

For activists and academics—and everyone in between

Who said this?

“If we have some room for discussion, we shall prove that morality is neither defined by putting on the veil nor immorality is defined by removing it. For morality and virtue are two noble faculties (malakatan nabilatan) related to the faculties of the self (malikat al-nafs), and a woman embraces them regardless of her style of dress and head cover.”



May Ziade



*Engaging Journalism
Students at LAU in the Fight
against Gender-Based
Violence*

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Opportunities

Call for Papers

The editorial committee of *Al-Raida* invites submissions for the Summer/Fall 2013 non-thematic, double-blind, peer reviewed issue.

For more information kindly contact al-raida: al-raida@lau.edu.lb

Call for Papers

The Journal of the Anthropology of the Contemporary Middle East and Central Eurasia (ACME) is announcing a call for a special issue the topic of *“Ritual and Local Traditions of Funerary in Islam: Historical and Contemporary Issues.”*

Deadline: October 31, 2013

For more information on the journal and guidelines to authors you can visit:

<http://www.seankingston.co.uk/Instructorsforauthors.pdf>

Call for Applications

The 6th Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies will be held on August 18 - 24, 2013 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Submission Deadline: June 12, 2013

For more information check the link below:

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An Anti-Imperialist Transnational Approach to Middle East Women’s Studies

Nadine Naber*

Angela Davis, writing on U.S. women’s prisons—where poor women, women of color, queer, and transgender people are disproportionately harassed, abused, and raped behind closed doors—asks: what if we named U.S. women’s prisons as *secret* prisons, prisons that operate within the same political context and rely on similar forms of violence as the CIA’s secret prisons of the war on terror?¹ Davis is referring to the CIA’s secret prisons in places like Jordan, Egypt, Iraq and Morocco where suspected “enemy combatants” are tortured, sexually assaulted and raped.² Individuals are tortured by U.S. personnel at detention facilities directed by the CIA or by foreign agents within jails assisted by the CIA.³

While teaching courses on U.S. Women of Color Feminisms and American Studies on the one hand and Middle East Women’s Studies on the other, I have run up against the limitations of area-studies divisions that continue to predominate within Middle East Women’s Studies—such as the framing of American Studies (including U.S. Women of Color Studies) and Middle East Studies (including Middle East Women’s Studies) as separate fields and the U.S. and the Middle East as geographically bounded regions. Such divisions obstruct the possibilities for engagement with important questions such as whether and to what extent U.S. racialized-gendered-sexualized prison structures have anything to do with the U.S. war on terror. In fact, a particular strand of feminist scholarship that I will

refer to here as Anti-Imperialist Transnational Feminist Studies (AITFS) has been asking such questions for decades, and these questions are now more imperative to Middle East Women’s Studies than ever before.⁴

AITFS theorizes the U.S. war on terror as a racialized, gendered, and sexualized imperialist war that operates through military and economic policy in order to advance and consolidate the system of capitalism.⁵ AITFS contextualizes the U.S. war on terror within the restructuring of U.S. domestic and foreign policy, which entailed an expansion of the conjoined heteropatriarchal, racist, and classist structures of the prison industrial

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complex (PIC) and the military industrial complex (MIC), both driven by the economic neo-liberalism of the late 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries.⁶ Historically, the Reagan era's neo-liberal economic policies and the war on drugs during the decades leading up to the war on terror set this process into motion. Notably, throughout this period, the MIC has worked through a neo-liberal system in which functions of the military were increasingly transferred to bodies outside of the state, including private corporations, subcontractors, and universities. Paralleling this process, the U.S. prison industrial complex has also undergone privatization so that nearly all prison-related service providers are for-profit companies and are sustained by a racist, classist, and heteropatriarchal criminal justice system.

Taking the lead from AITFS, I would like to focus on parallel conversations taking place within U.S. Women of Color Feminist Studies and Middle East Women's Studies about U.S.-led imperialism in the two decades leading up to, and the period immediately following, the official start of the U.S. war on terror in 2001. While these conversations (and these scholarly disciplines) often emerge separately, I take interest in the points of convergence that I believe are crucial to conceptualizing gender, sexuality and U.S.-led imperial war.

U.S. Women of Color Feminisms on the Expansion of Prisons and Criminalization Post 9/11

A bit of background: It is no secret that the U.S. has the highest documented incarceration rate in the world—at least 1 in 100 people in the U.S. are behind bars—and that the prison system is highly racist, sexist, and homophobic (African Americans comprise approximately 13.6 of the U.S. population, they comprised 39.4% of the prison population in 2009 and as of 2008, 1 in 10 prisoners face sexual assault).⁷ In 2009, in the state of Michigan, where I live, a class-action law-suit brought to public attention the

cases of over 500 women who experienced sexual assault by prison guards.⁸ Between the late 1980s and 2001, the rate of women's incarceration increased fivefold. Over the last two decades, and particularly 9/11, the U.S. has witnessed an intensification of law enforcement and an expansion of the prison industrial complex.

Women of Color Feminist Studies has established that the increased reliance on criminalization as a solution to problems such as gender violence, poverty, youth rebellion has disproportionately impacted women of color, poor women, queers and transgender people, sex workers, immigrant women, women with disabilities, and other marginalized women and increasingly brought them into more and more poverty and direct conflict with the law.⁹ Consider for instance mandatory arrest laws, which were passed in response to feminist criticism of police officers who refused to intervene in cases of domestic violence. Mandatory arrest laws were one part of a larger strategy to criminalize domestic violence; yet these laws have led also to the criminalization of women who are trying to escape from or survive violence. In some cases, police officers called to domestic incidents place the woman who is being battered under arrest. Increased cooperation between branches of law enforcement facilitates the deportation of undocumented women who report that they are abused. Initiatives designed to "get tough on crime" have led to long and punitive sentences for women convicted of acts of violence, even when committed in self-defense against their abusers. Most insidious of all, when resources are expended on policing and prisons while social programs such as women's shelters, welfare, and public housing face budget cuts, increased violence against women is the inevitable side effect. These cutbacks leave women with fewer options for leaving violent relationships.¹⁰

Transnational Convergences

U.S. Women of Color Feminisms and Middle East Women's Studies can

NGO Highlight

"Union de L'Action Feminine"

L'Union de L'Action Feminine (UAF), or the Union of Women's Action, is a Moroccan non-profit organization that started in 1983 as an informal group known as "The March 8th Movement". The movement developed to be officially known in 1987 as the UAF. Since its start the UAF initiated a serious national debate over women's rights in Morocco, and is considered as one of the first Moroccan NGOs to fight for Women's rights.

Click below to know more about "[L'Union de L'Action Feminine](#)"

enhance each other if we consider existing research on systematic racialized-sexual assault within the U.S. prisons and the U.S. military on the one hand and the systematic use of gender violence, patriarchy, and homophobia within U.S.-led wars in the MENA region. Particular strands of Middle East Women's Studies have established that heteropatriarchal Orientalist discourses fuel U.S. empire building--such as the call to "save Afghan women," or U.S. and Zionist narratives about saving Arab and Muslim queers from a homophobic culture and religion.¹¹ Middle East Women's Studies has also thoroughly documented the heteropatriarchal violence that accompanies U.S.-led imperialism and the impact of U.S.-led imperialism on concepts and practices of gender and sexuality in everyday life.¹² Indeed studies of the Abu-Ghraib torture scandal, including the theorization that the U.S. exported its long-standing, historically embedded colonial discourses of male supremacy, homophobia, and white supremacy, have drawn on U.S. Women of Color Feminist scholarship.¹³ Alternately, Middle East Women's Studies on racist-sexist

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U.S.-backed Israeli violence against Palestinians can enhance research on the routine gendered and sexualized torture in U.S. prisons and by the U.S. criminal justice system.

Conversations between U.S. Women of Color Feminist Studies and Middle East Women's Studies can also contribute to deeper analyses of both U.S. law enforcement and the U.S. military since local U.S. law enforcement is increasingly using U.S. military technology, and law enforcement and the military are increasingly sharing equipment and strategies. We might ask for instance, what are the implications of the Pentagon's recent report about sexual assault in the U.S. military on gender violence in the U.S. and in the countries the U.S. military is invading? According to the Pentagon, an estimated average of 70 sexual assaults are committed daily within the U.S. military or 26,000 per year (a 37 percent increase in one year).¹⁴ Such conversations can also deepen feminist understandings of torture since personnel and methods of torture and degradation are shared between U.S. prisons and the military and can further our concepts of "war culture" since war culture permeates U.S. law enforcement and schools, hospitals, and civil society.¹⁵

In response to current conditions in the U.S. where police, who are armed with war weapons, shoot and kill unarmed women, men, and children of color, where police can remotely administer shock to detainees, and where drone manufacturers may offer police remote-control drones,¹⁶ organizations such as INCITE! Women of Color against Violence now use the terms "law enforcement violence" to refer to a convergence of police brutality and the brutality by border control, private security, and military forces within the U.S.¹⁷ U.S. Women of Color Feminisms have also analyzed the impact of the gendered economic structures of U.S. imperial war, focusing on how budget cuts in the U.S. have brought about a massive loss in financial aid to women, children, and families in desperate need of housing, heating, and

healthcare, as well as contributing to unemployment and wage stagnation, all of which culminate in fewer opportunities for women to have safer, stronger, and healthier lives.¹⁸ Middle East Women's Studies analyses of U.S.-led imperial war similarly contribute to U.S. Women of Color Feminist Studies, with theorizations of the gendered-economics of the war on terror (in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and so on).

Researching and teaching beyond one-directional feminist analyses that focus on *either* the extreme devastation resulting from U.S. imperialism and war in the MENA region *or* racial-classist-heteropatriarchal violence in the U.S. means taking seriously how U.S. "domestic" politics and U.S. "foreign" politics exist within a similar historical and political frame. The ways these uneven, transnational histories rub up against each other constitute crucial points of alliance building and accountability across disciplines. Yet while framing the domestic and foreign structures of U.S. imperialism as relational, conjoined, and mutually constitutive, I also want to avoid making false equivalences—or assuming that people hailed into U.S. imperialism (and its racial and heteropatriarchal foundations) from varying locations share *equal* struggles. Rather, it is imperative to consider how the histories of people from different political locations within the U.S. and the MENA region (and beyond) rub up against each other when they are hailed into similar imperialist structures—in different ways and to different degrees. For instance, how do we approach alliance building *and* the asymmetry in the balance of powers when it comes to U.S. military recruitment of working class U.S. women of color (who will face high risks of sexual assault) through false promises about employment and education *and* U.S.-led bombing, killing, and sexual assault in the Middle East? I believe that exchanging ideas and organizing joint panels and projects between these fields can bring about more sophisticated feminist analyses of war

and can open up new possibilities for thinking and working for justice beyond colonial disciplinary and geographic borders. While I have centralized U.S. Feminisms of Color and Middle East Women's Studies, we might continue the questions Anti-Imperialist Transnational Feminists have asked in relation to other areas of inquiry and struggle—such as how the lives of the tens of thousands of third country nationals from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and beyond who are coerced into cheap labor and devastating conditions by corporations such as Halliburton in Baghdad rub up against those of Iraqi women living under the same war.

* I am grateful to Jesse Carr for editorial assistance on this piece.

¹ Davis, Angela. "A Vocabulary for Feminist Praxis: On War and Radical Critique." *Feminism and War*. Eds. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Minnie Bruce Pratt, & Robin L. Riley. Zed Books, 2008. 19 – 26.

² <http://www.globalresearch.ca/egypt-was-a-common-destination-for-torture-of-detainees-sent-by-u-s/23255>

³ <http://www.aclu.org/national-security/fact-sheet-extraordinary-rendition>

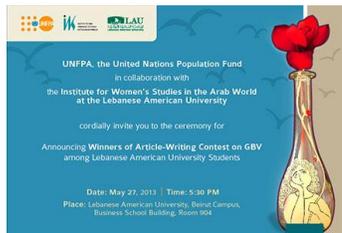
⁴ See for instance Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and Robin L. Riley, eds. "Introduction: Feminism and U.S. Wars - Mapping the Ground." *Feminism and War*. Zed Books, 2008; Bacchetta, Paola et al. "Transnational Feminist Practices Against War." *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism* 2.2 (2002): 302–308; and Grewal, Inderpal and Caren Kaplan, Post-colonial and Transnational Feminist Practices," <http://english.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v5i1/grewal.htm>,

⁵ Mohanty, et. al., 2008, 3

⁶ Mohanty, et. all, 2008.

⁷ Beck, Allen, and Candace Johnson. "Sexual Victimization Reported by Former State Prisoners, 2008." Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008; "Report: Nearly 10 Percent of Inmates Suffer Sexual Abuse." *NBC News*. 17 May 2012.

Engaging Journalism Students at LAU in the Fight against Gender-Based Violence



Christine Saifi, Fatima Haidar and Tala Basheer El-Issa are three journalism students, winners of the article-writing contest on gender-based violence (GBV) which took place at the Lebanese American University.

This contest was jointly organized by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) at the Lebanese American University (LAU), the United Nations Population Fund – Lebanon (UNFPA) with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Italian Cooperation. It came as a result of 4-day training workshop that took place in April 2013 where 21 media students at LAU were trained on the legal, religious, societal, medical, and economic effects of GBV.

The objective of the workshop was to sensitize young journalists on issues related to GBV and enable them to take a proactive role and become efficient agents in the fight against GBV by finding new angles for effectively and ethically reporting and covering GBV issues. The students were expected to submit articles ranging between 700 to a 1000 word to be reviewed by 5 jury members belonging to various sectors and who are experts in the area of GBV.

The ceremony was held on May 27 at the Lebanese American University where 1st prize winner Christine Saifi won an iPad for her article *In the Name of "Manhood", religion and the Lebanese Constitution*. The second prize winner was Fatima Haidar, who received the amount of \$300 for her Arabic written article *thalath mia't mughtasib li mra'a wahida* [300 rapists for one woman only]. The third prize winner was Tala Basheer El-Issa who won a digital recorder for her article entitled *Adults since Childhood: The Psychology of Sexually Abused Girls*.



According to Ghinwa Obeid, one of the participants and speakers at the ceremony, the training was an opportunity to “enlighten [her and her colleagues] to the daily crimes committed against women and other “taken for granted” minorities”, and to offer “a new perspective...acquired for a well- needed change.”

WHO IS SHE?

Profiling: May Ziade

May Ziade (1886-1941), was a Lebanese – Syrian poet and writer of Palestinian origin who received her education in Lebanon and lived in Egypt during the Arab renaissance period.

She was a poet, a public speaker, and a woman of letters, and was famous for her salon which assembled many of the (male) intellectuals in Cairo. Ziade translated poetry and prose from French and German, and contributed to many journals such as *majallat al-ma'rad*, *majallat al-rissala*, *majallat al-mar'ah al-jadida*, *majallat al-hilal* etc.

Her letters and correspondence with famous intellectuals of the time and her studies on pioneer women colleagues, such as Aisha Taymur and Bahithat al-Badiya, and her articles on the feminist Egyptian movement are a testimony of a mature and early Arab feminist awareness and activism.

Some of her works in Arabic include *kalimat wa isharat*, *sawaneh fatat*, *zulumat wa a'shi'a*, and *al-musawat*. All her works have been published in two volumes by Naufal publishing house.

Prepared by Dr. Hosn Abboud

Highlights



**Al-zawaj wa
talaq fi al-
masihiya**

**[marriage &
divorce in
Christianity]**

Author: (Father) Ashraf Shawky

Publisher: Vision for the Future

Language: Arabic

Year of Publication: 2010

The marriage contract and especially the issue of divorce, in Coptic Christianity still brings forth huge debates in Egypt.

Tens of thousands of civil divorce cases have brought state and Church in confrontation with each other, with the former authority legalizing divorce (under civil law) and the second authority refusing to sanction a remarriage for the individuals in question.

Despite the volatile nature of the topic, *Marriage and Divorce in Coptic Christianity* posits mildly and briefly three ways to conceive of marriage: as an exegetical concept—a textual ritual with a definition, theological history and legislation in different sects, a civil situation regulated by a number of common laws, and a deeper societal and ethical union to be understood in light of Christian values.

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Footnotes from page 3

⁸ Seidel, Jeff, and Dawson Bell. "\$100 Million Ends Prisoner Sex-abuse Suit." *Detroit Free Press* 16 July 2009; Egan, Paul. "Abused Female Inmates Must Pay Restitution before Receiving Settlement." *Detroit Free Press* 8 Aug. 2012.

⁹ Incite! Women of Color Against Violence. *Color of Violence: The Incite! Anthology*. Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2006; Richie, Beth. *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation*. New York: University Press, 2012;

Mogul, Joey L., Andrea J. Ritchie, and Kay Whitlock. *Queer (In)Justice: The Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States*. Beacon Press, 2011.

¹⁰ "INCITE! -Home." <http://www.incite-national.org/>. Web. 30 May 2013.

¹¹ Abu-Lughod, Lila. "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others." *American Anthropologist* 104.3 (2002): 783–790; Mikdashi, Maya. "Gay Rights as Human Rights: Pinkwashing Homonationalism." *Jadaliyya* 16 Dec. 2011; Amireh, Amal. "Palestinian Women's Disappearing Act: The Suicide Bomber Through Western Feminist Eyes." *Arab & Arab American Feminisms: Gender, Violence, & Belonging*. Ed. Rabab Abdulhadi, Evelyn Alsultany, & Nadine Naber. Syracuse University Press, 2010. 29 – 45.

¹² Al-Ali, Nadje, and Nicola Pratt. *What Kind of Liberation?: Women and the Occupation of Iraq*. 1st ed. University of California Press, 2010; Johnson, Penny, and Eileen Kuttab. "Where Have All the Women (and Men) Gone? Reflections on Gender and the Second Palestinian Intifada." *Feminist Review* 69.1 (2001): 21–43; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Nadera. "How Do We Read Violence Against Palestinian Women in Israel?" *Jadal* 6 (2010): 1–4; Razack, Sherene. "How Is White Supremacy Embodied? Sexualized Racial Violence at Abu Ghraib." *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 17.2 (2005): 341–363.

¹³ Razack, Sherene. "How Is White Supremacy Embodied? Sexualized Racial Violence at Abu Ghraib." *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 17.2 (2005): 341–363.

¹⁴ <http://www.sapr.mil/index.php/annual-reports>

¹⁵ Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and Robin L. Riley, eds. "Introduction: Feminism and U.S. Wars - Mapping the Ground." *Feminism and War*. Zed Books, 2008, 4.

¹⁶ "The Militarization of Policing in America." *American Civil Liberties Union*. <http://www.aclu.org/militarization>. Web. 30 May 2013.

¹⁷ "INCITE! -Home." <http://www.incite-national.org/> Web. 30 May 2013.

¹⁸ Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and Robin L. Riley, eds. "Introduction: Feminism and U.S. Wars - Mapping the Ground." *Feminism and War*. Zed Books, 2008, 13.

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AMEWS E-bulletin is published in cooperation with the Women and Memory Forum and the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World at the Lebanese American University.

