NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR MIDDLE EAST WOMEN'S STUDIES

AMEWS Officers and Editorial Board 1987-90:

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The editorial board of the AMEWS Newsletter:
Mine Cinar, Mervet Hatem, Suad Joseph, Afaf Mahfouz, Julie Peteet, Suha Sabbagh and Judith Tucker.

The Editorial Board encourages the participation of members in the newsletter. Please send us any news items that you feel may be of interest to others in the Association as well as your comments and suggestions.

*** Please note: Address changes should be sent to Mine Cinar, AMEWS Secretary-Treasurer (See address above)

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AMEWS is pleased to announce the guest speaker for our annual meeting:

SORAYA ALTORKI
Prof. of Anthropology
American University of Cairo
author of:
Women in Saudi Arabia: Ideology and Behavior among the Elite
Columbia University Press, 1986

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MES A 1988

The annual MESA meeting is being held this year on Nov. 2-5, at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles, Calif.

AMEWS' ANNUAL MEETING
November 2, 1988
Royal Suite, Beverly Hilton Hotel
3-6:00

AGENDA

3:00pm  Introductory Remarks
3:15-4:15 Lecture and Discussion by Guest Speaker Prof. Soraya Altorki
4:15-6:00 Business Meeting
6:00 - Dinner

** Please note: Due to the high cost of catering in the Los Angeles area, AMEWS will not be holding a banquet after our meeting. However, we have been able to reserve a room at the UCLA campus cafeteria for those members who would like to have dinner together. We regret that we are unable to offer our annual banquet.

PANELS ON GENDER AT MESA 1988

WOMEN, WORK AND DEVELOPMENT, Chair: Barbara Larson (University of New Hampshire)

GEN DER AND SOCIETY: HISTORIC AND MODERN PERSPECTIVES.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST: NEW PERSPECTIVES, Chair: Mounira Charrad (University of Calif., San Diego)

WOMEN IN IRAN

PATTERNS OF WOMEN'S WORK AMONG MIDDLE EASTERN IMMIGRANTS IN NORTH AMERICA, Chair: Barbara Bilge (Eastern Michigan U.)

WORK, EMPLOYMENT AND FAMILY AMONG MIDDLE EASTERN WOMEN, Chair: Mine Cinar (Loyola University of Chicago)

WOMEN IN ARMENIAN LITERATURE, Chair: Avedis K. Sanjjan (UCLA)

INTEGRATING WOMEN INTO WORLD HISTORY AND THE HISTORIES OF AFRICA, ASIA, THE MIDDLE EAST, AND LATIN AMERICA, Chair: Guity Nashat (University of Illinois, Chicago)
AMEWS PANEL:

THEORY, METHOD AND VISION IN MIDDLE EASTERN WOMEN'S STUDIES, Chair: Val Moghadam (New York University)

Workshop:

MIDDLE EASTERN WOMEN AND THE WEST, Chair: Afaa Mahfouz (University of Helwan, Egypt).

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Social Research Center (SRC) of the American University of Cairo has received a grant from the International Development Research Center (IDRC) to create a Regional Information Network on Arab Women (RINAW). The project has as Phase I to compile a Directory of all social science research institutions and all social scientists engaged in research on Arab women.

If you (or your institution) would like to be included in the Directory please write to:

Soha Abdul Kader, Interim Coordinator
RINAW
Social Research Center
American University of Cairo
113, Sharia Kasr El Aini
Cairo, Egypt

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Fatima Mernissi's Lecture Tour:

The Moroccan sociologist and author will speak at several institutions this Fall:

Trinity College, Oct. 1-5; Cornell University, Oct. 6-8; the Boston/Cambridge area, Oct. 9-22; Brown University Oct. 10-12, MIT, Oct. 18; the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Oct. 23-29; University of Wisconsin in Madison, Oct. 30-Nov. 2; City University of New York, Nov. 3-4; Columbia University, Nov. 3; NYU, Nov. 9; Vassar, Nov. 10-11. For more information on dates, times, and places contact each university. For general information contact Susan Schaefer Davis at (215) 649-7717.

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CALL FOR PAPERS FOR 1990 BERKSHIRE CONFERENCE

The 8th Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, "Crossing Boundaries in Feminist History," will be held on June 7-10, 1990, at Douglass College, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. The Program Committee especially welcomes proposals addressing the relations between women's history and social and political practice, or conjoining the discipline of history with other feminist studies, or taking a comparative approach crossing national, cultural, racial or ethnic lines.

We strongly prefer submission of proposals for complete panels (to include a maximum of two papers, one commentator and a moderator) or roundtables. Individual papers will also be considered. The Program Committee may rearrange panels, and submission of a proposal will be understood as agreement with this proviso.

Please submit proposals in triplicate by February 1, 1989, and include: panel title; title and one-page abstract of each paper (or roundtable); and one-page vita for each participant including current address and telephone number. Enclose a stamped self-addressed postcard for return on receipt of packet.

Send proposals on other than US topics to Jane Caplan, Dept., of History, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010; on US topics to Nancy Cott, American Studies Program, 1504A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520; comparative proposals may be sent to either.

The coming Berkshire Conference especially welcomes panels that cross boundaries of culture. The program committee recognizes that it is not always easy to construct panels with scholars working in other cultural or geographical areas. If you wish any assistance please contact Margot Badran, Berkshire Conference Program Committee, P.O.B. 6707, Syracuse, NY 13214.

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Conference:

Feminist Perspectives on Women in Arabo-Islamic Culture.
Cornell University. October 6-8, 1988. Fatima Hernissi was the keynote speaker.

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DOUGLASS COLLEGE OF RUTGERS, The State University of New Jersey announces

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON LEADERSHIP, POWER, AND DIVERSITY
the sixth in its ongoing series of seminars conducted through
THE BLANCHE, EDITH AND IRVING LAURIE NEW JERSEY CHAIR IN WOMEN'S STUDIES
The seminar will take place on
Wednesdays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Spring semester 1989.
The seminar will be conducted by

CHARLOTTE BUNCH
Internationally known writer and organizer, teacher and theorist, speaker and activist, she has been a leading figure in the women's movement for two decades. Founder of Quest: A Feminist Quarterly, she is editor of seven anthologies of feminist thought and author of numerous articles. Her most recent book is Passionate Politics: Feminist Theory in Action (St. Martin’s Press, 1987).

Seminar Description

This interdisciplinary seminar is envisioned as an opportunity for those working in various fields to explore feminist theory and experience in relation to leadership, power, and diversity in the United States and globally. It will look at how women have exercised leadership in a variety of current and historical settings including diverse governmental and non-governmental structures. Discussing what differences women's leadership makes will also involve examination of structures and leadership models created by women's organizations. Feminist insights into the redefinitions of basic concepts such as power and domination, consciousness-raising and empowerment, cooperation and conflict resolution between majorities and minorities will be considered. Of particular interest to the seminar will be the question of diversity: how has diversity of race, class, sexual preference and culture affected opportunities for and attitudes toward leadership and power as well as what are feminist approaches to dealing with such diversity constructively? The seminar will also address how feminist theory and experiments in these areas impact society generally.

The seminar aims at including participants with a wide variety of experiences and backgrounds within the United States and internationally. Choices will be made to ensure as much diversity of participants as possible and preference will be given to those who have experience with these themes in women's or social change groups, government, media, and/or have done research around them in any academic discipline.

Visiting Scholars
Applications are being accepted until October 15, 1988 for two visiting scholars to participate in the seminar from January 15 to May 15, 1989. Each scholar will receive a stipend of $12,500. Applicants should be non-tenured researchers, including independent scholars, activists and practitioners doing work which directly relates to the theme but which may be in any discipline. They will be expected to present one paper in the weekly seminar and to attend its meetings; to be on campus at least three days a week: to give at least one public presentation; and to work with undergraduate and graduate students involved in the seminar. Visiting scholar applications should include vita, descriptions of research or work to be pursued during the semester, copies of relevant papers, and no more than two letters of recommendation.

Seminar Participants
Applications are being accepted until October 15, 1988 for scholars, students, activists and practitioners wishing to participate in the seminar, and/or to present a paper, and living within commuting distance. The seminar will be as inclusive as possible, but not so large as to preclude full participation by all its members. All applicants for the seminar should send a letter indicating their interest and expertise in the topic and copies of their papers where relevant. Students, graduate and undergraduate, who wish to take the course for credit should also send one letter of recommendation.

Applications should be sent to Laurie New Jersey Chair in Women's Studies at Douglass College, c/o Ferris Olin, Rutgers Institute for Research on Women, Voorhees Chapel-Lower Level, Douglass College Campus, New Brunswick, NJ 08903. Announcements will be made by November 11, 1988. For more information call Ferris Olin at (201) 932-9072.

Douglass College, the women's college of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, and the largest college for women in the country, is the home of the Rutgers-New Brunswick Women's Studies Program, the Institute for Research on Women, and the Center for the American Woman and Politics. Over one hundred members of the Rutgers faculty are doing research on women and gender, and the university offers numerous programs as well as research opportunities through its own collections and those in nearby libraries. The Laurie New Jersey Chair in Women's Studies at Douglass, funded through an endowed gift to the college by Irving Laurie and through the New Jersey State Legislature and administered through the Department of Higher Education, has been created by women's studies researchers at Rutgers and by the Fellows of Douglass College to bring distinguished scholars to the University on a rotating basis.
The AMEWS Board decided to publish a copy of the child-
care proposal submitted to the MESA Board by Judith
Tucker. We thought our membership would be interested
in the proposal and MESA's response.

PROPOSAL FOR PROVISION OF DAYCARE FACILITIES AT MESA CONVENTION

submitted by the Association of Middle East Women's Scholars
to the Board of the Middle East Studies Association
June 2, 1988

As MESA conferences increasingly attract younger scholars,
many of whom are responsible for the care of young children,
conference participants are faced with the problem posed by the
absence of child care arrangements. The only option to date for
those who must bring children is to leave them in the care of a
babysitter alone in a hotel room, an expensive and alienating
approach which may well risk souring the next generation on
hotels, to say nothing of Middle East Studies. At the Association
of Middle East Women's Scholar's meeting held in conjunction with
the MESA conference in Boston in November of 1986, the AMEWS
membership unanimously endorsed the idea that proper daycare
services be provided as part of the coming MESA conference. We
felt that such services were required to allow full participation
of MESA's membership in the conference and to make the
organization responsive to the changing needs of its members. We
submitted a proposal to the MESA board in July of 1987 which we
understand was discussed at the November, 1987 meeting although
we did not receive an official response. We would therefore like
the Board of Directors of MESA and/or the Program Committee, as
appropriate, to consider the institution of a child care program
at the 1988 conference in Los Angeles.

Arrangements

The best way to proceed, based on the experience of others
with whom we have talked (most notably the organizers of the
Berkshire Conference of Women's Historians and the Arab-American
Anti-Discrimination Committee Convention, both of which ran
excellent daycare programs), is to put all the arrangements into
the hands of a competent child care service whose job it is to
set up an assigned space for daycare use (arrange for cribs,
cots, toys, and other materials), plan the program for the
children who will be attending, engage the proper number of
personnel, and oversee the program for the length of the
conference. The daycare organizer should submit a preliminary
budget to MESA with a sliding scale depending on the number and
ages of children attending. Ordinarily, the children would be
divided into three age groups: under 20 months, 20 months through
4 years, and 5 years to 12 years. The needs and activities of the
three groups obviously differ a good deal: separate rooms and
activities appropriate to the ages of the children are required.
One such service we know of, Sitters Unlimited, operates in the
Los Angeles area, but there are undoubtedly a number of others.
A good program requires advance registration so that the organizer can plan for the children, particularly for personnel needs. We suggest that an announcement could be prominently displayed in the registration material sent out for the conference advertising the availability of daycare and stating that all children must be registered by, say, October 15 in order to be received.

Cost

It is very difficult to estimate cost because it will vary by locality and by number of children registered. The straight individual babysitting fee charged at most hotels is around $6.00 or $7.00 per hour. We can assume that costs would not exceed this, because the money saved for salaries in a group setting would be applied to equipment and the organizer's fee.

We think that a good part of the cost could be covered by charging set daily fees for 9 to 5 care (or whatever variation seems appropriate for the convention schedule). Setting the fees too high would defeat the purpose which is to enable younger (and generally more impecunious) scholars to attend the conference. $20 per day might be a reasonable charge, but at this rate we should expect to subsidize the service.

Legal Considerations

The physical set-up, qualifications of personnel, etc. are all subject to legal requirements which vary from state to state. A licensed child care service will generally know and meet all legal requirements.

As for MESA's legal liability, the standard practice is to draw up a general legal waiver which parents must sign freeing MESA from any legal responsibility in the case of accident, etc. In addition, another form authorizing emergency medical care should be required. There is no way of eliminating all risk, but none of the organizations we have spoken with felt that legal concerns constituted an impediment to providing child care.

For further information: Judith E. Tucker
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Georgetown University
Washington, D.C. 20057
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Middle East Studies Association of North America
Department of Oriental Studies
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona 85721
(602) 621-5850
July 12, 1988

Dr. Judith E. Tucker
Department of History
Georgetown University
Washington, DC 20057-0001

Dear Dr. Tucker:

Thank you for your letter of 2 June 1988 sent on behalf of the Association of Middle East Women's Scholars.

Your proposal for the provision of daycare facilities at MESA meetings was discussed extensively at the MESA board meeting in November 1987 as well as more briefly at our April 1988 Spring board meeting. I had assumed that as an active AMEWS member that Elizabeth Fernea had conveyed the sentiment of the Board from the November 1987 meeting, but, in any case, I apologize for not giving you and AMEWS an official response from those discussions.

Even though a few organizations do coordinate and hence in essence provide for daycare facilities at their annual meeting, we found that most associations do not provide that service. Some had even tried it and then given it up in frustration - and expenses (and in some cases too few persons had actually used it). The Board basically believes that a scholarly, professional conference is not a place to bring young children, and therefore as an association we should not be encouraging the bringing of children to the meeting. The expenses involved are very real, and as you indicate in your letter, to make it so that it is not so unreasonably high, it would have to be subsidized - hence the general membership would be paying for some or much of the child care.

It is also not feasible to have the MESA Secretariat coordinate the daycare service. This is due partly to the time and expense involved, as well as the fact that the staff already is working considerably overtime on the annual meetings. I don't think that AMEWS quite appreciates the amount of work that would be involved - getting a preliminary count of children, divided by age groups - by separate rooms, coordinating with a child care service, managing the financial side, etc. etc. We have found that to get our members to inform us ahead of time about most matters is quite impossible - hence the great difficulty in scheduling affiliated group meetings, getting hotels to not cut off the special registration rate a month before the conference (when most of our members still have not called in their hotel reservations, despite bold warnings, implorations, etc.).
Also, I think that the legal considerations are not quite as minimal as you propose - even getting legal waivers signed, etc., is not that easy either.

Please be assured, however, that the Board understands that in some situations it might be imperative that children need to accompany the member to the meeting. Hence, we will for every meeting provide the information for the hotel’s child care service (or an alternative if readily available). For instance, child care information for the November 1988 meeting in Beverly Hills will appear in the upcoming special "Annual Meeting" issue of the MESA Newsletter.

I am sorry that we cannot respond to the AMEWS proposal for daycare facilities in a more positive manner. I hope that I have stated adequately the reasons that the Board feels the association should not sponsor daycare at the MESA Annual Meetings.

If further information is needed, please do contact me.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Bonine
Executive Secretary

cc: William B. Quandt, President
BOOK REVIEW SECTION

Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society
Reviewed by Susan Schaefer Davis, Haverford, PA.

It is a pleasure to review two such readable, interesting and worthwhile books. While basically they are quite different, there are some similarities: both are by women who have ties to the culture and state a concern with discourse, and both describe Muslim women whose dignity, strength and importance in their culture is illustrated.

Veiled Sentiments is an exemplary book in several ways, particularly for AMEWS readers: it is beautifully written, highly sensitive in its portrayal of the cultural context, and provides important information about women by "mainstreaming" concern with them into questions about cultural values of hierarchy and autonomy, honor and modesty, blood versus emotional ties as a basis for social relations, and finally the relation between ideology and human experience. This is a book that promises a lot - and delivers.

The book first introduces the community and the focus on poetry and sentiment, and describes how Abu-Lughod's place in the community influenced her work. The second section describes the ideology or values of Bedouin social life, and the third treats the contrast of mundane with poetic discourse in the society. Finally, an appendix presents images and themes of the poems she studied, which are reproduced in both English and transliterated Arabic.

The research was carried out in an Awlad Ali Bedouin community in Egypt's Western Desert, and centered on a group of fifteen related and client families. These were sedentarized people living in houses, who raised sheep and drove Toyota pickups, invested in coastal real estate and maintained many traditional behaviors.
From the very start, one is constantly aware of Abu-Lughod's sensitivity and ability to communicate what she sees and experiences. In thanking the Bedouin with whom she lived and worked, she includes the last page of her fieldnotes:

The tents, the sheep and the goats are all sights I will miss. I am sure I will forget so much of the texture of life, the feeling at the end of the day as we put away the food and pick the things up in semidark. As I sit in my room writing, I hear the muffled sounds of children running and shouting. R. calls out to her daughter. A car approaches the house. It is a quite life I will miss. There is no loneliness, always someone to sit with. I feel so much part of something here. I don't remember ever feeling that before (p.xiii).

At first a fellow fieldworker wonders "Are those really unedited notes?" After reading the book, one is no longer in doubt.

Abu-Lughod writes vividly and movingly. She describes her expectations on going to the field using a quotation from Durrell's Justine which focuses on the glistening sea and contains an almost incidental Arab. She implicitly contrasts her work with the Orientalist tradition by describing the interest of real Bedouin in the beauty and bounty of the desert, the taste of country milk and herbs. We empathize with her embarrassment at being escorted and introduced into the field by her Arab father, and share her later understanding of the importance of this demonstration of family support for a woman working alone.

The second section, in describing the social values or ideological context in which the poetry functions, analyzes several key oppositions. While it is impossible here to present the subtlety and complexity of the issues, an overview will give an idea of these concerns. Abu-Lughod explains how the Bedouin use ideology to reconcile values of equality with a strongly hierarchical social system, so that a person reaches the top of the system on the basis of morality, achieved by living up to ideals of honor. Honor and modesty (hasham), the values at the heart of the moral system, are tied to autonomy and dependence respectively. At the top of the social hierarchy are the most honorable and autonomous males, but dependent females and younger men can achieve respect and honor by exhibiting modesty and by differing to those with more honor. Translating hasham as "modesty" rather than "shame" renders it a behavior that one exercises, rather than a punitive label which one is assigned. Abu-Lughod notes that Bedouin(s) mediate the problem of inequality by viewing relations as complementary rather than antagonistic. Thus independence entails responsibility and dependence allows
choice of how much modesty to display, and thus how much honor to allow the claimant. One chapter discusses modesty, gender and sexuality, and in this context it is clear why female sexuality is so loaded in the culture: it is one area in which females have real power to influence male honor by the degree to which they exhibit hasham. Female sexuality is also described as posing a threat to male ties by blood, and to the hierarchy of providers and dependents, elders and juniors (p. 147).

The concluding section focuses on the ghinnawas or "little songs", whose form resembles Japanese haiku with a tone more like American blues. These poems captured Abu-Lughod's attention because of both their contents and their obvious importance in daily life. This poetry expresses personal sentiments about interpersonal relations, often those of the speaker. The poems are often formulaic, yet allow a wide range of expression. Situations involving poetry were usually more intimate than those of ordinary discourse, and more often in the "domestic" realm. In a society which expresses the values of independence in ordinary conversation, the ties to others expressed in the poems made them anomalous. For example, a woman who usually said she did not care that her husband had divorced her recited these poems to women in her household:

Memories stir of the beloved  
Should I release, I'm flooded by them... (p.226)

Abu-Lughod was led to explore "the relationship between the Bedouin poetic discourse and ordinary social life" (p.32). Her final chapter discusses why these poems, expressing sentiments of weakness and romantic love which violate the codes of honor and modesty, are so valued and do not decrease the standing of self-esteem of the speakers. She addresses the important question of what the difference in these two discourses reveals about "the relationship between a society's official ideology and individual experience..." (p.233), and the result is one of the best Middle East ethnographies in recent years.

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Doing Daily Battle (originally Le Maroc raconte par ses femmes, SMER: Rabat 1984 ) is also highly readable. Mernissi begins by saying that her objective is to "break th(e) ancestral silence" of women by allowing them to speak" (p.1), and she presents women's voices more directly and is less analytical throughout than Abu-Lughod. The introduction provides a framework which orients the reader to the importance of hearing women's voices in Morocco (and all of the Muslim East) and points out issues of central importance which recur throughout the text. It is straightforward and lively, with eight interviews presenting twelve women who talk about life experiences spanning most of this century, with emphasis on the seventies. The interviews
provide important and seldom-discussed information on many aspects of women's lives: raising crops and animals, working for wages in cities, emotional reactions to marriage and relationships with males, the change which affects them all, friendship, and relations to the supernatural.

Mernissi argues that the pervasive discourse in Morocco is male, and while admitting variation among men, she suggests that only one discourse is heard. Mernissi's interviews reveal female perceptions and realities very different from the pervasive Moroccan discourse about the world. The introduction focuses on differences in perception because they are "the key problem of cultural revolution"; these differences are then illustrated by the realities of the interviews.

The first difference in male and female perception concerns gender roles, which the prevailing discourse divides into strong male (economic provider) and weak female (dependent). The male view is that women are primarily concerned with beauty and sexual appeal, while Mernissi says women "see themselves as a race of giants doing daily battle against the destructive monsters unemployment, poverty, and degrading jobs (5)", and see men as "overcome, just like women, by the destructive forces that destabilize the rural world (6)." Secondly, males perceive the couple as inequalitarian, with the man economically dominant and the female affectively more important. Females want economic and affective equality; the desire for an equal caring relationship is illustrated in several interviews when women ran away from, divorced, or refused marriage to men they disliked. In her final example, Mernissi opposes conclusions about contraception by two very dissimilar groups of men against women's perceptions. Progressive politicians rejected birth control because it was initiated by international organization they felt had imperialist objectives, while conservatives opposed it in the name of Islam. No one consulted the major consumer and beneficiaries, the women. They were left with traditional methods of abortion (the plethora of which illustrated their need) and/or larger families.

Mernissi describes what she calls "terrorist" tactics used by Moroccan men to silence women like her who clamor to be heard. They either claim her ideas are imported and deny the cultural heritage, or that they are "not representative" in a scientific sense. This male discourse in fact reveals "a very specific interpretation of both the heritage and the science, which situates (males) in a very precise class relationship to the symbolic values of the society"(15). She concludes with a defense of the interview technique and qualitative research that echoes some of Gilligan's (1982) arguments about the limitations of most psychological research.
The women interviewed are mostly uneducated (as are nearly all Moroccan women over 40), and only one would be called "bourgeois": a high school teacher formerly married to a doctor. The women present a range of ages and activities, from a ten-year-old "maid" to a woman over sixty who says she married at nine, and include weavers, domestics, housewives, a psychic and a migrant to Europe. Interviews begin with descriptions of early life, so we learn about extended families and earlier forms of economic activity and gender relations; this provides a perspective on women's greatly changed lives. Mernissi evokes interesting material by her use of factual questions about daily activities and by rare queries about sexual harmony, women's perception of the differences between the sexes, and belief in supernatural spirits. She stresses the importance of building a relationship in interviews, and this shows in women's responses.

Besides being "musts" for professionals, both books are in paperback and would be excellent for classes on the Middle East, women's studies, and perhaps research methodology.

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Turkish Workers In Europe: An Interdisciplinary Study, edited by Ilhan Basgoz and Norman Furniss. (Turkish Studies 5.) 192 pages, University of Indiana Press, Bloomington 1986. $10.95. Reviewed by Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal, Stanford, CA.

The magnitude and nature of post-war immigration was unprecedented. Today, Western Europe accommodates roughly twelve million foreigners out of which approximately three million are Turks. What appeared to be an economically beneficial temporary measure for all concerned has turned out to be a highly complex social phenomenon with long-term cultural, political, and psychological consequences. Still, however, much ambiguity exists both at the level of policy and that of society and individual about the status of foreigners. The essays in this volume address this issue with an interdisciplinary approach. The encounter of Turkish workers with various aspects of life in Western societies (particularly in Federal Republic of Germany), and their cultural and social status are examined from sociological, legal, psychological, anthropological, and folkloric points of view.

Abadan-Unat argues that in dealing with the identity crisis and overwhelming rootlessness that they confront in a culturally distant society, Turkish workers develop a set of values and behavior code, which is defined as re-Turkisation. This, she argues, is not a simple return to traditional behavior orders, but, rather invention of a new urban subculture. Halman's article reveals striking parallels between the ways Turkish writers have dealt with migration and the resulting uprootedness and disorientation both at home and abroad. At a more personal level,
the book includes an interview with a young Turkish woman who reflects on her adolescent experiences in Germany as the daughter of a migrant worker. The uprootedness and identity problems of the Turkish migrant are illustrated very vividly by her testimony, as she describes with insight her alienation from Turkish culture and German society.

Toelken and Bendix complete the picture from the host-society side. Toelken's study provides a long list of ethnic jokes on Turkish guestworkers, which are expressions of growing fear and racial aggression, as well as confusion and uncertainty about the current situation with respect to the Turks in Germany. Bendix deals with the issue at a different level. He draws attention to the ambiguities and confusions in Law, administration, and policy pertaining to foreign workers, and how these provide obstacles to the integration of foreign workers.

The statistics provided by Kagitcibasi and Mushaben show that the European governments have not been very successful in restricting and reversing the flow of foreign labor. Despite their contrary efforts, the former labor importing countries are now faced with growing populations of foreign residents. Guestworkers, both demographically and socially, have become permanent components of host-societies. What is needed is a better understanding of the issues regarding these populations and development of realistic policies on housing, youth employment, education and political rights of guestworkers.

Although most of the articles included in this volume remain descriptive rather than analytical, Turkish Workers in Europe, overall, is a good source book for those interested in the subject.

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**War's Other Voices: Women Writers on the Lebanese Civil War**
Miriam Cooke
Cambridge University Press (Cambridge), 1988; 208 pages; hard.
Reviewed by Evelyne Accad

The long and agonizing Lebanese war—it has been going on for more than thirteen years now—has seen an impressive body of publications of all kinds: sociological, political, religious, anthropological studies, novels, poems, essays, etc., the bulk of which has already filled several anthological books in French, English, Arabic, and probably other languages as well. This is the first book which addresses the issue of women's writing and impact on/of the war very thoroughly and completely. Miriam Cooke not only went to Lebanon courageously, in the middle of the war.
to undertake her research, collecting both published and unpublished works, and conducting interviews with the various writers there, but she is also very well versed in the culture, speaking Arabic and French fluently and having a deep sense for the country both from inside and outside. These qualities clearly emerge in this study.

The central thesis of the book is to focus on what the author calls the Beirut Decentrists. They are the women writers who stayed in Beirut, shared the experience of the war, yet lived separately. They were decentered, “yet their marginal perspective gave them insight into the holistic aspect of war, united them and allowed them discursively to undermine and restructure society around the image of a new center.” (p.3) In such perspective, the difference between men and women writing about war comes out clearly: “Men wrote of strategy, ideology and violence. The Beirut Decentrists, regardless of confession and political persuasion, wrote of the dailiness of war. The men wrote of existential Angst: these women of abandoned loneliness. The men wrote defiantly of revolution; these women angrily against emigration.” (p.3)

The first three chapters entitled "A Different Experience", give us some background into the war and its impact on literary expression. Cooke examines universal questions as to the role of literature and art, the writers, the war, and the influence of culture on war. She brings new insights and arrives at original conclusions. For example, she remarks that: “To write is also to shape one’s life, and to render it relevant as a myth whose reality transcends the particularity of the author... Some of these writers appreciated the power of the pen, beyond spiritual and emotional therapy, as a tool for rallying a new consciousness”. (p.38)

The last four chapters are divided into two parts: "A Different Expression," and "A New Consciousness". Cooke assesses the difference between male and female writings and analyzes the distinctive contribution made by the Beirut Decentrists. The crucial issue is "Responsibility should combine the female sense of duty to others with the male sense of the rights of hierarchical space. Only then could real change take place, could hope for the future be nurtured.” (p. 119)

"The Beirut Decentrists" analyzed in this study include : Ghada al-Samman, Hannan al Shaikh, Emily Nasrallah, Laila Usairan, Daisy al-Amir, Claire Gebeyli and Etel Adnan. Cooke gives us a thorough and in-depth analysis of their works, most specifically when they deal with war. This book is an invaluable tool for anyone interested in the study of literature and particularly, of women’s literature in that part of the world.
We are also given an analysis of some of the men's writings about
the war: Taufiq Awwad, Ilyas Khuri, Halim Barakat, Andre Bercoff,
Ghalib Hanka, Abul Faraj, and Khidr Nubaouwa. Since their works
are not scrutinized like the women's, one might expect an
imbalance in the final conclusions. Yet the book's central aim
is not to compare the two, even though the point is often made
about important differences, but to focus on the women's vital
contribution: "the war had opened up a new arena of expression,
given them a voice in what had until then been a male-dominated
field. Through their writings, these women are telling their own
lives for the first time." (p. 166) To the Beirut Decentrists'
plea for recognition, Miriam Cooke's passionate analysis of their
works imparts an urgent, vital, vibrant tone.

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CRITICAL FORUM

I am pleased to see the creation of a "Critical Forum" in
AMEUS News, and I read with interest Mervat Hatem's reply to
my response to her review of N. El-Saadawi's Memoirs from
the Women's Prison. While I found Hatem's reply more
constructive - and less misleading - than her original
review, and while I don't want to abuse the use of "Critical
Forum" space, I do think that one clarification is in order.
In taking note of our "different readings" of the text,
Hatem suggests that mine is an uncritical reading; she goes
on to imply that what she defines as an uncritical reading
is also "condescending". These suggestions are so absurd as
to hardly merit reply. Obviously, we are all engaged in
work that is a priori a critical discourse, and it goes
without saying that El-Saadawi's works (like anyone else's)
must be subjected to the kind of careful critical
deconstruction, in a historical context, which has not yet
been achieved. (This very goal, incidentally, has been an
important impetus to me in choosing to translate
El-Saadawi.) Many of us have felt that this is not only
necessary but also urgent, and I am glad to see that Hatem
agrees; however, I failed to locate that critical discourse
in her review. What I objected to in her discussion of "key
concepts" in the book was the fact that she misread the
surface narrative, by confusing two clearly differentiated,
and crucial, characters. To move to a deeper, critical
reading does require an accurate reading of the surface
narrative. Both Hatem and I are guilty of having misread
important details. Hopefully we will both learn from this
exercise - and I hope this provides a good omen for the
"Critical Forum".

Marilyn Booth
Postdoctoral Fellow, American
Council of Learned Societies
Cairo
I am glad to see that the letters of Marilyn Booth and myself prompted the start of the Critical Forum in AMEWS NEWS as a space for debate. I realize that this space is precious and do not wish to claim too much of it on one subject. However, I feel it important to address a few of the issues raised in Mervat Hatem's reply to my response to her review of Huda Shaarawi, HAREM YEARS: THE MEMOIRS OF AN EGYPTIAN FEMINIST and to point to a larger critical matter.

1) Hatem levels a serious charge against me when she writes, "Badran does not agree with me that Sha'rawi's memoirs constitute a historical document whose integrity needed to be preserved on the grounds that Sha'rawi did not consider her text to be inviolate. This raises the separate but very important question of how she, as an American historian, needed to regard it differently." Clearly a serious and responsible historian would never say nor imply that the integrity of a person's memoirs should be violated and I certainly have not done so. With my knowledge of the history surrounding the project of Sha'rawi's memoirs I felt that my approach respected the explicit mandate of Sha'rawi and the integrity of her intended project as I explained in my preface. To condemn my work as a violation of the text is uncalled for. When Hatem says, "she as an American historian needed to regard it differently," there is an implication that one's nationality denatures one's work.

2) She writes, "Badran chose not to interview Abdal Hamid Fahmy Mursi, Sha'rawi's male secretary...She choose only to consult Idris..." and takes an entire paragraph to discuss this issue wondering why I did not think it important to cross check with Mursi. I do not know where Hatem got her information but in point of fact, I did interview Mursi long before he published the memoirs. He refused my requests to see the copy of the memoirs in his possession and more generally was very unforthcoming on general information and did not leave the door open to future discussion.

3) Hatem claims that I distort a reading of the memoirs when I write that the national revolution of 1919 and the aftermath brought Sha'rawi and her husband closer together and that it was their time of greatest collaboration saying that I had offered a "business like quote" to confirm this. The "business like quote" contained Sha'rawi's words which I think were quite clear. When Sha'rawi said that the revolution had brought her and her husband closer together can we not believe her? Hatem says, "In an interview I had with Amina Al-Said early this year, she informed me that Sha'rawi Pasha divorced his wife during this period..." I met with Amina Al-Said this month (September) and asked her specifically about this. She said that Sha'rawi did not divorce Huda during this period; this is confirmed by members of the family and others who knew the family. It is not to deny during close collaboration that strains, even great strains, could not and did not occur. Often collaboration brings strain and tension, especially if the parties have not had much of a history of collaboration and when it occurs under exceedingly trying circumstances.
4) There are points raised in Hatem's review and reply concerning the published, Arabic edition of the Sha'rawi memoirs, although not central to the discussion of the English edition, that need clarifying. In her review, Hatem wrote "Had Badran used the more detailed and complete accounts of the 1919 Revolution, which constituted the bulk of the published Arabic version, the English version would have been a substantially different kind of book." When I pointed out that the events of the 1919 revolution did not constitute the bulk of the published, Arabic edition, (The 1919 revolution is dealt with in the published Arabic version as follows: events leading to the revolution, 160-66; general events of the revolution, 166-74, 176-79; and women in the revolution, 174-75, 180-182, and 187-91 out of a total of 457 pages) Hatem passed over this shifting ground in her reply, "the events of the 1919 revolution, its political developments and her relations with Sa'd Zaghlul (i.e. the period from 1919 to 1924) are covered by pp 160-322." Moving beyond the original subject she adds, "The activities of the Egyptian Women's (sic Feminist) Union from 1924 to 1935 are presented in the remaining part of the book: pps 323-457." In fact, matters relating to the Egyptian Feminist Union begin on page 249. Between 249 and 323 there is a huge amount of data on the Egyptian Feminist Union while these pages also include material on nationalist political issues during the period, 1919 to 1924.

5) I conceptualized the harim years of Huda Sha'rawi to include those years up to the time she removed the veil the point being that as long as she kept the veil she retained the (powerful and charged) outward symbol of adherence to particular way of life even while doing many things to erode that life. With the removal of the veil in a public, political gesture she signalled an explicit rejection of the institution of the harim. For Sha'rawi and Saiza Nabarawi who unveiled at the same time this was a key event whose practical and symbolic importance for signalling the end of the harim as a way of life Nabarawi reiterated to me on numerous occasions. Hatem says, "Suffice it to say, here, that women's participation in the 1919 revolution contributed a significant challenge to the harem as an institution which emphasized women's seclusion, sexual segregation and their noticeable absence from the public domain." Based on Egyptian sources I have argued in my writings that important challenges to the institution of the harim occurred much before 1919. I accept what Egyptian women in oral and written testimonies have said concerning the importance of the veil for perpetuating the institution of the harim, even in the course of its final dissolution. In her article, "Feast of Unveiling, Feast of the Renaissance," commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Egyptian Feminist Union and the public removal of the veil by Sha'rawi and Nabarawi, Amina Al-Sa'id said, "...she (Sha'rawi) saw that the veil was the biggest obstacle in the way of the civilization of the Muslim, Arab woman. Thus the veil had to fall so that with it the strongholds of the reactionaries preventing women from being educated and participating in public life would fall." (HAWA, 24 March 1973) If Hatem chooses look upon the veil and conceptualize harim years differently that is her prerogative. However, to say that what I, an historian, do "is another example of Western obsessive identification of the harem with the veil" I see as totally out of order and I strongly object to it. Is it appropriate in
the AMFWS NEWS critical forum, or anywhere else, to level charges of western—or eastern—obsessions against each other or appear to qualify or disqualify each other on the basis of nationality any more than sex, color, or creed? We need to give this matter very serious thought.

Margot Badran
Cairo
Sept. 25, 1988

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MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION FORM

I would like to become a member of AMEWS and receive the Newsletter. Enclosed is my check for $15.00 made out to AMEWS. Please do not send checks drawn on foreign (non-US or non-Canadian) banks. If you are subscribing from abroad, please use a money order or postal coupons.

I would like to make a financial contribution to AMEWS' efforts. Enclosed is a check in the amount of $____.

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PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT: AMEWS DIRECTORY

AMEWS plans to compile a directory of women (and men) engaged in the study of Middle East women. This is provisionally called The Middle East Women's Studies Project. To initiate what will eventually be an international scholars' directory, we would like to compile data on our own membership, and would appreciate your cooperation. Please fill out the form below and mail to Mine Cinar (see address above)

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION SHEET

Name ________________________________________________

Address ________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

Telephone Number (s) __________________________________

Area/Discipline ________________________________________

Current Research (title and/or brief description) __________

_____________________________________________________

Site, Duration and Funding of Project _____________________

_____________________________________________________

Do you want your name on any circulating lists? Yes____ No____