intense his love for Khalil was and not… queerness. He knew that the Brother desired him…. People desire and lust for those they love, the same is true for Khalil. He expressed his desire for Khalil, thus giving Khalil the first opportunity in his life to contemplate his homosexual feelings. This confuses Khalil even more, causing mixed feelings:

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