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WOMEN
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CULTURES

6 Volumes including Index

EWIC

Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures

6 Volumes including Index

General Editor: **Suad Joseph**

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Introduction

The EWIC Project

The *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures* (EWIC) is an interdisciplinary, transhistorical, and global project embracing women and Islamic cultures in every region where there have been significant Muslim populations. It aims to cover every topic for which there is significant research, examining these regions from the period just before the rise of Islam to the present. The project is an effort, spanning five years so far, to bring together upwards of 1,000 scholars worldwide to write critical essays on women and Islamic cultures. EWIC aims both to cover the broad sweep of topics to inform the general audience and to take on cutting-edge issues to stimulate new research and advance the frontiers of knowledge. Although its focus is women and Islamic cultures in every society where Islam has had an important presence, EWIC studies Muslim women and women of other religions in those societies.

Muslims number over one billion people. They account for significant populations in every region of the world, including countries that are predominantly of another faith. Conversely, non-Muslims often account for significant populations in regions in which Islam is the predominant faith. EWIC's scope, therefore, is not women and Islam as a specific religion. Rather it is concerned with women and Islamic cultures, with the civilizations and societies in which Islam has played a historic role. EWIC thus attempts to survey all facets of life (society, economy, politics, religion, the arts, popular culture, sports, health, science, medicine, environment, and so forth) of women, including non-Muslim women, in cultures to which Islam has made a significant contribution.

EWIC was conceived in 1994 when Brill editor, Peri Bearman, contacted me to inquire about my interest in the idea of an encyclopedia of "Women in Islam." Four years of contract development and many reinventions of the project along the way led to the formal beginning of EWIC in 1998. By 1999, I was fortunate to recruit a brilliant set of associate editors: Afsaneh Najmabadi, Julie Peteet, Seteney Shami, Jacqueline Siapno, and Jane I. Smith. Alice Horner joined in 2002 as an editorial assistant for sub-Saharan Africa. During the first year we invited a distinguished advisory board of 42 scholars and writers from around the world to help guide our work. The advisory board covers all critical disciplines and every region of the world, and bridges the divide between scholars, activists, artists, and professionals in various fields.

As the first encyclopedia to undertake such an ambitious project on women and Islamic cultures, EWIC became a living organism, with a life of its own. It expanded into a 4,000,000 word, six-volume encyclopedia to be published in stages starting with Volume I in the fall of 2003. Volumes II and III will be published in fall 2004 and Volumes IV, V, and VI will appear in fall 2005. EWIC has 410 entry topics, which, given the regional divisions of the topics, has generated several thousand entries.

The aim of EWIC is not merely to offer a compilation of the information that exists but itself contribute to the creation of knowledge about women and Islamic cultures.

Guiding Vision of EWIC

Encyclopedias represent a particular and a peculiar form of knowledge. They aim to be authorities, often definitive, on their subject matter. As such, the production of encyclopedic knowledge is staged in a context dependent on their publishers and scholars. The publisher of EWIC, Brill, supported the editorial board's imaginative excursion into this genre of knowledge-making. The editorial board of EWIC set out from its first meeting to produce an encyclopedia that had at its core a recognition of the power of the process of knowledge production. All of us had an acute appreciation of the context and historicity of knowledge production. At every step, we reflected and evaluated the choices before us in terms of the impact our decisions would have on the kind of knowledge EWIC would present and represent. Communication among the editors and between the editors and authors became paramount.

The editors did not always agree with each

other on how to handle specific issues. But we all recognized that the EWIC project was an opportunity, indeed, a delicious moment to define a field of knowledge. The excitement of that moment brought with it the burden of responsibility. To whom were we accountable for that responsibility – to our publishers, ourselves, our readers, our subjects, our students, history, truth, all of the above? – and whether the different constituencies' needs could all be met were questions which hung over us. At times it seemed as if we were driven by EWIC. Not only did it come to have a life of its own, it took over our lives. But to the degree that it did, it was because of the passion we have had for the project and its possibilities. Our commitment to an encyclopedic project engaged us, as an editorial board, in intensive conversations on our individual visions for EWIC. What has emerged, over the course of four years of working together as a board (and, for me, nine years of project development), is a collective vision which belongs to none of us and to all of us.

Our conversations started with the title. As with most of our decisions, the discussions were extensive and the outcome was often based on compromise. We chose the title *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures* because it conveys an approach to a civilizational history. This is an encyclopedia about women within specific cultural milieus. By using the term "Islamic cultures" we meant to veer away from the notion that EWIC would focus on religious texts (although it does cover them) and to direct attention to the broad panoply of issues that are embraced within the term "culture."

Not only were we concerned to veer away from a privileged focus on religious texts, but we were committed to "de-essentializing" Islam. To do this, we needed to contextualize, historicize, and regionalize the experiences of women and Islamic cultures. We designed entries that situated issues of relevance to women within specific historical periods, political regimes, and localities. We took a historical approach to Section I, organizing entries by historical periods corresponding with major regimes, empires, or sociopolitical configurations within each region. As the production of knowledge is conditioned by the sociopolitical environments in which it is produced, this historical approach allowed us to identify critical changes in methodologies, resources, and paradigms. We also asked authors of every entry in Section II to situate their topics in their historical context and to examine the changes over time relevant to their topics.

EWIC worked to de-center the common Middle East focus of research dealing with women and Islamic cultures by seeking editors, advisory editors, entries, and authors from all over the world. We raised funds for translations so that we could recruit authors who could not write in English. We tapped our international advisory editors for suggestions (as well as for entry writing) and used our extensive network of connections. Early on, we recognized that the enormity of the aim of a global reach would require us to develop a database of possible authors by placing advertisements in journals and websites and at conferences. As news spread about the EWIC project, scholars and writers began contacting us. To our delight, the database grew within a few years to over 900 volunteer potential authors. We sought not only the leading scholars on specific topics, but also young scholars. We were keen to recruit young Ph.D.s and graduate students. Our thinking was that young scholars have often freshly surveyed the state of the art in their fields.

STRUCTURE OF EWIC

Perhaps our most critical and innovative decision was to organize the first five volumes of EWIC into two major sections. Section I (Volume I) is designed as a conversation among scholars, junior and senior, who do research on women and Islamic cultures, with the hope of opening new frontiers by evaluating sources and methodologies for research. Most of Section II (Volumes II–V) is devoted to making available to general readers the latest research on key topics of relevance to women and Islamic cultures. These volumes are organized by topic. Each volume is devoted to specific large categories of research, but within each volume the entries are organized alphabetically.

SECTION I, VOLUME I: METHODOLOGIES, PARADIGMS, AND SOURCES

Historical Entries. The 46 historical entries focus on problems in methodologies and sources relevant for doing research on women and Islamic cultures for each historical period. They are subdivided by region for entries covering contemporaneous periods of time. The logic for regional organization is that methods and sources change as empires and nation-states emerge. Since the gathering of information of all sorts is directly impacted by the political projects of empires and states, fine tuning EWIC's thematic pieces to

assess these changes was deemed by the editors to be important. The entries evaluate the methodological and epistemological problems in the study of women in each period and specific region covered. They are not reviews of events, the state of Islam, or the conditions of women; rather they are intended to direct the reader to resources available.

As such, they offer tools vital for scholars and students interested in further study and research. The authors were asked to be attentive to primary sources and to how the uses of the sources available have informed and shaped what is considered to be known about women during any period. As some pieces cover large stretches of time, authors were invited to evaluate important changes in methodologies and sources and assess how those changes affected what is known about women and Islamic cultures. The entries cover such topics as Crusade literature, Andalusian literature, Islamic biographical dictionaries, and Sufi sources. Most deal with regions such as Central Asia, Malaysia, Indonesia, sub-Saharan Africa, China, Mongolia, the Ottoman empire, Arab states, Western Europe, and the Americas. Our interest in historicizing the methodological section of EWIC emerged from a recognition that the specific political and social conditions under which knowledge is produced change over time and shape the nature and possible uses of that knowledge. We mean to continually remind ourselves and EWIC's readers of the importance of context, site, situation, and time in understanding not only women and Islamic cultures, but also how we come to know what we know about them.

Disciplinary Entries. The 23 disciplinary entries (including demography, history, anthropology, political science, sociology, literary studies, women's studies, economics, and geography) focus on critical appraisal of the methodologies and paradigms used in specific disciplines to study women and Islamic cultures. Disciplinary authors were invited to evaluate the epistemological assumptions of their disciplines and how these have affected the study of women and Islamic cultures. For example, the entry on anthropology was required to address the epistemological problems of the anthropological ideas of culture and the methodological problems of doing informant based fieldwork, and to critically assess the assumptions of participant observation. This approach came from a recognition that interdisciplinarity emerges from an understanding of

the constraints and possibilities for knowledge production built into the training of scholars. The overwhelming majority of scholars are trained in specific disciplines. Disciplines tend to produce their own genealogies of thought and method. While the boundaries of disciplines have always been porous, and have become increasingly so, we recognize that disciplinary assumptions act both as guiding and blinding lights in the search for understanding.

Section II, Volumes II–V

Section II consists of a vast span of topics across disciplines and regions grouped into the four volumes of Section II by large categories of research. Section II has two sorts of entry: regionalized entries and overviews. We discovered that each topic had its own "geography." That is, how each topic was researched and played out in each region of the world varied. We therefore regionalized the majority (212) of Section II topics. Topics were assigned as overviews when there was not enough material to cover them region by region, or when there was so much material that a general introduction to the topic was needed before the regionalized entries. Section II has 129 overviews.

Volume II. Family, Law and Politics

Volume II consists of 66 regionalized topics and 43 overviews, a total of 109 topics on family, law and politics. In some sense, this was one of the smoothest volumes to assemble. In most countries where Islam plays a significant role, family, law, and politics are deeply intertwined. In part, this is a result of the deference in family law to religious law (Muslim, Jewish, and Christian) in many Muslim countries and the deference to Muslim family law in some non-Muslim countries (such as India). In part the intermeshing of family, law, and politics results from the strength of family systems, which compete with states for the loyalties of their members in many countries. And in part our grouping of these categories of research resulted from the recognition that all states, in some capacity, generate family policies (and police families) and that law is a prime venue for the mediation of family-state relations.

Volume III. Family, Body, Sexuality and Health

Volume III covers 66 topics, of which 26 are overviews and 40 are regionalized. The volume includes such topics as child marriage; premodern

childhood; premodern discourses of love; court-
ship; marriage practices; sex education manuals;
religious discourses on sexuality; Islam and the
female body; sports and the female body; virgin-
ity discourses and practices; disabilities; the
female genital cutting; HIV; sexually transmitted
diseases; reproductive technologies; and science
and Islam. The body, as understood in discourses
and practices concerning the family and sexuality,
and as conceptualized under regimes of health,
runs through the topics of Volume III as a the-
matic continuity.

Volume IV. Economics, Education, Mobility, and Space

Volume IV includes 18 overviews and 70
regionalized topics, a total of 88 topics. The inter-
sections between materialities of various sorts
and lived realities and experiences tie these large
categories together. Volume IV takes up questions
of women's labor; world markets; traditional
professions; environment; premodern education;
colonial education; national curricula; migration;
diasporic communities; refugees; development
discourses; female space; housing; colonial and
modern cities; and homelessness.

Volume V. Practices, Interpretations, and Representations

Volume V consists of 78 topics of which 42
are overviews and 36 are regionalized topics.
Representations and their lived experiences is the
unifying theme of this volume. How women are
represented and interpreted and the practices
generating and generated by representations and
interpretations are critical for understanding
women and Islamic cultures. Particularly impor-
tant to these topics are the representations of
women in Islamic religious texts, Islamic sciences,
Islamic practices, and Islamic discourses. Just as
important, there are representations by women
writers and representations of women as female
entertainers, as women in the media and popular
culture, and women in the arts. There is also rep-
resentation of women's sexualities in poetry, the
arts, popular culture, and Islamic texts.

Volume VI. Index

Each EWIC volume will have its own indexes.
The cumulative index is compiled from the
indexes of Volumes I–V.

The EWIC Project at this Historical Juncture

The *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic
Cultures* is a project whose time has come. The
literature in the many fields it encompasses is
rapidly expanding. Research on women and
Islamic cultures is theoretically and empirically at
the frontiers of many disciplines. At the same
time the idea of the "Muslim woman" or the
"woman and Islam" has come to have a political
and historical salience, particularly in Western
media and scholarship, which is frequently fabri-
cated for these women, often out of whole cloth
that is not of their weaving. EWIC tries to cap-
ture knowledge in the frame of history, to histori-
cize knowledge in the context of place and to put
knowledge at the service of those who may be
enriched by understanding its processes of pro-
duction. Our own limitations as editors glared at
us: we recognized that often we did not know
how to find appropriate authors, or how best to
define entries for certain regions. At times, even
the most enthusiastic of our uniformly enthusias-
tic team found energy waning as EWIC grew. And
yet we can say that we held true to the vision and
dream of EWIC, which was and is to inspire its
readers to participate in this powerful moment in
the field of women's studies – to take what is
offered in this most unusual collection of what is
known and to move forward to break new ground
in the naming, framing, analyzing, and under-
standing of what is known and what can be
known about women and Islamic cultures.

Suad Joseph, General Editor
University of California, Davis
March 2003

Samples of Entries

Introduction

Scholarship on the history of women in premodern Morocco is a new field still confined to a handful of Moroccan scholars. Reconstructing past women's lives calls for an expertise in literary Arabic and in the courtly (*makhzanī*) style, an ability to decipher manuscripts, and a familiarity with the techniques of local research. Bureaucratic traditions were not well developed, and the mechanisms for preserving official documents haphazard. The court records, notarial documents, censuses, and other statistical documentation that form the substance of historical research in the former Ottoman territories are few and far between. For the eighteenth century, there is an irreparable void. The situation improves somewhat in the nineteenth century, especially after 1830, when record keeping improved. Consular archives, foreign ethnographies, and travel literature help fill the gaps, but these sources pose methodological problems of their own and require special treatment in order to compensate for inherent biases.

Tools of research

In addition to chronicles, correspondence, and literary texts, sources such as oral histories, poetry, anecdotes, and even aphorisms are helpful in conceptualizing mentalities and constructing a narrative framework. Historians of women must be prepared to become "fieldworkers," interviewing respondents, visiting sites, and observing with attentiveness. The Geertzian method of reproducing local context by "thick description" is the order of the day. A recent study exemplifying this approach is social historian Mohammed Ennaji's *Serving the Master: Slavery and Society in Nineteenth-Century Morocco*. Using techniques borrowed from anthropology and literary criticism, Ennaji gathered bits of information buried in diverse sources and wove them into an account of the enslaved woman's experience. He used official correspondence, registers (*kanānīsh*), and legal texts (*nawāzil* and *ajwība*) to reconstruct the world of these women, exposing their multiple roles and centrality to the domestic economy. Ennaji's study demonstrates that groundbreaking work in Moroccan women's history is possible when sources are used creatively and with attention to the broader cultural and political milieu.

Some of the more important tools of research available to the historian are the following:

1. The chronicles (*ḥawliyyāt*). As historian Mohamed El Mansour has pointed out, professional historians did not exist in precolonial Morocco; rather, educated men adopted the métier as an extension of their preoccupation with *adab*, or *belles lettres*. The more important chroniclers were secretary-scribes (*kuttāb*), appointed by the ruling sultan to record the events of his reign. They concentrated on the wars and catastrophes that formed the backdrop to their times, writing accounts that are court-centered, panegyric, and rarely concerned with the lives of ordinary people. Moreover, chroniclers were usually urban-based *ʿulamāʾ* concerned with paying deference to notables of their own social class. Yet a close reading of the chronicles is a necessary prelude to all forays into Moroccan history. Depending on the skill and objectivity of the author, the chronicle recreates the broader social and political environment in which women's history played itself out. The most important chronicle for the eighteenth century is the *Nashr al-mathānī* of Muḥammad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Qādirī (d. 1187/1773), published in a recent scholarly edition by A. Tawfīq and M. Ḥajjī; the portion covering the years 1665–1756 has been admirably translated and annotated by N. Cigar. Al-Qādirī's mother occupies an important place in this work, and other women make occasional appearances, such as the learned and pious Hajja Malwaniyya, who made the *hajj* 27 times. The landmark work for the nineteenth century is the *Kitāb al-istiqsāʾ* of Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Naṣīrī (d. 1315/1897).

2. Official correspondence is found in three Rabat depositories: the Hassaniyya (Royal) Library, the Direction des archives royales, and the archives of the Bibliothèque générale. These collections contain correspondence, tax records, property inventories, customs receipts, and other data. Letters from local officials to the court are

especially instructive about the conduct of everyday life, yielding information on domestic violence, famines and epidemics, and household economics. However, local officials had concerns of their own, the fear of royal displeasure among them, so that the accuracy and objectivity of the reporting is compromised. Knowledge of the local context, a sense of geography, and a familiarity with family networks is essential for understanding this type of material.

3. European archives are a prolific source for the social history of Morocco in the premodern period up to 1912. Foreign representatives were confined mainly to the port city of Tangier. Some remained in their posts for years, learning Arabic and developing a deep understanding of Moroccan society. John Drummond Hay served as Britain's representative in Morocco for much of the nineteenth century. His dispatches reflect the mindset of his day, but they are also a treasure trove for women's history, especially when he writes about issues such as prison reform. To what extent are European accounts a reliable source for local conditions? Clearly, the principal aim of personalities like Drummond Hay was to aggressively pursue national political goals while parrying the thrusts of his European rivals. As a result, diplomatic accounts must be used selectively, but when combined with local sources, they can become a powerful component of research.

4. *Waqf* documents. While court records from the precolonial period are scarce, having disappeared into private hands long ago, many documents of the *waqf* (public trust) or *hubūs* (as it is known in the Mālikī tradition) have been preserved and contain vital details about transfers of property. Women were often present in these transactions, making it possible to form an impression of patterns of female property ownership. The *hubūs* registers, or *ḥawālāt*, found in the Bibliothèque générale are organized by city and are most informative for the first part of the twentieth century; however, some go back as far as the eighteenth century. Marriage contracts are sometimes included in these records, adding another dimension vital to women's history.

5. Legal documents, especially *nawāzil*, are a priceless source for social and women's history. The *nawāzil* are collections of legal responses to questions of a practical nature. The *nāzila*, or question, was submitted to the jurist; in composing his response, he was given the opportunity to explore earlier texts and to produce an answer reconciling the prevailing social behav-

ior with legal precedence. The abundance of this genre in Morocco reflects a concern on the part of the legal community to integrate customary practices into formal law. Texts reach into the most intimate recesses of private life, revealing matters pertaining to sexuality and male-female relations. For example, the nineteenth century jurist al-Wazzānī was asked questions such as: How many times in a day may a husband require sexual intercourse with his wife? (No more than eight.) What methods of contraception are acceptable? Can a couple make love in the nude? Responses show that the doctors of law formed the first line of defense protecting women against the male brutality that was endemic in hard times. Husbands could beat and even kill their wives with impunity, the only restraint being a moral one imposed by the written opinions of scholars often distant from the scene in time and place. The *nawāzil* literature has been rediscovered in recent years by feminist historians and other social scientists who see in it an accurate reflection of the social reality. The most important published collections of *nawāzil* for this period are those of al-Masnāwī (d. 1259/1843) and al-Wazzānī (d. 1341/1923).

6. Censuses and other surveys were rare in nineteenth-century Morocco. The systematic collection of data did not become a regular practice until the arrival of the Protectorate in 1912. However, examples from the late nineteenth century initiated within Morocco's Jewish community show that the census was not alien to the Moroccan experience. A detailed house-by-house census of the Jewish quarter (*mallāḥ*) of Marrakesh was carried out in 1890 by officials of the *makhzan*, perhaps in response to demands for additional housing. The census gives details of family size and composition, relationships among members of the household, and the disposition of space within the house. The high number of unattached adult women listed as "widows" (*ayamāt*) in the census raises questions about their status in the family and their means of livelihood.

More prevalent as a statistical source is the official register, or *kunnāsh* (pl. *kanānīsh*). These were notebooks kept by officials concerning matters such as tax revenues, customs duties, lists of property, or expenses, such as the costs of rebuilding walls and fortifications. Because they often record data over time, the *kanānīsh* are especially important for establishing patterns of behavior. A *kunnāsh* of statistics

relating to the women's prison in Marrakesh for the period 1916–19 studied by historian Mohammed Ennaji offers a profile of the female prison population: age, place of origin, and the nature of the crimes for which the women were incarcerated. The majority (75 percent) were beyond the age of marriage and jailed for crimes ranging from prostitution to murder. Ennaji speculates that the turmoil created by the French occupation of 1912 took a huge toll on family life and suggests that the prison *kunnāsh* offers concrete evidence of the victimization of women by harsh circumstances.

7. Travel literature, both Moroccan and European, enters into the female domain. Women participated in the *hajj* and other pilgrimages, although their experience was rarely documented. A more familiar category is travel by Moroccans to the West on government-inspired missions. One such traveler, the scholar Muḥammad al-Ṣaffār, wrote a vivid account of his journey to Paris in 1845–6, in which his acute sensitivity toward the female "other" became a central motif of the voyage. On the basis of a few brief encounters, he drew firm conclusions about the place of women in French society and the nature of male-female relations among Europeans. His comments limn the contours of the Moroccan male consciousness on questions of sexuality, showing how travel literature, if read with imagination, can offer new perspectives on gender relations in the local setting.

Foreign visitors were captivated by Moroccan women, and European travel books from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are a primary source for depictions of them. The underlying intention of many of these books was to prove the moral superiority of Christians over Muslims, and often these accounts are deficient in knowledge of the country. Yet certain observers wrote accounts that resonate with authenticity. The captive Englishman Thomas Pellow circumambulated Morocco as a member of Sulṭān Mawlay Ismāʿīl's army in the late eighteenth century. His stories of the powerful women at court and of the strains on family life caused by military service provide insights into women's lives at both elite and ordinary social levels.

Two well written travel narratives from the nineteenth century deserve special mention, the first by Eugène Aubin, the pseudonym of a French diplomat who observed Moroccan society with rare sensitivity, and the second by Auguste Mouliéras, a French scholar with a consuming taste for detail. Women travelers had privileged access to female space, but on the whole their accounts offer little that is new. An exception was Amelia Perrier, a British gentlewoman who wrote a witty if barbed account of native society during her winter in Tangier in the early 1870s.

8. Biography. Hagiographical literature (*manāqib*) enjoyed great popularity in Morocco, offering stories about marginalized people that more formal genres ignored. Saintly women figure prominently in al-Tādilī's medieval compilation, *Tashawwuf ilā rijāl al-taṣawwuf* (compiled 617/1220), but they mysteriously disappear in the later dictionaries. Halima Ferhat, a Moroccan social historian of the medieval period, speculates that pious women may have lost their social standing when Sufi practice became increasingly imbricated with questions of noble descent through the male line in the sixteenth century. The hagiographical literature transmits a positive image of women, while at the same time it expresses a view that is deeply misogynistic. Ferhat claims that the roots of the popular stereotype of women as illtempered, cruel, and shrewish can be found here, contributing to the layered notion of the female persona widely held today.

For later centuries, oral sources become more important in fleshing out the saintly personality. The fieldwork of anthropologist Edward Westermarck, carried out in the early decades of the twentieth century, preserved some of this oral tradition. Westermarck's insights fundamentally shaped the formulations of the later colonial ethnography, and continue to influence Moroccan social science. A fulllength study devoted to the impact of his work on women's studies is yet to be written.

9. Finally, the importance of visual sources for the study of women in Morocco, especially in the nineteenth century, must be mentioned. As foreign curiosity about Morocco grew, so did an interest in photographing women in varieties of native dress. Photography studios were established in Tangier toward the end of the nineteenth century, among them the atelier of the Spaniard Cavilla, and the studio of a British citizen, G. W. Wilson. Both created albums of Moroccan scenes that were sold to tourists on the streets of Tangier. The garish titillation practiced by photographers in Algeria, who sometimes pictured women partially dressed, is unknown in Morocco, where women are shown in modest, covered poses. Photographs were used to illustrate travelogues and tourist

guides; a good example is Edmondo de Amicis's *Morocco: Its People and Places*, first published in Italian, lavishly illustrated with photos including rare images of rural women. The advent of the box camera and its adoption by tourists meant that women were often caught incidentally in the camera's eye, as in the Morocco albums of Leslie N. Wilson, found in the Fogg Museum at Harvard University. The Moroccan woman in Western art could be the theme of an extended monograph of its own; from Delacroix to Sargent and Matisse, the female figure was the subject of painterly attention, expressing the poetry, mystery, and exoticism with which foreign artists experienced this unknown land.

The challenge ahead

What is needed is to establish a coherent and meaningful historical narrative that places women at its center, while adding depth to our present state of scholarship. Much of the source material clusters around three principal themes: legal and political issues, including woman's changing juridical status and the impact of modernity; the evolving economy and woman's productive role in it; and woman's involvement in cultural and social life outside the family.

1. Legal and political issues. How were the lives of rural women different from those of city women from the legal standpoint? In rural areas populated mainly by Berbers, customary law – both written and oral – played a predominant role in establishing women's status. Religious scholars were prone to issue judgments that took into account local conditions, even if it meant setting aside the better-known authoritative sources. A case in point is the study by historian Aḥmad Tawfīq of a fatwa written by a religious scholar of the Middle Atlas, Muḥammad al-Kīkī (d. 1186/1772) on the validity of contracts in which women make gifts of land to male kinsmen. At issue was the fact that these contracts were sometimes made coercively and against the woman's will, thus invalidating their intent in the eyes of law. Al-Kīkī's fatwa, as analyzed by Tawfīq, demonstrates the keen sensitivity of the rural jurist to the peculiarities of the local context.

On the political level, the late nineteenth century witnessed the acceleration of the process of state formation, the centralization of power, the growing role of the *makhzan* in everyday affairs, and the introduction of European goods. Yet we have few studies that investigate the impact of these important changes on women's lives. How did the introduction of new technologies affect women and the family? Novel products, new methods of production, and changing tastes are documented in the sources. French traveler Charles René-Leclerc lists products of European manufacture for sale in Fez in 1905, including metal cooking pots, colanders, and knives; we can only conjecture the extent of their impact on the household routine. In the port cities in particular, new standards of hygiene were introduced, medical assistance became available to women even of the poorer classes, and concepts of health and healing were revised. Even simple tasks, such as supplying the household with water, underwent change. Documenting these transformations from a woman's perspective will advance our understanding of how Moroccan society as a whole faced the challenges of modernity.

2. Economic issues. What roles did women play in the violent economic shifts that transpired in this period? What were the differences between rural and urban women, rich and poor? To what extent were women integrated into local economies, into trading networks, and into long distance trade? How did the profound effects of the prolonged nineteenth-century economic crisis affect the family? None of these questions can be answered with any degree of certainty at the present time. We do know that woman's work generally went without compensation in both urban and rural settings, and as geographer Mohamed Houbbaida points out, the debate concerning the right of women to benefit from the fruits of their labors was ongoing. In the countryside, women's contribution was considered an organic component of the labor furnished by males. The role of women in the crafts industries is also documented in the sources; texts refer to women artisans as makers of rugs and weavers of mats and cloth. Historian Roger Le Tourneau notes how Jewish women in Fez were a mainstay of the profitable industry of producing *sqalli*, or golden thread, working alongside men at critical stages of production. Georges Salmon, a French sociologist working in Tangier at the turn of the last century, noted how women sellers in the weekly market came from both urban and rural origins. Early photographs provide additional testimony of their presence in public space as vendors and buyers. Women were property owners and landlords, owners of slaves, managers of businesses. Their power and efficacy in the

economy is indisputable, yet this role awaits systematic historical treatment.

3. Social issues. The social climate in which women operated in the precolonial period is the subject of both anecdotal and legal evidence. Popular imagery often refers to women in a derogatory manner. Sayings found in popular literature such as: "The peasant is both woman and donkey," reveal common attitudes that structured the social hierarchy. We have noted the physical dangers that beset women from their male relatives, raising the question of the disciplinary role of men as an excuse for cruelty. The Middle Atlas jurist al-Kīkī decries excessive use of force, saying that the ideal would be to correct with a gentle instrument, such as the stick, in order not to cause serious injury. Mohammed Ennaji writes how victimized rural women would take flight to neighboring tribes, or join the floating population of the socially marginal who sought refuge in a nearby *zāwiya*. His careful combing of the official correspondence from the late nineteenth century has yielded plentiful information on topics unspoken in the "official" chronicles, such as prostitution, slavery, and runaway women. Legitimated violence toward women continued to be accepted until a recent date, underscoring the need for a careful historical analysis of its forms and practices.

On the positive side, we should note women's constructive role in social organizations such as brotherhoods. Women took part in public processions, adding a dimension of spectacle and drama. Members of the Aysawa brotherhood set out each year en masse from their home lodge in Meknes to Tangier, with women followers of the sect figuring prominently in their cross-country march. Women regularly traveled to visit a favorite saint. These independent experiences outside the male purview appear to have been treasured moments of freedom; nineteenth-century Jewish marriage contracts from northern Morocco guarantee the woman's right to make the annual pilgrimage to the shrine of Rabbi ʿAmram b. Dīwān at Azjen. Women were dancers and musicians, performing sometimes together with men, at other times separately. Women's artistic presence altered public and private space. Careful research into these hidden aspects of women's experience will put an end to conventional notions that minimize their cultural influence.

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Literary Studies

The relation of the discipline of literary studies to the "women and Islamic cultures" of our present encyclopedic endeavor is first of all the relation of "women and Islamic cultures" to the category of literature itself. For this latter – literature, in its *modern* sense – and its attendant field of "literary studies" is a relatively recent intellectual and academic construction. Though poetry or epic or drama long pre-date the modern period and its concept of "literature," for literary studies they are understood in the modern world as specific genres contained within the broader category of literature. This was not the understanding of the ancient or classical worlds. Epic was recited by bards and inspired by the gods or the muses. It told of the lives of great mortal or semi-divine heroes and, infrequently, heroines – Gilgamesh or Innana, Odysseas or Achilles, for example – and of their relationships with the divine world and its gods as well as with the human world and its mortals. Drama had its origins in religious ritual. Poetry developed diversely in most languages of the ancient and classical worlds – love songs, elegiac verse, commemorative verse, praise songs, lyric poetry. These forms – and commentary on them – are millennia old. But the concept, term, and category of literature – and, thus, of "literary studies" – is a much later phenomenon, even if its critical "tradition" includes classical works of philosophy, rhetoric, narratives, or poetry. It is specifically in the modern period, with its construction of the category of literature and of literary studies, that we can speak of the relationship of literary studies to "women" and to "women and Islamic cultures."

MODERN LITERATURE

"Literature" comes into modern English, and into modern European Romance languages, from the Latin root *littera* or "letter." It designates, most basically, a written text – a text composed of letters. And it was, then, directly linked to the ability to decipher letters – to literacy. Literature and its study were a marker of status and class – of education, culture, manners – and of faith. And, whether or not the term and concept of literature in other languages (in the Arabic *adab*, for example) is based on the word for "letter" (and it is not in Arabic), the historical understanding of literature and access to it as the mark of culture and breeding, of textual access to religious scriptures and books, is shared from its earliest origins.

Religious literature. If specific genres – poetry, drama, epic – that are now folded into the modern category of literature have existed for millennia, so too have written texts. The sacred books of the three monotheistic religions – Christianity, Judaism, and Islam – though each with their origins in the spoken word, were all ultimately recorded and passed down as written texts as were the sacred texts of many other religions and regions. They constitute, then, "religious literature." For such religious literature, what we now call the discipline of "literary studies" was more properly textual scriptural studies – the study of the sacred word. It was a careful, serious, and faith-based linguistic endeavor. Thus, the answer to the question of whether or not there is an Islamic literature *in this sense* is unquestionably affirmative. There is a vast and rich body of religious texts that we might call – that, in fact, have been called for centuries – Islamic or Christian or Jewish or Buddhist literature.

But this is not the literature of modern literary studies. And the distinction is crucial, I think. In fact, if we are to posit a category of *modern* Islamic literature, its most productive understanding would not be as a necessarily religious or even religiously informed literature. Nor would it necessarily be a literature written by Muslims. Rather, Islamic literature is *modern* literature informed by the great multiple traditions of Islamic culture – which suffuse the literary and cultural contexts of the modern Arab world (though not only there). Thus, "Islamic" culture imbues the visual and textual and cultural production by a diverse range of artists, regardless of their specific religious affiliation or of any religious affiliation at all.

Literacy. Modern literature does, however, bear the weight of traditions from across the centuries of literature as the written religious text, and of the

man – or sometimes the woman – of literature as he or she who reads and understand the sacred word. And modern literature bears the weight of traditions for which he or she who reads is, by extension, educated, cultured, mannered, and even moral. And the foundation of that morality, culture, manner, and education was literacy, defined as the ability to read the sacred book or books. So, as in late sixteenth-century England: "hes nocht sufficient literatur to undirstand the scripture" (he hasn't sufficient literature [or letters] to understand scriptures) (quoted in Williams 1976, 184). Still and already, in the emergence from the classical or Byzantine or Islamic or classical Chinese worlds, literature and its reading – if not yet its study as in the "literary studies" of our present topic – was increasingly associated with books of a wider purview than sacred texts. In the medieval Islamic world, a learned man or woman could read the sacred texts of Islam. But he or she could also read works of geography, history, philosophy, poetry, medicine, and travel narratives. In a parallel fashion, in the late European medieval world, and especially for Renaissance Europe, the concepts of literacy and literature, while closely intertwined, were also more expansive, including more than works of a sacred nature.

Late 18th – early 20th century. Modern literature, in modern as opposed to ancient or classical or medieval languages, emerges, then, subsequent to the traditions of sacred texts. It is enabled and shaped by the spread of a shared vernacular language, by the rise of printing presses, of newspapers, of educational systems that began to include broader social strata than a royal or court or clerical elite. And modern literature is crucially informed by the simultaneous modern historical movements of nationalism, international capitalism and colonialism – which are, as Etienne Balibar sagely reminds us, diversely interwoven. "In a sense, every modern nation is a product of colonization: it has always been to some degree colonized or colonizing, and sometimes both at the same time" (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 89). For colonizing *and* colonized peoples, these social, economic, and political conditions contributed to a notion of literature as more widely accessible, as presumably secular, and also as presumably an articulation of the history and "character" of a (national) people. Modern literature – that is, written texts designated and valued as "literary" from the period beginning in the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century – unquestionably enfolded within its boundaries earlier written and oral traditions – of sacred texts, of oral poetry, of folk song and folk legend, of earlier classical or medieval texts. But modern literature was pressed into service as the textual illustration of the culture and history of a presumably *national* and *modern* people. (Alternatively, of course, it could be used as "evidence" of the non-modernity and non-national or "backward" character of a people.)

The nations emerging as ideological, cultural, economic, and political entities from the great empires of the "East" and "West" – from the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, or Russian empires – or expanding as new imperialist powers – France and England, following on their predecessors, Portugal and Spain – increasingly sought to legitimate their aspirations to being (or, in their preferred self-image, to already being) modern and unified nations via literature (and culture). That is to say, modern literature in modern languages is implicated far more directly than earlier textual traditions in the value-laden categories of empire, nation, ethnicity, and race. While these concepts and their social realities certainly were not new to the modern period, they were doubtless differently relevant and certainly differently configured for ancient or classical societies or for medieval societies or for monotheistic religions and their texts.

The nation-state. The category of modern literature, then, increasingly came to be identified with (the preferred self-image of) a people or a nation and with their modern and vernacular or at least modernized national language. In this formulation, modern literature reveals the essential characteristics and cultural continuity of a people – the general – through its very particularity or specificity – the literary text and its particular workings. Parenthetically, this formulation of modern literature as simultaneously particular – the individual literary text and its unique workings – and general – what the literary text manifests about a broader category of a people, a class, a nation – echoes a very venerable argument indeed. In a classical quarrel between the particular and the general, Aristotle's *Poetics* designated poetry as more universal (and hence more philosophical) than history – which is concerned only with the particulars. Modern literature seems to want it both ways. And one of the tasks of *modern* literary studies, then, would be to trace the workings of both in the modern literary text. Thus the discipline of literary studies as a theoretical reflection on and analysis of the creative practice of literature was called upon to pay careful attention to literature and its organization, to its language and

linguistic use – to literary content, tropes, images, and symbols. For, if sacred texts were a manifestation or revelation – or at least a suggestion – of the traces of the divine, modern, "secular," vernacular texts were some sort of manifestation or revelation as well, though now no longer of the divine but of a people or nation. (Romanticism and its legacies also offer us the literary text as the manifestation or revelation of the unique style and insight – if of an individual author more often than of a people or a nation.) This formulation of literature and of its concomitant discipline of literary studies was largely the articulation of an emerging elite of the nascent nation or nation-state. And, not surprisingly, the preferred self-image of "modern literature" and of the discipline of literary studies, as of modern nations and elites, was inconceivable without the construction of other *non*-elites, *non*-nationals, and *non*-moderns. (G. W. F. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* with its trajectory of a progression of cultural and spiritual development of [European] nations or Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* with its exhortation to the teaching of culture as an antidote to the threat of the lower classes are familiar and influential European illustrations of this configuration.)

Women in Islamic cultures

The crucial importance of this relatively recent category of modern literature to the cultural *and* political production of what came to be called, in the last decades of the twentieth century, "representations of identity" is critical to a consideration of the discipline of literary studies as it attempts to account for "women and Islamic cultures." For in earlier formulations of "literary studies," the study of women and/or of Islamic cultures was not in the manifest foreground of the discipline; such study would barely have registered at the disciplinary margins. (Eric Auerbach's magisterial *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, though in fact written in the Muslim "East" during the Second World War – in Istanbul, scarcely attended to "women and Islamic cultures." Nor did Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature*, another foundational text for literary studies in the first half of the twentieth century. More concerned with defining a field and its disciplinary foci that contained a presumably agreed-upon literary tradition, "women" or "women and Islamic cultures" were not within the range of their critical attention.) The categories of "women" and "Islamic cultures," if present at all, would have been largely relegated to vaguely titillating quasi-anthropological fantasy on the one hand (women)

and exotic and vaguely titillating quasi-anthropological displays that largely confirmed the cultural and moral superiority of the west on the other (Islamic cultures). (For numerous literary examples of this phenomenon with an astute historical view, see Mohja Kahf's *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman* with its contrast between medieval and Renaissance views of Muslim women and those of the modern period.) Though in fact foundational to the constitution of notions of the "modern" and the "West," since the modern must necessarily posit itself against a non- or anti-modern and the West against a non- or anti-West, women and Islamic cultures were hardly considered central to the discipline of literary studies. More precisely, they were not considered relevant. Concerns of linguistic or structural formalism, discussions of genius and stylistic innovation, of civilizational superiority, or of authorial biography dominated the discipline. It is only in more recent decades, from the post-Second World War period but most especially from the 1970s, that literary studies turned its attention beyond a designated canon of a literary tradition that fairly uniformly excluded women and Islamic cultures – as it excluded many other peoples and cultures.

Postcolonial studies

Edward Said's *Orientalism*, based on earlier and simultaneous work in France, became a foundational text for literary studies in the English-speaking world of the ways in which this modern eighteenth- and nineteenth-century construction process worked – most specifically for Said, of the ways in which the "West" constructed the "East." And in the folds of Said's analysis of the "Western" postulation of a largely imaginary "East" are compelling suggestions of the ways in which the "West" constructed not just the "East" but itself in the process. Said's *Orientalism* would become one of the founding texts of a field of literary studies – "postcolonial studies" – that would include as one of its proper objects "women and Islamic cultures." And the study of women and/or of Islamic cultures from this critical perspective sought not just to provide yet another story from yet another previously ignored perspective. More radically, it sought to refocus the very definition of the "Western" itself by illustrating in textual action the crucial dependency of elite notions of what was "Western" or "male" or "European" or "rational" or "civilized" on the creation of what was postulated as its polar opposite. In this context, the study of women and of women in Islamic cultures became one among a number of important ways to

challenge and seek to disassemble the narrative of the unremitting march of reason, truth, light, and civilization over against the dark, erotic, violent, feminized East. (This deadly series of oppositions is still in place, even if with some minor rhetorical tinkering, in the early twenty-first century. It is lethally mobilized once again to wage war or to justify wars already being waged against parts of the Arab world, though not only there.) Literary studies contributed to this disassembling effort its traditionally careful attention to language, to the construction of literary form, to the use of image and figure, of metaphor and symbol. And these characteristics of a (literary or non-literary) text were no longer referred to as simply the marks of the genius and creativity of an author, a language, or a great cultural tradition. They registered the fault-lines of exclusion and inclusion, of repression and silence, of power and domination. (See Leela Gandhi's *Postcolonial Theory* for a concise and clear formulation by a literary scholar of post-colonial theory's intersections with feminism, nationalism, and with the challenge of not effacing differences amongst peoples.)

Subaltern studies

Roughly simultaneous with this Anglo-French development in literary studies was the equally important and wide-ranging (though not necessarily literary) work of the subaltern studies group in South Asia. (For an introduction to their work, see Guha and Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies*; for a suggestive extension of Subaltern Studies' South Asian origins elsewhere, including to pointed considerations of gender, see Ileana Rodriguez, ed. *The Latin American Subaltern Studies Reader: Latin America Otherwise*.) Drawing from "Eastern" and "Western" theoretical traditions, subaltern studies sought to (re)construct the story of subaltern or non-dominant history that was missing both from colonial and from post-independence elite histories of India. They focused their intellectual attention on the role of groups of people almost completely missing from official, elite history – the urban poor, the peasantry, the large masses of people in India who were engaged in the making of modern India. In this context, the roles of women and of religion were included in their field of critical attention. Mining official colonial records as well as previously ignored historical documents, subaltern studies sought not just to construct a counter-narrative to an official history that allocates a "spurious primacy" to national elites. More boldly, subaltern studies as a linguistic, textual, cultural, and histor-

ical enterprise suggests, at its best, a deconstruction or problematizing of the very categories that inform colonial and national histories. The theories of cultural, social, and historical change, implicit in the work of the subaltern studies group, as the (violent) transition between sign systems situates its efforts – if metaphorically – on a terrain shared with literary studies that would study the workings of sign systems in literary texts.

So too, feminist theories and analyses – particularly, but not exclusively, with literary focuses – would take as their objects of analysis the category of "women" as it was absent from or silenced in the dominant narrative of "literature" or "culture" or "civilization." (The classic French text is Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*; for English and nineteenth-century English literature in particular, rather than language as a whole in de Beauvoir, one of the classic early texts is Gilbert and Gubar's *Madwoman in the Attic*.) And the categorical rubric of "women" grew to include not only a putatively universal concept of "woman" but also women "elsewhere." (For an incisive critique of feminism's myopia, see Chandra Talpade Mohanty's still important essay of the mid-1980s, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses.") This acknowledgment of women elsewhere – that is, outside of the presumably white, European origins of the "Western" feminist movement (though this construction of the origins of Western feminism ignores a rich array of women's activism that is neither) – included various kinds of attention to "women in Islamic cultures." As well, to the extent that French intellectual life in the post-Second World War period was directly confronted with and challenged by the French colonial legacy in North Africa, most famously in Algeria, French political, literary and feminist theories were even more explicitly drawn to a consideration of "women and Islamic cultures." The situation of women in Islamic cultures became an object of political or historical or literary attention for some feminist thought. (See, for example, the work of the Algerian-Jewish-French feminist theorist, Hélène Cixous, but also the work of sociologist Marnia Lazreg, or literary scholar Winifred Woodhull, or that of Miriam Cooke or Fedwa Malti-Douglas, the latter two writers informed by the French feminist tradition if not necessarily operating from within its parameters.) And, albeit with uneven attention to their rich and diverse traditions, writings by women from or in the Islamic worlds began to be translated. (For excellent and accomplished translations and contextualization,

see for example, the work of Marilyn Booth or of Salma Khadra Jayyusi and the Project for the Translation of Arabic, which she directs.) In addition, the influence of psychoanalytic theory – originating in the work of the nineteenth-century Austrian "father of psychoanalysis," Sigmund Freud, and evolving substantially in the work of the twentieth-century psychoanalytic theorist, Jacques Lacan, and the numerous appropriations of his work – in the field of feminist literary studies is noteworthy in this instance as it summons attention to language and its (often unintentional) tropic use as an optic for understanding gendered cultures. (See, for example, Evelyn Accad's *Sexuality and War* or the insightful performance of a literary analysis profoundly informed by psychoanalysis and by questions of race and gender – though the focus of her attention is not women and Islamic cultures – in Barbara Johnson's excellent *The Feminist Difference: Literature, Psychoanalysis, Race, and Gender*.)

Conclusion

This brief survey of broad categories of thought and analysis – of modern literature and its attendant discipline of literary studies, of attention to (or ignoring of) "women and Islamic cultures" – reiterates an abiding concern of literary studies that has inflected that discipline's effort to "study" women and Islamic cultures. Postcolonial or feminist or subaltern studies have each refocused attention on women and (Islamic) cultures within the field of literary studies. (See also the compelling intersection of these approaches in a work such as Ania Loomba's *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*.)

Studying literature – learning to read with careful attention to language and form, to structure and content, to historical and social context, to literary traditions – provides a way of reading and "learn[ing] to learn from the singular and unverifiable" of literature (Spivak 1998, 145, n. 49). It can remind us, if only figuratively, of how we "study" and "read" the world beyond the literary text. A great diversity of epistemologies (ways of knowing), theories (generalized optics or ways of seeing), and methods (ways of disciplinary practice) inhabits the discipline of literary studies. Nevertheless it attempts to take up questions of gender ("women"), of relative cultural difference ("Islamic cultures"), and of unequal relations of cultural and social power – though it has not always done so – literary studies can afford a useful reminder of the ways in which the study of literature teaches us to read, to query, and to learn differently, and to be attentive to the silences, lapses,

and ambiguities of (literary) language, text, and context.

If literature interrupts the familiar use patterns and conventions of language, in so doing it offers an opportunity to the reader to reflect anew on the (literary) word, on the literary world, and on the extra-literary world. If literature interrupts the familiar use patterns and conventions of language, it can also engage in a similar and similarly productive interruption of patterns and conventions of thought. It can call attention to the ways in which the unheeding or intellectually careless study of women and Islamic cultures can construct away the object of critical attention. For inclusive study carries its own dangers, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak shrewdly signals:

> This demand [on the inhabitant of the Third World to speak up as an authentic ethnic fully representative of his or her tradition] . . . in principle ignores an open secret: that an ethnicity untroubled by the vicissitudes of history and neatly accessible as an object of investigation is a confection to which the disciplinary pieties of the anthropologist, the intellectual curiosity of the early colonials and the European scholars partly inspired by them, *as well as* the indigenous elite nationalists, by way of the culture of imperialism, contributed their labors, and the (proper) object (of investigation) is therefore "lost" (1998, 60).

Yet still, within the field of literary studies as it reads and studies literature, "learning to learn" from the "singular and the unverifiable," we might also learn to learn from that which is not the same, not a confection of repeatable identity, not simply a quiescent object for literary or any other study. We might also be able to learn to learn *from* women in Islamic cultures. And perhaps *about* women and Islamic cultures. All the while questioning those categories of thought that appear to us as a given – "women" or "culture" or literature, or yes, even "Islamic."

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MARY LAYOUN

Love: Premodern Discourses, Persian, Arabic, Ottoman, Iberian, and South Asian (Overview)

INTRODUCTION

The subject of love (ʿishq, ḥubb, maḥabbat, hawā) in the major premodern Islamic textual traditions (Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and Urdu poetry) can be characterized by two broad issues: one is an ongoing tension between sacred (ḥaqīqī) and profane (majāzī) love; the other is the question of the gender of the beloved, especially as it is reflected through the prism of language(s). It would be well to keep in mind that much of the literature on love is the production of male writers situated in privileged positions (often as educated, professional courtiers) and their construction of types and situations of love, whether heterosexual or homosexual, reflects the concerns of the particular milieu in which they functioned. Parallel to the courtly discourse on love and intersecting it at various junctures was the practice and language of Sufism, which became such an organic element of this literature that it is often futile to make distinctions based on the genre of a text or biography of its author. Despite the vast region that these language traditions covered and the fact that the participants in this culture were members of societies that were ostensibly Islamic but often infused with distinctive local traditions that added new dimensions to the classical heritage they encountered, the poetics of the literature of love remained unchanged until early modern times. Beginning with classical Arabic literature, writing about love in a mannered way was an urban phenomenon that branched off in new directions with the independent growth of Persian(ate) cultures. The underlying and persistent theme in any discourse on love, whether poetic or philosophical, was that the state of love is ecstatic but accompanied by sorrow and suffering, and the entire experience leads the lover to a mystical and/or psychological transformation, which often involves martyrdom. Love and desire are the result of a particular manifestation of beauty, whose aesthetic standards were dictated by shifting tastes and local preferences, and captured in multiple ways in the written and visual sources. The object of love in lyric poetry was a woman or a boy (sāqī or shāhid), but the reader's role is not to grapple with clues as to the beloved's identity but rather to receive and enjoy the text at multiple levels. By the analogic use of a poetic language made up of fixed images and cryptic metaphors, the relationship of lover and beloved was transferred to express multiple sets of power relationships: slave and master, poet and patron, or man and God.

ADAB

The intellectual and theoretical tradition of the state of love forms the subject of many *adab* works in Arabic, the most influential being *Risāla fī al-ʿishq wa-al-nisā* (Essay on passionate love and woman) of al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 869), and the Andalusian work *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* (The dove's neckring) of Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064). These works describe the psychological and philosophical aspects of love with its physiological and social effects, giving the reader the benefit of the author's personal experiences. *Adab* works written in a mixture of poetry and prose were models of writing in the first place, their contents being incidental to the author's larger literary endeavor. This explains the popularity of anthologies that combine anecdotes with the author's own poetry, such as Muḥammad ibn Dāʾūd's (d. 910) *Kitāb al-zahrā* (Book of the flower), a large anthology of love poetry, and in Persian the ever popular Saʿdī's (d. 1292) *Gulistān*, whose fifth chapter on love and youth is a collection of moralistic and didactic anecdotes. The Persian mirror for princes genre, such as *Qābūsnāma* by Kay Kāvus written in 1082–3, offered practical advice on matters of conducting love affairs with a view to providing a normative guide for the ideal lover. Platonist ideas regarding the ethical dimensions of love formed the basis of much of the theoretical discourse such as Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's (d. 1274) *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, which places good as the ultimate goal of true love over pleasure and profit. These works make a clear distinction between marriage, sex, and love, although there can be overlap in these categories. Moderation is called for in matters of love, and being uxorious is viewed as a malady that can lead to a person becoming unmanly and in danger

of falling into the control of women. In Persian Sufi works, the most systematic and theoretical discussion on the qualities of love was carried on, such as in the influential mystical treatise, Aḥmad Ghazzālī's (d. 1123) *Savāniḥ*, which gave a fixed form to the nature of poetic discourse. Whereas prose works are prescriptive and normative in nature, and are always explicit about the gender of the beloved, it is in poetry that the fullest expression of love in all its forms takes place and creates an ambiguity regarding gender that persists in some form till the present day. Especially in the later Persianate traditions, the fact that Sufi terminology and concepts had permeated all forms of discourse whether courtly or not, means that distinctions regarding the profane or mystical nature of love and gender become almost impossible to make. Mystical poetry became the template through which all forms of love were expressed, to the point where ambiguity became a regular feature of the discourse on love. Poets followed the "religion of love" prescribed by Muslim mystics as a creed that was universally expressed in a framework adapted for both secular and profane poetry, wiping out the connective seams in the process.

PREMODERN POETRY

Gender has been a central issue in scholarly debates on premodern Islamic poetry since the object of desire can be of either sex, irrespective of the grammatical gender of the language. From the early Beduin poets of the Arabian Peninsula, who expressed their passionate love for women called Salmā and Hind who had departed with their caravans, to the development of the cult of chaste love (ʿudhrī) among Umayyad poets, the object of desire for male poets writing in Arabic was women for the most part. Homoerotic poetry, although not uncommon, was perceived as a Persian influence, with the symbolic agent of this act of cultural transference being the ʿAbbāsid poet Abū Nuwās (d. ca. 810). Multiple forms of love are to be found in later Arabic poetry with an increased obfuscation of the attributes of the beloved, leading to the innovative and enigmatic hybrid compositions of Andalusian poets, which were produced in a milieu in which Muslim, Christian, and Jewish intellectual and artistic traditions interacted with each other. In Persianate poetry, the gender issue becomes moot although it is never far from the consciousness of literary critics. Lacking grammatical gender, Persian poetry was ambiguous from the beginning, and Ottoman and Urdu poetic traditions, which came into their

own through a Persianate orientation, often identify gender but invariably represent the beloved as male. Scholarly studies of these two traditions emphasize that love poetry was a product of the poet being part of a sexually segregated society, and therefore the malleable *ghazal* form of poetry was immediately relevant to their experiences, a point that may be said to be common to all the traditions discussed here, but which ignores the long and complex Arabic and Persian classical traditions embedded in the Islamicate poetic consciousness. In this male-oriented literary culture, women's voices are extremely marginalized although the small number of names of female poets in sources may be related to the fact that they were not included in the classical canon. The voices of women expressing love are often heard at the margins of the Islamic world: noteworthy for its literary innovation is the *muwashshaḥ*, a hybrid form of Andalusian poetry and the product of a region of cross-cultural currents, whose final section (*kharja*) sometimes had a female voice speaking in a vernacular dialect; at the other end of the Islamic world, early Urdu poetry of the sixteenth century from the Deccan was inspired by the Indic tradition of having a woman/beloved as the speaker of the *ghazal* who sings about the pain of separation from her absent lover, a convention that was discarded in favor of the conventional homoerotic type of poem. The poetic language of the love lyric is marked by the use of an almost infinite number of binary opposites, in terms of images as well as the cast of characters that people the poems. These images tend to become clichés over time and allow the works to be interpreted completely on the allegorical level, so much so that this feature is regarded as the "culmination" of a tradition marking the demise of classicism. The allegorical work *Love and Beauty* by the Ottoman poet Gālib from 1783 is as much about the language of poetry and the burden of tradition as about its ostensibly erotic subject matter. One constant in all the traditions is the poet/lover of mystical bent who obsessively pursues his object of desire and breaks away from society and tradition in his quest for love. The persona of the lover often merges with that of the poet, making for a poetic language that is often subjective and highly charged.

NARRATIVE PROSE AND POETRY

Heterosexual. Tales with complicated plots and a host of varied characters are to be found in prose narratives such as the *Thousand and One Nights* and the *maqāmāt* genre that treat love and

sex as incidental to the plot without a systematic development of the subject. Topical anthologies in classical Arabic literature are replete with anecdotes and poetry about love. A rare narrative tale from an Arabic anthology of stories about famous lovers that survives in a fragment from Andalusia is the story of Bayāḍ and Riyāḍ. Lovers are often depicted in a courtly setting like this one, with their peers, who represent the society against which their love must struggle. The realm of narrative poetry (maṣnavī) is a Persian(ate) form that is almost without exception a genre of heterosexual love as opposed to the ambiguous lyric. Here the employment of legendary or historical lovers allows for a more concrete depiction of amorous themes and also facilitates the visual representation of these tales. There are innumerable pairs of lovers and characters in Persian(ate) language narratives, and often the same figures are represented in multiple ways because local aesthetic and literary preferences and the function of a particular story changed over time and across regions. The major characters from these romantic maṣnavīs have become emblematic figures in the Persian literary imagination, both in the vocabulary of lyric verse as well as in everyday language, extending from Iran to the many cultural traditions of Central and South Asia. Although women wrote lyric poetry there seems to be no instance of a verse romance authored by a female from any of the literary histories under discussion. Whereas the more intimate lyric form allowed women to participate to some extent in the discourse of love, the verse romance is a narrative constructed by male authors that addresses the concerns of a predominantly male audience, whether courtly or Sufi. However, women occupy a central place in the plots of this genre and the agency that is accorded them varies according to the poet's intent. The most universally known lover in premodern Islamic poetry is Majnūn. The story of his devotion to Laylā (Laylī in Persian), who is much like the unattainable lady of courtly love poetry, has its origins in Arabian legends but continues to capture the popular imagination beyond the Islamic world to this day. The Persian poetic version of this story by the poet Niẓāmī Ganjavī (d. 1209) presents the most complete picture of the detrimental effects of a passionate and chaste love that causes the lover to be afflicted with dementia and irrationality and finally to be ostracized from society. The lover's state of isolation is expressed by Majnūn who has retreated from the civilized world and only has animals as his companions against a natural setting (Figure

1). Although the focus of creative interest in this tale is largely on Majnūn's state, the love between him and Laylī is mutual, having blossomed in childhood when they saw each other in the classroom. Gazing at a beautiful person who is to become the object of love is a central event in the narratives of love as in Niẓāmī's story of the lovers Khusraw and Shīrīn, when love first blossoms through Khusraw's gaze on Shīrīn bathing in a pool of water. This is an essential stage on the path of love, whether it takes a profane or mystical form, so much so that the Sufi practice of gazing at beautiful boys (shāhid) became controversial. In the love tales set in courtly circles, such as Khusraw va Shīrīn and Haft paykar, values of proper kingship and moral rectitude are expounded through the metaphor of love, with the woman protagonist often being a catalyst to help the male/king adopt the right path. One of the most beautifully crafted and complex love tales is Haft paykar, which describes the love of the Persian king Bahrām Gūr for seven princesses from all the climes of the world, against the backdrop of a universal and cosmic harmony of the planets and accompanied by color and number symbolism. A departure from the representation of a woman as virtuous and chaste is the obsessive love of Zulaykhā for the beautiful youth Yūsuf. A story that in the Islamic context goes back to the Qurʾān and was versified by the Persian poet Jāmī (d. 1492), it is ultimately a tale about the construction of female sexual desire at the hands of a male writer. Zulaykhā's behavior is irrational and often surreal, as when she beseeches Yūsuf to reappear in her dreams as other women look on disapprovingly. Another major symptom of love is illness that results in the poet/lover being suspended in a state between reality and hallucination (Qābūsnāma, 72). Although in lyric poetry the lover's state is explored in all its multifarious manifestations, it is in narrative verse that this representation shifts from being metaphorical to realistic. The Urdu poet Mīr Taqī Mīr (d. 1810) wrote several short verse narratives, some in an autobiographical mode, about the debilitating effects of love on the poet/lover in an oppressive social setting that is fundamentally hostile to lovers. The reversification and reintepretation of well known stories by Persian, Ottoman, and Urdu poets, cast in a mystical vein and a language with a fixed set of aesthetic and ethical ideals, allowed for localized and peripheral elements to become part of this canon. Most notably in the case of Indo-Persian, a distinctively hybrid South Asian aesthetic and textual culture developed that

played a formative role in shaping the discourse of love in various vernacular and folk traditions.

Homosexual. In contrast to the love lyric, narrative poetry rarely dealt with the subject of homosexual love, with the exception of the story of Sulṭān Maḥmūd and his slave Ayāz, which does not depict love between two equals but the power dynamics between a king and his slave. Initially celebrated as an example of sincere love between two opposites in the works of Persian poets such as ʿAṭṭār (d. ca. 1220), the tale was versified by the poet Zulālī (d. 1615) as an epic with the lovers bonding in the shared experience of the Muslim conquest of India. A similar pair in the homoerotic genre of king and beggar is exemplified by the *Ḥālnāma* (Book of ecstasy) of ʿĀrifī (d. 1449), where the pairing of king-beggar/Sufi or master-slave allows for the roles of the lovers to be reversed, a paradigm that paradoxically becomes normative and is repeated innumerable times in the context of other relationships. The Indo-Persian poet Ghanīmat Kunjāhī's work of 1685, *Nayrang-i ʿishq* (Sorcery of love), is an allegorical work that describes the passion of ʿAzīz for Shāhid, a dancer who falls in love with a woman after a short-lived passionate affair with his lover. This story like many of the love tales of Persian was cast in a mystical framework to make it morally palatable to its readers.

Love of the other

The lover's obsession for a beloved who belongs to a different religious community, whether Zoroastrian, Christian, or Hindu, has appealed to writers of the larger Islamic community, whose history of contact with non-Muslims is written into the discourse of love as a political or more often mystical encounter with the other. This story is a variation on the constantly utilized trope of love between individuals who are binary opposites in some way, whether belonging to a different class, social, religious, or gender group. The complexities of power relationships and social tensions are worked out through narratives of love, and in the folktales of many cultures love between members of different communities is a central topic in which union often involves fantastic plots and exciting adventures. In Indo-Persian, the romance by Amīr Khusraw (d. 1325), ʿĀshīqa, on the love of his patron's son, the Muslim prince Khiẓr Khān, for the Hindu princess Deval Rānī, not only symbolizes the victory of the Muslim invader over the feminized Hindu state but also celebrates the union that produces a new syncretic culture. The story of the pious Shaykh Ṣanʿān, who temporarily gave up his creed for his love for a Christian girl, found a new life in Qājār times in Iran, being used to visually represent the encounter of an outmoded way of life (Iran) with a new civilization (Europe). The Ottoman poet Nedīm (d. 1730) was considered innovative in depicting his beloved as a European, and similarly, the lover with all the traditional characteristics is actually an Englishman in one of the stories interposed in the Urdu poet Rajab ʿAlī Surūr's *Fasāna-i ʿajāʾib*, written in 1824. Exoticizing the practices of love in the culture of one's other can render the poet a voyeur but allows for the expansion of the parameters of the standard repertoire of images utilized by poets. A poetic narrative, *Sūz o gudāz* (Burning and melting) by the Iranian poet Nawʿī (d. 1609), an émigré at the Mughal court in India, describes the passionate love between two young Hindus in the vein of Majnūn and Laylī. The self-immolation (*sati*) of the female protagonist on the funeral pyre of her lover who accidentally dies before they can achieve union raises the standard for measuring fidelity among sincere lovers. The passion of love actually causing a person to go up in flames is also dealt with in a short anecdote in Amīr Khusraw's *Maṭlaʿ al-anvār* whose illustration shows a bathhouse keeper burning for the love of a king. A literary genre of classical Persian poetry that combines notions of beauty, desire, and love is the *shahrāshūb* (or *şehrengiz* in Ottoman Turkish), which is a catalogue of young boys engaged in various crafts described in lyrical poetry. This poetry presents love as a cosmopolitan commercial activity against the backdrop of a thriving metropolis. An early poet of this genre is the eleventh-century vilified woman Mahsatī who wrote bawdy verses about boys in the bazaar. In Persian, this poetic genre is exclusively homoerotic, but in Ottoman it takes on a life of its own and there are poems of this type that describe women of different cities. It is thus another instance of the dissolution of the gendered confines of the Persian language in a related tradition. The text and illustrations of the *Zenānnāme* (Book of women) by the Ottoman poet Fāżil Enderunlu (d. 1810) describe women of the world and depict them as beautiful objects in public spaces where they are open to everyone's gaze, showing the society as well as the landscape of poetry opening up to new possibilities and perspectives.

Visual representations

Paintings from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often document the changing spatial

world of lovers and the sphere in which love is practiced and represented to an audience. Although illustrations from long narratives continued to be produced, including familiar scenes of famous lovers, a consciousness of the intimate and private space of lovers can be observed in illustrations from the Timurid and post-Timurid times that depict a pair of lovers in a garden or courtly setting, increasingly unaccompanied by any attendant figures. The rise of single-page painting and the popularity of the album form (*muraqqaʿ*), where unconnected specimens of calligraphy and painting were collected, also facilitated this shift towards individual representation. Over time, as *ghazal* poetry came to be interpreted solely on the mystical level, its inherent symbolism was visually represented by the figures of a male or Sufi with a woman (Figure 2) or boy (Figure 3), the only two possible pairs of lovers in this context in the idyllic microcosm of this textual world. In a remarkable Mughal painting (Figure 4), a style generally characterized by its attention to realism, two actual lovers, Prince Shujā and his wife, who were married in 1633, are depicted together, their eyes locked in an amorous and tender gaze. With the advent of modernity, major shifts in the aesthetic standards subscribed to by artists of the Islamic traditions took place, with parallel developments in the written cultures.

European influence

Beginning earlier but most perceptibly in the nineteenth century, the encounter with European cultures and the privileging of their literary norms over all the language traditions discussed above, the traditional discourse and practices of love, and notions of beauty and desire, began to be challenged and much of the literary heritage of the past was deemed worthless and perceived as the product of a decadent and ineffectual tradition. Bourgeois attitudes towards love, sex, and marriage, along with the suppression of homoerotic and sexually ambiguous forms of desire, contributed to a new type of literature that was meant to be realistic and wholesome. The classical poetic convention of addressing the beloved as a male, which supposedly protected the honor and identity of women in premodern times, was now ironically forced to reflect only heterosexual love. In the case of Iran, a study of painting and literature of the nineteenth century shows that in the course of modernization homoeroticism was transformed into a complex veiled heteroeroticism (Najmabadi forthcoming). The colonial

presence in India and the suppression of Muslims in 1857 led the Urdu critic Hālī to proclaim a new poetic manifesto that ironically called for a rejection of classical poetics precisely in order to salvage the tradition (Pritchett 1994, 182). The *ghazal*, which was the site of Persianate homoerotic notions of beauty and love for so long continues to be a popular form in Persian and Urdu today, but with its inherent ambiguity suppressed and considered to be purely a generic marker. Narrative tales in verse or prose were superseded by the novel and short story, literary forms that brought their own cultural and generic expectations, but that simultaneously incorporated native notions of love and desire in the new forms of discourse.

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SUNIL SHARMA

Science: Discourses and Gender (Overview)

This entry will explore the emergence of scientific discourses on women and gender in Islamic cultures in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through the transformation of the notion of science from "useful arts" to modern forms of scientific knowledge and practices.

Biological reproduction and female illnesses

The medicalization of childbearing in Islamic cultures throughout the nineteenth century illustrates the centrality of reproduction to the emergence of scientific discourses on gender. Historically, this entailed the replacement of local midwives with individuals trained in the modern science of medicine, as well as the supervision of that process by state authorities. Thus, in Ottoman Egypt under the reign of Muḥammad ʿAlī, a school of midwives was established in 1832, among the first of its kind in the Middle East. Training for female doctors, ḥakīmāt, was for a period of six years and included obstetrics, pre- and post-natal care, hygiene, vaccination, and the preparation of medicines (Kuhnke 1990, 125). The newly trained ḥakīmāt were instrumental in administering vaccinations, supervising and certifying midwives, collecting vital statistics, treating syphilis, ascertaining the virginity of maidens, and performing post-mortem autopsies on female victims of epidemics and murder (Fahmy 1998, 49–50). Through the services they rendered ḥakīmāt were part of a larger state project of disseminating medical knowledge to the broader public, of undermining "old wives' medicine," and, less innocuously, supervising and monitoring larger segments of the population, particularly women. Similarly, in Ottoman Turkey, medical schools began training local midwives in 1842. Often, the medicalization of childbearing embodied the need for larger populations to sustain increased agricultural productivity and military strength.

Childbearing continued, throughout the twentieth century, to be subject to medicalization, in particular through private women's initiatives and state-sponsored maternal-child welfare clinics, which were aimed at reducing high infant mortality rates. In turn-of-the-century colonial India, for example, traditional midwives (dāyāt) were blamed for high infant mortality rates, and in 1934 the All India Women's Conference called for the registration of all dāyāt and midwives (Gupta 2002, 177–85). High infant mortality rates had plagued the Muslim world since the turn of the century, with epidemics such as cholera and smallpox claiming the lives of children under the age of five. Indigenous women's associations and organizations emerged in the Muslim world from a tradition of religious charitable organizations and learned societies. Centered on social welfare and uplift, local welfare societies began to emerge in the first quarter of the twentieth century, concerned principally with the protection of motherhood and childhood, and the lowering of maternal and infant mortality rates.

Partly in response to European colonial allegations that the indigenous population was unable to care properly for its offspring, children's dispensaries and maternal-child health clinics sought to instruct mothers in the methods of cleanliness and the proper feeding and bringing up of their children. Local women's associations and schools emerged in, for example, Egypt (the Mabarra Muḥammad ʿAli, 1909); Lahore, India (the Muslim Woman's Organization, 1908); Zanzibar (Arab Girls' School of Zanzibar, 1927); and Mombasa (the Government Arab Girls' School, 1938), and were often responsible for the diffusion of health propaganda to mothers and children. Other examples in the Muslim world were in Lebanon where the Sisters of Love was founded in 1847, containing a school, sanitarium, and home for wayward girls, and the Orthodox Aid Society for the Poor founded in Acre, Palestine in 1903 (Fleischmann 1999, 102). Between 1919 and 1921 the Red Cross founded mothers' societies in Beirut, Aleppo, and Damascus (Thompson 2000, 84–5). In Turkey during the second constitutional period (1908–19), several women's societies were formed, such as the Red Crescent Women's Center (1912) and the Society for the Defense of Women (1914) whose goal

was "to render mothers capable of bringing up their children according to the principles of modern pedagogy" (Fleischmann 1999, 103). An interest in the scientific organization of the protection of childhood began to develop, and, for example, Egyptian delegates were sent to attend international conferences in 1925. Islamists, too, concerned themselves with the protection of motherhood and Muslim Brother Ḥasan al-Banna founded an Institute for the Mothers of the Believers in Egypt in 1933, while Zaynab al-Ghazālī founded the Muslim Women's Association in 1936 – encouraging Muslim women to be modern, scientific, and educated in order to be proper mothers.

While childbearing was one component of the scientification of gender discourses, reproductive diseases and other female illnesses also began to be linked to the eradication of folk medicine (*tibb al-rukka*). By the turn of the century folk medicine was relegated to a realm of predominantly female superstition and irrational non-modern practices to be replaced by the new medical sciences. Thus, conditions such as infertility, once the purview of local healers, became subject to the new discourses of health and science. An example of the denigration of traditional or folk medicine is ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ismāʿīl's 1892–4 study entitled *Tibb al-rukka*, which critiqued the practices of old wives' medicine in modern Egypt. In India Mawlana ʿAlī Thanawī's *Bihishti Zewar* (Heavenly ornaments) – a "guide for respectable women" – critiqued customary practices, especially related to childbearing, but, interestingly, encouraged women to learn the traditional *yunani tibb* ("the scientific medicine of the Greco-Arabic humoral system") alongside modern medical practices (Metcalf 1990, 10). In North and central Africa emergent scientific discourses especially targeted the female practice of *zar-bori* (or the exorcism associated with spirit possession) for religious and medical reform, often viewing the illness as a form of female hysteria or a heterodox "un-Islamic" practice (Morsy 1993, 18, Hale 1996, 6).

Another arena where state intervention sanctioned scientific gender discourses was in the regulation of prostitution and the transmission of venereal diseases. The regulation of sexual diseases and, in particular, syphilis, had long been one of the exigencies of the large-scale military campaigns and encampments of the nineteenth century. So much so that in 1835 Dr. Clot Bey, the Frenchman who helped establish the modern medical profession in Egypt, wrote a treatise on syphilis, which had reached near epidemic pro-

portions in the Ottoman viceroy Muḥammad ʿAlī's large naval and military bases (Fahmy 1998, 43). Prostitution had been legal in Egypt throughout most of the nineteenth century, although criminalized in Cairo. By the 1860s and 1870s the ban had been lifted in Cairo and prostitution became subject to state regulation with required medical examinations and health certificates. After the 1882 occupation prostitution came under British regulation, taking place in registered houses and with "compulsory weekly examinations" (Badran 1995, 192–206).

Colonial armies, too, regulated prostitution and in Algeria the French army mandated monthly medical visits for prostitutes (Lazreg 1994, 55). Similarly, in French mandatory Syria and Lebanon, the French colonial army was keen to regulate prostitution, passing laws in 1921 (Syria) and 1931 (Lebanon) that required prostitutes to register with the police, carry identification cards, and be medically examined twice weekly (Thompson 2000, 86–7). In colonial India, British officials became increasingly concerned with the regulation and registration of prostitutes, and the containment of venereal diseases, particularly after the 1857 revolt (Gupta 2002, 109–10). By contrast, in colonial Mombasa, a port city where prostitution flourished, official attempts to regulate the trade (such as a 1929 regulation requiring travel passes certifying that women were married) were largely unsuccessful and the government settled on the regulation of venereal diseases (Strobel 1979, 141–50).

Prostitution was often posed as a religious and public health issue, with Muslim reformers expressing concern for the moral and physical health of the people. Thus, Islamist discourse dovetailed with public health prescriptions. For example, Egyptian feminist Hudā al-Shaʿrāwī wrote to Shaykh al-Azhar Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl to enlist his support in banning prostitution, which he did by commending the Egyptian Feminist Union for "commanding good and forbidding evil" (Badran 1995, 198). In the Netherlands Indies where mixed unions between Europeans and natives had become increasingly common by the turn of the century, the *Sarekat Islam* "campaigned against concubinage on religious grounds," while colonial authorities expressed concern over the eugenic fitness of children born of mixed unions (Stoler 1997, 221).

Interestingly, the prevention of sexual diseases and prostitution led to proposals for the encouragement and medicalization of marriage. In April 1941 Muslim Brother Sayyid Quṭb proposed the

reconsideration of a law in Egypt that called for the medical testing and certification of individuals before marriage by government physicians to ensure the sexual and reproductive health of the couple (S.Q. 1941, 90). This failed attempt to medicalize marriage was one component of state efforts to assert control over the reproductive process.

Social reproduction

Female education and the Woman Question. The turn of the century witnessed a proliferation of writings throughout the Muslim world surrounding what came to be known as the Woman Question. Throughout the late nineteenth and the twentieth century Muslim reformers began to agitate for female education, linking the reform of women inextricably to the progress of the nation as Qāsim Amīn's widely read and controversial 1899 *Taḥrīr al-marʾa* had done.

Yet Amīn's ideas did not arise in a vacuum and debates in Turkey and India, for example, both foreshadowed and followed many of his arguments. Critical of the Tanzimat reforms as superficial and imitative of the West, the Young Ottomans have traditionally been viewed as the first proponents of women's emancipation in Turkey, posing the reform of women as essential to civilizational progress. Tanzimat (1839–76) and Hamidian (1876–1908) era writers such as Namīk Kemal (1840–88) used dualisms like *alafranga* (*alla franca*) and *alaturka* to highlight the Westernized versus indigenous elements within Turkish society (Göle 1996, 33–4). As Partha Chatterjee has noted in the Indian context, anticolonial nationalist discourse situated the Woman Question within an inner domain of spirituality, localized within the home and embodied by the feminine; nationalist discourse was thus enabled to construct a cultural essence distinct from the West (Chatterjee 1993, 134).

Another example is produced by Turkish writer Mahmud Esad (1865–1918) who asserted the division of the world into a material and spiritual realm. The Western (representing material scientific progress) could be adopted so long as the Eastern spiritual realm remained intact. Women functioned as either the "touchstone of Westernization" (Göle 1996, 27) or the "touchstone" of Western "contamination" (Kandiyoti 1991, 32) depending on one's ideological position. For Westernists, the superiority of the West in science and technology related to its positivist world-view and critique of religion, while for Islamists the abandonment of Sharīʿa was the

cause of Ottoman decline. Two Turkish texts related these issues to the status of women: Şemseddin Sami (1850–1914) published *Kadinlar* (Women, 1880) stating "the condition of any society is always symmetrical to the condition of women," hence the necessity to educate women in science and proper child-rearing; and Fatma Aliye Hanīm (1864–1924) published *Nisvan-ī Īslam* (Women of Islam, 1891), arguing that Islam was not a barrier to the "progress of civilization" (Göle 1996, 32–3).

Scientific child-rearing. Articles in the turn-of-the-century women's press in the Muslim world began to consolidate new scientific gendered discourses on wifehood, domesticity, and proper child-rearing. Among the first women's journals in the Islamic world were *al-Fatā* (Egypt 1892), *Hanimlara Mahsus Gazete* (Turkey 1895), *Khatoon* (in Urdu, India 1904), *Danish* (Iran 1910), *al-ʿArūs* (Syria 1910), and *Fatā Lubnān* (Lebanon 1914). Common throughout the literature of the turn of the century was a concern for the proper upbringing or education of the future generations. Proper child-rearing came to condense a complex set of debates about the nature of mothering, child-rearing, the progress of nations, and the backwardness of Muslim nations.

A fundamental shift occurred at this time as mothers became responsible for the physical, moral, and intellectual development of children. Nationalist discourses began to problematize child-rearing, calling for its reorganization on scientific lines according to modern, hygienic, and rational principles. Within many Muslim colonial settings, "ignorant" mothers were problematized by both colonial administrators and indigenous modernizing reformers as particularly unsuited for the preparation of a new generation. Such assertions held up the example of an advanced and scientific European pedagogy to corroborate their argument, pointing to the relationship between proper mothering and the progress of the nation.

The importance of mothering and child-rearing thus played a critical role in the emergence of scientific gender discourses. The creation of a national family in Turkey emphasized the importance of women's role in socializing the sons of the nation (Duben and Behar 1991, 212–14, 216). Beginning in the Hamidian era, and particularly from the late 1880s, Turkish writers began to focus on the relationship between proper child-rearing, social reform, and the health of society. Drawing on the French sociological and psychological tradition, treatises on child health and child-rearing manuals began to flourish, and pedi-

atrics itself emerged as a specialization (ibid., 226–38). Abdullah Cevdet (1869–1932), a positivist and biological materialist, argued for the "rehabilitation of the mothers of the nation . . . on scientific grounds" (Kandiyoti 1991, 33). In 1909 medical doctor Nuṣrat Fuʾād published his enormously popular (three editions) *Izdivaç Şerait-i Sihhiye ve Içtimaiyesi* (The hygienic and social conditions of marriage) in which he covered the hygienic preconditions for healthy family life (marriage, housekeeping, and child-rearing) (Duben and Behar 1991, 138, 182–3, 205). Ahmet Midhat Efendi (1844–1912) began publishing influential texts in the late 1890s (such as *Istidâd-i Itfâl* or Children's aptitude and *Çocuk Melakât-i Uzviye ve Ruhiyesi* or The physical and mental faculties of children) instructing parents and children alike and connecting the progress of Europe to proper child-rearing. Such ideas on mothering were disseminated widely through organizations such as the Society for the Protection of Children and its journal *Gürbüz Türk Çocuğu* (The robust Turkish child) and the premier women's journal of the pre-republican era *Kadinlar Dünyasi* (Women's world) in which women were exalted as mothers and child-rearers.

Turn-of-the-century Persian texts reconfigured the premodern concept of woman from house (*manzil*) to manager of house (*mudabbir i-manzil*) (Najmabadi 1998, 91). The centrality of motherhood and wifehood in Iran during the modern period is illustrated by child-rearing and domestic science textbooks, which began to address the mother (rather than father). The "modern educational regimes" of the turn of the century created an image of the modern woman as manager of the household and educator of children, requiring the cultivation of scientific sensibilities. Writers such as Mīrza Āqā Khān Kirmānī (1853–96) in his *Sad khatābah* imagined the womb as both a vessel and a school (*maktab*), and linked the advancement of women to national civility (Najmabadi 1998, 92–5). Iranian discourses were hybridized with European discourses as, for example, in the late nineteenth-century *Kitāb-i Aḥmad*, a modified version of Rousseau's *Emile* (Najmabadi 1998, 99–100). An 1891 text entitled *Tarbiyat-i aṭfāl*, which covered hygiene, proper child-rearing, and housekeeping, embodies the transformation of the largely female and oral domain of woman's wisdom into male authored texts aimed at the inculcation of scientific sensibilities (Najmabadi 1998, 104–7).

Iran's constitutional revolution (1905–11) initiated a consciously secular modernity in contra-

distinction to the Qājār monarchy. During the constitutional era (1905–20) family life, now envisaged as part of a national family, transformed mothering into a central task for the creation of national citizens. The acquisition of modern science through education, in particular, was viewed as a means to overcome national backwardness and the backwardness of women. Journals such as *Danish* (1910) and *Shukūfa* (1914–18) promoted the science of housekeeping, child-rearing, and husband management (ʿilm i-shawhardārī). The new Iranian woman was to be a scientific mother and the house a space of citizenship. In a 1910 article a female principal exhorted: "you respected women must seriously and with great effort seek sciences and spread knowledge" (Najmabadi 1998, 108). The Pahlavi era (1925–79) in Iran consolidated a secular nationalist vision of modernity, in emulation of the Kemalist secular state, while inaugurating an aggressive project of state-building. Under Reza Shah's reign (1925–41) women became symbols of modernity appropriated by the state, symbolized by the 1936 ban on veiling. A state-sponsored "ladies' center," with organized lectures and activities providing women with a scientific basis for child-rearing and housekeeping, was formed in 1935 by Reza Shah, and independent women's organizations and journals were shut down (Paidar 1995, 105–6).

In Egypt and Greater Syria the writings of the journal *al-Laṭāʾif* (1885–95) edited by Shāhīn Makāriyūs (with anonymous entries presumably written by his wife, Maryam Nimr Makāriyūs) began to include articles in the late 1880s on domestic obligations, the education of women for proper wifehood and motherhood, and in particular the importance of modern scientific principles of child-rearing (physiology, nutrition, pedagogy). For example, one article cited Linnaeus's upbringing as an example of how "added education could enhance a mother's ability to provide stimuli based on scientific knowledge" (Cannon 1985, 474–5). Writing in *al-Laṭāʾif* in 1890, a Syrian female writer hailed education and the "basic principles of science" as the means for women in the Middle East to realize domestic and social roles (Cannon 1985, 476–7). In the early twentieth century the scientific–literary journals *al-Hilāl* and *al-Muqtaṭaf* covered the European kindergarten movements as examples of how the science of play contributed to the exercise of children's bodies and minds and the advancement of the European nations (Shakry 1998, 139–41).

At the Egyptian University in 1908 a special

Friday "lecture for ladies" was launched by Hudā al-Shaʿrāwī. In 1911 Labība Hāshim, a Syrian émigré and editor, began a lecture series on child-rearing in which she instructed mothers in the science of *tarbiya*. In her collection of articles, *al-Nisāʾiyyāt*, Malak Ḥifnī Nassif also addressed the reform of *tarbiya*, exhorting reformers to address female education and condemning young marriages as a cause of female hysteria (Baron 1994, 163). In fact, throughout the first third of the twentieth century the women's press in Egypt was replete with articles on childbearing and child-rearing. Between 1928 and 1936 the Lebanese journal *al-Marʾa al-jadīda* and the Syrian journal *al-ʿArūs* regularly featured columns on motherhood, with medical and pedagogical advice (Thompson 2000, 143). Household management, too, became subject to scientification and rationalization, as for example in the school of practical housewifery established in Cairo in 1909 to teach "the laws of household economy and hygiene" (Tucker 1985, 128) and Malaka Saʿd's 1915 practical text on household management *Rabbat al-dār* (Baron 1994, 156–7).

Similarly, in India mothering and child-rearing were to become modernized and rationalized and women's journals began to carry advice columns on child-rearing as early as 1874 (Gupta 2002, 185–90), while *Bihishti Zewar* devoted an entire book to proper child-rearing and household management (Metcalf 1990, 315–82). In colonial Mombasa, Muslim reformer Shaykh Amīn bin ʿAlī Mazrūʿī, writing in the 1930s in his journal *al-Iṣlaḥ*, suggested that Muslims imitate Europeans in female education, pedagogy, and child-rearing, but within a framework of Muslim religious science (Strobel 1979, 103–6).

However, anti-colonial nationalist Islamic discourses on motherhood were not merely parasitic upon colonial or European discourses. Crucial to the discourse of upbringing was the concept of *adab*, entailing a complex of valued dispositions (intellectual, moral, and social), appropriate norms of behavior, comportment, and bodily habitus (Messick 1993, 77–9). Islamist reformers were able to draw upon resources indigenous to the Islamic tradition that emphasized the proper pedagogy for children, the cultivation of the body, and the moral education of the self as essential for the constitution of a rightly guided Islamic community. Such norms of pedagogy were complementary, and not antithetical, to the modernist disciplinization of the body and rationalization of the household (Shakry 1998, 127–8). Further, the formation of new private spheres within Muslim colonial settings was often fashioned within non-secular parameters. As Dipesh Chakrabarty (1992) has shown in the creation of a domestic sphere in colonial Bengal, such attempts encountered resistances which refused to align along bourgeois public-private axes. Pointing to other configurations of self and community, he elucidates the construction of bourgeois domesticity in Bengal as hinged upon two fundamental strategies of exclusion: the rejection of companionate marriage (denial of the bourgeois private) and of the secular historical construction of time by an invocation of collective memory (denial of historical time).

Contemporary discourses: family planning and population control

The principal manner in which gender has figured in contemporary scientific discourses in the Muslim world has been in the debates on family planning, population control, and new reproductive technologies. Early in the twentieth century Muslim scholars began discussing the permissibility of modern contraceptive methods, arguing by analogy from medieval jurists' discussion of coitus interruptus, often arriving at conflicting opinions. Thus, for example, Indian Deobandi reformers, such as Mufti Azizur-Rahman, allowed contraception, while Mawlana Mawdudi wrote an entire treatise in 1943 declaring modern birth control to be harmful to Islamic values (Omran 1992, 201–8).

As early as 1937 the Egyptian medical association organized a conference on birth control covering topics such as eugenics and the use of modern contraception to prevent unwanted pregnancies. In fact, the first official fatwa in Arabic addressing, and sanctioning, birth control in the twentieth century was issued in Cairo in 1937 by Shaykh ʿAbd al-Majīd Salīm, and reprinted in the conference proceedings.

As healthy childbearing became a "national duty" within the Muslim world, nationalist discourse increasingly took up the Woman Question, encouraging the mothers of the future to "reproduce less in order to reproduce better" (Anagnost 1995). Yet it would not be until the 1950s and 1960s that Muslim nations would begin to embark on official family planning programs. Among the first countries to formulate official population policies in the Muslim world were India in 1951, Egypt in 1964, Morocco in 1966, Iran in 1967, and Indonesia in 1970. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, as in Egypt, the state

made great efforts to achieve a broad consensus on family planning through a focus on disseminating information on population issues rather than simply distributing contraception (Hoodfar 1994, 12). Through Friday sermons and government sponsored population programs for disseminating family planning knowledge among workers and in rural areas, the state defined family planning as the prevention of pregnancy for the health of the family and society. Nevertheless, individual religious pronouncements often found themselves at odds with state sponsored population programs. Throughout the Muslim world abortion is generally prohibited unless the mother's health is at risk, and absolutely prohibited after 120 days.

Several fatwa committees and councils have convened on the issue of family planning, notably the Academy of Islamic Research at Al-Azhar in 1965 and the Councils of Islamic Fiqh in Mecca in 1987 (Omran 1992, 215–6). Several major pan-Muslim conferences on family planning also took place throughout the Muslim world: Rabat, Morocco 1971; Banjul, the Gambia 1979; Dakar, Senegal 1982; Aceh, Indonesia 1990; and Mogadishu, Somalia 1990 (Omran 1992, 216–24).

At the December 1991 First International Conference on Bioethics in Human Reproduction Research in the Muslim World at Al-Azhar University, Muslim scholars reached a consensus on reproductive health and new reproductive technologies, the gendered dimensions of which are clear. Scholars emphasized the following: that Islam is fully compatible with modern scientific research; that Islam promotes strong progeny through the selection of healthy spouses rather than through biogenetic engineering; that any reproductive research that poses a threat to mother, child, or future offspring is clearly unethical; that infertility is a problem in the Muslim world and thus that in vitro fertilization is acceptable, insofar as the sanctity of marriage is maintained (sperm and egg used belongs to the spouses and surrogacy is prohibited) and the protection of patrimony guaranteed; that overpopulation is also a grave problem in the Muslim world and that family planning is permissible in Islam, so long as no harm accrues to the mother; and that Islam promotes chastity outside of marriage and thus prevents sexually transmitted diseases.

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OMNIA EL SHAKRY

Women, Gender, and Harem

The word "harem" refers to the female members of a household, or to the dedicated architectural enclosure in which they live. Few Islamic institutions can rival the harem in the concerted – even obsessive – manner in which it has been represented in art, literature, social theory, and political discourse. Although there is today a relatively consistent tissue of images that defines popular conceptions of the harem, this vision is thrown into question by the historical and geographical variability revealed by scholarly research. For its part, some of this research has tended to approach its subject teleologically, attempting to trace the historical unfolding, maturation, and institutionalization of an ideal, and thereby exhibiting totalizing tendencies of its own. In fact, "harem" is a word that has corresponded to many realities in different times and places – realities not necessarily organized within a logically coherent developmental program.

Etymology

The Arabic root *ḥ-r-m*, from which "harem" is derived, generally refers to prohibition, unlawfulness, veneration, sacredness, inviolability – in other words, it conveys the notion of a taboo (Ibn Manẓūr 1988, 615–19). Although its derivatives occur no fewer than 83 times in the Qurʾān – referring to dietary laws and prohibitions during the pilgrimage, the holy months, and the sacred precincts of Mecca in which it is forbidden to kill – not once does the word refer to women or to women's quarters. That connection is, however, established in certain classical Arabic dictionaries, where *ḥurma* is said to refer to something held sacred and inviolable, something which it is one's duty to honor and defend, and only in this specific sense to a man's wives and family (al-Jawharī 1287 A.H., 486; al-Fayrūzābādī 1289 A.H., iv, 110).

Another word derived from the same root is *ḥarīm*, which refers to those parts of a house or property (e.g. a well) whose use is forbidden to all but the rightful owner, and more particularly to "the part of the house into which one enters and upon which the door is closed" (al-Zabīdī n.d., viii, 240, al-Azharī 1964–6, v, 47). Once again, it is

in this quite specific sense of the private quarters of a house that the women's apartments came to be known as the harem. The Persian word *andarūn*, which means "interior" and denotes the women's quarters of a house, is precisely equivalent to this term.

The common practice of referring to this arrangement as "sexual segregation" is inexact, as it is not based on sex alone. Adult men and women who are forbidden (*maḥram*, another derivative of the same root) from marrying each other by virtue of kinship – e.g. a brother and sister – can share a common space; in this sense, if the harem is a zone occupied by women, then it is necessarily forbidden (*ḥarām*) to men other than their kin.

Religious basis

Though "harem" does not denote women or women's quarters in the Qurʾān, there is a verse that has been taken as laying the foundation for the separation of men and women. It reads, in part: "And when you ask them [feminine] for something, ask from behind a veil (*ḥijāb*); that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs" (33:53). Although commentators agree that "them" in this verse refers specifically to the Prophet's wives, they have usually generalized it to all Muslim women, and have taken this verse as ordaining that men and women must be spatially separated (al-Qurṭubī 1364 A.H., xiv, 227).

The degree to which such separation is fundamental to Islam has been debated. Fatima Mernissi argues that the Prophet's home in Medina "created a space in which the distance between private life and public life was nullified, . . . in which the living quarters opened easily onto the mosque, and which thus played a decisive role in the lives of women and their relationship to politics" (1991, 113). However, there are prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*) that suggest that this practice did not last – e.g. one that describes how the Prophet stretched a curtain between Ṣafiyya and the people to emphasize that she was his wife; and another that relates how ʿĀʾisha refused to admit the brother of her foster uncle into her apartment following the revelation of the "verse of the veil,"

until the Prophet gave her leave on the grounds of kinship. There is even a tradition that admonishes men to "Beware of entering upon the ladies" (al-Bukhārī 1979, 62: 22, 89; 40, 166; 159).

The "verse of the veil" is, incidentally, the origin of the word *purdah* – after the Persian word for "curtain" or "veil" – that denotes female seclusion in India. Relatedly, the women's quarters are known there as *zenana*, after *zenān*, Persian for "women."

The segregation of women from non-*maḥram* men was generalized following the death of the Prophet, both under the leadership of the Caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 634–44 C.E.), known for his strict views concerning women, and as a result of the growing influence of peoples with whom the Arabs came into contact through military conquest (Ahmed 1982, 41–78).

History

Since residences with separate quarters for women were the province of only the wealthiest few, it has historically been royal and imperial harems that have provided the paradigm for discussions and representations of the harem. Evidence suggests that the first royal harems appeared during the Umayyad period (661–750 C.E.); by the ʿAbbāsid period (750–1258 C.E.), they had become established not only as fact, but also as mythology. Thus, within less than a century of his death, the Caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–61 C.E.) was related by al-Masʿūdī to have had 4,000 concubines in his harem, "with all of whom he enjoyed conjugal relations" (1861–7, vii, 276); al-Khwārizmī went even further a few decades later, placing the number at 10,000 (1297, 137). Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786–809 C.E.), whose name is indelibly linked to tales of fabulous harems thanks to the *Thousand and One Nights*, is another illustrious ʿAbbāsid caliph known to have had many concubines.

But the importance of this period for the institution of the harem transcends caliphs and their concubines. Historically, the establishment of Islamic orthodoxy was deeply imbued with the mores and material reality of the ʿAbbāsid elite, and that is true in particular of gender relations. Thanks to successive military victories, upper-class ʿAbbāsid men had gained the ability to procure large numbers of female slaves unencumbered by the legal rights and protections enjoyed by freeborn Arab women. As foreign women thus became traded commodities, harems populated by chattels gradually replaced more equal matrimonial unions, heralding an acute decline in the status of women

(Abbott 1946, 67). This is one of several ways in which the harem has played a determining role in the construction of gender in the Muslim world.

To varying degrees, Islamic societies established after the collapse of the ʿAbbāsid dynasty continued the practice of keeping harems. For instance, the Mughal Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605 C.E.) had many consorts, placed by his contemporary Abū al-Faḍl at "more than 5,000." Such numbers, however, are better understood as indicators of a ruler's stature and prestige; thus, Abū al-Faḍl suggests that "the large number of women – a vexatious question even for great statesmen – furnished his majesty with an opportunity to display his wisdom" (1843–1949, i, 44). This is doubtless why the fact that the Mamluk ruler al-Ashraf Ināl (r. 1453–61 C.E.) had only one wife, Zaynab, and no concubines led the biographer al-Sakhāwī to write: "In that respect, he was indeed unique among kings" (n.d., xii, 44–5). Of course this statement pertains specifically to royal households; there is scant information on how the common people lived at the time, and what does exist tends to be circumstantial. For instance, Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Rāziq has argued on the basis of architectural evidence – oblique entrances and screened windows to block the view from the outside – that Mamluk women must have been secluded at all levels of society. While he also claims that this practice forced Mamluk-era builders to distinguish between the parts of the house reserved for women and those parts open to visitors, this view is not unanimously shared (1973, 178–81).

One context in which residences – at least those of the wealthier families – were separated into such sections was the Ottoman empire. Known as *harem* (or *haremlik*) and *selâmlık*, i.e. women's quarters and "greeting place," this dichotomous spatial arrangement is commonly viewed as based strictly on gender; in fact, it is more aptly representative of a private/public cleavage, provided that this cleavage is not conceptualized in too close an analogy with its Western manifestations. On the one hand, the *harem* was an inner sanctuary for both male and female members of the household, while the *selâmlık* was a public stage for welcoming and entertaining guests of both genders; on the other hand, however, women engaged in social, economic, and even political activities from behind *harem* walls, suggesting that the word "private" fails to capture the full range of experiences in which women partook there (Hegland 1991, al-Sayyid Marsot 1978). Interpreting these concepts at least for late Ottoman Istanbul, it is also worth

noting that only 2.29 percent of all married men were polygynous; among those, furthermore, the average number of wives was only 2.08 (Duben and Behar 1991, 148–9). Thus, the *harem* was much more likely to be a monogamous (albeit extended) family's private quarters than a space dedicated to housing multitudes of women.

The low numbers just quoted are not unusual; surveys indicate that the proportion of polygynous households in North Africa and South Asia does not exceed 5 percent. Although much higher proportions – sometimes over 40 percent – are reached in sub-Saharan Africa, harems are not common there. In sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, communal ownership of land and the predominance of women in agricultural work make polygyny widespread, but seclusion impractical; by contrast, individual ownership of land and the predominance of male-dominated plough farming in Eurasia and North Africa make seclusion possible, but polygyny undesirable (Boserup 1970, 37–52, Goody 1973). This underscores the fact that "harem" is principally a system of female seclusion, and not just polygyny by another name.

Ultimately, as Islamic countries engaged in modernization attempts modeled after the West, women came to be viewed as gauges of success, and harems as embarrassing relics of a past best forgotten. It is no coincidence that a book describing such an experiment in westernization is entitled *Turkey without Harems* (Olivero 1982).

A plethora of images

Throughout history, women have played a significant role in masculinist symbolic economies. Accordingly, the harem has figured prominently as a carrier of meaning, both in the Muslim world and elsewhere. And, as often happens with such laden concepts, it has had many different and sometimes contradictory meanings.

One of the characteristics most commonly attributed to the harem in Western thought is oppression. In the works of Montesquieu and other Enlightenment thinkers, the harem was viewed as a microcosm of oriental despotism – the master representing the sultan, and the subservient women, his "effeminate" subjects (Grosrichard 1979, 147–9). In nineteenth-century religious tracts, the harem was invoked to garner support for missionary work under the guise of restoring Eastern women's dignity through Christianity (Başcı 1998). In the writings of feminists such as Brontë and Wollstonecraft, it provided a tool with which both to mark the oppression of women as

alien to civilized Europe, and to render feminism less threatening by displacing its target to distant lands (Zonana 1993). In the hands of anti-feminists, the confinement of harem women was used as a cautionary tale of what might happen to European women if they were granted the sexual freedoms that feminists supposedly demanded (Ridley 1983, 74).

In contrast to the Western view of the harem as pure oppression, many Muslim historiographers represented it as an instrument of power and den of intrigue, claiming that royal harem women brought ruin upon their countries by usurping sovereignty which was rightfully the ruler's. In 'Abbāsid, Fāṭimid, Ottoman, and many other contexts, misogyny thus provided a vocabulary of protest when economic crises or military defeats made it useful to find a scapegoat. In truth, these women's social and political activities were not the exception but the rule, as they performed key mediating functions between the ruler and his subjects (Peirce 1993).

Another staple of Western discourse on the Orient was eroticism: the harem was represented as a monument to male scopic desire, a phallocratic fantasy where an army of women existed only to sexually service a unique master. Among the most common tropes in this discourse were the device of representing harem inmates as European, and therefore "safe" for transgressing Western men; the tendency to portray them as unindividuated pluralities; the careful attention given to their grooming practices such as the application of henna and the depilation of pubic hair; the great popularity of images such as the Turkish bath and the slave market; and the wildly exaggerated notions of harem women's sexual desires, including accounts of lesbianism, bestiality, and masturbation (Schick 1998, 197–226).

By contrast, some Muslim writers have approached the harem as an inviolable sanctum analogous to the Ḥaramayn – the holy sanctuaries of Mecca and Medina. The Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy has given the equation of domesticity with femininity the weight of divine law: writing that "The Arabic name *sakan*, to denote the house, is related to the word *sakina*, peaceful and holy, while the word *harim*, which means 'woman,' is related to *haram*, 'sacred,' which denotes the family living quarters in the Arab house," he warns against constructions that might violate the home's "womanly inwardness" (1969, 57). Stripped of such masculinist essentialism, the idea that seclusion engenders a female spatial autonomy that affords Muslim women freedoms

their Western counterparts have historically lacked is articulated by Leila Ahmed, who views the harem as a system that "enables women to have frequent and easy access to other women in their community, vertically, across class lines, as well as horizontally," and where "women share living time and living space, exchange experience and information, and critically analyze – often through jokes, stories, or plays – the world of men" (1982, 524, 529). This echoes the observations of the eighteenth-century British travelers Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Lady Elizabeth Craven, that thanks to seclusion and veiling, Ottoman women "have in reality more liberty than we have" (Montagu 1763, ii, 33–4).

By its proximity to Europe, the Ottoman empire was best situated to provide most of the stock images that came to constitute Western conceptions of the harem. In the seventeenth century, works like Michel Baudier's *Histoire généralle du serrail*, Ottaviano Bon's *A Description of the Grand Signor's Seraglio*, and Jean-Baptiste Tavernier's *Nouvelle relation de l'intérieur du serrail du Grand Seigneur* laid the basis for fantastic descriptions of imperial harems that remain as alive today as they were when first written. But these authors had never been inside a harem, and had to rely on native informants of dubious truthfulness, as well as each other. Though first-person narratives by the women who actually inhabited the harems are rare, they do exist and constitute valuable sources of information. For example, the *Humāyūn-nāmeh* of Gulbadan Begum, daughter of the Mughal Emperor Bābur (r. 1526–30 C.E.) and sister of Humāyūn (r. 1530–56 C.E.), offers a fascinating account of the lives of royal harem women in India – as well as the political events during the reigns of the first three Mughal emperors. Most extant first-person narratives by harem women are more recent: Gayatri Devi's account of the Rajput court in Jaipur, Taj al-Saltana's memoirs of the Qājār court, and Leylâ Saz's account of the Ottoman court all belong to the early twentieth century.

SPACE AND GENDER CONSTRUCTION

There is a great deal of variability in the ways the harem has been represented. But like any social institution, the harem is in essence a representation; and like the history of any social institution, its history is therefore largely that of its representation. Rather than searching for the true essence of the harem in religious texts or historical practices, it is more fruitful to conceptualize it primarily as a socially constructed space, often more imagined than physical, and to focus on how it has functioned to construct gender.

Feminist geographers stress the mutually constitutive nature of space and gender, arguing that the differences in the ways men and women experience space are not only a consequence of gender differences, but are also productive of them (McDowell 1999). As Doreen Massey writes, "geography matters to the construction of gender, and the fact of geographical variation in gender relations . . . is a significant element in the production and reproduction of both imaginative geographies and uneven development" (1994, 2). Massey's reference to geography must be understood in the broadest sense, as encompassing spatial structures not only natural but also artificial, not only physical but also imagined. As a spatial construct, the harem has historically played a fundamental role in the construction and reproduction of gender – not just in the Muslim world, but also in the West, where it has been an omnipresent trope for centuries.

Analyzing the relationship between space and alterity, David Sibley has shown that marginalization "is associated not only with characterisations of the group but also with images of particular places, the landscapes of exclusion which express the marginal status of the outsider group" (1992, 107). Segregation reproduces itself: spaces of otherness become not only repositories of "others," but producers of alterity as well. Whether the locus of patriarchal oppression or an autonomous space of feminine liberty, the harem system has provided the spatial basis of gender difference. And since spatial differentiation often coexists with power differentiation, it has been implicated in the production and perpetuation of power assymetries along gender lines. But that necessarily means that it is also a site of resistance; indeed, the ongoing political struggle over veiling and seclusion can be viewed as an aspect of spatial politics, a contest over the restructuring of space.

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