

Flight Against Time

By Emily Nasrallah

*Flight Against Time** is Emily Nasrallah's first book to be translated into English. It is her sixth novel in a series of thirteen books, and is a moving story about the immigrant experience.

More about this book will appear in the November issue of *Al Raida*: «Women and War».

Emily Nasrallah is a prominent Lebanese writer. She was born in Kfeir, a small village in South Lebanon. A graduate of Beirut University College and the American University of Beirut, she was a teacher and



* Nasrallah, Emily. *Flight Against Time*. Charlottetown: Ragwood Press, 1987. 208 pages.

journalist before becoming a full-time novelist and short-story writer.

Having lived the Lebanese experience, Emily Nasrallah says that women all over the Arab World can develop their capacities despite difficulties and hindrances. She is presently working on a new novel. «Writing», she says, «is my breath of life».

Women in Development

By Winifred Weekes-Vagliani

In collaboration with Bernard Grossat

Paris: Development Center Studies, 1980.

«Women in Development» was published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The book aims at fulfilling one of the major concerns of OECD which is integrating women in development. It brings together the knowledge and experience available in member countries of the Organization in both economic development and the formulation and execution of general policies of economic aid.

The purpose of this study is to adapt such knowledge and experience to the actual needs of countries or regions in the process of development thus putting the results at the disposal of countries by appropriate means.

Dr. Weekes-Vagliani's study is divided into three parts: an overview of the problem, methodology and case studies.

The overview emphasizes the need to integrate women in development «It is now generally recognized that women are essential components of the development process, which can take place only if both men and women are included». (W. Weekes-Vagliani, p. 7)

Using existing data which have recently been made available, Dr. Weekes-Vagliani developed a methodology in her study focusing on young women. It combines survey data and anthropological materials to bring a new perspective to bear on the problem of breaking into the vicious circle of hunger, poverty, illiteracy and early child-bearing.

With scarce national resources, the study reveals that policy makers need to know which measures will reach the intended target group. Knowledge of certain factors such as ethnicity and family systems associated with ethnic groups, domestic life cycle patterns, the meaning of delayed marriage and economic autonomy in each setting are essential to design effective policies and development programs.

By focusing on young women and including material which to-date has often been ignored, this study provides some helpful insight for future research and action in this field.

Mortemaison

By: Vénus Khoury - Ghata

Mortemaison^{*}, meaning **Deadhouse**, is the novel of a journey through the night, the liberation from love. In her usual sharp satiric style, Vénus Khoury-Ghata, a Lebanese novelist, poetess and journalist, living in Paris - expresses the grief of a wife over the death of a loved one. It is a catharsic way of dealing with sorrow.

The story unfolds in a sequence of strange events. At Luc's death, his wife starts to dig into his past trying to find out the facet of his life which was hidden from her. In her quest, she meets Christine Tsarkovskoy, a Russian woman who was Luc's ex-mistress. He had abandoned her when he got married, leaving her his dog as a

consolation! He had already stopped desiring her when she became a good friend of his mother. In his mind the two women had become interchangeable, thus contradicting Freud's oedipal theory.

The wife then decides to travel to Turkey --to the Asian side of the Bosphorus-- to meet her mother-in-law and introduce her daughter Mie to her. Through the strange stories recounted by her mother-in-law, she tries to reconstruct the puzzle of Luc's life «descendant of the bey's of Turkey, of the revolutionaries of Albania, believer and infidel, man and seagull» (p.99).

Unable to forget her grief through her quest, the wife goes to Paris and throws herself into a relationship with a Brazilian. She realizes «en termes vulgaires, elle souhaitait un nettoyage de son coeur, le sexe de l'amant agissant à la manière d'une curette d'obstétricien». (Literally that she was using sexual intercourse as a means of cleansing her heart as an obstetrician would clean her womb) (p. 136). Feeling guilty at her action, she sees it as a betrayal of her husband's memory.

Although one appreciates Khoury-Ghata's unusual poetic images, her humour and satire --rare qualities among women writers-- the novel is a disappointment. The story is superficial and does not move beyond the perpetuation of old clichés. Women are portrayed as jealous, vengeful and greedy. Youth and beauty are the components of seduction and children are the only consolation against death.

The novel ends on a reflection over the importance of her daughter. Only Mie had really counted in her husband's life -- therefore his death. She was the prolongation of Luc, and thanks to her, he could live a second life, a sweeter childhood. It is this thought which, ultimately consoles her.

One wishes that Vénus would find a way to channel her talents into worthwhile and transcending human topics.

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* Khoury-Ghata, Vénus.

(*) **Mortemaison**. Paris: Flammarion, 1987. 169 pages. 70.00 F.F.