

Humiliation and Masculine Crisis in Iraq

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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 2003¹

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 politico-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.

I focus in particular on the element of humiliation in masculine crisis. I also examine the crisis in terms of gender and human rights, something that is virtually never done in the case of male subjects. Building on many years of research into contemporary state repression, warfare, and genocide, I argue that it is typically

the case that militarized conflicts and uprisings lead to disproportionate violence against younger adult males – those of imputed “battle age” (military capability)². Iraq is no exception. There, younger adult males constitute *the most vulnerable population group in the present occupation and military struggle*, if by “most vulnerable” we mean the group most liable to be targeted for killing, torture (including sexual torture and humiliation), and other acts of repression.

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.

Though 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



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

Picture Credit: Reuters/Oleg Popov

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.³

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.”⁴

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.”⁵ The

Norwegian social scientist, Evelin Lindner, has explored the effects of humiliation and its companion, shame, in what she calls “honour societies” – including those of the Arab Middle East.⁶ 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).⁷ But their impact is more complex, subtle, and quotidian. Media reports have documented the central role of these quantities in fuelling 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 harassment, humiliation before family members, mass roundups, incarceration, torture, selective killing,⁸ and denial of the right to humanitarian evacuation from besieged cities.⁹

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 ... [T]he military acknowledges that most people it captures are probably not dangerous.” As a result, “entire swaths of farmland have been cleared of males – fathers, 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 up 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.”¹⁰

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 soldier's boots on their heads is a prime example.

More masculine humiliation follows in detention 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. In the description of 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 behind a cluster of perhaps 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, unhooded 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.¹¹

It is hard to think of imagery more likely to fuel the rage of Iraqis, and particularly younger Iraqi men.¹² 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 (D-Del.) went so far as to contend that "this is the single most significant undermining act that's occurred in a decade in that region of the world in terms of our standing."¹³

Masculine Crisis and the U.S.

Feelings of humiliation figure strongly in the other side of masculine crisis in Iraq: that of the invaders, led by a president apparently seeking to avenge his father's humiliation at the failure of the 1991 Gulf War to win him reelection, while Saddam Hussein remained in power throughout the 1990s. Jonathan Freedland captured this with some suggestive comments about humiliation and politico-military aggression:

A veteran New York political operative once told me: "Never underestimate the subtext of male violence that runs through American politics." ... Bush feeds that glad-



Former Iraqi prisoners wave from a bus after they were released from Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, May 14, 2004.

Picture Credit: Reuters/ALI Jasim

itorial appetite skillfully. "Slowly but surely we're going to hunt them down," he warns the "bunch of cold-blooded killers" of al-Qaida. There will be no limp-wristed attempt to understand terrorism's root causes. "See, therapy isn't going to work," he says to laughter. And, in a moment of pure Mafia-speak, he mentions an al-Qaida suspect caught by the US: "This guy is no longer a problem for America," he says, with an implicit wink. You could be watching *The Sopranos*.¹⁴

There was humiliation, too, in the sophisticated and widespread insurgency against the US occupiers that left the US occupation reeling in April 2004. "In the space of two weeks," notes the *Washington Post*, the insurgency "isolated the U.S.-appointed civilian government and stopped the American-financed reconstruction effort ... pressured U.S. forces to vastly expand their area of operations within Iraq, while triggering a partial collapse of the new Iraqi security services ... [and] stirred support for the insurgents across both Sunni and Shiite communities."¹⁵ This massive blow paralyzed the US authorities on the ground and shocked their masters in Washington, along with those trying to ensure George W. Bush's reelection. The contrast between the macho "mission accomplished" rhetoric of the immediate post-conquest period, and the collapsing occupation structure at present, could hardly be more stark. Such contradictions injure a specifically masculine pride; they are the politico-military equivalent of a kick to the *cojones*.

As for the pathological machismo displayed by some of the occupying troops, it is to be expected – though never condoned – and it is secondary, both chronologically and logically, to its political counterpart. That the military lives and breathes this gender ideology hardly needs emphasizing, after two generations of diligent feminist criticism

on this count.¹⁶ Likewise, under conditions of protracted occupation of an alien population whose public face ranges from the sullen to the murderously hostile, the stress and isolation have increased, while discipline and self-esteem have declined; and so 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 opposition 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 male/masculine crisis of post-conquest Iraq has direct and decisive politico-military implications. Economic hardship and unemployment have played a key role in fuelling anti-occupation sentiment among men, often leading them into the swelling ranks of the violent opposition. Likewise, the gender-selective repressive measures deployed by the occupation forces has spawned a gendered 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.

END NOTES

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1. Clark quoted in *Business Week*, 24 November 2003, p. 43.
2. The selective targeting of "battle-age" men, both combatant and non-combatant, has roots deep in human civilization and human conflict. The organization that I direct, Gendercide Watch (www.gendercide.org), confronts gender-selective killing of both women and men. Among our central contentions is that "state-directed gender-selective mass killings have overwhelmingly targeted men through history, and that this phenomenon is pervasive in the modern world as well." One of the grimmest examples of recent decades is the Anfal Campaign of 1987-88 against Iraqi Kurds, when up to 180,000 people – overwhelmingly male civilians – were consumed in the Ba'athist holocaust. For scholarly treatment of the theme, see Adam Jones, ed., *Gendercide and Genocide* (Memphis, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004); on Anfal, see the Gendercide Watch case study at http://www.gendercide.org/case_anfal.html.
3. See "Jobs for the Boys – and for Foreigners," *The Economist*, 11 October 2003, p. 48.
4. "Iraq Unemployment," BBC Online, 6 January 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/3372029.stm>
5. Thomas Friedman, "Thomas L. Friedman Reporting: Searching for the Roots of 9/11," CNN International, October 26, 2003.
6. Evelin Lindner defines "humiliation as the enforced lowering of a person or group, a process of subjugation that damages or strips away their pride, honor or dignity." She cites Suzanne Retzinger and Thomas Scheff's finding that "humiliated fury" plays a major role "in escalating conflict between individuals and nations." Lindner, "Gendercide and Humiliation in Honor and Human-Rights Societies," in Jones, ed., *Gendercide and Genocide*, pp. 40, 45.
7. For an overview, see Gendercide Watch, "Case Study: 'Honour' Killings & Blood Feuds," http://www.gendercide.org/case_honour.html.
8. Selective, at least to the extent that men of "fighting age" are

viewed en bloc as a threatening force, with fire directed accordingly. This should not efface the apparently indiscriminate, but withering, "counterfire" frequently directed by U.S. forces against predominantly civilian quarters and populations.

9. In April 2004, Iraqi males of "fighting age" were routinely prevented from leaving besieged Fallujah. On other occasions, only males accompanied by children were allowed to leave, leading to desperate scenes of men accosting children near the checkpoints and seeking to pass them off as their own in order to escape. The South African Sun Times reported an encounter with a "young Marine [who] tells us that men of fighting age can't leave. 'What's fighting age?' I want to know. He contemplates. 'Anything under 45. No lower limit.'" See Jo Wilding, "U.S. Snipers Shoot Anything That Moves," *Sun Times*, 18 April 2004.
10. Jeffrey Gettleman, "As U.S. Detains Iraqis, Families Plead for News," *New York Times*, 7 March 2004.
11. Seymour M. Hersh, "Torture at Abu Ghraib," *The New Yorker*, 10 May 2004. http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040510fa_fact
12. One survivor of alleged torture at Abu Ghraib, Dhia al-Shweiri, gave voice to the intimate link between masculine humiliation and misogyny. "They [American forces] were trying to humiliate us, break our pride. We are men. It's OK if they beat me. Beatings don't hurt us, it's just a blow. But no one would want their manhood to be shattered. They wanted us to feel as though we were women, the way women feel and this is the worst insult, to feel like a woman." Quoted in Scheherezade Faramarzi, "Iraqi Prisoner Details Abuse by Americans," *Associated Press dispatch*, 2 May 2004.
13. "U.S.: No Widespread Abuse in Iraqi Prisons," *Associated Press dispatch*, 2 May 2004.
14. Jonathan Freedland, "The Natural," *The Guardian*, November 5, 2002. The Sopranos is an HBO television program built around the lives and crimes of mafia gangsters.
15. Rajiv Chandrasekaran and Karl Vick, "Revolts in Iraq Deepen Crisis in Occupation," *Washington Post*, 18 April 2004.
16. See, recently and representatively, *Cynthia Weber, Faking It: U.S. Hegemony in a "Post-Phallic" Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).



The Preferred Partner

An Investigative Field Study of Lebanese Youth

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"A girl from a good family, pretty and rich" – these are the three main criteria and in this order that have been cast in the extended family where I grew up and in that order – for evaluating men's right choice of a bride. On these three qualities and their variations, I witnessed 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 of his family's status and of his physical appearance, a disregard sometimes followed by the saying: *"There's nothing shameful for a man except his empty pocket"*. Though these conversations addressed existing couples, they also referred to other prospective ones in which the man and woman seemed to satisfy the above-mentioned prescriptions. These prescriptions and criteria remained in my value frame of reference and in my cognitive repertoire, as fixed hypostases of unquestionable necessity.

The link with my family was broken when I joined a multi-sectarian coeducational boarding school (in which I spent my adolescence) and later enrolled at a university whose student majority was non-Lebanese. The diversity and heterogeneity of people in these two institutions offered me a unique opportunity to reconsider the values

of my family – among them the three hypostases – and to replace them by other, seemingly more attractive ones. 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 abounding with promises of all types of revolutions – among them the women's liberation movement – and that the prevailing values regarding us women had begun to decline to make way for values more compatible with the latest transformations. Later, I had the opportunity to read what researchers had written to affirm that there is a strong link between social history and people's private lives¹ and that the occurrence of historic events in the lives of age cohorts of people can produce a "political generation" of people who share the experiences and opportunities offered by their world. This "political generation" enables them to define their potential, qualifies them to embrace modes of thought, and offers them the

experiences needed to carry out certain behaviors – like selecting a partner and endorsing that partnership – which seem to characterize people of that era of historic events.²

The Second Wave of Women's Liberation Movement, in the 1960's and 1970's was such a "historic event" that stamped, with its own imprint, the personalities of a whole generation of women and men. Diverse types of writings and studies, most of which were anecdotal, have documented this era. Most feminist writings³ affirmed the pivotal importance of feminist consciousness (acquired by both women and men through their affiliation to consciousness-raising groups)⁴ in the formation of their respective individual identities.

However, this feminist consciousness was not restricted to individuals or groups but rather went beyond that to infiltrate all scientific and academic fields. In Gender Psychology (the field of concern here), the works of feminist pioneers such as Bem, Spence, and Helmreich⁵ were published. These works attempted to assess the presence of a new feminine identity compatible with the above-mentioned transformations, its forms, and its psychological and psychosocial features, etc.

In the mid-1980's, directly inspired by the works of Bem, Spence, and Helmreich, and relying on their research tools, we undertook an attempt to identify the new identity of female undergraduates in Lebanon.⁶ We had sensed the difference in the context of a major transformation, unlike any other experience in our society.

We assumed that the 18-21 age cohort (which constituted the population of the above-mentioned study) had spent its early formative years in a revolutionary era fraught with liberation movements; that this age cohort "inherited" the achievements and opportunities for which the former generation had struggled to acquire and which had now become (for this age cohort) a task already completed and a given; and finally, we assumed that the impact of the achievements and opportunities acquired takes a certain time period to fade.

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.⁷ This identity, whose prevalence we detected 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 society⁸.

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?

That is, what is the prevalent gender type of the preferred partner as perceived by those young men? Does it resemble, or transcend, the traditional feminine profile?

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 transcendence 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.

There is nothing shameful for a man except his empty pocket.

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 follows, the mentioned inventories (our research tools) and their components.

The Gender Identity Inventory

This consists of four scales, the first for masculinity, the second for femininity,⁹ the third designated as “neutral”, 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 “masculinity” and “femininity” 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, thus creating the “femininity” scale. These traits revolve around nurture (tenderness, love of children, sacrifice, understanding, sentimentality) and relationality (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), etc.

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 personality. 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,¹⁰ 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 items. These items consist of statements about popular sayings that judge the status of women and men, their roles, traits, relationships, and relationship-related values and connotations.¹¹

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 young men seek prospective female partners who are nurturing and relational and who have expressive skills. These young men even wish these partners to be sometimes 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 attractiveness. With regard to this finding, young men in our sample 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 studies conducted by researchers on men’s mate selection 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 them women’s ability to procreate; researchers suggested 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 less 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 man identifies with his masculine stereotype and does not violate its requirements. But the case differs with “obedience”. Young men require more obedience from their partners than their female coeds 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 traits in this group, neither 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 repertoire a sex-based connotation and as such conflict with their strong desire for innocence in their prospective partners? As for 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 partner - 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 provides one of the psychological as well as cultural preconditions of manhood.

Among the interesting traits are self-reliance and independence. According to the classifications based on the statements of Lebanese university youth in the mid-eighties,¹⁴ self-reliance is a masculine feature while independence is desirable for men and not for women (classified thus on the masculinity-femininity scale). Although male undergraduates attributed 16 masculine features to their preferred female partner, they rejected attributing “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

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The Lebanese male undergraduate seeks an innocent and obedient partner.

(the male partner in this case)?; it seems that neither 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:

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 stereotype¹⁶, 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.¹⁷

If we assume that the mate selection situation stimulates a

behavior or inherent feminine disposition 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 demand. Hence, the young man's desires would be a constituent of the mate selection situation, calling for the prominence of her "femininity" and the decline of her "masculinity" at the same time. This tendency to adjust to a "coupling" situation is - as documented by gender differences researchers - a women's feature par excellence, a feature for which a female begins training during adolescence and one that accompanies her into adulthood, particularly into the time of mate selection.¹⁸

Some studies have documented¹⁹ 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 specific to female university students since previous studies - particularly those that adopted an evolutionary perspective²⁰ - demonstrated that women characterized by masculine features were undesirable partners.

One of the reasons for the high masculinity in female undergraduates in our sample, in addition to the above-mentioned reasons, is that the reference group²¹ (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 he must be: brave, capable of confrontation, strong, self-confident, defiant 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 the qualities of intelligence, creativity, orderly thought, and eloquence in self-expression - these are advanced cognitive characteristics that the male undergraduate does not claim to possess to the expected degree.

Although the female undergraduate is preparing herself for a certain vocation and for economic independence, she is no different from women in all cultures²² studied by western researchers, for she desires an independent partner who is responsible and self-reliant (these two features do not characterize the male undergraduate to the expected degree). Can we conclude that the female undergraduate (who is to be economically independent) seeks in a male partner the features that enable him to be a family provider, the characteristic that seems synonymous with traditional masculinity in all societies, particularly Mediterranean ones?²³

On the neutral scale, we find a balance between "supply" and "demand" with the exception of few features, such as "live conscience" and "honesty". If we add to these "modesty" and "loyalty" (feminine features), and

this last feature (loyalty) is more in demand than it is in supply, does this set of features indicate from a hidden end (and sometimes a frank one by supporters of polygamous multi-wife marriages) an attitude attributed to men in Lebanese society - that of tending to desire more than one partner? Does the female undergraduate desire a male partner whose psychological features clash with the prerequisites of sharing him with another woman?

Among the features the female undergraduate does not seek in her male partner are the tendency for aggression, dominance, and the willingness to take risks (all of which are considered socially desirable for men but not for women), obedience, sensitivity, shyness, sentimentality, and acknowledgement of weakness (all of which are considered socially desirable for women but not for men). Male undergraduates attribute all these features (with the exception of the willingness to take risks), to a low degree, to themselves as well. It seems that both male and female undergraduates agree that extreme deviation from either stereotype is undesirable; they both severely distance from their respective partners those 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 rhythm 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

Contracting romantic partnerships does not occur outside the cultural/ideological, political, or economic context.

	Andro _(F) & _(M)	Fem _(F) & _(M)	Masc _(M) & _(F)	Undiff _(M) & _(F)	High Masc* _(M)	High Fem* _(F)
% of male students preferring a female partner of gender type:	24.2	42.2	9.1	24.2	33.5	66.6
% distribution of female students according to self image gender type	50	17	10	23	60	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 Footnote 10.

A study of the above table reveals that the percentage of feminine 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.¹⁵ However, 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 men desire such androgynous female partners. Also 66% of the male undergraduates in our sample selected a future female 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

	Andro _(F) & _(M)	Fem _(F) & _(M)	Masc _(M) & _(F)	Undiff _(M) & _(F)	High Masc _(M)	High Fem _(F)
% distribution of female students preferring a male partner of gender type:	30	7.5	35	27.5	65	37.5
% distribution of female students according to self image gender type	23	12	21	44	45	33

traits - reappears in the table that reveals the distribution of female undergraduates (according to preferences of partners' gender type) and that of male undergraduates (according to their gender identity). Two-thirds of the young women selected partners of high masculinity while less than half their male colleagues describe themselves as having high masculinity.

One wonders: what are the reasons for this exaggeration? Is this exaggeration the result of the response style provoked by the inventory? We are referring to the known tendency for 'Social Desirability' to which respondents are inclined to fall prey to in similar inventories, a tendency whose influence researchers attempt to neutralize. If the inventory is responsible for provoking this tendency, its effect would have been generalized; i.e., it would have applied to both female and male respondents. The same would have applied to the high femininity desired in the male partner, particularly since a high percentage of women attributed high scores to themselves on that scale. But the female undergraduate did not exaggerate in attributing feminine features to her male partner, as becomes evident from scrutinizing the scores of traits on the Femininity scale; the percentage of male undergraduates of high femininity is close to the percentage of young women who desire that high femininity in their male partners.

Perhaps the exaggeration phenomenon results from the following factors

we noted above 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,²⁴ she will attribute to that partner high scores on the masculinity scale, in whole and in part, so as to make him masculine

to a degree at least equal²⁵ to her own 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, one whose recurrence has been documented by western researchers and which describes female

youths in Lebanese society according to several studies.²⁶ 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. Eagly and Wood²⁷ 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 "Gender 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 persistence 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 1980s²⁸ 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 more to the feminine tendencies of both men and women (such as emotional expressiveness, relationality, nurture) than 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 context of well-known economic and demographic conditions in Lebanese society,²⁹ is that a life partnership 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 constructs, as is the case in the conceptual background and operational definitions that govern the research tool used here.

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 socially desirable features for women and men 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: most young men tend to prefer a feminine partner, and most young women tend to prefer a masculine partner. That is, the socially desirable profile for women remains the most suitable when describing the female partner, and the socially desirable profile for men remains the most suitable when describing the male partner.

We would like to point out that we are describing a preference and not actual mate selection. Studies concerned with determining preferences in the domain of romantic partnerships have documented mate selection style that does not differ much from the results indicated by this study. Some researchers believe that the mutual attraction between the feminine woman and the masculine man is

the most widely occurring, despite the prediction of some of these researchers that this type of attraction will necessarily decline with the decline in the traditional division of gender roles. In fact, according to some studies, the actual partnership between the masculine man and the feminine woman - and not merely the preference for it - is the one that occurs most, compared to that involving other gender types. However, what the researchers regret (those who have conducted longitudinal studies that traced the course of that type of partnership) is that it is more prone to breakup than other gender type partnerships.³⁰

Why is this so? Ickes,³¹ for example, believes that attraction between the two stereotyped couples is the partnership model most suitable for the prerequisites of survival of the human race. Since partnership between the sexes in this era is motivated by desires and factors more complicated than survival needs and prerequisites, then the more primal type of attraction is likely to decline once the instinctual reasons for its occurrence are "consumed": fertility prerequisites and their related psychological factors (sexual attraction, in particular). These have come to occupy only a part of the lives of women and men and constitute no more a life-consuming "project". The paradox that people currently live is manifested by the clash between the culture of the past and the disposition provided by our genes on the one hand, and between our actual reality and what contemporary culture prescribes and provides, on the other hand.

These preliminary survey results are restricted to the convenient sample that was available to us and limited by the research tools used. Nevertheless, these results indicate that the group most sensitive to material and human changes – university students – is for the most part fixated in past times. As far as their romantic partnership preferences are concerned, their expectations of the partner are not concordant with actual reality, particularly the human reality. These changes, as indicated by our study results, consist in transcending gender stereotypes for both sexes. Why did this transcendence, exhibited by the majority of university students both male and female, not reflect on partnership preferences for university students?

Psychologists, particularly those inspired by psychoanalysis, 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, partial and hence incorrect. But, researchers in the field of Social Psychology affirm that contracting romantic partnerships does not occur outside the cultural/ideological, political, or economic context.

We did not have the opportunity to explore Arab studies that indicate a quality change in the methods of mate selection. We refer, in this context, to the study by Mona Fayyad³² in which she documented men-women partnerships in a period when university youth in Lebanon witnessed national/liberation 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 that were equal to them and "uncommitted" to gender stereotypes, capable of building equitable tradition-free relationships. If we go back further in time to the beginning of the twentieth century, to a revolutionary era similar to the sixties and seventies in its promises, we note what Qassem Amin wrote in his book *Woman's Liberation*, describing the female partner as equal to men in her concerns and education and in handling social responsibility and not merely as a female passively responding to her mate's desires and breeding his progeny. In this respect, the description given by Fayyad makes it possible to identify a quality transformation proportional to the time period that separates the two mentioned eras.

We wonder: why don't we find in the current time period a quality change similar to that witnessed when comparing the Nahda period in the beginning of last century to the 1960's and 70's? Why does the tendency of selecting a stereotyped partner resembling the traditional image of women or men more than it resembles actual women and men dominate? Is this tendency, found in a group of university students, and according to the above discussion, one of the signs of "frustration" in youth, a phenomenon much discussed in public discourse?

Is this tendency an indicator (among others such as the revival of religious fundamentalism) of that youth's regression into the controllable world of reassuring, established tradition, a kind of defence against the real world (and hence a less threatening substitute) that imposes a unitary universal reference, thus marginalizing most of our youth on more than one level?

Or is this no more than an expression of expected lingering of attitudes behind reality's transformation in accordance with the fact that all that relates to our attitudes, beliefs, and feelings – mate preferences at the heart of that – is likely to persist and remain much longer than its reality-based rationales?

The orientation of gender attitudes for this group of youth can answer some of these questions. This is because the adoption of conventional stands regarding

men's and women's roles in society; the strong adherence to traditional beliefs about these roles; and combating behaviors leading to amending policies, laws, and institutional measures in accordance with transformations that affected these institutions – all of these are related, according to some researchers,³³ to defensive authoritarian personalities, ones "defeated" in their actual reality, and vice versa. This is because gender prejudice belongs 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 relationship between gender identity and gender attitudes in this group of Lebanese youth.³⁴ Is mate selection subject to the same consideration? Is a gender stereotyped mate preference linked to conventional stands toward women'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 women'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 moderately 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 an undifferentiated self-image have been found³⁵ 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 mechanism 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 partner profile preferences and its relation to the self-image of the corresponding members of the other sex among university 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.

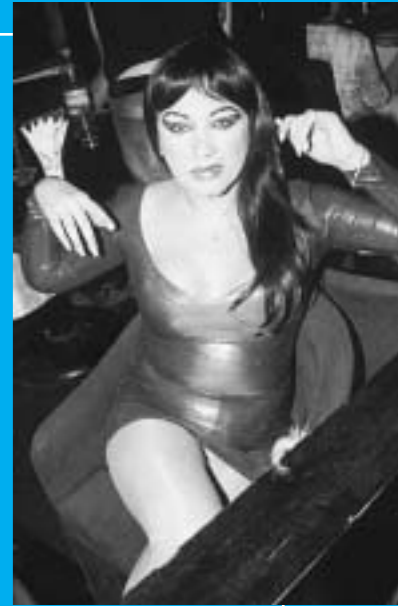
Isn't this what studies on humanity most often reap: finding few answers embedded with further questions awaiting answers?

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8. Baydoun, Azzah Shararah, (1988), same as Footnote 5, pp. 111-118.
9. This inventory does not resemble traditional ones. Its masculinity and femininity scales, in contrast to traditional measures in psychology, are perpendicular, whereby their components do not lie on one bipolar continuum. Femininity, according to this inventory, is not the opposite of masculinity, nor is masculinity the opposite of femininity; instead, they are constructs independent of one another. Accordingly, a person - whether a man or a woman - can exhibit both masculine and feminine traits. Aggressive people can also be nurturing, and the same person can be equally active or passive. As such, gender identities have multiplied, and their correlated characteristics have become more complex: where previous inventories produced one stereotypical identity for each sex (feminine for women and masculine for men) and one non-stereotypical identity (feminine for men and masculine for women), identities have become, based on the proposed form of classifications, non-stereotypical in two additional ways: androgyny (high masculinity and high femininity) and undifferentiated (low masculinity and low femininity).
10. We used the median for the pooled of scores of both women and men as a separator between « high » and « low » in each of the masculinity and femininity scales.
11. Among this inventory's items, we mention the following first six statements:
 1. Woman's nature is not compatible with political work.
 2. A man feels inferior if a woman shares in providing for the family.
 3. The relationship set by religious laws between men and women is correct in all cases and at all times.
 4. A man's manhood is not compromised if he does household work.
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No Comment



“Dancing Against the Norms”

A Profile of Mosbah Baalbaki

■ Lynn Maalouf

Journalist

Every Saturday night, at around three o'clock in the morning, Music Hall's long velvet crimson curtains draw open, leaving way to a slim, tall figure that takes position in a bare set up, standing under a single spotlight. As the first percussion beat rips through the silence of anticipating viewers, the figure's hips take a bold swing left, and then another 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 swaying 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 couple of months at least, he is solicited to perform at private parties for political and financial bigwigs across the globe, from the Seychelles islands, to Milan, Sardinia, Paris, London and Dubai. And when he's in town, he dances before a



full house every week end; even if a few sarcastic boos made by suddenly insecure male voices accompany the cheers, there's no question that a significant number of revelers are ready to wait until that late hour just to see Mosbah's show, which lasts no longer than a mere 10 minutes at the most. Mosbah has also attracted considerable international media attention, including a special CNN report in 1999, and interviews with the BBC and the *New York Times*.

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 stardom: “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 communication arts at the Lebanese American University. Upon graduation, 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 checkered 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 umpteenth time during the interview, seemed to be a deliberate choice serving to expose a perfectly hairless, olive skin chest.



“I'm not trying to provoke anyone. 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 who I am and what I'm worth. They didn't buy into the talk. But I was hurt. I wanted to quit. It wasn't worth it. But then Michel managed to convince me. I held on because I have faith in what I was doing. I have passion for what I do.”

When asked whether he believes he contributed to a more homosexual-tolerant society in Lebanon over the past years, he gives a modest shrug, but then refers to the special report published in 2001 in the French magazine *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 managed to open a breach in these norms by imposing himself as an artist and a cultural icon.



Masculinity in Morocco

■ Abdessamad Dialmy

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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. This emancipation is considered a sexual liberation, which means a "danger". Sexual liberation is considered, in the name of a patriarchal Islam, as debauchery, prostitution and license.

In the same logic, the socio-economic crisis pushes the Moroccan man to become attached to, even to regress to

the traditional religious forms of masculine domination. Consequently, the principle of the equality of the sexes finds itself the primary victim of the economic crisis. Tradition becomes a shelter against the difficulties that development programs, especially in matters related to reproductive health, encounter. Chauvinism manifests itself through religious texts and fundamentalist Islam. According to traditionalists, matters relating to reproductive and sexual health must be treated in conformity with two unchangeable and pre-established Shari'a principles: the inequality of sexes in matters relating to personal status and the subordination of sexuality to marriage. Consequently, the Moroccan man finds himself lost between two calls: the egalitarian call of reproductive health programs and the discriminatory call of religious traditions.

In Sexual identity and reproductive health in Morocco¹, we analyzed this indecisiveness through 10 large variables:

- The psychosocial profile of masculinity
- The sexual orientation of masculinity
- The judicial profile of masculinity
- The self-determination of feminine sexuality
- The (pragmatic) protection of sexuality

- Masculinity, between fertility, impotence and contraception
- The masculine obstetrical conscience

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 only. Since he does not have an advanced academic education, the "ordinary" man does not have the intellectual means to conceive the principle of equality of sexes as a rational and democratic principle. Unlike the intellectual man, who not only conceives the principle of feminism 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 masculine identity which is defined as unconditional power and privileges "based" on a sexist and a-historic "understanding" of Islamic texts.

II.2 Administrations

Since we did not have sufficient means to cover all administrations, we chose the ones accountable to 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.3 Sites of the Investigation

Initially, we have chosen to carry out the investigation in three different sites: the Oriental-Rif (*Oujda*), the Middle-Atlas (*Khénifra*), and the city of Rabat. Why such a choice?

The Oriental-Rif, is considered in Morocco as the center of masculinity in its extreme brutality. The natural constraints and economic precariousness of the Oriental-Rif 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" (1994-2000). These cities are Agadir, Tanger and Tétouan. Thus, the investigation was enlarged to include minor civil servants of these three cities.

II.4 Obtained Samples

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.

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, virility and fecundity in the masculine reconstruction of masculinity.

III.1 Psychosocial Profile

In Agadir, masculinity is defined as "practicality", self-

Table 1: The Repartition of Questionnaires According to Sites and Administrations

Administration Site	Agriculture	Education	Equipment	Interior	Health	Total
Agadir	28	17	33	19	26	123
Khénifra	17	12	23	30	10	92
Oujda	21	17	15	0	21	74
Rabat	15	13	23	35	20	106
Tanger	15	9	14	8	13	59
Tétouan	16	13	13	14	14	70
Total	112	81	121	106	104	524

Table 2 : The Repartition of Interviews According to Sites and Administrations

Administration Site	Agriculture	Education	Equipment	Interior	Health	Total
Agadir	2	1	2		2	7
Khénifra	2	2	2	2	2	10
Oujda	2	2	2		2	8
Rabat	2	1	2	2	2	9
Tanger	1	1	1		1	4
Tétouan	1	1	1	1	1	5
Total	10	8	10	5	10	43

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 despotic. 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 heroism 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 will work anywhere, and the one who has a job, and money. He has a strong character and is rea-

sonable; 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, irrevocable 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.1.1. Psychological Characteristics of Masculinity

The category of psychological characteristics (table 3) includes 16 characteristics that define manhood. These

Table 3: Category of Psychological Traits of Masculinity

Cities Psychological traits	Agadir	Khénifra	Oujda	Rabat	Tanger	Tétouan	Total
Reason		x	x	x		x	4
Courage		x	x	x			3
Fear / respect		x			x	x	3
Authority				x	x	x	3
Personality				x	x	x	3
Self Control	x			x			2
Equilibrium /Measure		x			x		2
Decision-making	x					x	2
Practical	x					x	2
Intelligence		x					1
Handling difficulties				x			1
Precaution					x		1
Sensitivity						x	1
Roughness						x	1
Toughness						x	1
Taking initiative						x	1
Total	3	5	2	6	5	10	31

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 24% of the total sample. On the sites' level, we mainly find them mostly in Rabat, where they constitute 32% as opposed to 13% in Tétouan. We mainly find them in

III.1.2. The Moral Qualities of Masculinity

The moral qualities category (table 4) includes 10 qualities that have been cited 17 times. To keep his word is the moral quality that was cited unanimously. Responsibility comes in second position with 3 citations. Oujda is the city that cites the most moral qualities. Tétouan is the one that cites them the least.

III.1.3. The Social Indicators of Masculinity

The social indicators category (table 5) includes 4 elements that have been cited 11 times. Man as the supporter of the family is the quality that heads the poll. This quality was cited by five cities with the exception of

Table 4: Category of Moral Qualities of Masculinity

City Moral quality	Agadir	Khénifra	Oujda	Rabat	Tanger	Tétouan	Total
Keep his word	x	x	x	x	x	x	6
Responsible	x		x		x		3
Honest	x						1
Non-fornicator	x						1
Non hypocrite		x					1
Non traitor		x					1
Chivalrous			x				1
Honorable			x				1
Worthy			x				1
Keep a secret				x			1
Total	4	3	5	2	2	1	17

Table 5: Category of Social Indicators of Masculinity

City Social indicators	Agadir	Khénifra	Oujda	Rabat	Tanger	Tétouan	Total
Home supporter		x	x	x	x	x	5
Hard-working			x	x		x	3
Has money		x		x			2
Protecting the family		x					1
Total	0	3	2	3	1	2	11

Table 6: Category of Political Qualities of Masculinity

City Political Qualities	Agadir	Khénifra	Oujda	Rabat	Tanger	Tétouan	Total
Loyal to the country	x						1
Not despotic		x					1
Has an opinion			x				1
Takes position						x	1
Total	1	1	1			1	4

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. Of the psychological traits, reason (it is a psychological trait, because it implies moderation, equilibrium and precaution), keeping one's word (moral quality), supporting the family (social quality) come first among notions that define manhood. Tétouan is the city that uses the psychological perspective the most in order to define manhood, while Oujda adopts the moral perspective. Khénifra and Rabat adopt the social perspective.

This notional approach in defining man reveals a certain continuation of the

Table 7: Chauvinism of Man According to Cities

Attitudes Cities	Man is better	Intermediary	Man is not better	No answer	Total
Agadir	26,02%	15,45%	58,54%	0,00%	100%
Khénifra	27,17%	11,96%	60,87%	0,00%	100%
Oujda	8,11%	4,05%	86,49%	1,35%	100%
Rabat	23,58%	9,43%	64,15%	2,83%	100%
Tanger	20,34%	6,78%	66,10%	6,78%	100%
Tétouan	15,71%	11,43%	68,57%	4,29%	100%
Total	21,18%	10,50%	66,22%	2,10%	100%

patriarchal definition of masculine identity. This patriarchal continuation expresses itself through the affirmation of the intellectual, physical, social and religious superiority of man. Opposition between reason and emotion is always defined as opposition between men and women. The same applies to the opposition between physical force and weakness. Man is considered more suited to accomplishing hard work. In Oujda, some assert that physical force allows man to "correct" his wife, which does not stand in the way of seducing her. Socially, man symbolizes the protection of home; he is the defender of

the house, meaning the women living inside it. Finally, from a religious point of view, "the woman is inferior because she cannot lead in prayer".

But the definition of man as being superior is a definition that is far from appealing to everyone. In fact, only 21% of interviewees (against a majority of 66%) are favorable to the proposition "being a man signifies being better than the woman" (table 7).

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 masculine identity. This profile is largely determined by the necessity of heterosexuality. "Being a man, is being heterosexual": this recurrent phrase signifies the rejection of homosexuality because it is considered as an anomaly that undermines masculinity.

III.2.1. Bisexuality, a Subject of Doubt

Regarding bisexuality, opinion is divided: 44% of interviewees agree with the following point "in every human being, there is both femininity and masculinity", where as 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 the Oujda patriarchal opinion was expected, the health opinion was, on the contrary, unexpected. In fact, the health civil servants are theoretically the most suited to say that every human being possesses masculine and feminine hormones. Only one health civil servant mentioned this biological foundation to explain the presence of masculinity and femininity inside the human being.

It is recognized in Agadir that masculinity and femininity can coexist in the same person and that bisexuality does not undermine the masculine identity. Generally speaking, the bisexual hypothesis defense did not provide a rich and diversified plea. Because of the dominant patriarchal perspective, mono-sexuality is stated as evidence. In Oujda, it was asked, "does man become pregnant?" This question was used as the irrefutable argument-the argument par excellence-of non-bisexuality. It is said that man should be man and woman should be woman. The femininity of man is inconceivable, and to treat man, as a woman is to question his masculinity, and to humiliate

him. In Tétouan, a normal man cannot be masculine and feminine at the same time. In case bisexuality exists, it can only be a sickness, a deviance and a devaluation of man. To accuse a man of bisexuality, is to feminize him; it is to degrade him to an inferior ranking. In fact, according to 79%, to treat man as woman is to insult him.

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 so-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 *chadd*, which means pervert, and the notion of *choudoud* (perversion) signifies, in the everyday language, the "passive" homosexuality only. The hormonal surplus explanation does not excuse the passive homosexual. In Rabat, it is thought that the over-presence of feminine hormones does not justify a man's receptive homosexual behavior.

In Oujda, the hormonal explanation leads to the hypothesis of sexual impotence: the receptive homosexual is a sexually impotent male because he has a surplus of feminine 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 killed to purify society, is adopted once more. In Oujda, it goes as far as requesting that they be burned to death.

In Agadir, an unprecedented attitude has been noted and it consists in explaining homosexuality as sexual work. Here homosexuality is recognized as prostitution, as a trade of bodies, as a trade-alternative, since unemployment is affecting boys and girls. A young Moroccan is ready to play active and passive roles, depending on the client's will. In Agadir, the questions regarding morality 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

intromission, 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 when a birth takes place, 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 not the purpose of the homosexual act. For example, it is concluded in Agadir that the homosexual prostitute is more a prostitute than a homosexual and does not deserve to be called homosexual. 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 penetrator and the penetrated both remain men" simply because they have a penis.

b. "Demasculinization" of the Receptive Homosexual

It is inconceivable to be a (sound) man and a receptive homosexual (especially for pleasure) at the same time. Consequently, the homosexual identity applies to the ones who practice receptive homosexuality, based on a bio-psychological need. For 61%, a man who was submitted to sodomy by another man is no longer a man (table 8).

As a result, active homosexuality is implicitly more accepted because its actor respects the masculine paradigm of penetration. The penetrator has more value. He

Table 8: Sodomy and Masculinity According to Cities

Attitudes Cities	Sodomized, man is no longer man	Intermediary	Sodomized, man stays a man	No answer	Total
Agadir	55.28%	5.69%	31.71%	7.32%	100%
Khenifra	60.87%	18.48%	20.65%	0.00%	100%
Oujda	67.57%	4.05%	20.27%	8.11%	100%
Rabat	74.53%	4.72%	15.09%	5.66%	100%
Tanger	40.68%	5.08%	42.37%	11.86%	100%
Tétouan	64.29%	8.57%	18.57%	8.57%	100%
Total	61.45%	7.82%	24.24%	6.49%	100%

is called a man because he practiced sex with someone else. In fact, for 38% of interviewees (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 submitted to sodomy by another man is no longer a man. 67% of interior civil servants think so. The city of Rabat expresses this attitude the most (with 75%), followed by Oujda (68%). It is only in the city of Tanger where the sodomized is still considered as 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, is to penetrate the other, 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 male 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.

c. "Demasculinization" of All Homosexual Actors

This third attitude undermines the masculinity of all homosexual actors. To 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 penetrator 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 religion. The ideal Islamic city is perceived here as free from homosexuality.

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 several 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 "Sexually speaking the woman is a 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 sodomized 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 sterility 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 an incontestable 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 expectations, 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 education 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, can be virile, but it is his sperm that is bad".

Table 10 shows that 79% of interviewees (against 16%) make the difference between masculine infertility and sexual impotence. It is the interior civil servants that differentiate the least: 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 virile 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 debauchery. 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

Table 9: Acknowledgment of Masculine Sterility According to Administrations

Attitudes Administrations	Man cannot be sterile	Intermediary	Man can be sterile	No Answer	Total
Agriculture	13,39%	6,25%	79,46%	0,89%	100%
Education	8,64%	4,94%	81,48%	4,94%	100%
Equipment	19,01%	9,92%	68,60%	2,48%	100%
Interior	14,15%	3,77%	80,19%	1,89%	100%
Health	16,35%	8,65%	74,04%	0,96%	100%
Total	14,69%	6,87%	76,34%	2,10%	100%

Table 10: Sterility and Sexual Impotence According to Administrations

Attitudes Administration	Infertility means sexual impotence	Intermediary	Infertility does not mean sexual impotence	No answer	Total
Agriculture	21,43%	3,57%	74,11%	0,89%	100%
Education	1,23%	3,70%	93,83%	1,23%	100%
Equipment	9,09%	2,48%	84,30%	4,13%	100%
Interior	36,79%	6,60%	56,60%	0,00%	100%
Health	6,73%	3,85%	89,42%	0,00%	100%
Total	15,65%	4,01%	79,01%	1,34%	100%

familiar with biomedical knowledge and shows that etiology is largely impregnated by culture. Hence, magical belief 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 but "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 man ignores God that he doubts his masculinity." 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 ethno-racist explanation of sexual impotence was expressed once in Agadir. Health civil servants said that, compared to the Berber man, the "Arab is sexually deficient". Being a Berber himself, this civil servant takes his revenge, since the Arabs are (ideologically) dominating.

III.3.3. A Critic of Sexual and Reproductive Health

The patriarchal tradition is rejected when it defines masculine identity as virility, progeny or a large progeny.

Tradition is rejected when it defines man as being virile. Of course, excluding virility from the definition of masculinity is not accepted unanimously. It is believed that masculinity is sexual power, which implies sexual satisfaction of the wife. According to an interior civil servant, when a man does not have sexual libido, he does not have what really defines man. According to some civil servants, nowadays women demand more sex, openly express their need for sex and have no problem showing it. It is recognized that the "woman is sexually more powerful". Hence, it is normal that virility is now explained more and more in terms of orgasmic power. It is also nor-

mal that sexual fear inspired by the "new woman" pushes man towards more sexual failures. An education civil servant says that "the woman can have an orgasm four times, whereas the man has less, I am not sure if it is due to food, climate, nature, but man has to handle this...he has to heal himself, to eat vegetables...". In addition, impotence can lead to adultery and divorce. Also, an individual who does not satisfy his wife sexually is not a man. 38% of civil servants in Rabat and 29% in Agadir believe that an impotent man is not a man. Moreover, 24% think the same throughout Morocco.

For an absolute majority of 62% (see table 11), sexual impotence does not indicate non-masculinity. The danger of identifying masculinity with virility is clearly apparent, mainly in Oujda and Tanger. The modern civil servant refuses to define man based on sexual activity: "man is not only sex". Defining man according to his sexual activity is degrading and incorrect because "virility is found in animals, especially animals" (Tanger). Hence the impotent man stays a man because "he also takes decisions", and because of this, he has what really defines man (Tétouan).

Tradition is rejected when it pushes man to have male descendants to be considered as a man. It is in Khénifra where people tend to associate the most between masculinity and masculine progeny (21%). But for 87% of interviewees (table 12), masculinity does not consist in having boys: "To have a boy or a girl is a pure hazard, it has nothing to do with masculinity...it is God who decides". A national education civil servant demystifies the masculinity/progeny association by stating that men who prefer to have boys think less about their virility than the perpetuation of their name (lineage).

Thus to have daughters only does not weaken man's masculinity: "Our prophet had daughters only, and he was a man...". In Oujda, it was "wisely" said that babies' sex depends on God's will. It was stated that "we are no longer in the jahiliya² period", and we need to show that girls are actually welcome. Furthermore, we can feel a slight prefer-

Table 11: Sexual Impotence and Masculinity According to Cities

Attitudes Cities	An impotent man is not a man	Intermediary	An impotent man is a man	No answer	Total
Agadir	29,27%	9,76%	57,72%	3,25%	100%
Khenifra	23,91%	13,04%	63,04%	0,00%	100%
Oujda	4,05%	13,51%	79,73%	2,70%	100%
Rabat	37,74%	13,21%	46,23%	2,83%	100%
Tanger	16,95%	6,78%	72,88%	3,39%	100%
Tétouan	18,57%	15,71%	62,86%	2,86%	100%
Total	23,66%	12,02%	61,83%	2,48%	100%

Tableau 12: Masculinity and Masculine Progeny According to Cities

Attitudes Cities	Masculinity signifies masculine progeny	Intermediary	Masculinity does not signify masculine progeny	No answer	Total
Agadir	4,88%	3,25%	86,99%	4,88%	100%
Khenifra	20,65%	7,61%	71,74%	0,00%	100%
Oujda	4,05%	0,00%	93,24%	2,70%	100%
Rabat	2,83%	0,94%	93,40%	2,83%	100%
Tanger	5,08%	0,00%	93,22%	1,69%	100%
Tétouan	2,86%	4,29%	88,57%	4,29%	100%
Total	6,87%	2,86%	87,40%	2,86%	100%

ence 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 "fahl", which means virile. Man's virility "fouhoula" 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..."

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 illiterates.

Synthesis

The analysis of man's psychosocial profile leads to the distinction amongst four categories of traits and definitional qualities 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 first positions 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

Table 13: Masculinity and large Progeny According to Cities

Attitudes Cities	Masculinity signifies Large Progeny	Intermediary	Masculinity does not signify Large Progeny	No answer	Total
Agadir	12,20%	8,13%	74,80%	4,88%	100%
Khenifra	17,39%	7,61%	75,00%	0,00%	100%
Oujda	8,11%	5,41%	83,78%	2,70%	100%
Rabat	14,15%	4,72%	81,13%	0,00%	100%
Tanger	10,17%	6,78%	81,36%	1,69%	100%
Tétouan	17,14%	4,29%	72,86%	5,71%	100%
Total	13,36%	6,30%	77,86%	2,48%	100%

young people, which means the loss of patriarchal "qualities" of masculine identity. This de-masculinization, which is anti-traditionalist, constitutes the starting point of a new masculine identity. Hence, it is said that the sentimental man should not be considered a woman. It goes the same for the one who helps his wife performing domestic works. Tenderness and friendliness are from now on compatible with masculine qualities. We can conclude that man is not a sacred identity, an unchangeable soul: he is susceptible to change and evolution. To reject everything that is feminine is no longer essential to demonstrate masculinity in Morocco. Man no longer dominates the relationship between men and women. This evolution is less visible on the sexual orientation level. Bisexuality still means sickness and deviance, and is mainly degrading for man. In fact, to call a man a bisexual, is to feminize him, to degrade him to an inferior patriarchal ranking, it is to insult him. For a large majority, to be a man, and to be heterosexual, not homosexual.

To identify homosexuality as masculinity is probably the only way to make it acceptable. Homosexuals are men living a dominated masculinity, but are still considered men. The social contempt towards the passive homosexual does not automatically imply treating him as a woman. This indicates an undeniable feminine aspect within the ordinary masculine thought.

Sexual impotence no longer deprives man of masculinity. Because of his penis, a man stays a man. Today, the ordinary man refuses to be defined as a sexually active and functional male only. Virility goes beyond the ability to have orgasm and is redefined as education, nobility of the soul, and reason. Ordinary men are starting to recognize publicly that a woman is sexually more "potent" than a man.

In the same way, the masculine and/or large progeny is no longer a necessary condition of masculinity. It is rather the capacity of supporting children that is becoming synonymous with masculinity. A successful sexual activity is not the one that leads to a masculine and/or large progeny, but to a profound conjugal understanding within a more or less democratized nuclear family. To have fewer children is becoming a choice, a necessity. Consequently, to have fewer children is no longer synonymous with non-virility and non-masculinity. Also, to have only daughters is no longer considered as a defect or a handicap. To go even further, the infertile man is considered a man despite his infertility. To summarize the situation, the ordinary Moroccan man is successfully undergoing sexual transition.

Translated by Josiane Maalouf



"In Morocco, a Man is Like a Diamond:"

The 2004 *Mudawwana* Reforms and the Problem of Moroccan Masculinity

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In October of 2003, King Mohammad VI announced his intention to radically improve women's rights by reforming Morocco's *Mudawwana al Ahwal al Shakhsiyyah*, or Code de Statut Personnel,¹ 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 celebrate these changes as a revolution in human rights,² others express a range of ambivalent reactions to the reforms, viewed as threatening the stability of the family and calling into question the pillars of Moroccan religious and cultural identity.³ Based upon a period of ethnographic fieldwork in Fes and Rabat during the time of the change,⁴ this essay combines feminist and "Male Studies"⁵ perspectives to examine how individuals deploy constructions of authentic Moroccan "male-ness" and "female-ness" in discourses of opposition to the reform.

Gender Complementarity/Gender Equality

According to sociologists and anthropologists who study traditional North African marriage practices, the pre-amendment family laws are based on a logic of strategically maximizing procreation within the patriline 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 Charrad,⁶ Fatima Mernissi,⁷ and Pierre Bourdieu⁸). For example, while the pre-amended Code's legal marriage for women (15 years) prolongs her legitimate childbearing years⁹ and the right to polygamy maximizes the male's reproductive potential,¹⁰ both practices undermine intimacy and reciprocity between the spouses. Other features heighten this disparity, such as the husband's right to confine the wife to the home;¹¹ the stipulation that women must be represented by a *wali*, or male tutor in the marriage contract;¹² and differential access to divorce.¹³ In turn, the pre-amendment Code positions the husband as undisputed head of the household, the sole provider¹⁴ responsible for regulating the behavior of female and junior members of his family. A model of the family based on the culturally sanctioned ideal of husband as provider and woman as passive consumer,¹⁵ is set against the economic realities of contemporary Morocco, where many women are economically active and where it is no longer uncommon to find women at the head of the household.¹⁶

Many of the Code's sex-specific factors were overturned or reformed in the 2004 amendments. Women's age of

END NOTES

1. The primary credit for the realization of this inquiry goes to the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS, Beirut), which accepted and supported my project, as part of the Middle East Research Competition (MERC). I address my most sincere thanks and gratitude to LCPS/MERC, and especially to Dr. Oussama K. Safa, director of the MERC program.

The acknowledgment for this inquiry's expansion to other sites goes back to Dr Mostafa Tyane, director of population in the Moroccan ministry of health, to Dr Théo Lippelvel, director of JSI project (USAID), and to Dr Najia Hajji, chief of family planning division at the Direction of Population. In order to realize this inquiry on a such sensitive theme in an Arab-Islamic society, where certain questions are still inconceivable to some, it took all the open-mindedness of the following directors: Director of Population, Ministry of Health, Director of Pedagogic Support, Ministry of National Education, Director of Human Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Director of Human Resources, Ministry of Equipment, Director of General Affairs, Ministry of Interior.

Consequently, my thanks go to these five directors for not only authorizing such an inquiry, but also for facilitating its accomplishment next to their delegations and directorates in the chosen cities.

Concerning the cities of Agadir, Kénifra, Oujda, Rabat, Tanger, and Tétouan, my most sincere thanks go to the *Walīs* and gov-

ernors of the ministry of interior, to the delegates of the ministries of health and national education, to the regional and provincial directors of the ministries of agriculture and equipment. I would like to thank them for appreciating the strategic stake of this work, and for encouraging their civil servants to answer the questions of people conducting interviews.

I cannot forget these civil servants who sacrificed their time and revealed their most intimate thoughts on personal subjects, I thank them for the trust they had in us. Therefore, I would like to thank the five administrations of agriculture, national education, equipment, interior and health on the central level, and on the regional and provincial levels in the cities of Agadir, Khénifra, Oujda, Rabat, Tanger and Tétouan. I would like to thank them for having encouraged scientific research and believed in it. A grateful thought asserts itself and goes to my students in my LIDESP laboratory, at Fes University: Houada al Addouni, Hakima Mrini, Habiba Hafsaoui, Bouchta al Khayari and Jamal Fezza. They did their best to collect in the best possible way reliable and credible facts. I would like to congratulate them for having put up with wisdom, even in some rare cases, the provocations they were subject to. My last thank you goes to Mrs. Bouteina Elomari, IEC consultant at JSI, for her precious help.

2. It is worth noting that during the *Jahiliya* (pre-Islamic era), newly born girls used to be buried alive, to avoid dishonor to their families.

marriage was raised from 15 to 18, thus made equal to that of men.¹⁷ The new Family Law places strident regulations on the man's right to polygamy.¹⁸ In addition, the new reforms radically equalize men's and women's access to divorce and improve divorced women's right to property and support in the event of divorce.¹⁹ In a radical re-formulation of how the rights and duties of husbands and wives vis-à-vis one another are constructed, the new regulations also guarantee the wife the same rights to employment and access to the public sphere as her husband, and make both spouses responsible for provisioning the family.²⁰ The new *Mudawwana* therefore, 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 *Mudawwana* has changed the legal definition of what it means to be a husband and father in Morocco.²¹

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 natures, in line with a religiously and socially sanctioned ideology of gender complementarity. Discourses of protest to the reform open up the way for a critical examination of how systems of apparent "male-privilege" are grounded in everyday practice, offering the opportunity to question how such systems 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*: "In its explorations of the debilitating effects of various codes of masculinity on men's lives. . . men's studies. . . demonstrates the connections between the pursuit of patriarchal power and various sorts of male self-denials" (Brod, p.8-9). In line with this critical perspective, my work is committed to exploring masculine domination as a source of limitation for men as much as for women.

To justify resistance to all or parts of the reforms, many of my informants describe the basic nature of women and men as crystallized in two complementary essences: the woman is the source of *hanane* or tenderness, and the man is the source of *sulta*, or authority. Citing the Qur'an and *Hadith* as the sources of this philosophy, informants elaborate that women's propensity to become pregnant and especially to breast-feed makes them subject to a greater sense of integration with another human being, the child, but this propensity for integration is generalized and affects her relationality with other human beings

as well. Thus, not only in the act of breast-feeding, but in all her interactions, she has a tendency to bare her heart and sacrifice her own interests in favor of an empathetic bond with another human being. While this is a strength in terms of being a mother or a wife, it is 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, but not as an invasion 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 head, not with his heart. To a greater or lesser extent, I found that this opposition of *hanane* 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 love, this tendency is mediated by their rational capacity to discern what would be in their best interests and, also importantly, in the best interests of their family of birth, to which, given the fact that Morocco is a patrilineal society, he still owes allegiance and support. In addition, the wrong marriage choice would not be as catastrophic for a man as for a woman because he has far less to lose in the transaction. Indeed, given that the main source of symbolic capital for a woman is her virginity,²⁴ she has everything to lose in choosing the wrong partner.

Sex and Money

In her study, *Beyond 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 the features 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 movements, 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 steady work,²⁵ men are no longer in a position to oppose their wives' employment, as the survival of the family may depend on women's income. Therefore, men are frustrated in fulfilling the societal demand to "protect female honor," as women's entry into the workplace represents a loss of control over their movements.

In this vein, Brod's essay also analyses the destabilization of masculinity in the passage from precapitalist to capitalist systems: "A transfer of power from the hands of individual patriarchs to the institutions of capitalist patriarchy. . . creates a gap between institutional and personal power. For men, this creates a disjuncture between the facts of public male power and the feelings of men's private powerlessness." He continues, "Persisting images of masculinity hold that 'real men' are physically strong, aggressive and in control of their work. Yet the structural dichotomy between manual and mental labor means that no one's work fulfills all these conditions" (Brod, 1987, p.14).

Borrowing a useful term from sociologist Emile Durkheim,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 social relations" (Charrad, 2001, p. 5), it would seem likely that the advent of a new *Mudawwana*, which sanctions changes in the gendered breakdown of labor in contradiction 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, marked by the rising age of marriage for both women and men²⁷ and also by men's—but not women's—rising disinclination to marry at all. Some informants predict that this crisis will be brought to a head by the *Mudawwana* changes, a set of reforms which "turn marriage into a prison for men."

Many of my informants describe marriage as something men can gladly do without or indefinitely postpone, given society's tacit approval of out-of-wedlock sexuality for men in the form of their recourse to prostitutes or girlfriends. According to Mernissi, whether married or not, "men are encouraged to expect full satisfaction of their sexual desires, and to perceive their masculine identity as closely linked to that satisfaction" (Mernissi, 1987, p.161). However, while masculine identity is affirmed through sexual conquest, Moroccan society closely links women's honor with virginity before marriage, and women's identities remain somewhat centered around their achievements as mothers and wives. Given this tilted playing field, many argue that the government is actu-

ally doing women a great disservice with the advent of the Family Law reforms, and suggest that if the government really wanted to help women, it would be doing all that it could to make marriage more attractive to men instead of exacerbating the problem by introducing another obstacle in the form of a controversial and threatening family law.

Sadiqi provides a modifying perspective on these alarmist claims. Although she agrees that there is a "crisis of marriage" in Morocco, based on "complex causes that range from unemployment, women's education and work, to suspicion towards 'mixity' and fear of failure in marriage (which for women brings shame to the family)," she doubts that the *Mudawwana* reforms will actually exacerbate the problem. Rather, Sadiqi expresses the more positive view that these changes will "gradually be in favor of a better image of women," adding, "As in the case with any major change, there will be a phase of uncertainty and doubt, but that is only normal. The royal support, the legal and political support, as well as the support of the feminist movement will certainly help in this regard."²⁸

A Man is like a Diamond

A specific social myth that has emerged with regularity within my interviews is a pervasive belief that women greatly outnumber men in Morocco, with informants estimating from three to five times as many women as men. Although demographic realities of such as male immigration and the longer lifespan of women undoubtedly play a role in shaping these perceptions, the estimation of difference is greatly exaggerated. The myth of the overabundance of women²⁹ expresses a belief in their dispensability and emphasizes the symbolic overvaluation of the man. "In Morocco, a man is like a diamond," one Moroccan sociologist recently related to me. "If a woman gets one, she considers herself very lucky." If in Morocco, a man is like a diamond, what is a woman like? When I asked this question to the sociologist, he only laughed sadly.

"Women—who are citizens of [the] domestic universe and whose existence outside that sphere is considered an anomaly, a transgression—are subordinate to men, who (unlike their women) also possess a second nationality, one that grants them membership of the public sphere. . . . Having been identified as primarily citizens of the domestic universe, women are deprived of power even in the world in which they are confined, since it is the man who wields authority within the family" (Mernissi, 1987, p.139). The feminist men's studies approach defined by Brod would challenge us to rethink this uneven division in different terms. Instead of imagining men as possessing a dual citizenship in both worlds, Brod would rather invite us to consider the price

of masculinity as a sort of emotional exile from the domestic sphere.

"Paradoxical as it may seem. . . men's public lives in an important sense represent a retreat and escape from their personal lives, a shrinkage rather than an enlargement of their spheres. . . [Richard] Ochberg writes: 'Men may attempt to escape their private troubles by migrating—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 with it a set of untenable financial responsibilities and harsh emotional denials. In my interviews, many describe the *Mudawwana* reforms as "a victory for women," or even, upon further questioning, "a victory for women over men." Yet, a consideration of the various, albeit more

subtle ways, the reforms encourage greater sex-role flexibility for men as well as women, lead to a more expansive assessment of the reforms, deflecting the conversation away from an unproductive reiteration of conflict model or "battle of the sexes" rhetoric. By shifting the focus to capture how the heavy burdens of the masculine dominant 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 desideratum 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 Magreb Arabe Presse website www.map.co.ma. Since its original drafting in 1957-8, directly following the French occupation, the Code had been slightly reformed once before, in 1993. For a summary and evaluation of the 1993 changes see Malika Benradi's 2003 article, "Le Code de la Famille: la Moudawana," especially section 1.2 "La timidité des révisions de 1993" (Benradi, 1993, p. 69).

2. Dr. Nouzha Guessous, one of the members of the royal consultative committee for drafting the reforms, elaborates "Le nouveau code de la famille constitue une avancée historique incontestable en ce sens qu'il consacre les principes de dignité, d'égalité et de responsabilité au sein de la famille et par là même dans la société marocaine en général. C'est une avancée des droits humains au Maroc car il concerne la protection des droits et de la dignité de franges parmi les plus vulnérables de la société, à savoir les femmes les enfants" (Hassan, 2003, p.1).

3. As detailed by Abderrahim Sabir, much of the public controversy over the *Mudawwana* reform has taken shape within the larger debate that raged over the adoption of Le Plan d'Action National pour l'Intégration de la femme au Développement (PANIFD), officially introduced to Prime Minister Abderrahmane Youseoufi in March 1999, of which the Family Code reform constitutes one of the most controversial parts. Sabir characterizes opposition to the reform by focussing on the rhetoric of two major Islamist groups, Adl wa al-Ihsan and Al-Islah was al-Tawhid: "The antagonists of the Plan fiercely denounce it, arguing that it would discourage men from marriage, would incite 'prostitution and debauchery,' and would be against Islamic law" (Sabir, 2000, p.3). In this vein, Souad Eddouada sums up the tenor of the dialogue between advocates and opponents during the pre-reform years as regards the issue of cultural authenticity: "The main demand of Moroccan women's associations was reform in accordance with international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), a factor that enfeebled the feminist's claims. Representatives of Moroccan reli-

gious parties challenge the feminist struggle for "gender equality" which is, according to them, a western, secular value that promotes the primacy of the individual over that of the family. According to this outlook, both the culturally specific and the religious importance of the family are disregarded by Moroccan proponents of CEDAW-guided reforms (Eddouada, 2001, p.1). However, the King himself defends against these claims: "In my capacity as Amir Al-Muminin (Commander of the Faithful), I cannot make licit what God has forbidden, nor forbid what He has made lawful. It is necessary to be mindful of the tolerant aims of Islam, which advocates human dignity, equality and harmonious relations, and also to rely on the cohesiveness of the Maliki rite and on *ijtihad*, thanks to which Islam is a suitable religion for all times and places. The aim is to draw up a modern Family Law which is consistent with the spirit of our glorious religion" (Magreb Arabe Presse, 10/3/2003).

4. September 2003 to July 2004, under the support of a Fulbright IIE grant.

5. As formulated by Harry Brod: "The most general definition of Men's Studies is that it is the study of masculinities and male experiences as specific and varying social-cultural-historical formulations. Such studies situate masculinities as objects of study on a par with femininities, instead of elevating them to universal norms (Brod, 1987, p. 2).

6. See especially Chapter 2, "Islam and Family Law: An Unorthodox View," in *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco*, where Charrad summarizes, "An aspect of Maliki family law emphasized in this chapter is the fragility of the conjugal unit. The legality of polygamy, the unilateral right of repudiation, the absence of common property between husband and wife, all tend to facilitate the dissolution of the marital bond. The message of the law is that the nuclear family does not constitute the significant locus of solidarity. Islamic law in effect defines the conjugal unit as potentially short lived. By contrast, it identifies the blood ties united the extended patrilineage as those likely to endure" (Charrad, 2001, p. 49).

7. In her 1974 *Beyond the Veil*, Mernissi writes, "Muslim wariness of heterosexual involvement is embodied in sexual segregation and its corollaries: arranged marriage, the important role of the moth-

er in the son's life, and the fragility of the marriage bond (as revealed by the institutions of repudiation and polygamy)" (Mernissi, 1987, p. 45).

8. In *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Pierre Bourdieu identifies the strengthening of the patriline as the first goal of Algerian tribal matrimonial strategies. The customs described in the section, "Matrimonial Strategies and Social Reproduction" (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 58-71) offer a productive point of comparison to the tendencies codified in the 1957-58 *Mudawwana*. "The mythic world view which accords [women] only a limited existence and never grants her full participation in the symbolic capital of her adoptive lineage, the sexual division of labor which restricts her to the domestic tasks leaving the representational functions the man—everything combines to identify the interests of the men with the material and particularly the symbolic interests of the lineage" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 66).

9. *Moudawana Code de Statut Personnel et des Successions* Art. 8 (1996, p.45).

10. *Ibid.* Art. 30 (p. 57).

11. As Mernissi points out, Art. 35.3 (*Ibid.* pp. 60-61) of the original code provides that husbands should authorize wives' visiting their parents, with the implication that women's access to the outside world in general is mediated by their husbands (Mernissi 1987, 109).

12. *Ibid.* Art. 12 (p.47).

13. Book II, articles 44-81 detail men's and women's differential rights to divorce (pp. 69-85). Within these pages, we find that men have the right to unilateral repudiation, and that for women, divorce is a more lengthy, complicated and expensive ordeal.

14. *Ibid.* Art 115 (p. 97). Mernissi's translation: "Every human being is responsible for providing for his needs (*nafaqa*) through his own mean, with the exception of women, whose husbands provide for their needs" (1987, p.148).

15. "The fact that we cling to images of virility (economic power) and femininity (consumption of the husband's fortune) that have nothing whatever to do with real life contributes to making male-female dynamics one of the greatest sources of tension and conflict" (Mernissi, 1987, p.149).

16. According to Fatima Nessif's 2001 study: "Female headed households are increasingly established in Morocco. . . [where] one fifth of households depend on women for their needs and livelihood. Based on 1991 statistics, this percentage reaches 22.5 in urban areas compared to 16.0% in rural areas" (CERED, 1995, 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 (Nessif, 2001, p. 274).

17. *Al Mudawwana al-Jadidah al-Usrah* (Le Nouveau Code de la Famille) 2004, Art. 19 (2004, p. 19).

18. See *Ibid.* Art. 40. (2004, p. 22). Also, according to an online fact sheet issued by the Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc/Women's Learning Partnership, entitled "Comparison of former Moroccan Family Law with the new provisions:" "Polygamy is allowed, subject to the judges authorization [the former code did not require this authorization] and to stringent legal conditions. . . The woman now has the right to make her acceptance of marriage conditional upon a pledge by her husband-to-be to refrain from taking other wives" (2003, p. 1).

19. *Ibid.* Arts. 78-128 (2004, p. 36-43). As summarized in the ADFM/WLP factsheet: "Repudiation and divorce, defined as the dissolution of marriage, are a prerogative that can be exercised as much by the husband as by the wife, under judicial supervision, and in accordance with the legal conditions set for each party. (Under the [former] legislation, repudiation and divorce are left to

the discretion of the husband only, and are often exercised in an arbitrary way) (2003, p. 1).

20. In the pre-amended code, the rights and obligations of the spouses are divided up and described under three separate sub-headings: Art. 34, "The Rights of the Spouses Vis-à-vis One Another"; Art. 35, "The Rights of the Wife Vis-à-vis Her Husband;" and Art. 36 "The Rights of the Husband Vis-à-vis His Wife" (60-61). This section of the Code authorizes many aspects of spousal inequality: Art. 36.1 demands the wife's fidelity to the husband; yet we find no complementary demand for the husband's fidelity to the wife; Art. 36.2 establishes the wife's "obedience" to the husband; Art. 36.4 places "the management of the household and its organization" squarely in the male spouse's hands; and Art. 35.4 implicitly gives the husband the right to monitor his wife's access to the public sphere. The amended Code radically reformulates these rights and duties under the single Art. 51 (2004: 109), "The Mutual Rights and Duties between the Husband and Wife." Art. 51.1 makes fidelity a mutual obligation, and also replaces the stipulation of the wife's "obedience" (*ta'ah*) to the husband with a call for mutual "respect" (*ihiram*). In addition, Art. 51.3 affirms, "The husband and the wife are both responsible for caring for the house and the children," and 51.4 stipulates, "consultation before making decisions concerning the family and family planning," thus newly placing the authority over the family as well as the responsibility for its economic survival into the hands of both husband and wife. The ADFM/WLP factsheet sums up these changes as follows: "Equality with respect to the rights and obligations of both parties. . . In return, the wife must contribute to the household expenses (2003, p.1).

21. Email communication 29 February 2004.

22. Most agree that this reform undeniably contradicts the teaching of the Maliki school, which envisions marriage as "a contract between families" rather than individuals (Charrad, 2001, p.32). In this vein, my informants unanimously claimed that even with their new right, women will not exercise the prerogative of independently contracting their marriage, for in doing so they would alienate both their family of birth and their husband-to-be, who would "not respect" a woman who did so. The idea of a woman entering into marriage on her own was mainly met by anxiety and disapproval, as it goes directly against the grain of the still widely-held view of marriage as an affair between families, not individuals. Interestingly, the idea of a man opposing his parents' wishes to marry the girl of his choice was not considered a catastrophe, but rather seen as a surmountable difficulty. Of the four majors schools within the Sunni tradition, only the Hanafi gives women the right to freely contract their own marriage (Ikkracan, 2003, p. 14).

23. Raja Rhouni, in her analysis of the cultural resistance to this change, draws upon the work of Ait Sabbah: "The tutor (*wali*) represents the interests of a Muslim patriarchal social order, in which the woman is believed to be uniquely motivated by her libidinal desire in her choice of a husband. Thus, in reading the symbolism of an institution like the *wali*, we find a reiteration of the androcentric binary opposition inherent in orthodox Muslim discourse: the woman and the male tutor come to represent respectively the confrontation between the forces of nature and those of culture; anarchy and the ordering force of Muslim civilization (Rhouni, 2004 p. 153; Sabbah, 1984, pp. 64 & 113). Incidentally, within her dissertation Rhouni argues that Fatna Ait Sabbah is actually the pen name for Fatima Mernissi.

24. For a discussion of the significance of female virginity in Morocco, see Mernissi's chapter "Virginity and Patriarchy," in her collection *Women and Rebellion in Islamic Memory* (1996).

25. For a discussion of socioeconomic instability Morocco, see "Reform and Politics of Inclusion in the Maghreb," in which

Azzedine Layachi summarizes: "In Morocco today, around 20 percent of the population of 30 million live in poverty, ten percent in sheer misery and 30 percent (mostly the young and the elderly) are classified as vulnerable. . . . Unemployment is around 20 percent. . . and job creation cannot keep up with the increasing number of job seekers. The educational system, which has been turning out more and more unemployed graduates, is ailing and in need of major overhaul (Layachi, 2001, p. 11).

26. Emile Durkheim, "L'Education Morale," in *Selected Writings*, edited by A. Giddens, Cambridge 1972, p. 174.

27. According to Beamish and Tazi Abderrazik, "The mean age at marriage in Morocco has risen dramatically to 26.4 years in 1997 (27.8 in cities and 24.7 in rural areas). Citing a 2002 study by Tazi Benabderrazik, Beamish and Abderrazik continue: "The rising age at marriage in Morocco indicates that marriage during adolescence is becoming less common. In 1960, nine out of every ten young women ages 20-24 years and four out of every ten ages 15-19 were married; almost 40 years later, only four 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." Citing a 2000

CERED study, 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 married by the age of 20, down from less than 18% and 3% respectively, in 1994 (Beamish and Abderrazik, 2003, p. 6).

28. Email communication 29 February 2004.

29. According to the Afrol Gender Profile for Morocco, in terms of the 2000 total population estimate, we find 1 male/female. However, we find the male/female ratio shifting according to age, with males slightly outnumbering females under 15 years (1.05 males to females). For the 15-64 age category, we find .98 males/females, a tendency which increases as the population ages (www.afrol.com/Categories/Women/profiles_women.htm). However, this slight difference in no way approximates the exaggerated nature of the claims that women significantly outnumber men. Furthermore, data from the U.S. census bureau's demographic data on Morocco, which provides more precise age breakdown into four year periods, states that men slightly outnumber women until age 30, but again the gender difference remains a negligible one (www.census.gov/cgi-bin/ipc/idbsum?cty=MO).

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Masculinity as Violence in Arab Women's Fiction

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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 may 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 unforeseen passionate reaction; 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 repre-

sentations 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 pacifistic, as rejecting violence. While some individual men may be less violent they are depicted 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 that the texts have been given but also because this should provide all readers of this paper access to the texts themselves should they wish to continue the investigation in greater depth themselves. It is always a diffi-

cult and dangerous task to generalize anything relating to Arab women; this term refers to women who possess a range of identities across disparate geographic and historical spaces. With this in mind, I am simply looking for common trends in Arab women's writing without hoping to produce any "truths" that are supposed to reflect all Arab women's experiences. Due to the length and time constraints of this essay, I only refer to the texts that best illustrate the representation of masculinity as violence. The authors referred to here are Hoda Barakat, Salwa Bakr, Hanan al-Shaykh, and Sufi Abdallah.

Feminists have demonstrated in countless works that traditional definitions of violence do not adequately represent male violence against women. Because they ignore the systematic and pervasive nature of violence against women, often these definitions, usually incorporating physical violence only, are too narrow. Like the feminist sociologists and philosophers who have

studied violence against women, I have adopted a woman-centered definition of violence; that is, I am including as violent those behaviors or actions that women experience as dangerous and abusive. This expands the traditional definition of violence from straightforward physical violence to include emotional and sexual violence, abuse and exploitation, and the threat of violence. All of these forms of violence are connected with masculinity in many Arab women writers' texts.

Violent Men

Masculinity is generally equated with violence and individual men are depicted as unrestrained and unruly when it comes to women. Such men in Arab women's texts are most often flat characters where their aggression is their primary personality traits and their relationship with the women protagonists is characterized by violence. In these texts, men become their violence and all other aspects of their selves disappear. In *The Story of Zahra* by Hanan al-Shaykh nearly every man the protagonist Zahra encounters exploits or abuses her in some way. From the earliest years of her life, Zahra learns the violent potential of men from her father. This father beats not only Zahra's mother for suspected infidelity but Zahra herself. He "showers her with blows" that she

might admit her mother's betrayal, and her mother is left bloodied (Al-Shaykh, 1995, pp. 14-15). Later in her life, Zahra rarely mentions her father except to express his attitude toward her—ranging from indifferent to negative, or to express a fear that he might kill her: "my father's image, coming into my mind, frightened me to the extent where I felt sure he would kill me should he ever find out. He would not hesitate, I knew, even if it meant him spending the rest of his life in prison. He was capable of severing my head from my body." (Al-Shaykh, 1995, p. 31).

After her father, the next man she forms a relationship with is her first lover, Malek. A married man and friend of Zahra's brother, Malek manipulates Zahra by offering friendship and romance in order to seduce her. After taking her virginity, knowing well the consequences for an unmarried woman without a hymen in the Arab world, Malek refuses to marry her. The friendship, romance, and even any semblance of care disappears; even after two pregnancies and abortions, Zahra is left feeling used as Malek still does not feel any attachment or responsibility toward her. Even when Zahra has a nervous breakdown and needs to be hospitalized after Malek takes her for an abortion without her consent, Malek evades responsibility by lying to her family about the situation and saying that the breakdown occurred at work and that he came to her rescue (Al-Shaykh, 1995, pp. 38-9).

After the breakdown, Zahra decides to escape to Africa and ends up in her uncle's house. Again, the uncle, Hashem, who was a leader in a violent coup d'état in Lebanon, abuses her. As the only person she knows in Africa, Zahra is dependant on Hashem, and he takes advantage of this situation. Although the beginnings may seem innocent, such as when he watches her sleep and tries to hold her hand, Zahra is disgusted and disturbed by her uncle's advances. But when his desire pushes him to lie on top of her, as she is sleeping, Zahra again suffers a breakdown and tries to kill herself.

While recovering in hospital, Zahra chooses to accept a marriage proposal from Hashem's friend Majed. Majed is a patient and forgiving husband, but still there exists in him a subtle and latent violence. He is emotionally abusive toward her, insulting her with unnecessary cruelty: "You look like a cat that has just eaten its own kittens," he said. "How is it possible for anyone to wear such a short, tight skirt? Who do you think you are, girl? ...It would be all very nice if the short skirt showed a pretty figure. But look at you, look at all this make-up. Your face is no better than a Halloween mask." (Al-Shaykh, 1995, p. 96)

After several fits Majed's patience is exhausted, and he reacts violently when Zahra refuses his sexual advances:

He tried to put his arms around me. I slipped away. He drew close. I stepped back. He followed. I screamed, but he ignored my cries. I tried to push his hand away, but he was set on having a fight.... I forced him away, making up my mind that he would never touch me unless I were dead, lifeless, as it had been with our foreign neighbour...when she defended herself to the death as the hair-dresser tried to rape her....

Majed remained insistent, and "I [Zahra] went on defending myself until my resistance began to fail, my crying still having no effect. Then I bit his hand with all my strength and heard him bellow, 'Damned woman! Bitch! Animal!' ...I fell on the floor as he pushed and then kicked me. He threw me down on the couch as I went on ceaselessly screaming and moaning" (Al-Shaykh, 1995, pp. 108-9).

Zahra then requests that Majed divorce her and she returns to Lebanon. There she becomes involved with the next and last man in her life. The Lebanon she has returned to is raging with war and violence. Even Zahra's brother Ahmad, the only man who until this point has not acted violently, has become a combatant. Every trip outside the house could amount to suicide. But when she is out one day, she notices the neighborhood sniper watching her. They meet, and they have a sexual relationship. With this sniper, Zahra experiences her first sexual pleasure; she falls in love with him and even entertains thoughts of marriage. But when she discovers she is pregnant and too far along to abort, she tells her sniper. He is supportive to her face, but when she leaves him, she is shot from the rooftop. Every relationship with a man that Zahra has had in her life is characterized by violence and abuse. Though some of the violence she has witnessed by the men in her life is part of the war, most of it is directed at her.

Violent Women

One might argue that there also exist violent women in texts written by Arab 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 "naturally" non-violent. They are only pushed into violence as a necessary reaction to their circumstances, which are usually depicted as caused by men. In this way, as Nadjé al-Ali writes, the authors "turn around the roles of criminal and victim 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 Golden Chariot, a novel set in al-Qanatir women's prison, also tells the tale of a group of criminal women. 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" (Faqr, 1995, p. v) and all of the violent 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 Faqr, 1995, p.v). The male characters in Bakr's work 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 his abandoning her and taking a second wife, Aziza determines to kill him. Before committing the act, she imagines how to accomplish the deed in the least violent, most romantic possible way - as she does love the man. She imagines coating him in chocolate and breaking him into edible pieces, or alternatively smothering him with the powerful scent of flowers. (Bakr, 1995, pp. 8-9). The other women in the prison who were charged with violent crimes similarly committed them against an abusive man. Two besides Aziza were murderers and two had committed assault.

Azima the giant, as she is known in the text, is a woman imprisoned for having had her ex-lover castrated. The man, Hussain, whom she loved deeply, had exploited her sexually and financially, offering promises of marriage and lifetime love. In reality, however, he was only in the relationship to gain access to her wealth. After years of being used by him, when Azima finally realized that he was only using her, she ended the relationship. Hussain began spreading vicious rumors about her that greatly damaged her reputation. In order to avenge herself Azima hires a career-criminal to castrate the former lover. Another imprisoned for assault is Jamalata who is a poor thief who threw a hot iron at a neighbor. This man had been stalking Jamalata and her younger mentally disabled sister. Jamalata was less afraid for herself than she was for her sister, whom she feared she could not always protect

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, Jamalata fulfils her threats and assaults him with the iron.

The only murderess whose victim was not her lover is Madame Zaynab. A wealthy 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 access her dead 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 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 painful act that made her feel as though she was going to die" (Bakr, 1995, p. 39). As time 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 above characters were 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 a violent or even aggressive personality. These acts are portrayed as solely situational, where anyone, no matter how naturally non-violent, would have done the same. Regarding Madame Zaynab, Bakr writes, "People found it impossible to imagine that this beautiful, petite woman, as fragile as fine crystal, was capable of such a thing; they never knew...that she could have done it a second, third, or fourth time were she ever to be placed in a similar situation again." (Bakr, 1995, p. 150). It can be seen in all of these cases that the women would not have acted violently had they not been threatened by their male "victims".

Men Resisting Violence

Not all males are represented in these texts as violent. Those who resist violence, however, are not seen as men by society. It is in these cases that the connection between violence and masculinity is the most striking. Unlike the majority of male characters in fiction by Arab women, 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 Sufi 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 his 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: Haniya 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 be 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.

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, while criticizing the use of unnecessary violence, equates violence with men and pacifism with women as if they are natural and even essential characteristics of men and women.

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 mainly feminine traits in both body 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 background of the Lebanese civil war, and while his friends (male) are busy with demonstrations, politics, and warfare, Khalil is concerned with housekeeping, his rela-

tionships, and his identity. All of his actions are those associated with women - cleaning, cooking, handicrafts, 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 divorcee "who sits, squat, and pudgy on a stone that has witnessed the beloved" (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 and gendered identity. The first occurs after the assassination of his love-object and boyhood friend, Naji. Disturbed by erotic dreams and feelings toward his dead friend, he tries to persuade himself that this is just a passing phase:

After Naji was killed, Khalil's body...began to get confused, the surface of his inhibitions was slit open and his suspicious dreams invaded him, they unfastened the ties by which he kept a grip on many intricate and ambiguous matters, the least of which were his erotic dreams 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 his 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 faintness, having short legs, a slight build, straight chestnut hair and large eyes, all these things do not make a man a hermaphrodite, or effeminate, or make him any less masculine, or...queer. 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 violence that surrounds him begins to change. 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 tortured 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 things out so I can pull back and feel my nausea, so I don't have to go out and do the dirty work for money.... All that toil 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 gay man, who guesses Khalil's sexual orientation. Known only as "the Brother", this man is a powerful political figure, 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 consummate his homosexual feelings. This confuses Khalil even more, causing mixed feelings:

Khalil realized that what drew him to the Brother, what drew him like a magnet, was that he knew how intensely the Brother desired him.... People desire and lust for those who realize the extent of their desire for them.... Desire mingled with acute nausea. With hatred verging on the pleasure of torture. More torture from this man who is often tormented in his attempts to reach me, stamp his imprint on my soul and possess it, so I become like him. Khalil thought: we certainly become like the people we have sex with and I do not want to be like this man. (Barakat, 1995, p. 194).

Khalil does not have sex with the Brother, but he does become like him. He is attacked on the street by armed men, but when he shows them the Brother's business card, they desist. He becomes angry and filled with hatred for the world, for his weakness, and for being given the opportunity by the Brother to become an active member of society. He has no choice but to become what is required of a man in a violent, dangerous situation - violent and aggressive. In the epilogue of