

L'Excisée (The Excised) ⁽¹⁾

Most novels and stories written by Middle Eastern women reflect a seething revolt against traditions that weigh heavily on them. The same revolt is expressed in their poetry, but, while poetry moves the readers by an emotional, rhythmic expression, fiction has the ability to stir their imagination through detailed description, original plots and forceful characterization.

Evelyne Accad's novel contains the elements of both fiction and poetry. She has an amazing gift for verbal expression, which she has sometimes set to music and played on the guitar. She deeply feels what she writes, and her rhythmic prose slips unconsciously into a poetry which permeates her book like a haunting melody.

The book focusses on women she has known and studied in Lebanon and North Africa; in depicting their sufferings, she so completely identifies with them that one would think she is telling her own story.

Her heroine is a dreamer, an idealist who ran away from an oppressive home atmosphere with the hope of bringing freedom to enslaved women living under another sky. She crossed the sea to be with the man who had lured her with promises and who had inspired in her an idealistic love by showing her the symbolic box of his dreams which he had carried since childhood, and by affirming to her that together they would walk toward the light and work to free other women from the mire. Where is that man now? Where are his promises? What message could she give those unfortunate women when she herself has to be veiled, excised, enclosed in a stifling room? How could she revolutionize a world whose people idealize violence and perpetuate it in the name of "revolution"?

The disillusioned heroine finds only one exit out of her dungeon: suicide; but before disappearing, she manages to carry away with her a little friend who joins to the charm of innocence an unlimited faith in her rescuer: Nour (light), whose name symbolizes hope, is sent to Switzerland in company of another young Arab woman who had run away from a cruel fate. The little girl "will live to help her sisters, to accomplish what the heroine of the story failed to accomplish".

It is a symbolical story of illusion and failure, but it is also one of faith in the future. Little Nour will grow to be a strong militant woman. The story ends with her words asserting her determination to struggle: "I shall return, You will see, I shall return!"

"Canadians in the Third World"

Canada, which we consider as a remote country because of its location far up near the Arctic Ocean, has recently recognized the essentially interdependent nature of our world and since the early seventies has embarked on a strategy which "recognized that a more equitable sharing of the world's resources is essential if we are to create a more stable and predictable world economy". In 1975, the Canadian government set out to reduce the gap between the industrialized world, including North America, Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, and the developing countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, by raising its Development Assistance to 0.5 percent of its gross national product by 1985, aiming at 0.7 percent by the end of the eighties.

CIDA, the Canadian International Development Agency, has played an important role in this field. "It is multifaceted, involving actions on many fronts. It is a catalyst, providing support for the many non-governmental organizations which work to educate Canadians and involve them in development activities. It also plays a development role, working to share Canadian expertise with others in the world."

CIDA has three channels through which Canadian resources are put to work in the Third World: the Bilateral, Multilateral and Special Program Branches.

Bilateral assistance may take the form of food aid, commodities, infrastructure projects, lines of credit or any combination of them.

Multilateral Programs Branch is an organization that works by cooperation. Donors contribute to an organization whose board of governors represents the countries that give and the countries that receive. Together they decide on projects.

The Special Programs Branch established in 1968 a program of cooperation between government and private agencies in the Third World. CIDA sets aside almost 10 percent of its funds to support private sector involvement in world development. It cooperates with NGO's (non-governmental organisations) by providing grants to help expand the scope and increase the impact of a given project. In 1980-81, Canadians contributed over \$100 million to finance the overseas development efforts of more than 200 NGO's based in Canada.

(Excerpts from *Canadians in the Third World*, CIDA'S Year in review, 1980-1981)

(1) Editions L'Harmattan, Paris 1982.

ISIS

The Bulletin of the "Groupe de Recherche sur les Femmes Algériennes" (Research Group on Algerian Women) is a quarterly published by the C.D.S.H., (Centre de Documentation des Sciences Humaines) in Wahran, Algeria. The Bulletin started in 1982 as a collective project⁽¹⁾ has issued 3 numbers containing press reviews about Algerian women, interviews with feminist leaders, detailed reports on the ceremonies of the 8th of March (Woman's Day), criticism of the activities of the UNFA (National Union of Algerian Women), literary texts, evaluation of research on women, an Arabic section publishing excerpts from Arabic feminist literature and personal impressions written by college students. One of the sketches entitled "The Code" presents the problems resulting from polygamy and from restricting to the husband the right to divorce and to grant his wife the right to work, i.e. those forms of injustice toward women allowed by "The Code".

- (1) See *Al-Raida*, August 1, 1982, no. 21, p. 6, "Rituals of the 8th of March in Algeria".

Répertoire des thèses et mémoires concernant l'Algérie, disponibles à Oran (Wahran), 1981.

(The Repertory of theses and studies concerning Algeria, available at Oran, 1981)

The introduction gives the following figures about the contents of The Repertory:

734 works in foreign languages
182 works in Arabic
916 total number.

The works were presented between 1976 and 1981 as requirements for the following degrees: State doctorate, doctorate, doctorate of the 3rd cycle, maitrise, diplomas of "études approfondies", "études supérieures", licences and others. They are distributed among the "Archives of the Wilaya of Oran", its libraries, the Center of Economic and

Social Documentation, the Center of Documentation of the Human Sciences (C.D.S.H.) and the National Commissariat for the Census and Statistical Inquiries.

Theoretical and Methodological Problems in Research on Women in Developing Countries⁽¹⁾

This is a collection of papers presented at a seminar held by the Women's Research Center in Social Science, Copenhagen, about problems in women's research in developing countries. Edited by Myra Lewinter in 65 stencilled pages, it contains, besides the introduction, four papers dealing with the above topic, written by women researchers and anthropologists. The introduction by the Editor presents the contents which reflect — at different levels — a number of important issues. One of them is the **invisible** woman in the Third World, invisible in official figures or studies, where "statistics, accounting and analysis either ignore women's contribution to the national economy or shift them in and out of statistical categories". Another problem raised by the papers is that of the national conception which views men as household heads, while, in many societies of the Third World, women are often the chief providers of the family's basic subsistence needs. The contribution of women to the national economy through their domestic labor is entirely overlooked. As an example, the term "manpower" which restricts labor to males is still used instead of "labor power" or "labor force", which includes the contribution of both sexes to the development process. The editor finally raises the issue of helping Third World women organize and improve their situation. The researcher's work should not be limited to the methods of development planning but "it should also take into consideration the women's own aspirations".

- (1) Women's Research Center in Social Science, H.C. Andersens Blvd. 38, Mezz.
1555 Copenhagen V, Denmark, December 1982.

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