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Cynthia Nelson, Shahnaz Rouse, eds.. *Situating Globalization: Views from Egypt.* Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2000. 361 pp. $39.95, paper, ISBN 978-3-933127-61-7.

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I will first discuss the ten articles in this fascinating book and then how they fit into the overarching themes of the book. The first article, by Philip Marfleet, addresses the claims of Islamic ideologues who argue that their framework can counter and replace Western discourses. The Islamizers aim to stop compromising with the West and to extend Islamic thought to every corner of the earth. This would entail replacing the secular dualism of Western knowledge with an integrated Islamic knowledge. The central feature of the new intellectual order would be *tawhid*, or the oneness of God. Islamic sociology would focus on the unity of Islamic society rather than on nation, state, or ethnic identity. The Islamic framework is uniquely situated because the *umma*, while diverse, is uniformly committed to universal foundational values. Islam alone offers the moral values needed for modern global society to function properly. Marfleet counters that the universal claims of Islamism and the universal claims of globalism err in obscuring or ignoring the fluidity, mixing, and change in cultural evolution. He argues that the claims of Islamizers go hand-in-hand with the globalization of contemporary life. In response to the Islamist claim that human knowledge must derive from the Qur'an and Sunna, Marfleet insists that Islam, like other religions, is not a uniquely universal ideology, but adapts to a wide variety of political, economic, cultural, and social circumstances.

Mona Abaza, after discussing the key players and themes in the debate over the "Islamization of Knowledge," compares the impacts of the debate in Malaysia and Egypt. She finds that Malaysia has been far more eager to adopt Islamic principles in its governmental institutions than has Egypt. She suggests this is because a government minister, Anwar Ibrahim, has successfully imposed "Islamic institutions" from the top down in order to undermine the growing Islamist opposition. In contrast, in Egypt the secular intellectuals, while under fire from Islamists, continue to fight for their liberal and secular social vision. Intellectual life is therefore more stimulating in Egypt than in Malaysia, perhaps because Malaysians are more affluent and therefore more satisfied with life. In an endnote Abaza cautions the reader that this paper was written in 1996, before the financial crisis and the imprisonment of

Anwar Ibrahim challenged some of her findings. The reader hopes for an update.

Cynthia Nelson and Shahnaz Rouse co-author a study of three women (Doria Shafik, Jahanara Shahnawaz, and Hamida Akhtar Hussein) who, in their own ways, attempted to reform their societies. All three led or are leading lives of transition and cultural hybridity. Shafiq was an Egyptian Muslim educated at the Sorbonne who straddled two cultures for much of her life. She became an influential feminist leader but struggled within herself for a satisfactory identity. Janahara was a Muslim nationalist and anti-colonial activist in British India who helped frame the charter of Women's Rights in Pakistan. Like Jahanara, Hamida Akhtar has written autobiographical studies that are important and perhaps unprecedented attempts at self-representation. Jahanara uses archives and government documents in her autobiography, while Hamida writes in an oral, story-telling-style in which she remains on the margins. Jahanara was a political activist and her approach suggests her interest in and access to power.

Didier Monciaud traces the career of Sheikh Moubarak Abdu Fadl, a Nubian-Egyptian communist educated at al-Azhar, who was imprisoned during much of the Nasser era for his political views and activities. After his release from prison in 1964, Abdu Fadl continued his political activities, but with the 1967 defeat found it increasingly difficult to organize. He participated in the re-establishment of the Communist party in 1975; was imprisoned again for his opposition to the Camp David Accords; and, in the 1980s, following his release for health reasons, became a communist public spokesman. Monciaud bases his article on a series of interviews with Sheikh Moubarak who he admires greatly for the richness of his experience, his moral values, and his unswerving commitment to political beliefs.

Mohammed Tabishat writes about an endemic sickness in Egypt, *al- daght*, or high blood pressure. *Al-daght* might also mean "hypertension," "stressed out," or, in severe cases, "nervous breakdown." I can attest that it afflicts anyone who lives for a period of time in downtown Cairo. Tabishat presents detailed case studies of an upper-middle-class Egyptian family, a lower-middle-class family, and an impoverished widow and her children. The different worldviews of these subjects demonstrate that *al-daght* is not a physical problem as much as one of social and material dysfunction. Explanations for the disease, which varied according to gender and social class, attributed it to pollution, low-quality food, crowdedness, work- and family-related stress, and economic insecurity. Clearly the social context is critical in medicine.

Kamran Asdar Ali demonstrates how the state uses the discourse of modern medicine and health to further its project of constructing the modern Egyptian nation. Through its family planning and medical policies the state attempts to organize the female body to create a "modern" family and society. He concludes that the notion of "civil society" cannot exist outside the nation-state and that the asymmetry of power between the individual and the state allows little space for negotiation or contestation of the discourse on women's reproductive rights. State policy is imposed from above and resisted when possible.

Petra Kuppinger retells the life story of Um Ali, a successful and popular midwife whose death symbolized "the slow death of age-old female wisdom and practices, as much as her life and work demonstrated the very feasible option of successfully inserting more recent knowledges into time- honored practices" (p. 276). With her death, expectant women had recourse only to unpleasant hospitals where doctors preferred the more convenient and profitable Caesarean deliveries. Younger women avoided midwifery, a profession that was semi-legal at best, opting instead to become helpers at large medical facilities rather than self-employed and independent prac-

titioners, to the disadvantage of Um Ali's and other midwives' clientele.

Anita Hausermann Fabos explains that, even though married to a Sudanese living in the exile community in Cairo where her fieldwork was located, she did not gain entr=e as she had expected. This led her to consider the complex relations between the researcher and the research community. She concludes that "relations between husband and wife should be seen as producing knowledge specific to the confluence of power relations encompassed by the relationship" (pp. 295-296). Few readers would disagree.

Heba El-Kholy studies the *ayma* or marriage inventory, which gives many Egyptian women a measure of security in their marriages. The *ayma* is a document that itemizes furniture and supplies brought into the marriage by the husband and wife. Since women are vulnerable to unilateral divorce, men have the right to take a second, third, or fourth wife. Yet, men may also be forcibly returned to the home and thus, the *ayma* provided by the husband may make him toe the line to avoid significant economic loss. The *ayma* was most important to lower-class couples, while the more affluent classes tried to emphasize emotional rather than commercial and contractual ties in a marriage. El-Kholy found that lower-class women were conscious of their vulnerability as women and were able to take steps to protect themselves. She concludes that "in depth, contextualized research which is both self-reflective as well as sensitive to the perceptions, thought categories, language and local idioms used by women and men in various settings represents an opportunity for generating knowledge about gender that can escape the traps of both western ethnocentrism and indigenous elitism" (pp. 328-329). This, of course, is what we all aim for, though it can be argued that there is no guarantee that ethnocentrism or indigenous elitism does not creep in around the edges.

Nadje Al-Ali argues that feminist approaches have been generated from locales around the world and not just from the West. Egyptians and Westerners have created stereotypes of one another to establish boundaries and identities, but researchers must seek to "overcome long established binary oppositions between 'indigenous' and 'western' bodies of knowledge." We live in a culturally hybrid world with no pure or authentic cultures and comfortable and easy oversimplifications should be avoided.

The introduction seeks to find overarching themes that connect these very different sorts of articles. One theme is the indigenization of knowledge. All the articles address social and cultural change resulting from the stresses of modernity, in one form or another, but I am not sure if indigenization of knowledge fits in every case. The other major theme is globalization, yet only a few of the articles engage with globalization theory. A section on Egypt's economic transformation and the impact of the recently imposed structural adjustment programs would have helped. Many of the articles are marred by incomplete citations, syntactical errors, and organizational problems, and required careful copyediting.

All of the articles are lively, interesting, and topical. The volume will interest specialists in contemporary Egypt and in the politics of cultural decolonization.

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