comically insulting names in the shadow plays, and with the important observation that the playful and idiosyncratic nature of some of these names made them just as confusing to the medieval scribes of the varying manuscripts as they are to modern readers today.

In introducing his translation of *The Phantom*, Guo promises nothing definitive, as indeed the text of Ibn Dāniyāl’s shadow play is filled with problematic readings and difficult language. He wisely, therefore, forgoes perfection and plunges boldly forth, producing a translation that is amusing and flavourful. As with all translations, fault could be found with his decisions in rendering numerous words and phrases. But I will note only that the translations of poetry are distinguished from that of prose by font size alone, without any metre, rhyme, or otherwise exceptional use of language to set them apart.

Guo’s translation of a shadow play and the preceding analysis are bound to contain some flaws and lacunae because the subject of his study will require many more volumes to treat completely. This volume is an important addition to a recently growing body of work on those central Arabic literary figures who only appear marginal due to their obscenity or shocking subject matters. For example, Sinan Antoon’s dissertation *The Poetics of the Obscene: Ibn al-Hajjaj and Sukhf* (Harvard: 2006) centres on a poet who, like Ibn Dāniyāl, was widely celebrated for his obscene verse but also in charge of policing public morality. Another recent dissertation (mine), ‘The Hikaya of Abu al-Qasim al-Baghdadi’ (UCLA, 2012), centres on a highly obscene and unusual text thought by some to have directly influenced Ibn Dāniyāl’s work. A forthcoming volume on the genre of mujān, *The Rude, the Bad, and the Bawdy: essays in honour of Geert Jan van Gelder* (E. J. W. Gibb), is a festschrift for the University of Oxford’s Geert Jan van Gelder, a pre-eminent scholar of marginal Arabic literature, whose work (notably, *The Bad and the Ugly* [Brill, 1989]), it must be said, seems conspicuously absent from Guo’s bibliography. Guo’s contribution on an author whose subject matter and preferred genre are marginal and who hails from a century itself often marginalized in modern scholarship, takes an important step towards expanding our understanding and expectations of Arabic literature.

*Emily Selove*

*University of Manchester*

E-mail: selovian@gmail.com

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*Muslim Women in War and Crisis: Representation and Reality*


*Muslim Women in War and Crisis* is a unique book. Divided into three main parts—Central and South Asia; the Middle East and North Africa; and, Europe
and the United States—it is an attempt to highlight the experiences of Muslim women in times of peace, war and post-conflict situations. Shirazi and the other contributors discuss ‘representation and reality’ with reference to Orientalism, which Shirazi declares is ‘...the product of four-thousand-year relationship between Europe and Asia, resulting in the historicization of the Muslim woman as either sexually idealized or oppressed’ (p. 6). This discussion of cultural bias, in relation to the Muslim world and specifically to Muslim women, is a valuable addition to the growing literature on Muslim women (see, for example: Lila Abu-Lughod [ed.] Remaking Women, Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East [Princeton: 1998].)

In their varied contributions, the authors, whose lives have been affected by conflicts, have a number of aims. First, they challenge the way Muslim women are represented in the mainstream (Western) media, which Shirazi argues lack the tools to appreciate what it means to be a Muslim woman (p. 5). Carol Mann’s chapter on Afghan refugee camps argues that the West sees Muslim women through its understanding of an Islam in which the ‘...notion of the individual is absent...’ (p. 69). Due to this skewed understanding Muslim women are identified in terms of their relations (to parents, spouse, children, clan, group), with the result that many of the nuances in these relationships and other roles that Muslim women play, are lost. Sara Struckkman’s chapter on Chechen ‘Black Widows’ also highlights the Western cultural bias vis-à-vis Muslim women, through textual analysis of the New York Times’ presentation of the Chechen ‘Black Widows’. She asserts, while questioning the motivation of the women in becoming suicide bombers, that the Times ‘relied heavily on other feminine explanations that stripped women of agency, effectively robbing them of a desire on political grounds to fight for the Chechen cause’ (p. 103). Struckkman’s point is that the Times continued to propagate the view of Muslim women as weak, lacking in initiative, and in need of protection. She highlights the fact that the narrative changed when reporters interviewed Chechen rebels, which allowed space for alternative explanations of why men and women joined the campaign. Angeles Ramirez’s study of the hijāb in Spain presents the cultural and media bias in lumping women who wear the hijāb with the concept of a conservative, anti-modernist, violent Islam that encourages the subjugation of women; conversely, Muslim women who do not wear the hijāb are viewed as modern, liberal and Spanish. Ramirez declares: ‘Wearing the headscarf—that most obvious of Muslim symbols—is explained away by immigrant status and inadequate education, as well as a failure to integrate...The absence of the headscarf signals adaptation, modernity, and culture. Its presence is perceived as a threat to democratic values’ (p. 240). This issue is explored in greater depth in Fauzia Ahmad’s ‘The 7/7 London Bombing and British Muslim Women’, and Omar Sacirbey’s ‘Images of Muslim Women in Post-9/11 America’. These two chapters explore the way Muslim women are perceived in two countries that had experienced jihādi terrorism. They highlight the rise in Islamophobia but more interestingly how this development affects Muslim women who are easily identifiable if they wear the hijāb. Ahmad, like Ramirez, reaches the conclusion that ‘...the British media significantly contributed to the vilification of Muslim
women by representing them as a “threat” to liberal secular “western” values. This outcome was achieved, at least in part, by deliberately and consistently linking the veiled Muslim woman image to news stories about 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the tragic events of 7/7 (p. 259). Nada Fuleihan, a Lebanese woman of Christian background, looks at the hijāb as an ‘expression of Lebanese self-assertion and defiance and a sign of grief [arising] from the human catastrophe’ that occurred following the 1982 Israeli invasion (p. 165). What becomes apparent from Fuleihan’s argument is not only the role of the hijāb as a symbol of resistance, but also how it divided Lebanese women, leading many to view it ‘as religious fanaticism or the result of coercion’. Fuleihan explains that some felt that ‘in a general atmosphere of religious fervour, there must have been a form of indirect coercion, a pressure to adopt a dress code in return for approval from the community’ (p. 170).

Another theme promoted in the book is that, even though different conflicts affect people and especially women differently, certain experiences are universal. Consequently, some of the chapters focus on dispelling the view that Muslim women are helpless victims or indifferent actors in the construction of their societies, whereas others call for a more robust study of the role that women can play in post-conflict situations. Almirzanah, on the women of Aceh, writes: ‘women should be acknowledged as invaluable resources—whether at the negotiation table, or during reconstruction, or when policy is crafted. Especially women with firsthand experience of conflict, as well as those who have suffered untold misfortune, deserve pivotal, substantive roles in reshaping their communities’ (p. 34). Rita Stephan on women’s leadership during the Lebanese Cedar Revolution builds on Almirzanah’s argument. She shows how Lebanese women resisted the Syrian occupation and became liberators, concluding: ‘The Cedar revolution left an indelible image of women as active and equal citizens in their society. Their spontaneous, dynamic activism reveals an unmistakable sense of ownership’ (p. 194). This theme resonates in Almirzanah’s fieldwork with the women of Aceh as she notes how Muslim women sometimes had to hide the role that they played during the conflict or the violence that they endured during the conflict. The latter point is explored in greater detail in Shamita Basu’s ‘Nation and Selfhood: Memoirs of Bengali Muslim Women’, which raises the issue of sexual violence by looking at how women experienced the partition of India, in her chapter ‘Nation and Selfhood: Memoirs of Bengali Muslim Women’. Zilka Spahic-Siljak’s ‘Images of Women in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and, Neighboring Countries, 1992–1995’, also highlights how sexual violence—primarily rape—occurs for national, religious and/or ethnic reasons, in other words, how men use women’s bodies to send a message to their male enemies.

In trying to provide different narratives, a major (perhaps inevitable) shortcoming of the volume is inconsistent methodology. The authors draw on an array of disciplines and methodologies, limiting the book’s appeal to students, who may struggle with such a disaggregate approach: the contributors draw on primary sources such as poetry, prose, diaries, news and visual media. It is ultimately difficult to situate the volume within a specific discipline or sub-discipline and interest, making it more chapter-centric, which may mean that
readers may miss on some very useful insights, as they will opt to focus on those chapters that they believe are of use to them and their research. A second shortcoming is that in trying to encourage a more frank and in-depth review of the role of Muslim women in contemporary society—whether Muslim or not—there is little, if any, reference to how the Qur’an is interpreted to justify the subjugation of women. (See, for example, Abdullahi An-Na’im, ‘The Rights of Women and International Law in the Muslim Context’, Whittier Law Review, 9/3 [1988]: 491–516; Ann Elizabeth Mayer, Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics [Boulder: Westview Press, 3rd edn., 1999].)

Some of the contributors are quick to chastise Western media for misrepresenting Islam and Islamic practices, but give little attention to how Islamic societies and states permit misogynistic practices. Also missing is a review of the discourse between Muslim women and feminism. The emergence of two tendencies among Muslim feminists surely merits discussion—some Muslim women embrace Islam but oppose Political Islam, whereas other Islamic feminists seek societal change and place Islam at the centre of social-political activism: see Irfan Ahmad ‘Cracks in the “Mightiest Fortress”: Jamaat-e-Islami’s Changing Discourse on Women’, Modern Asian Studies, 42 (2008), 549–75, at 551; Amal Treacher, ‘Reading the Other Women, Feminism, and Islam’, Studies in Gender and Sexuality, 4/1 (2003): 59–71. Some of this diversity among women is a subtext in Fuleihan’s chapter where she highlights the tensions that emerged in Lebanon between women in relation to the hijab, but overall it is not tackled in the book.

In sum, this book is an important contribution to the growing body of literature addressing the representation of, and the challenges faced by, Muslim women in the post-Cold War period. In collecting and amalgamating such a remarkably diverse group of authors, Jaegheh Shirazi has provided readers with different ways of understanding Muslim women in war and crisis.

Isaac Kfir
Syracuse University
E-mail: ikfir@maxwell.syr.edu
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Our Bodies Belong to God: Organ Transplants, Islam, and the Struggle for Human Dignity in Egypt


As modern medicine globalizes, medical knowledge and technologies are transferred across societies, and medical practices in different countries, at least on the surface, increasingly resemble one another in structure and function. Yet, the tools of biomedicine insert themselves into complex social realities, and the valuation of biomedicine may differ significantly from one cultural context to