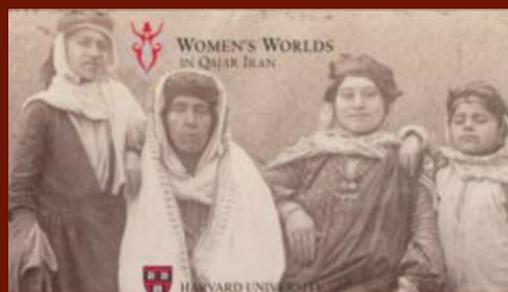


For activists and academics—and everyone in between

Who said this?

“Learn [addressing men] that you are a partner in the self (*al-dhat*) even though you are different in the attributes (*al-sifat*). And learn that the Spirit - neither male nor female - is an abstract essence (*jawhar mujarrad*) except that it is influenced by the physical situation (*halat al-taqwim a-l badani*) which makes the receptiveness (*qabiliyyat*) of men and women different; and each of them is half of the world and positioned in this equal ratio in absolute terms ”

Zaynab Fawwaz



Women's Worlds

In Qajar Iran

An innovative project
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Library

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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

The Fulbright Scholar Program

The 2014-2015 Fulbright U.S. scholar Program is now open! Over a dozen awards that include a Gender Studies priority are offered for 2014-15.

The application deadline for most awards is August 1, 2013. For other eligibility requirements you can visit the following link

http://www.cies.org/us_scholars/us_awards/ or contact scholars@iie.org

U.S. citizenship is required

Call for Presentation

The Inter-Disciplinary. Net organization is preparing for its **1st Global Conference entitled "Revolt & Revolution"** that will be held between November 4 - 6, 2013 in Athens, Greece.

Deadline for pre-formed proposals: June 14, 2013.

Gender and Activism in the Middle East

JMEWS Distinguished Lecture and Research Workshop

Bonnie Rose Schulman

On Friday, April 19, 2013, the *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, the official publication of the Association for Middle East Women's Studies, held its 2013 Annual Distinguished Lecture and Research Workshop, at Yale University, around the theme of "Gender and Activism in the Middle East." This annual program gathers scholars and practitioners around research themes related to Middle East women's and gender studies. The day of presentations and discussions was highlighted by a keynote Distinguished Lecture. Past themes include, "Women, Gender, and Violence in the Middle East" with 2012 Distinguished Lecturer Judith Tucker and "Youth, Gender, and Dignity in the Arab Uprisings" with

2011 Distinguished Lecturer Diane Singerman.

This year's program featured Distinguished Lecturer Nadjé Al-Ali, who delivered a lecture entitled "Gendering Rage: Protest, Cultural Productions, and the Making of New Men and Women in the Middle East." Al-Ali discussed the interplay between activism and academic research, rejecting the idea that they represent absolutely opposing poles. She reflected on rage as a productive and creative affect and force that is both gendered and gendering. Al-Ali incorporated elements of her own personal history of rage, which ultimately ushered her into the world of feminist activism. She offered a candid exploration into how to best reconcile

paradoxes raised by commitments to both academia and activism. Ultimately, Al-Ali's remarks called for a more nuanced approach to both discourses.

Surrounding Al-Ali's Distinguished Lecture, eleven scholars came from across the United States and as far as Egypt and Belgium to present papers related to the day's theme. The program opened with a session entitled "Gender Activism, Uprisings, and Political Participation." Moderated by Ambassador Sallama Shaker, the panel addressed historical and current political uprisings in the Middle East, focusing on three main case studies of Kuwait, Morocco, and Tunisia. Alessandra L. González explained seeming

Gender and Activism in the Middle East

JMEWS Distinguished Lecture and Research Workshop (from p. 1)

contradictions found in different strands of Kuwaiti feminism, an issue further explored in her new book, *Islamic Feminism in Kuwait: The Politics and Paradoxes* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2013). In her research, Melodee Baines sought out illiterate communities in Morocco to better understand both their roles in political activism and other Moroccan communities' understandings of these roles. Finally, Sarah Weirich discussed the relationship between memory, religion, politics, and gender in Tunisia, specifically pointing to cases where men use women's bodies to envision a future Tunisia and remember its constitutional struggle while women resist this symbolic dramatization.

The second panel, entitled "Gender Activism and New Media," was moderated by *JMEWS* Book Review Editor Mikaela Rogozen-Soltar and explored the role of television and the Internet in current Middle East activism. To open the session, Nay El Rahi introduced a discussion on Lebanese television talk shows that are geared toward a female audience, investigating the extent to which these personalities deem feminist issues too political for inclusion in their programs. Next, U.S. State Department Representative Maro Youssef shared her personal views on the role of social media in the recent North African uprisings, rejecting the notion that recognition of these activists' use of Facebook, Twitter, and other online networks is fundamentally Orientalist. Finally, Karina Eileraas examined the intersection of sexuality, body politics, feminism, and cyberspace, citing the case of Aliaa Mahdy, the Egyptian blogger who posted a nude self-portrait that went viral.

The third panel, entitled "Gender Activism and Women's Embodiment," was moderated by *JMEWS* Editorial Board Member and Yale anthropology professor Narges Erami. Both presentations looked to Egypt for examples of this potent relationship. An Van Raemdonck discussed the politics of female genital cutting in

Egypt in the context of women's rights activism and contesting claims of religious authority. Susana Galán spoke about the resurgence of sexual harassment in the time following the 2011 Egyptian revolution, highlighting a shift in activism toward resistance to the state and allegiance with revolutionary goals.

The fourth and final panel, moderated by Yale Ph.D. candidate Jess Newman, was entitled "Gender Activism: Examples from the Middle East and North Africa." First, Ban Almahfodh-Graime proposed a youth entrepreneurship model in Sadr City, Iraq, as a sustainable instrument of development and stability in the region. Next, Soona Samsami of the Women's Freedom Forum relayed stories about the ordeals of the mothers of Iranian political prisoners, proving that this network of women and family serves as a powerful example of how even the most marginalized can make their voices heard. Finally, Isis Nusair introduced the SALMA Network, contending that, while the activist group focuses largely on discrimination and violence against women, its definition of women's rights encompasses economic, social, and political rights and reinterprets the meaning of equality, justice, and development.

One of the program's most poignant moments came at the end. A New Haven resident attending the event with her school age daughter took the opportunity to offer the final comment of the day. She noted how the challenges highlighted by the different presenters throughout the day—(society's attitudes toward) illiteracy, politics of memory, abuse of the media, sexual harassment, poverty, violence, and gender inequality—were not unique to the Middle East. In fact, she said, they were strikingly similar to those faced by her fellow New Haven residents every day. Calling our attention to these common human threads connecting communities in New Haven, the Middle East, and beyond, she emphasized the need for us to act together in search of solutions.

We hope that this conference provided but one small step in this direction.

NGO Highlight



"Women in Front" is an NGO that aims to promote expert and specialized women, highlight their expertise and push them to the front line by encouraging them to play leading role and therefore contribute in creating a new modern and reformed Lebanese society.

To know more about "Women in Front" go to the following link:

www.womeninfront.org

** Click [here](#) to view the 2013 Distinguished Lecture with Naje Al Ali. Click [here](#) for more information about the event, including full research abstracts and participant bios. We invite you to join us for next year's 2014 *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 10th Anniversary Celebration: Distinguished Lecture and Research Workshop in Honor of Sondra Hale, scheduled to take place on Thursday, **April 3, 2014, at Yale University.**

Want to Share your Thoughts & News?

Write Us!

We are interested in articles, announcements about events, conferences, workshops, film-screenings, social initiatives, related to women and gender issues in the Middle East, North Africa and beyond.

Please e-mail:

amewsbulletin@gmail.com

Women's Worlds in Qajar Iran

Introducing an Innovative Project with Harvard College Library



Women's Worlds in Qajar Iran (WWQI) is an innovative project that uses digital and online technology to overcome the archival limitations that studies of Iranian culture and society in Qajar period (1785 – 1925) have faced.

Started in 2009 in collaboration with Harvard College Library and with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, WWQI has so far digitally preserved and catalogued thousands of images, making them available in a fully bilingual and richly annotated website at www.qajarrowmen.org.

The archival material includes: poetry, essays, and treatises; travelogues; marriage contracts; artistic reproductions, including paintings and calligraphies; photographs; objects of every day life;

deeds and transactions; and endowment documents; and a wide array of correspondence, both official and private.

Approximately two-thirds of WWQI's digital images have been acquired from individuals and families located in Tehran, Qazvin, Yazd, Los Angeles, Geneva, Houston, Boston, San Francisco, London, and Toronto. The remaining images were contributed by major archival institutions, most notably Majlis Library, Malek Library, the National Library and Archives, Tabriz Central Library, Tehran University Central Library, the Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia, the Institute for Iranian Contemporary Historical Studies, the Mossadegh Foundation, the International Institute for Social History, and the Center for Iranian Jewish Oral History.

In April 2012, WWQI launched a new, more robust website. Since then, scholars from Iran, the U.S., and Europe have made use of the WWQI archive for their research, and teachers have introduced it in their classes.

In the next phase, as WWQI continues to identify, digitize, and preserve additional materials, WWQI will also add new

features that can facilitate researchers' and teachers' use of the archives.

These include:

- A user platform that will make it possible for scholars to collaborate and weigh in on one another's research.
- Interactive genealogies and graphs that will increase researchers' ability to connect the disparate pieces of data embedded within the archive.
- Guided tours with audio, curated by experts in the field.

Since its inception, the WWQI project has made a conscious effort to improve the ease with which research pursuits grounded in its holdings could be undertaken. These newest innovations, inspired by the computational designs and interactive technologies now increasingly introduced into history and humanities research and teaching, will hopefully open up innovative possibilities for studies of Iranian history and culture.

For more information visit the [Facebook Page](#) or Contact wwqi@fas.harvard.edu

WHO IS SHE?

Profiling: Zaynab Fawwaz

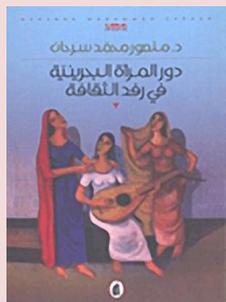
Zaynab Fawwaz (1860-1914), feminist, woman of letters and author was famous in the late nineteenth century for her writings on reform topics and gender-related issues. Her essays appeared in over 17 local Egyptian General Press, in Cairo and Alexandria. Fawwaz, as an intellectual, was part of the public debates that urges reform in many aspects, the education of women and their freedom from the confinement of expectation.

Fawwaz authored a work within the genre of *tarajim* (the Arabic –Islamic biographical dictionary tradition) on eastern and western women who were prominent for their own accomplishments. She was able to adapt this genre - authored historically only by men - to a different discourse and a new aspiration, installing at the end the foundational stone of the first expressions of Arab Feminism (M. Booth). *Al-Durr al-manthur fi tabaqat rabbat al-khudur* (Pearls scattered throughout the Women's Quarters) was published in 1894. She also pioneered one of the earliest Arab novels, *Hussn al-Awaqib* (Good Consequences) in 1899 and a play, *al-Hawa wa-I Wafa'* (Passion and Loyalty) in 1893.

Zaynab Fawwaz came from a modest background in south Lebanon (Tibnin), immigrated to Egypt in the late 19th century, and was self-taught in the Islamic sciences and traditions; she was also aware of her literary abilities and became consequently a major figure in the Arab literary renaissance. Zaynab Fawwaz is a model today for many Arab women in the diaspora. Her publications attest to the originality of early Arab feminist awareness and activism.

Prepared by Dr. Hosn Abboud

Highlights



Dawr Al-Mar'a Al-Bahrainia fi Rafd Al- Thaqafa

[Bahraini Women
Creating
Culture]

Author: Mansour Mohamed Sarhan

Publisher: Al-mu'assasa l'-arabia l-il

dirasat wa-l nashr

Language: Arabic

Year of Publication: 2009

Bahraini Women Creating Culture

documents in a bibliographical index the various kinds of published literary and scientific output in the period 1973 until 2006. The book includes the dozens of publications issued on diverse fields of knowledge, major academic and even postgraduate research in local Arab and foreign universities, as well as journalistic output from the forties until the end of the twentieth century. Entries are categorized according to field and topic, from autobiographies to environment studies, from philanthropy to historical milestone. The book also lists major women organizations and unions. A good working catalogue for those interested in the area.



Taboo Al-Bakara

[The Hymen
Taboo]

Author: Various

Publisher: Al-Awan

Language: Arabic

Year of Publication: 2008

The Hymen Taboo, one of al-Awan series of publications aiming at forming, reforming and propagating rational secularism, critiques the 'virginity taboo' by introducing the case of a French Muslim citizen who demanded a divorce from his wife on the grounds that she was not virgin. The various contributors use various approaches to shed light on the fundamental value of virginity for women as an assessment of moral value or marriage eligibility in contemporary society. They wonder how far this taboo still prevails, and ask why such ancient (and, to many minds, obsolete) social rules hold fast despite their violation of the dignity and rights of women as stated by international codes? The texts call for a serious, rational discussion of the subject, removed from the emotional outpourings yelled from pulpits or the sensationalism of the media.



Al-Mar'a Al- Saoudia: Sawt wa Soura

[Saudi Arabian
Women: Sound
& Image]

Author: Maleiha Ahmed Shihab

Publisher: Tawa l-il nashr wa-l i'lam

Language: Arabic

Year of Publication: 2010

Saudi Arabian Women: Sound & image explores or rather, laments, the difficulties that Saudi Arabian women having their lives regulated by a kind of tribal patriarchy, strengthened and preserved by religiosity. The book contains a number of essays ranging from autobiographical narration (self-reflection), thinly-veiled fiction and analysis of the various dilemmas of everyday living published in the press: stories of marital abuse from which wives have no legal escape or protection, the low wages of women teachers in schools, the iron rule of religious *fatwas*, the intentional obstruction of reform, and others.

To contribute announcements or articles to this newsletter or to subscribe, please email:
amewsbulletin@gmail.com

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