AMEWS NEWS

Volume 1
Number 3
November 1986

NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR MIDDLE EAST WOMEN STUDIES

Proposed By-laws to be voted at November Business Meeting

The first annual business meeting of the Association for Middle East Women's Studies will be held on Thursday, November 20, 1986 at the Sheraton Boston Hotel. The business meeting will immediately follow the keynote address by Ms. Etel Adnan, scheduled for 3-5 pm ("Growing up to be A Woman Writer in Lebanon"). The agenda of the business meeting will be announced in detail at the meetings. We will have a report from the President and the Secretary-Treasurer on the activities of the year and a report from the Editorial Board of AMEWS NEWS. We will also discuss the program of this year's MESA meetings, make plans for next year's MESA panels to be sponsored by AMEWS or organized individually by AMEWS members, and discuss future growth of AMEWS. Please be thinking of ideas you would like to see developed or discussed at the business meeting.

A major agenda item will be the adoption of by-laws for the Association. It is a requirement of affiliation with MESA that we have a constitution and by-laws. I have therefore reviewed the by-laws of a number of professional associations, including some of those affiliated with MESA, and put together a proposal for the consideration of the members. Since the by-laws are lengthy, it would be helpful if the members could review them prior to the business meeting. Discussions will proceed more efficiently if proposed changes are written out in advance and sufficient copies brought to the business meeting for distribution to the membership.

The founding year of AMEWS has been highly productive, with three issues of the Newsletter already out, membership rising rapidly, and much enthusiasm generated about future plans. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the AMEWS and MESA meetings and continuing our work together.

Suad Joseph
President

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To join AMEWS, contact Kathleen Howard Merriam, Secretary-Treasurer

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AMEWS NEWS is interested in a Logo and graphics. Please submit to Val Moghadam.

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Submissions to the Newsletter should be directed to the relevant Editor.
If in doubt, contact Val Moghadam (home tel. no. 212/865-7944).

Proposed
November 1986

Constitution and Bylaws of

The Association for Middle East Women's Studies

Article I. Name

The name of this organization shall be the Association for Middle East Women's Studies.

Article II. Objectives

Section 1. The Association for Middle East Women's Studies shall be a private, non-profit, non-political organization of scholars and other persons interested in the study of women in the Middle East. The objectives of the Association shall be to advance the study of women in the Middle East.

Section 2. To advance the study of women in the Middle East, the Association shall:

a. Facilitate communication among scholars through meetings;

b. Publish a newsletter and promote the publication of scholarly work on women in the Middle East;

c. Promote cooperation among members of the Association and other persons or organizations concerned with Middle East women's studies.

d. Stimulate scientific research in Middle East women's studies.

Section 3. The Association shall receive and administer funds in support of these objectives.

Article III. Membership

Section 1. Membership Categories. There shall be two categories of membership in the Association: (1) Members, (2) Institutional Members.

Section 2. Members. Any person having a demonstrable professional or scholarly interest in Middle East women's studies is eligible for membership. A Member in good standing will have one vote in the nomination and election of nonappointive Officers and in the transactions of the Association, and shall be eligible for elective or appointive office in the Association, subject only the the regulations in this Constitution and Bylaws. A Member shall receive all regular publications of the Association.

Section 3. Institutional Members. Any institution such as a library, museum, or other scholarly or educational institution may be an Institutional Member. An Institutional Member in good standing may receive all regular scholarly publications of the Association.

Section 4. Professional Interest. A professional interest in Middle East women's studies is defined as a serious concern in the subject in accordance with the standards generally accepted in the profession, whether or not the interest is a source of livelihood.

Section 5. Dues. Dues shall be determined by the Members at the annual business meeting and shall be paid to the Secretary-Treasurer. Any person four months in arrears in payment shall not be entitled to receive the publications of the Association, and any person one year in arrears shall, after formal notification, lose membership privileges.

Article IV. Meetings

Section 1. Annual Meeting. The Association shall normally hold an annual meeting in conjuction with the meetings of the Middle East Studies Association on the day set aside for affiliated associations. This meeting shall consist of a business session and a planned program of presentations and discussions. The agenda of the meeting will be planned by the Board of Directors and announced in the Association newsletter.

Section 2. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Association shall be called at any time upon the request of the President, the Board of Directors or upon the request of no less than one quarter of the Members.

Section 3. Notice of Meetings. Notice of every annual meeting will be served on each member through the newsletter of the association not less than 15 days or more than 60 days before the meeting. Notice of special meetings shall be announced through the newsletter or special mailings. Such notice will state the purpose(s) and program of the meeting.

Section 4. Quorum. At all duly called meetings of the Members, the presence of one-quarter of the members shall be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the act of the majority of the Members present shall be the act of the Members.

Article V. Board of Directors.

Section 1. Management. The Board of Directors shall consist of the President, Secretary-Treasurer and the immediate past President. The affairs and the property of the Association shall be managed by the Board of Directors, except that the ultimate authority of the Association shall be vested in the Members as expressed in the annual meeting or through mail polls. The Members may originate general policies and give general directives to the Board. The Directors shall act only as a Board and individual Directors shall have no power as such.

Section 2. Annual Meeting. The annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held as soon as practicable during the annual meeting of Members. Such annual meetings of the Board shall be general meetings and open for the transaction of any business within the powers of the Board without special notice of such business except in any case where special notice is required by law or by the Bylaws.

Section 3. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board shall be called at any time by upon the request of the President or upon the request of no less than two thirds of the Directors.

Section 4. Notice of Meetings. Notice of every annual meeting of the Board and every special meeting, shall be served on each Director not less than 5 days or more than 30 days

before the meeting. Such notice shall state the purpose(s) of the meeting and the time and place it is to be held.

Section 5. Quorum. At all meetings of the Board, the presence of two thirds of the Directors shall be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum. Except as otherwise provided by law or by the bylaws, the act of the majority of the Directors present and voting shall be the act of the Board.

Section 6. The Board of Directors shall make interim appointments to fill a vacany in any office until elections are held.

Article VI. Officers

Section 1. Number of Officers. The officers of the Association shall be the President and the Secretary-Treasurer. One person may not hold both of the aforesaid offices at the same time.

Section 2. Election of Ufficers. The President and Secretary-Treasurer shall be nominated and elected at the annual meeting of the Members. When more than one candidate is nominated for office, election shall be by secret ballot. The candidate for an office who received the highest number of votes for that office is elected. In the event of a tie vote, a run-off election shall be held immediately.

Section 3. Term of Office. The term of office for the President and the Secretary-Treasurer shall be two years. Newly elected officers shall take office at the close of the annual business meeting.

Section 4. President. The President shall be a member of all committees ex officio, including editorial boards for all publications and shall be a member of the Board of Directors for one year after her/his term of office. S/he shall be the chief executive officer of the Association and shall have general supervision of the affairs and property of the Association and over its several officers, and shall generally do and perform all acts incident to the office of President, and shall have such additional powers and duties as may from time to time be assigned to her/him by the Board.

Section 5. Secretary-Treasurer. The Secretary-Treasurer shall act under the supervision of the Board and shall have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, the correspondence and all the funds of the Association and shall keep or cause to be kept and shall be responsible for the keeping of, accurate records of the correspondence, assets, liabilities and transactions of the Association. S/he shall deposit all moneys or other valuable effects of the Association in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as may be designated by the Board. The Secretary-Treasurer will report to the Members at the annual meeting on the fiscal state of the Association.

Section 6. The fiscal year of the Association shall end as of December 31 in each year.

Article VII. Publications

Section 1. The Association shall print and distribute to the membership a quarterly newsletter of matters pertaining to

the objectives of the Association.

Section 2. The newsletter shall have a Board of Editors elected at the annual meeting. The Board shall consist of not less than four or more than six editors in addition to the President of the Association. Board members shall serve a term of two years.

Section 3. The Association shall encourage the publication of scholarly work on Middle East women's studies.

Article VIII. Amendment of Bylaws

Amendments to these Bylaws or any of them may be proposed (1) by the Board of Directors (2) by petitions signed by twenty-five members in good standing. All proposed amendments shall be discussed at the first annual meeting of the Members following their proposal, after which they shall be submitted by the Board of Directors to the members by mail ballots. After allowing sixty days for returns, they shall be considered adopted if approved by a mjority of those returning ballots. Amendments shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

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AMEWS expresses special pleasure in Elizabeth Fernea's presidency of MESA. She has made major contributions to Middle East Women's Studies and encouraged other scholars in the field.

As a writer and film-maker, Elizabeth Fernea is a pioneer in the interpretation of Arab women's lives for American audiences. Guests of the Sheikh has taught generations of college students about the experience of ethnographic fieldwork, while a wider reading public learned from it the difficulties, pleasures and achievements of women in an Iraqi community. Her book about her life in Egypt, her book and films on women of Marrakech, her films on Egyptian and Palestinian women, and most recently The Arab World, written with her husband, Robert Fernea, have informed us and a wider public about the ways of life of Arab women of different classes in city and countryside. The two volumes which she edited with Bezirgan made work by Middle Eastern women and American scholars in Women's Studies readily available.

Scholars who have worked with Elizabeth Fernea have come to appreciate her personal qualities of integrity, intellectual breadth, and her commitment to the interests of others. These characteristics will lend grace to her tenure as president of MESA and her continuing role in Middle East Women's Studies.

Lucie Wood Saunders

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REVIEWS
Edited by Margot Badran

SEXUALITY IN ISLAM, Abdelwahab Boudiba, trans. by Alan Sheridan (Routledge & Kegan Paul: Boston, 1985)

Review by Amal Rassam, Department of Anthropology, The Graduate Center and Queens College, City University of New York

SEXUALITY IN ISLAM is a translation of a book by the same title which was published in 1975 in France; the author, A. Boudiba, is a professor of sociology in Tunisia. SEXUALITY IN ISLAM is one of a handful of books currently available on the subject of sexuality and sexual ideology in Arab-Muslim culture that are written by Muslims. As might be expected, these range from conservatives who defensively argue for the status quo to radicals who attribute much of society's ills to the dominance of a sexual ideology that oppresses women, subverts men and promotes duplicity and authoritarianism in public life. Boudiba, in a sense, manages to assume both roles. On the one hand, he claims allegiance to what he perceives to be the harmonious synthesis of the sacred and profane achieved by Islamic religious tradition; on the other hand, he is highly critical of what he sees as the failure of Muslim society to translate the ideal model into social institutions and practice.

Simply put, Boudiba's thesis is that unlike Christianity, Islam accords a priveleged position to sexuality. An examination of the Quran, the shari'a, and the relevant medieval commentaries reveals a weltanschaung where sexuality and erotic pleasure are not only desirable but are, in fact, a sign of divine power. Islam does not depreciate nor deny man's libidinal energy, on the contrary, it attributes a sublime significance to the sexual investing it with a sacral character that removes all trace of guilt and integrates it into the legitimate domain of the religious. There is no celibacy in Islam and marriage is a canonical obligation for all believers. In practice however, this ideal "harmonious synthesis" of the sexual and thensacred has rarely been realized, more frequently, it has been subverted and degraded into a morose, repressive sexuality that oppresses men and women alike. Muslim societies today, writes Boudiba, suffer a "sexual crisis" just as they suffer political and economic ones and the challenge is to work out genuine solutions, ones that are not simplistic imitations of Western one nor mindless retreats into an illusionary past. Neither Marxist radicalism nor Islamic fundamentalism are the answers to the current malaise of Muslim societies; rather, as an idealist and a believer, Boudiba writes, "To emerge from this malaise we must at all costs rediscover the sense of sexuality, that is to say, the sense of the dialogue with the other partner, and the sense of faith, that is to say, the sense of dialogue with God." (248)

Boudiba's purpose in writing the book is clear: to search out the dialectical relationship between the perception of sexuality in Islamic Tradition and the concrete reality of sexual relations in Arab-Muslim society which is also to search out the lost meaning of real faith and authentic love and to restore them to their proper place in the Muslim

a growing body of writing on Iran and attempts to bring a more woman centered approach to studies of Middle Eastern societies, two trends which have accelerated since the late 1970s. The two works discussed here reflect these developments and advance them. One is a collection of studies by various authors and the other an individual's revised dissertation. Both works demonstrate the exciting possibilities for the study of Iranian women, despite real difficulties facing those involved in that field, although both also have their problems and limitations.

Eliz Sanasarian's THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN IRAN has the advantage of a single clear theme. It makes pioneering use of some interesting material to trace the varying fortunes of groups and activities concerned with women's rights, equality, and emancipation in Iran during this century. Sanasarian deserves much credit for her work and for her perception of, if not solutions to, the problems of relating this women's movement both to other aspects of Iranian politics, and to women's movements elsewhere. She manages to convey both the real substance and the real limitations of Iranian women's efforts towards equality and emancipation, and to put forward some useful hypotheses about the importance of political autonomy, adequate means of communication, and interaction with other political issues, as variables affecting the history of the women's movement.

However, while these achievements may have been gained partly by her use of the conventional tools of American political science, a full exploration of the implications of her arguments has equally been hindered by those same tools. Rather than relying on an abstracted set of social scientific "criteria" to "test" the Iranian women's movment, she might have found it more helpful to pursue a historical analysis of the connections between the social and the political in that movement, and to locate it within a historical process. This would have allowed her, for example, to discuss why the activities of educated and priveleged women in Iran in the 1920s and 1930s were not paralleled by popular female protest, as happened in 19th century Western Europe and North America, or in 20th century China.

A fuller treatment of the historical and social context would also have ensured a better understanding of the circumstances of Iranian women, and hence their interest, or lack of it, in challenging their situation. In particular, the (changing) position of women within economic and family structures, needed more discussion while the historic importance of continuing, if variable, socioeconomic and political subordination of Iran to external powers was somewhat underemphasized. Sanasarian frequently stresses the role of "ignorance" and "traditionalism" in restricting the appeal of the women's movement among Iranian women. If such explanations are not to be patronizing or chauvinistic, then it should be shown that such phenomena are products both of Iran's history of exposure to quasi-colonial andd post-colonial influences, and of systems of community, class and gender power within Iranian society. Moreover, the author might have considered the extensive and damaging critiques of the "tradition versus modern" dichotomy as a conceptual tool for understanding in her analysis. Nonetheless, these criticisms of Sanasarian's approach should not obscure the real and constructive

contribution made by her book to the study of Iranian women.

While the strength of Sanasarian's contribution lies in its clear focus on one specific political subject, the interest of the collection of short studies edited by Guity Nashat, WOMEN AND REVOLUTION IN IRAN, comes from both the variety and the depth of analysis of the individual pieces it contains (including one by Sanasarian). As with many collections of such studies, there are problems of consistency in approach (ranging from studies of legal texts and reports of participant observation and social surveys, to literary criticism and accounts of personal experience) and varying levels of generality (which include highly compressed surveys covering long periods of time, or large amounts of material, or national trends, as well as very specific small-scale studies).

Most of the contributions are interesting and informative, if necessarily limited by space, but particularly valuable insights can be gained from Hegland's and Bauer's perceptive studies of lower class village and urban women's activities, experiences and attitudes in 1978/79, from Betteridge's accout of women's religious involvements, and from the cultural dimension provided by Milani's work on the poetry of Saffar-zadeh and Hermanen's examination of the image of Fatimeh in Ali Shari'ati's writing. At another level the survey pieces by Nashat and Karen Mirani are helpful in giving stimulus to further work to fill gaps, challenge generalizations or develop arguments further. Though if it is not always easy to see how some quite interesting pieces (eg. those on mut'a marriage and on women's status in the Quran) were intended to contribute to the specific theme of the book, women and revolution, as a whole the volume will be a useful resource.

The social, cultural, and political complexities of women's experience in Iran during this century have yet to find an adequate synthesis and interpretation. Such a project also faces the very real obstacles ranging from the absence or inacessibility of sources, and the difficulties in developing appropriate theory and method to comprehend the specificities of Iranian society and history, to the western cultural and intellectual bias within women's studies and Iranian area studies, and the class and gender bias of much established scholarship. However, to make these points is not so much to express discouragement as to recognize a challenge--a challenge to which, whatever their limitations, the writers who have been discussed are making a valuable response which should be appreciated.

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THE OTTOMAN LADY: A SOCIAL HISTORY FROM 1718 TO 1918, Fanny Davis, (Greenwood Press: Westport, CT, 1986)

This work presents a broad portrait of urban upper class female society of the late Ottoman Empire. Fourteen of the fifteen chapters deal either with an important stage in the life cycle--for example, "Childbirth," "Marriage," "Illness, Old-Age, and Death,"-- or with a major aspect of life in this society--for example, "Religion," "Education," "Architecture and the Arts," and "Social Life." The first chapter is a description of life in the imperial harem, which formed the pattern for the female households of the Ottoman elite. The book

deals only with the Muslim elite, mentioning dhimmi women only rarely when their lives intertwined with those of the author's subjects, and, reflecting the author's sources, is based almost exclusively on descriptions of life in Istanbul.

Davis's work is the first presentation (of which I am aware) in any language of such a composite picture of this society. Its merit lies in its broadness rather than in its depth. Indeed, as Davis herself says in her preface, "In engaging in (this study of the upper class Ottoman woman), the author freely acknowledges that she has taken on a large assignment and that her work, far from being definitive, can serve as no more than an introduction to the subject." The principal value of the book is its eminently readable, informative, and entertaining synthesis of the vast amount of material upon which it is based; this material consists primarily of accounts of Western travellers, memoirs of Ottoman women, works of literature, and personal interviews, as well as a large number of secondary sources. The best chapters (for example, "The Woman Slave") are essays which bring together widely divergent sources, the weakest ("Religion") do little more than restate easily accessible material. A particularly felicitous aspect of the work is Davis's weaving into her text of excerpts of contemporary fiction, which not only adds support to the points she makes but brings a richness that enchances the texture of the narrative. With its wide scope and accessibility to the non-specialist, this book will be valuable for those interested (and those teaching courses) not only in the history of Ottoman women but also in the social history of women in general.

However, such a survey approach entails inevitable and obvious shortcomings--lack of depth and of the kind of accuracy and reliability provided by non-anecdotal data. What we have in this work is an enormous amount of fact and adecdote grouped by topic but a marked absence of sustained treatment of important issues such as the change of social custom over time, the impact of Western attitudes and customs, and the gradual emancipation of women from the harem. It is not that the author is not interested and the reader, therefore, wants her to speak to them in greater depth, but that her analytic comments are few and fragmented among the different chapters. Davis has chosen rather to let her material speak for itself. Davis's Ph.D thesis ("Two Centuries of the Ottoman Lady," Columbia University, 1968), of which this book is a revision, contains a brief concluding section including a summary reflection on her subject, but this was unfortunately omitted in the book.

Davis's observations in the concluding section of her thesis--that seclusion in the harem did not prevent Ottoman upper class women from enjoying a rich social life and playing a significant role in political life through the extensive networks that existed in this female society--raise the additional problem that on occasion the tone adopted in the presentation of material belies the author's general conclusions. For example, the very title of the chapter,"Intrigue", which describes the influence of women on the fate of their husbands' careers and on the political life of the empire in general, trivializes social behavior that Davis appears to believe had a significant impact on political life. The admittedly noxious activities of some women are

not effectively distinguished from what the Ottomans, themselves, appear to have accepted as legitimate, and indeed necessary, social intercourse.

Because of the nature of its sources, this book tends to present a "soft", primarily domestic and inward-looking, portrait of the Ottoman, emphasizing those aspects of her life in which Western observers were most interested. What is now needed, as Davis points out in her thesis, is work in Ottoman primary sources of this period such as court (kadi) records (like the work of Jenninngs and Gerber for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), which provide information on women's economic activities, their position vis-a-vis the law in domestic and commercial matters, and family relations, and in women's publications of the later years of the empire. To this list one should add women's vakf (pious foundations) deeds, which provide information on sources, of women's income, family and slave-mistress relations, and social relations in general, as well as inheritance (muhallefat) registers, which provide information on women's consumption patterns and the impact of these of Westernization. Given the vast holdings of Turkish archives and libraries, this is only a preliminary list of work waiting to be done on the subject.

A final note: the subject of this book is one which would benefit from illustrations, of which a copious number exist in published works and manuscripts. That only three are included is regrettable, particularly in view of the excessive price of the book ($49.95).

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EUROPE'S MYTHS OF ORIENT, RANA KABBANI, (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1986)

Review by Barbara Harlow, Department of English, University of Texas at Austin

Rana Kabbani concludes her study, EUROPE'S MYTHS OF ORIENT, with the admonition that we must "continually question the testimony we have inherited, be it from the soldier, the scholar or the traveller." (139) The inherited testimony which Kabbani critically examines here is that which Europe has, over the centuries since the Middle Ages, accumulated and elaborated on its Near Eastern neighbors in the Arab and Islamic world. In her analysis the author shows that the literary and ideological influence of one writer on another has played an even more significant part in the constitution of that cultural legacy than the active influence or engagement of the Orient itself, producing in the end a "communal image of the East, which sustained a political structure and was sustained by it." (10) Chateaubriand, for example, travelled the lands of the Mediterranean mentally encumbered with the almost two hundred accounts of the Holy Land which he had read prior to his journey. Charles Doughty, at the end of the nineteenth century, had similarly equipped himself with Biblical passages whose early inscriptions he hoped to find etched on the stones of Arabia deserta. Doughty in turn influenced T.E. Lawrence who went on to write the introduction to the third edition of his predecessor's travel narrative as well as his own SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM.

The turn-of-the-century and its aftermath for which Doughty and Lawrence wrote was in the process of reworking to its own ends the oriental stereotypes which had been contrived and developed by neo-classicists of the Enlightenment, Romantics and Victorians. This evolution of artifice and its embeddness in the cultural exigencies of the historical moment is particularly well demonstrated in Kabbani's comparison of three successive European translations of the 1001 NIGHTS. Galland's translations of the tales into French was well-received, according to him, "at the Court, in Paris and in the Provinces," perhaps because, as Kabbanii points out, Galland had adapted the colloquial Arabic to the"precioisite" of his time and omitted what he deemed might offend the sensibilities of his readers. When E.W. Lane translated the stories into English for the nineteenth century, he provided a patina of scholarship with all the footnote apparatus of the academic which served to "contain" the Oriental extravagance of the Arabic original. In the case of Richard Burton, however, at the end of the nineteenth century, the tales were translated as "bawdy entertainment" for his male readers. For all their differences of innuendo and interest, the three translators alike lamented their their more erudite scholarly and literary production found less enthusiastic audiences.

The tradition that Kabbani scrutinizes is a literary history, which, while it covers much of the same material as that discussed by Edward Said in ORIENTALISM and other studies which Said's work inspired, is organized around a largely literary focus to which she brings the critiques of feminism as well. Moving chronologically, from the medieval period to the present, "woman" is shown to have played a significant part in the elaboration of "Europe's myths of Orient." In chapter I, "Lewd Saracens," the source of even such contemporary works of popular culture as Le Carre's THE LITTLE DRUMMER GIRL or Ken Follett's TRIPLE, is presented in the discussion of the Romance and its stock characters of Christain knight. The role of women, as Kabbani describes it, in the East/West encounter allowed thus for the definition of European chivalric codes no less than those conditioning the etiquette of the Victorian gentleman. The historical and phantasmatic "relations" with Oriental women, as she maintains, justified in turn domestic exploitation of women while allowing prurient escape for the European males' socially inhibited desires, both sexual and political.

EUROPE'S MYTHS OF ORIENT opens with a discussion of the politics of travel and the issue of the connection between travel and power is sustained throughout. Kabbani's own analysis, however, remains largely literary and does not directly explore the political parameters within which Europe's cultural fantasies and mythologizing are devolved. Thus while she presents, for example, the popularity of the slave market as a setting in nineteenth century orientalist painting, she does not locate this appeal of "the image of the captive beauty" in the context of the political and parliamentary debates on slavery and the slave trade taking place in England and on the continent throughout this period. A greater historicizing of these "myths" might perhaps have revealed more fully still the negative consequences of this testimony which the West has inherited from centuries of domination and exploitation of its "others."

In questioning this testimony in EUROPE'S MYTHS OF ORIENT, Kabbani, however, finds some exceptions to the generally complicit traveller in Europe's politics of cultural power. She singles out in particular Wilfred S. Blunt, who, in HIS SECRET HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH OCCUPATION OF EGYPT (1907), championed the cause of the "colonized" and exposed the atrocities and injustices of England's rule over Egypt. EUROPE'S MYTHS OF ORIENT raises important questions about the West's complacent acceptance of its cultural past and the justification this provides for its current political agenda. Could this voice of questioning yet find still other articulations in the voices of those, the "orientals" themselves, male and female, who are here testified to?

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BOOKS RECEIVED

Abbot, Nabia, AISHA THE BELOVED OF MOHAMMAD (Al Saqi Books: London, 1985), reprint of 1942 edition with new preface by Sarah Graham-Brown.

Abbot, Nabia, TWO QUEENS OF BAGHDAD (Al Saqi Books: London, 1986), reprint of 1946 edition with new forward by Sarah Graham-Brown.

Adnan, Etel, THE INDIAN NEVER HAD A HORSE (Post-Apollo Press: Sausalito, 1985).

Adnan, Etel, JOURNEY TO MOUNT TAMALPAIS (Post-Apollo Press: Sausalito, 1986).

Adnan, Etel, SITT MARIE ROSE (Post Apollo Press: Sausalit, 1982).

Alloula, Malek, THE COLONIAL HAREM (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1986), translated by Myrna Godzich and Wlad Godzich, introduction by Barbara Harlow.

Atiya, Nayra, KHUL-KHAAL: FIVE EGYPTIAN WOMEN TELL THEIR STORIES (Syracuse University Press: Syracuse, 1982), foreword by Andrea Rugh.

Basgoz, Ilhan and Norman Furniss, TURKISH WORKERS IN EUROPE (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1985).

Beck, Lois, THE QASHGQA'I OF IRAN (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1986).

Davis, Susan S., PATIENCE AND POWER: WOMEN'S LIVES IN A MOROCCAN VILLAGE (Schenkman Books: Cambridge, 1982).

Dorsky, Susan, WOMEN OF 'AMRAN (University of Utah Press: Salt Lake City, 1986).

Duley, Margot I. and Mary I. Edwards, THE CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF WOMEN (Feminist Press: New York, 1986).

El Saaddawi, Nawal, GOD DIES BY THE NILE (Zed Books: London, 1985), translated by Sherif Hetata.

El Saadawi, Nawal, MEMOIRES FROM THE WOMEN'S PRISON (The Women's Press: London, 1986), translated by Marilyn Booth.

Fernea, Elizabeth W. and Basima Q. Bezirgan, editors, MIDDLE EASTERN WOMEN SPEAK (University of Texas Press: Austin, 1977, third paperback 1984)

Fernea, Elizabeth W., editor, WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN THE MIDDLE EAST: NEW VOICES OF CHANGE (University of Texas Press: Austin, 1985).

Jayawardena, Kumari, FEMINISM AND NATIONALISM IN THE THIRD WORLD (Zed Books: London, 1986).

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The Reviews editor circulated publishers announcing the start of AMEWS NEWS and asking for review copies of relevant books. There was a good first response, however, a number of publishers with recent books on women in the Middle East did not respond. We are eager to announce and review your books and therefore ask you to urge your publishers to send review copies to: Margot Badran, Reviews Editor, 1 Morton Road, DeWitt, NY 13214. Please write to the same address if you wish to do a book review.

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OTHER EYES: WOMEN'S FILMS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

To mark the inauguration of AMEWS, there will be a special group of films by and about women within the audio-visual program at this year's MESA conference. Several of the filmmakers, including two living outside the US, have been invited to attend the conference and participate in cineforums after the screening of their films.

As of mid-October, the schedule (guaranteed to change) is as follows:

THURSDAY, NOV. 20:

4:50–6:15	Anou Banou, The Daughters of Utopia (Edna Politi, Israel)
6:30–8:10	The Fertile Memory (Michel Khleifi, Palestine)
8:15–8:45	Five in the Eyes of the Devil (Fitouri Belhiba, Tunisia)
9:00–9:30	Permissible Dreams (Atiyat al-Abnoudi, Egypt)

FRIDAY, NOV. 21:

3:00–4:00	Pressure (Michele Ohayon, Israel)
4:30–5:30	Family Ties (Nadia Hijab, Jordan/Tunisia/Egypt)

SATURDAY, NOV. 22:

9:35–11:15	Like the Sea and Its Waves (Edna Politi, Israel)
12:00–1:30	Wildflower (Palestine/Lebanon) CINEFORUM with Mai Masri and Jean Chamoun
1:45–2:30	El Sebou': The Egyptian Birth Ritual (Egypt) CINEFORUM with Fadwa El Guindi
2:45–4:00	The Zerda and the Songs of Forgetting (Algeria) CINEFORUM with Assia Djebar

SUNDAY, NOV. 23:

9:30–12:00	The Nouba of the Women of Mont Chenoua (Algeria) CINEFORUM with Assia Djebar

Some of these films will also be screened informally in a separate room (Exeter B) on Friday from noon to 7 pm and on Saturday from 4 to 6:30. Details will be available at the conference. For more information, please contact Miriam Rosen at (212) 777-0654.

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EVENTS

edited by Susan Schaefer Davis

In this column we publish announcements of events of interest to AMEWS members, as well as reports on these events to the extent possible - for which we depend on your participation. Please let us know, well in advance, of upcoming events in your area, including conferences, distinguished lectures, and visits to the area by well-known scholars, especially those from abroad. Events from the recent past will also be noted, in order to enable members to contact individuals for relevant information. We also want to solicit volunteers to report on the various events they attend; their reports will be edited (mainly with regard to length) and pubished here with a by-line. Finally, we would like to solicit your suggestions for additions to this column. Please address all correspondence and announcements concerning events to Susan Schaefer Davis at the address on the masthead.

Past Events

Arab Women Solidarity Conference. Cairo, June 1986. Reported by Aleya Rouchdy.

The conference was organized by Dr. Nawal Sa'dawi and focused on "Women, Work, Islam". It was conducted to challenge the recent trend in the Egyptian press advocating and encouraging women to remain home and not to work in the public sector. The main speakers were: Dr. Ahmad Kamal AbulMagd, Professor of Law; Dr. Ni'mat Fuad, Professor at Helwan University; Judge Sa'id Al 'ishmaawi; Dr. Foda of Cairo University; and Dr. Omar Shaheen, a psychiatrist. A similar conference will be held in September [see below] where representatives of other Arab countries will be present.

Turkish Family and Domestic Organization. Hunter College, CUNY, New York, NY, April 23-25, 1986. Reported by Lucie Wood Saunders.

This workshop was organized by Daniel Bates and Alan Duben and sponsored by the Institute for Turkish Studies, Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, and Hunter College. Participants were invited, and publication of the papers is being considered.

Papers specifically about women were:
J. Starr's on the role of district courts in changing women's lives 1950-1967; Z. Toprak's on women and the family during the II Connstitutional Period; and E. Olson's on women's extra-domestic activities.

In other papers, questions about the status and roles of women were discussed in the context of families. Those who used primarily historical materials were:
I. Ortayli writing on changing legal structure and the Ottoman family; A. Duben examining household composition in Istanbul

censuses of 1884/85 and 1906/07; H. Gerber looking at records of the sharia courts in 17th century Bursa; R. Jennings on divorce records in Nicosia, Cyprus 1580-1640. D. Quataert analyzed relationships between Ottoman household production of textiles and international makets; H. Lowry examined the 15th century Tahrir Defter as a source of family history; C. Behar's paper was on polygyny in late Ottoman Istanbul; J. McCarthy wrote on the understanding and incidence of polygyny among the Ottoman Turks.

Papers on the family since mid-20th century which were based primarily on ethnological or sociological research included: D. Bates on variation in rural household structure; N. Tapper on changing wedding patterns; M. Meeker on family and public culture; C. Delaney on the theory of procreation and families; R. Mendel onn the impact of European migration on families; E. Struck on migration patterns and household structure; R. Casson and B. Ozertug on relationships between household structure, land ownership and production; and A. Gokalp on traditional kinship structures.

Arab Women Solidarity - International Conference: Challenges Facing Arab Women in the Coming Decades. Cairo, September 1-3, 1986. Program submitted by Margot Badran.

"The conference is one of the activities undertaken by the AWSA to face the mounting wave of fanaticism and reaction supported by foreign multinationals which not only threatens the future of all Arab peoples but also directs its blows first and foremost against women...It also aims at strengthening the links between Arab women and reinforcing cooperation between them, at defining and reinforcing the relationship between their rights as women and the general movement of the Arab peoples towards independence, freedom, social justice and unity."

The three main themes of the conference were the political, economic and socio-cultural challenges facing Arab women in the closing decades of the twentieth century. The conference papers and proceedings will be published in book form, with both Arabic and English editions.

Conference presentations:

Political Challenges Facing Arab Women Nawal El Saadawi Egypt
Democracy - Women and Authority Fatima Mernissi Morocco
U.N. Resolutions and Arab Women Mervat Tallawy Egypt
Economic Challenges Facing Arab Women Mohay Zeytoun - Egypt, Fatma Babekr - Sudan, and Nadia Ramsis - Egypt
Socio-Cultural Challenges Facing Arab Women Fatma Ibrahim Sudan
Women and Islam Khaled M. Khaled Egypt
Women Facing Islamic Fundamentalism Foad Zakareya Egypt
Arab Women Organizations Rashida Eneifer Tunisia
Role of Women in Decision-making in Egypt Zenab Shaheen Egypt
Family Law and Arab Women Dalila Hanouche Algeria
Arab Women in Occupied Land Mona Rishmawi Palestine

Problems of Palestinian Women Rita Giacaman Palestine
Women's Image in Popular Islamic Writing Hoda Lutfi Egypt
Conception of Freedom in Syrians Women's Literature Hamida Naana Syria
Effects of Arab Thought on Women's Movements Ekbal Baraka -Egypt; Raja Neama - Lebanon
Women's Image in Arab Men's Writings Sonallah Ibrahim Egypt
Women's Image in Arab Cultural Heritage Fadwa Douglas Lebanon
Arab Women in the Mass Media Awatef Abdel Rahman-Egypt; Soha Abdel Khader-Egypt; Khawla Matter-Bahrain; Mona El Hadidi-Egypt; Thaera Shaalan-Yemen; Gamila Ali Raja-Yemen; Maggie El Halawani-Egypt
Women's Status in the Gulf Countries Salma Matter Emirates
Social Effects of Health Problems among Arab Women Nahid Tobia Sudan
Mental Health Problems and Women in Tunisia Monira Shelli Tunisia
Traditional Health Practices and Arab Women May Hadad Lebanon
Field Study on Women in Mansoura Hala Ismail and Gihan El Sayed - Egypt

Large Scale Commercial Agriculture in the Ottoman Empire - Oct. 24-25, 1986 - State University of New York at Binghamton

Eleven papers were presented on the relationships of land tenure, social and political structure, and agriculture; none focused specifically on women. For more detailed information, contact The Fernand Braudel Center, SUNY Binghamton, Binghamton, NY 13901 (tel. 607/777-4924).

Upcoming Events

International Conference on Moroccan-American Relations - Nov. 13-15, 1986 - Omni International Hotel, Norfolk, Virginia

Conference sessions focus on cultural, political, strategic and economic aspects of U.S.-Moroccan relations, in commemoration of the bicentennial of the Treaty of Marrakech. While there are no panels or papers focused on women, many Moroccan and American scholars will participate. For more information contact Dr. Jerome Bookin-Weiner, International Programs, Old Dominion Univ., Norfolk, VA 23508 (tel. 804/440-4419).

Association of Arab-American University Graduates 19th Annual Conference: Whither the Arab World - Nov. 13-16, 1986 - Sheraton Boston Hotel, Boston, MA

There will be twelve panels and workshops on the major issues confronting the Arab world today, including political uncertainty, pending economic setbacks and increased social fragmentation; no presentations focus specifically on women. The keynote address will be by Noam Chomsky, and the Banquet speaker on Saturday evening will be Dr. Abdel Azim Anis, writer and prominent opposition figure in Egypt. Contact AAUG's national office at 556 Trapelo Road, Belmont, MA 02178 (tel. 617/484-5483) for more information; one can register on

arrival.

1986 MESA Meetings in Boston - Nov. 19-23, 1986 - Sheraton Boston Hotel, Boston, MA

SEE BELOW FOR ANNOUCEMENT OF AMEWS MEETING AND LISTING OF PANELS AND PAPERS ON WOMEN

1986 Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association - Dec. 3-7, 1986 - Phiadelphia, PA

There will be 27 panels related to gender or the Middle East, usually not simultaneously; your typist's energy and US postal rates do not permit a full listing. Those wishing more information should contact the AAA, 1703 New Hampshire Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009 (tel) 202/232-8800.

Sudan Studies Association Extraordinary Meeting - "Sudanese Studies: Past, Present, and Future" - Jan. 2-7, 1987 - Khartoum, Sudan

The first 3-4 days will be meetings, and excursions in the Sudan will be organized for the last 3 days. For more information contact Dr. Constance Berkley, 20 East 9th St., Apt. 7-H, New York, NY 10003.

Institute of African Research and Studies - "The Nile Basin" - March 1987 - Cairo, Egypt

A major goal of the conference is to consolidate the relationships between the scientific communities of the 9 Nile basin countries, and to begin collaboration on natural resources and development. Provisional topics are: land and water resources, agriculture and food, livestock and their problems, and human resources. The participation of American scholars is sought, but no financial assistance is available. For more information contact The Dean, Institute of African Research and Studies, Cairo University, 12613 Giza, Cairo, Egypt (tel. [local] 348.78.13/3348.47.28/348.56.32; telex 94372 UNCAI UN)

Oxford University and Pitt Rivers Museum - International Symposium on Afghan Studies - sometime between 5-26 April, 1987 - Oxford, England

The five day symposium will bring together international scholars conducting research on Afghanistan, primarily to investigate the problems of disappearing Afghan culture with the involuntary migration of perhaps 1/3 of the population. For more information contact Dr. Schuyler Jones, Refugee Studies Programme, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St. Giles, Oxford OX1 3LA, England

Gender/Culture/Politics - An Interdisciplinary Conference - April 10-12, 1987 - Evanston, IL

Participants include Jane F. Collier, Barbara Ehrenreich,

Catherine Gallagher, Nancy C. M. Hartsock, Bell Hooks, Barbara J. Nelson, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Ann Snitow, Carol B. Stack, Monique Wittig. For more information contact Program in Comparative Literature and Theory, 152 Kresge Hall, Northwestern Univ., Evanston, IL 60201

American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) Annual Meeting - April 24-26, 1987 - Memphis, Tennessee

Papers are solicited for the annual meetings; the submission deadline is Jan. 15, 1987. For more information, contact Prof. Rita Freed, 1987 Program Committee Chair, Institute of Egyptian Art and Archaeology, Memphis State University, Memphis, TN 38152.

AMEWS MEETING AT MESA IN BOSTON

The first formal organizational meeting of AMEWS will take place on Thursday afternoon, Nov. 20, from 3-6 P.M.

3-4:30 Address by author Etel Adnan
"Growing Up to Be a Woman Writer in Lebanon"

(this is a correction of the earlier title sent to AMEWS members)

4:30-6 Business Meeting
All current and potential members are encouraged to attend

PANELS AND PAPERS ON WOMEN AT MESA IN BOSTON

(from MESA Bulletin; does not include any last-minute changes)

Friday November 21

8-10 AM Feminism, Theory and the Study of Women in North Africa and the Middle East

"Feminist Discourses, Women's Reality: the Case of Women in Algeria"; Marnia Lazreg
"The Woman's Image of Herself, a Conscious and Unconscious Self-destruction"; Aida A. Bamia
"Segregation and Desegregation in the Religious Life of Muslim Women in Egypt"; Valerie J. Hoffmann-Ladd
"Prospects for Feminism in the Middle East: The Case of Turkey"; Yasemin Soysal

10:30-12 Disguised Employment in the Middle East: Female Labor in Agriculture

"'Disguised Employment': Dependent Family Labor in the Process of Development"; E. Mine Cinar
"Rural Household Production and the Sexual Division of Labor: A Research Framework"; Nulifer Isvan-Hayat
"Invisible Carpet Weavers: Women's Income Contribution in Rural Turkey"; Gunseli Berik

10:30-12 Arab Women's Poetry (A Reading)

Salma Khadra Jayyusi
Huda Naamani
Miriam Cook
Etel Adnan

12-1:30 The Role of the Woman Intellectual in the Arab World

"Beirut's Decentrists: Women's Voices from under the Debris"; Miriam Cooke
"Feminism, Sexuality, and the Egyptian Woman Intellectual"; Margot Badran
"Arab Nationalism & Feminist Consciousness in the Arab Women North African Novels"; Evelyne Accad
"Politics and Feminism in the Writings of Inji Aflatun"; Michelle Raccagni

12-1:30 Tribal Women At Work
(Sponsored by AMEWS)

"Female Labor, Cognitions of Work and Relations of Production in Boir Ahmad, S.W. Iran"; Erika Friedl
"The Anthropology of Women's Work Among the Sheikhanzi Nomads of Western Afghanistan"; Bahram Tavakolian

Saturday November 22

8-10 Public and Private Domains

"The Role of the Domestic Sector in Incipient State Formation"; Julie Peteet
"Female Sensuality, Soap and Social Space: Moroccan Women's 'Body Techniques' and Social Organization in the Hamman"; Maria Messina
"Nation, State and Gender: The Fate of Women's Rights in Tunisia"; Mounira Charrad
"Public and Private Domains: A Critique of the Literature on Women and the Middle East"; Suad Joseph
"The Weeping Bride: Marriage and Woman's Volition in Morocco"; Hannah Davis

10-11:30 Issues in Women's History

"Women and the Politics of Patronage: Family Life in Nablus"; Judith E. Tucker
"Female Authority, Saitly Succession and Colonial Politics in 19th century Algeria"; Julia A. Clancy-Smith
"Women's History, Family History, and Legal Sources"; Margaret Meriwether
"Women's Press in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt"; Beth Ann Baron

2-3:30 Women, Culture and Ideology In Contemporary Iran

"From Tahireh to Tahireh: Veils and Words"; Farzaneh Milani
"The Ambivalence Toward Women in Shi'i Law and Ideology";

Shahla Haeri
"State-building, Ideology and Women's Work in Iran"; Hamideh Sedghi

Sunday November 23

8-10 Gender and Personal Status Laws

"Egyptian Personal Status Laws and the Politics of Gender Consciousness in the 1920s"; Mervat Hatem
"Secular vs. Religious Approaches to Personal Status in the Middle East"; Halim Barakat
"The 1979 and the 1985 Personal Status Laws and Marital Relations within the Egyptian Family"; Afaf Mahfuz
"Wealth, Property and Social Structure: Jabal Nablus, 1800-1850"; Bishara Doumani

10:30-12 Harim Power in the Arts or Women in the Arts: Visual and Architectural

"Females as Subject and Object: The Case of Fatimid Art"; Irene Bierman
"Purdah Power: The Women in Mughal Painting"; Ellen Smart
"Three Female Mamluk Patrons: The Case of Fatimid Art"; Caroline Williams
"The Image of Ottoman Women in the Arts: 1570-1680"; Ulku Bates
"Timurid Architectural Patronesses"; Bernard O'Kane

10:30-12 Gender and Family Among Middle East Immigrants in the United States

"Generational Differences in Women's Roles in the Palestinian Family: Perspectives of Palestinian Women in Chicago"; Louise Cainkar
"Eddies in the American Mainstream: Who is Acculturated When the Native-Born Marry Immigrants?"; Barbara Bilge
"Migration and the Role of Women among Yemenis and Southern Lebanese in Dearborn:; Barbara Aswad
"Egyptian Migration and Ethnic Association"; Guy H. Wolf

The following is a listing of panels with individual papers which deal with gender; we apologize for any we may have overlooked.

Friday November 21

8-10 Classical Persian Poetry: A Comparatist Reassessment
"Vis: a Woman with a Voice of Her Own"; Farzaneh Milani

8-10 Tribe and Diatribe: The Anthropology of the Tribal Concept in Yemeni Society
"Honor Among Tribes: The Underlying Values of Tribal Society"; Najwa Adra
"Performance, Competition and Shelf: a Semiotic Analysis of Yemeni Tribal Weddings"; Steven C. Caton

8-10 Medieval Islamic Political Theory
"Nizam Al-Mulk's Manipulation of 'Tradition' in A'isha and the Role of Women in Islamic Government";
Denise A. Spellberg

10:30-12 Land Tenure, Property and Rural Development in the Middle East
"Woman, Properties and Migrants: Access to Land and Local Conflicts in Rural Egypt"; Georg Stauth

12-1:30 The Labor Movement and Structural Change in Iran
"The Female Labor Force: Trends and Prospects"; Val Moghadam

2-3:30 Narrative Genres
"The Paradigm of Love and Types of Romance"; Victoria Rowe Holbrook

Saturday November 22

8-10 AM Conversion and the Arts of the Islamic World
"The Survival of 'Anahita' Imagery in Islamic Art";
Dorothy Shepherd

Sunday November 23

8-10 Ottoman Social & Political Transformation in the Post-Suleymanic Era
"The Rise of the Ottoman Imperial Harem"; Leslie Peirce

10:30-12 Contemporary Issues in Egyptian Society
"Egypt's Law of Personal Status"; Fawzi M. Najjar
"The Zar Cult in Rural Egyptian Society: An Anthropological Study"; El Sayed El Aswad

Conference Opportunity

Participants are being sought for an innovative Wingspread conference on INTEGRATING SCHOLARSHIP ON WOMEN into international studies and foreign language courses. Twenty five participants will be chosen from applicants who direct or administer international studies programs, or other relevant faculty; all expenses except hotel and breakfast will be paid. The conference will be at Wingspread, Racine, Wisconsin, on March 16-18, 1987. Interested parties may apply by submitting a statement outlining their interest in developing projects in this area on their own campuses. Applications and requests for further information should be sent to Dr. Janice Monk, SIROW, 265 Modern Languages Building, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721 (tel. 602/621-7338). Application deadline is Dec. 15, 1986.

Research Opportunity

Research Affiliate Program -- Center for African Studies, The University of Florida Application deadline January 31, 1987.

The Center offers 3 two-month appointments to college faculty

who are African Studies Specialists with regular appointments at institutions which do not have adequate resources for current African-related research. Preference will be given to scholars at community and liberal arts colleges and universities in the southeast. While the work of most former participants has focused on Africa as a whole (eg education, population, development) or on specific sub-Saharan countries, Charles McClellan (History, Radford Univ) worked on "Darasa, the Ethiopian Empire and World Economy" and Peter Garretson (History, Florida State Univ) worked on "Bandits on the Ethiopian-Sudanese Frontier". This suggests that work on North Africa, or on the Middle East as related to Africa, would be suitable.

Each affiliate receives $2500 to cover the cost of housing, transportation and living expenses, and is provided with office space and minimal secretarial services. For more information contact:
Outreach Director, RAP
Center for African Studies, 470 Grinter Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611 tel: (904) 392-2183

Publication Opportunity

The Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt is soliciting manuscripts on Islamic Egypt. Direct inquiries to Prof. John L. Foster, Editor JARCE, 2003 Lincoln Street, Evanston, IL 60201.

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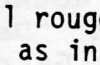
Etel Adnan - Literary Reflections

Miriam Cooke, Duke University

> "Sometimes while painting, something wild gets unleashed. Something of the process of dreams recurs ... But with a special kind of violence: a painting is like a territory. All kinds of things happen within its boundary, equal to the discoveries of the murders or the creations we have in the world outside."

(Journey to Mount Tamalpais, Sausalito: Post-Apollo Press, 1986, p. 26)

In Etel Adnan's literature, poetry, painting and prose coalesce to form a single creation. Forbidden as a child to speak Arabic, she has spent her life compensating for the vacuum left by the prohibition to express herself in her own language. She may write in French or English, but painting, she once said, is her vehicle for Arabic: "I paint in Arabic."

Is that why so much of her writing is illustrated not only with plates but also with flourishes and bursts within the text itself? In Apocalypse Arabe (1980), each segment of the poem is pockmarked with signs that weave above the often dense text a system of meaning: STOP, she writes, but the arrow points on, and on, and on ... It is war. Lebanon, 1975. Words, non-Arabic words, adjectives, nouns and a very few verbs, timidly cower around the edge of reality and mechanically repeat themselves; "Un soleil jaune Un soleil vert Un soleil rouge Un soleil bleu Un  jaune Un soleil ." All that changes, as in the rainbow of a blast, is the color.

In the 20 years following the publication of her first volume of poetry, Moonshots (1966), Adnan has published eight books, of which two are written in prose: the novel Sitt Marie Rose (1978) and the 1986 "essay" entitled Journey to Mount Tamalpais. The poetry collections are: Five Senses For One Death (1971); Jebu et L'Express Beyrouth - Enfer (1973); L'Apocalypse Arabe (1980); Pablo Neruda is a Banana Tress (1982); From A to Z (1982) and The Indian Never Had a Horse (1985).

Adnan published three books before the Lebanese Civil War (1975 -). Yet, despite her distance from Beirut, it is noteworthy that the bulk of her writing, 6 of 9 books, has appeared since the outbreak of the war in her homeland. In fact, her third volume of poetry, L'Express Beyrouth - Enfer, although published two years before the beginning of the war, is clearly a prognostication of the coming inferno. Violent imagery tears through the disjointed narrative of a disintegrating self to jolt awareness. In Apocalypse Arabe, written between 1975 and 1976, Adnan again anticipates a cataclysm. This time it is the Israeli invasion of 1982. The bombers are there: "STOP STOP STOP STOP STOP STOP STOP STOP STOP STOP un avion soleil ⟶ avion tout tourné là-haut" (p. 35). Sabra is there. The world with its high sounding revolutionary rhetoric is there. And so is hate, rage, defeat.

Situated in the middle of the war and of her anguished concern for her self-destructing country is her elegy in prose, Sitt Marie Rose (1978). This three-part novel in seven voices is a poignant evocation of a savagery the war condoned: the murder, dubbed "execution", of a Christian woman by her co-religionaries for her support of her Palestinian lover.

Since the Israeli invasion she has not written of her country, but out of it. In poetry, prose and painting she has sought a peace that might discursively resolve the political stalemate.

Her most recent publication, Journey to Mount Tamalpais (1986), is only the second piece of prose that she has produced. This essay, "in the tradition of Siddharta", describes a powerful voyage of discovery through the attempted un/discovering of the almost magical mountain. This mountain, all mountains (maybe also Mount Lebanon?), challenges all notions of the centrality of the human "I": "Do not climb that mountain unless you know it needs you. Otherwise, you shall die like a diseased raven, and carry your skeleton in crowded streets, and never, never, recover your memory" (p. 14). It becomes the self to my other self, and by distancing me from myself allows a perspective, the only perspective, on my self, on all selves. The 16 plates scattered throughout the 63-page text depict this Californian mountain in all its moods: wild; gentle and furry; distant; immediate; soaring up above the reader; almost lost below the clouds that carry the reader. If this volatile entity invites you on a journey, you must go. For if we cannot survive in life, let us at least try in art.