

**Letters from Ramallah, 2002**  
(Article written in English)

**Islah Jad**

These letters were written by Islah Jad to friends and relations in Egypt during the Israeli invasion of the West Bank and Gaza in the spring and early summer of 2002. The letters read like a journal of daily life in Ramallah during the invasion, and describe the pain and suffering of the people, especially the women among them. Islah Jad also expresses, however, the Palestinian resistance to occupation, their will to live, to survive not only as individuals, but also as a people and a cause.

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**Imane Khalifé: Non-Violence and the Life of a Young Lebanese Activist**  
(Article written in Arabic)

**Nader Srage**

This portrait of Imane Khalifé is not about her life as an assiduous young researcher at the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World at the Beirut University College, but rather as one of those who in 1984 launched the first effort at a movement of non-violence in Lebanon, in the midst of the divisions and destruction of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990).

The paper reduces pure narrative description in order to emphasize her image as a militant. It examines the socio-political climate that contributed to the full flowering of this heroine's call for the peace march of May 6, 1984, during the tenth year of the war. This was to be the first popular insurrection against the violence, for which she was awarded *the Right Livelihood Honorary Award* **right name?** in Stockholm that same year. Though unaware of this breakthrough, she had broken social taboos in this effort to stop the war, a young woman, and an ordinary citizen, working against powerful forces.

She went into exile in Paris, and died in 1999. She deserves recognition especially in the context of the savage war launched this summer of 2006 by Israel on Lebanon.

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**Writing Arab Women's Lives**  
(Article written in English)

**Jean Said Makdisi**

In this paper the author reflects on some of the reasons she deems it necessary and important that Arab women should write about the lives of other Arab women. She discusses some of the problems – some of them theoretical, but also some methodological -- that she encountered as she wrote her recently published triple biography of her grandmother, mother and herself, three generations of Arab women. In discussing these problems and remembering how she dealt with them, she raises questions in feminist theory and methodology, as well as in practical matters in the writing process.

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## **The Formation of the Writing Self: Mai Ziyadeh and Virginia Woolf's "Judith Shakespeare."**

**( Article written in Arabic)**

**Hanan Ibrahim**

This paper aims at comparing issues raised by Mai Ziyadeh in her letters to Jubran Khalil Jubran with those raised by Virginia Woolf in her narrative about Shakespeare's fictitious sister, Judith, who, in various ways, relates to Woolf herself. The story of Judith appears in Woolf's book, *A Room of One's Own* based on the lecture she gave at Cambridge University on women and writing in 1928.

After providing a theoretical frame of reference for the above works as acts of auto/biographical writings, the paper endeavors to explore how the writing self is inextricably related, consciously and unconsciously, to its context, diverse, complex and oppressive as it is. Why Woolf finds herself in a situation where she has to invent Judith, and why women were not allowed to be writers, or recognized as such, in medieval and Elizabethan times are dealt with by way of shedding some light on issues pertaining to Arab women as raised by Mai Ziyadeh.

Through a close and attentive reading to the above works, the question is raised whether matters relating to women in 16<sup>th</sup> century England are pertinent for discussion within the context of Arab women in modern times. If we find that some of them are, then it is important to find out what such convergences indicate on a wider cultural and political level. How the 'I' of the writing 'agent' emerges and unfolds its multidimensional self in the present act of writing will also be deciphered in the course of the study.

## **A Reading in the Autobiographies of Three Arab Women**

**(Article written in Arabic)**

**Rafif Sidawi**

This study deals with the autobiographies of three women authors: Fadwa Toukan, who was born in 1917 in Nablus, Salma Haffar Alkouzbari, who was born in 1922 in Damascus, and Noura Nwaihed Halawani, who was born in Jerusalem in 1931 but lived most of her life in Lebanon, her father's and her husband's native land.

This semiotic study examines the significance of the references that reveal the hidden realities of the lives of the three authors, and observes how they express both their "inner self" and "the other" from a socio-cultural perspective. The study also uncovers their unspoken discourse, using declared objectives on the one hand, and the logic of narration on the other.

All three authors tried to remake themselves through their autobiographies in the belief that writing is both an act of life and an act of presence, outside the narrow limits of the self. At the same time, their boldness in exposing their inner selves in

their respective autobiographies shows the extent to which their socio-cultural contexts affect each author's writing style.

The socio-cultural legacy also manifests itself in the three autobiographies, when it becomes clear that hereditary values still dominate, though to different degrees. The autobiography of Toukan, for instance, though it seems more revolutionary than the other two, and though the author promised herself that she would not permit anyone to obstruct her life, expresses through the unspoken, the inner barriers that .dominate, especially in the lives of women

### **Um Kulthum: A Gendered Study in Biographical Writing (Article written in Arabic)**

#### **Hind al Soufi**

This study compares two biographies of Um Kulthum, one written by a man, E. Sahhab, and the other by a woman, I. Sayah. Six points are highlighted in comparing the two biographies: The feminist awareness of Um Kulthum's mother, ; Um Kulthum's attitude towards faith and traditional values; the rebelliousness of Um Kulthum; Um Kulthum as a engaged citizen; Femininity and Masculinity; Um Kulthum the virtuoso musician.

The study concludes that while Sayyah emphasizes Um Kulthum's feminist attitudes and behavior, Sahhab emphasizes the role of men in building the beliefs and the personality of Um Kulthum.

### **Women's Bodies Past and Present: An Anthropological Reading (Article written in Arabic)**

#### **Sawsan Karimi**

This paper examines the roles played by contemporary Bahraini women in inventing, forming, and representing their various identities in a society rich with cultural diversity. Bahraini women's appearances, bodies, and roles reflect the socio-economic and political changes not only in Bahrain, but worldwide as well. These changes continue to redefine identities in Bahrain.

## **Lebanese Mothers Reflect on Their Lives (Article written in Arabic)**

**Fadia Hoteit**

This study approaches the experience of inner/intimate motherhood through a rational and “objective” analysis of a group of mothers with such an experience. In other words, the study rejects the notion of separating the emotional from the rational, and the personal from the objective.

Five women intellectuals producing knowledge in various academic fields are interviewed. Their views about their relationships with their children, as well as with their mothers, and about the ways in which these relationships have changed, are then presented. The presentation of these experiences shows a change in maternal behavior that varies from radical change (one case) to minor change (one case) to varying changes on some levels (three cases).

The changes these mothers experience revolve mainly around the following aspects: the adoption of “democratic” notions; the increased awareness of individuality; ideological commitment; the perturbation of social roles and the increasing authority of the mother. In addition to presenting these changes in maternal roles, the study also points to the seeds of change in the characteristics of the new generation that can be summarized as follows: child-like behavior, egocentricity, rationalism and independence. The study concludes that an aware and responsible motherhood, given a clear delineation of parental roles, produces balanced and rational personalities. The main condition for the success of maternal (and paternal) roles is that they are able to mature in a social environment able to adapt to their production, and able to support them with an adequate symbolic (political and ideological) authority to allow them to produce and to develop.

## **Searching for the Feminine (Article written in Arabic)**

**May Gebran**

In this paper the author examines a kind of feminine writing that reflects the imperatives of the female body. She insists on a sexually differentiated discourse, and refuses the existence of a sexually neutral one.

For this purpose, the author conducted interviews with women from different social milieus, including young and newly married women. As they speak they express the “*non-dit*” on femininity: sexual life, family life, the body, marriage, their relationship with the other sex – husband, man. Why do they suffer? What are the sources of their psychological, affective, and sexual problems?

These women, the author concludes, must be heard so that others can grow closer to themselves, and to their new femininity.

***“I weep: I need a friend:” A Structural Characteristic Peculiar to Women***  
**Article written in Arabic**

**Najla Hamadeh**

This paper is based on what Freud called "The Negative Oedipus Complex", which is the period of a little girl's life in which she is attached to her mother, before she has to revert the attachment to her father (someone from the opposite sex), in preparation for assuming her feminine personality and role.

The author claims that the role of the negative Oedipus complex in structuring the girl's personality and emotional preferences is ignored because theories often focus mainly on males, and hence they tend to neglect a situation that pertains only to females, as does this one. She argues that this stage in the girl's lives, ignored by theorists, causes them to yearn always for other females as "significant others" in their lives. The author offers evidence from literature, as well as from the example of a game that young Arab girls play: "*I weep: I need a friend.*"

**Across Borders: Letters from a Mother to her Son**

**Noha Bayoumi**  
**(Article written in Arabic)**

What are the possibilities of feminine self-expression within the givens of social and cultural boundaries, including especially cultural representations of the feminine? How does the feminine self receive and then reproduce itself among women who have not had the advantage of higher education? To what degree can the warm letters of a woman/mother express a more liberated selfhood than that embodied in the actual experiences of a woman/wife/mother? Did Alice transcend the accepted language of "the mother," and did she, in using her own form of self-expression, liberate herself and launch herself as a new kind of woman? What was her relationship with her son, who had emigrated because of the war in Lebanon? How was this relationship embodied in her letters and in his collages, in which her letters are prominent elements?

This study discusses these questions, and concludes that long distance motherhood is an exceptional situation that creates its own style, and that Alice belongs to a clearly defined social group. In the self-assured form of identity unencumbered by the ambivalence between tradition and modernity, there is a marked similarity between what is authorized, what is experienced, and what is imagined, between what is perceived to be real and what is perceived to be possible. In spite of the fact that the mother channeled worldly and spiritual values to her son, and in spite of the age difference between them, she was able to achieve an understanding of his experiences, and went along with his artistic outlook.

**Women in Prison: Zaynab el-Ghazali and her *Days of My Life*  
(Article written in Arabic)**

**Hosn Abboud**

*Ayyam min hayati*, or (*Days of my Life*, 1972) by the Islamist activist Zaynab al-Ghazali (1917-2005) is one of the earliest memoirs written by women or members of the Muslim Brotherhood on their sufferings in prison. I have situated the memoir of al-Ghazali in the context of others written by Egyptian women activists of the same political era -- Inji Aflatun, Latifa al-Zayyat, Farida al-Naqqash and Nawal al-Saadawi -- though these others take an opposite political direction from hers, being on the left and in the movement resisting the normalization of relationship with Israel. I did so in order to contrast the level of al-Ghazali's openness on the *self* and the *other* with that of this group of women intellectuals. The importance of dedicating an analytical study of al-Ghazali's memoir lies in the need for a critique of al-Ghazali's political, ideological, and feminist ideas, especially that al-Ghazali presented herself as a model for Muslim Brotherhood (not sisterhood) and as an independent character that does not conform with the norm of the Islamist daa'ya of today. The memoir was politically influential to the Muslim Brothers and was translated into many languages.

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**A Reading of a Tunisian Militant's Memoirs :  
Radhia Haddad and her "*Parole de Femme*"  
(Article written in Arabic)**

**Dalenda Largueche**

Is there any specificity in the language of women? How can a woman in an Arab cultural context undo social models and constraints to express women's identity?

In the case of political militancy, how can the discourse used by a woman successfully construct a personal experience exceeding the collective story of women? In what way are women's words different from men's?

In this article I shall try to approach these questions and others through my reading of the story of one Tunisian *destourian* militant: Radhia Haddad, who emerged on the Tunisian political scene and that of the women's movement in 1952 and remained active in them until 1971.

In exploring this story, which traces the political trajectory of this political woman, one is immediately confronted with the question: How do women manage in political affairs? Do they reproduce the same power patterns as men, or do they develop a feminine language that embodies their particular values?

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**Afifa Saab: Experiences and Perspectives**  
(Article written in Arabic)

**Naila Kaed Bey:**

Afifa Saab ( date ) was the first Druze woman journalist. Her publication *Al Khadar*, founded in 1919, became a forum for women scholars who called for social reform and change. She sought to make its scope of subjects as broad as possible encompassing all that might interest a Druze woman of her time.

Afifa Saab addressed every pertinent impediment to women in her conservative milieu with unprecedented forthrightness. Opting for adopting some western culture that was of significant value, she made sure it did not flagrantly conflict with her mid-eastern identity. She also advocated religious tolerance, secular culture and patriotism. Her fervour transcended journalism to education, and she established the Sorat School in Mount Lebanon. She remained true to herself, a staunch activist who did not bask in success, or dreaded failure.

Despite all her contributions, Afifa Saab was denied the historical attention that is her due. This paper sheds light on the diligent efforts of this remarkable woman, and her involvement in the twentieth century women's progressive movement.

**Abstract: The Great Women of Onayza**  
(Article written in Arabic)

**By Ahmad Al-Wasel**

This work depicts the great contribution to society made by some Saudi Arabian women, despite the chains with which patriarchy tries to restrain them, including its attempt to put women down in order to discourage their constructive efforts. It is about the creativity of these women, who constitute magnificent role models for posterity.

The women under study are mostly from four generations of the author's relatives: grandmothers, aunts, sisters and nieces. Other women, also from the Onayza region, are mentioned. They are described as engendering for themselves roles in education and social work - both as relief work and as contribution to the beautification and enjoyment of everyday life- as well as in the economic and political lives of their societies. Some resided or still reside in the city of Qaseem or in the Najd region of Saudi Arabia. Others live in Kuwait or Egypt.

**The Lives and Labours of Rural Women in Yemen**  
**(Article written in Arabic)**

**Sukaina Hachem**

This paper studies the informal agricultural labour undertaken by women in the Yemeni countryside. It discusses the economic and social value placed on their work, and the ranking of women within their own families, in the context of established customs and traditions, most of which have a negative effect on women. The study shows that the labour of rural women in Yemen is inseparable from the labour and production of men, though women's labour is not calculated as part of the GNP.

The study is based on a sample of rural women, and shows their continuous efforts at various forms of labour. These become all the more onerous because they must be done on a remorseless daily basis. In addition, the women must attend to their regular household duties that they undertake alone because of the division of labour on the basis of gender. In addition, the normal hardships of life in rural Yemen forces women to do work much tougher than that demanded of women in the cities.

**The Life and Work of Emily Bsharat**  
**(Article Written in Arabic)**

**Souher al Tal**

This paper is about Emily Bsharat (1913 – 2004), the pioneer of the Jordanian women's movement. Her father, the master of the Bsharat clan, was known for his generosity and influence within Ottoman, and later Jordanian, society. Although he was conservative, he sent Emily and her sisters to the American Friends School. After her father's death, Emily went to England and become the first female lawyer in Jordan, thus achieving her childhood dream.

Beginning in the 1940s, and until her departure to England, Emily taught English, and was very active in social work. She established the first Jordanian women's society in 1944, and in 1953 she established the first women's school for nursing in cooperation with an American organization. In addition, she established the first orphanage in 1951, which is now known as "Mabarret Um Al Hussein".

During the 1940s, she wrote for Jordanian national newspapers, demonstrating her views on socialism and Arab unity, and in 1954, she became an activist. She established the *Union of Jordanian Women* which influenced her political and feminist awareness. In 1958, her organization was closed down, along with many others, but she continued to struggle for the causes of Arab unity, society, and women, and the Union was reestablished in 1974. In addition, she increased her personal efforts to support weak and poor women in the courts. In 1976, she ceased her public activities.



Emily, who never married, lived a modest, simple life. She left all her fortune to academic and charitable organizations.

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## **Single Women as Heads of Households**

### **Maya al Rahbeh**

This study deals with single women with families from various social groups and regions within Syrian society. It examines the relationship these women have with themselves, the effect on them of the standard notion of self-sacrifice, and how all this creates in them emotional deprivation and psychological perturbation. The study also looks at the relationship of these women with their children, especially as to the negative aspects of this relationship. Children who live without fathers have aggressive tendencies, as well as a tendency towards truancy from school. They also tend to leave school early to go to work.

The study examines as well the very complex relationship of these single women heads of households with society, especially in the light of various factors: the fact that the nature of the family is tending to change from the extended towards the nuclear, especially in the cities; the poor economic situation has reduced the control of men over the women in their families; the absence of a social security fund that could help women in times of their need; and the control or even banning of civil groups that could have been of some help to single women with families.

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## **Guardians of Life: The Stories of Two Women (Article written in Arabic)**

### **Nazek Saba Yared**

This essay is based on a series of interviews with two Lebanese Christian women, both middle-aged widows, but from completely different backgrounds. One grew up illiterate in a mountain village; the other is a dentist from Beirut. The essay compares the difficulties and obstacles each of them faced as women. It also points out that some of these obstacles were due to the traditions, customs and mentality of their patriarchal society, whereas others were caused by unjust laws that discriminate against women.

However, the essay also shows that some of the difficulties they faced were linked to the circumstances of their personal lives, and thus demonstrates the different trajectory their lives took. It also points out how they faced the difficulties and obstacles on their path, the means to which they resorted in order to overcome them, to what extent they succeeded, and why they failed whenever they did. Yet in spite of the great difference between them they did resemble each other in certain ways: both paid a price for being women; both had an acute sense of responsibility, patience, courage; and both had strong personalities that struggled against fate and would not succumb.

The essay also tries to elucidate the hidden, the unspoken behind their actual words.

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