MEDIA, RELIGION AND GENDER IN EUROPE

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Contents

Preface

Dealing with religion, gender is not often the first question that appears; identity is. Religion does not move easily between liquidity and transmodernity, and it is not a secret that resistance to new dynamic concepts affect the vast majority of religious denominations. Nevertheless, religion is defined by its ability to make connections between different entities and also to adapt to different cultures and social trends. In recent years, we have seen a proliferation of new concepts that challenge religious values. And gender is certainly one of the most complex and urgent ones.

The gender question is more and more at the core of internal religious debates. It is not only about Femen demonstrations, feminist religious historical reviews or internal feminist demands within religious organizations. It is about how religions picture themselves in an evolving landscape where gender is not merely an appendix.

According to Liikkanen, gender is constructed in and through every space in society, including the institutional spaces of public domain. But do religious traditions really accept gender as a construct?

The main preoccupation of religions has not been the construction of the self. Religions have a strong bond with salvation and also with self-realization. So, the question of gender cannot be avoided.

Lipovetsky defines Western society as hypermodern, a society of excess and the surpassing of all kinds of limits. Gender also questions the limits. And by questioning that, it calls into question the idea of the body as well, and the whole idea of the self.

For some religious leaders, gender is not even a concept; they are reluctant to use the word, and if they use it, it is with negative connotations. Gender seems to be more the fruit of atheistic worldviews than a question that affects religions.

Many of the most profound discussions on gender and religion focus on the question of change, free will and natural acceptance. Is gender a given, or is gender a dynamic entity that could evolve according to personal will or collective legitimation? In this very complex, very difficult, very risky, very dangerous world, to put it in Bauman's words, both religion and gender become very complex, very difficult, very risky and even very dangerous concepts to deal with.

Gender carries resonances of a broader and much more complex aspect: identity. It is not surprising that for some religious traditions, gender is not an easy question to tackle. Expressions like "gender ideology" or "gender deviance" are never far from certain current religious discourses. Gender is troubling precisely because it deals with identity; and identity has to do with power.

In this book we aim to hear a range of voices that reflect the diverse and reflect the great plurality of cultural views on those aspects that lie at the crossroad be-

tween media, religion and gender. These papers are the outcome of the European Workshop "Gender, Media and Religion" organized by Blanquerna Observatory on Media, Religion and Culture in Barcelona (June 2014) in the framework of the European Riseci Project (Religion in the Shaping of European Cultural Identity). The debate was extremely stimulating, and our desire is to extend this exchange of ideas by means of this volume.

Gendering media, religion and culture: key insights and new challenges

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INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2014 once again uprisings in the Middle-East region have made images of veiled Muslim women a common sight in newspapers and television shows. These images are but one example of how gender has become a core theme when religion is presented in news media but also in popular or entertainment media. This media trope has been followed by an increase in the publication of research articles that focus on not least the coverage of Muslim women in Western news media. However, research that analyzes these events focusing on intersections between media, religion, culture and gender is still in its infancy. This book/special issue is one sign of an increased interest in these issues within research on media and religion. This paper will present some key issues and new challenges for this research area that I learnt from my work with editing the book *Media, Religion and Gender: Key Issues and New Challenges* (Lövheim, 2013a)[1]. Through examples drawn from the chapters in the book I will discuss how using gender as a "lens" can inform our thinking about the interplay between media and religion in contemporary society. Finally I will summarize three key insights and three key challenges that I see that a gendered perspective bring to studies of media and religion.

1. GENDER IN STUDIES OF MEDIA AND RELIGION

The new interest in studying gender as a core dimension of the interplay between media and religion is a recent trend that started around the mid 2000s (cf. Lövheim, 2013c, Sterk, 2010). The increased focus on gender in media representations of religion, in Europe following an increased religious diversity following increased immigration and acceptance of LGBTQ-identities, is one possible explanation. However, I want to argue that it is also due to shifts in the fields of religious studies and media and communication studies: these fields of research that the new area of media, religion and culture once braced against in its formation (cf. Hoover & Lundby, 1997). In the mid 1990's, when this happened, religious studies was undergoing a shift from a focus on religion as institutions and on protestant Christianity toward other forms of lived religion. The critique against the dominance of the seculariza-

tion paradigm voiced by, for example, José Casanova (1994) was in the first years of the new millennium followed by the discourse of a "resurgence" or new visibility of religion (cf. Habermas, 2006; Toft et al., 2011) within studies of religion but also political science and philosophy. Linda Woodhead refutes the claims of a "return of religion" (2012: 27). The "new visibility" is rather a sign of how religion is transforming along with modern society from centralized, religious institutions and hierarchies of leadership to looser forms of association based on small groups, occasional gatherings and festivals. These new forms of religious actors connect with the market regime of neo-liberal political ideologies and consumer capitalism in their focus on supporting individuals in their everyday lives and in the formation of identity and lifestyle. Furthermore, various media play an important part in "linking the likeminded and like-hearted to one another in a vast plurality of different forms of religious alliances" (Woodhead, 2012:27). A further characteristic of the new kind of religious landscape emerging in contemporary North Western European societies that Woodhead points to is that the carriers of the new kind of religiosity are increasingly women (2012: 21, 24).

In media studies the mid 1990s were, not least in the US context, formed by the "culturalist turn" (Hoover, 2002). The critique of transmission models of the media and theories and methods focusing on the "effects" of the media in shaping values and relations implied an emphasis on the complexity of the interpretation of media texts due to the particular contexts of reception, and a focus on media use in everyday life. The awareness of the particular social and cultural context of media consumption opened up possibilities for a gendered analysis not least by introducing methodological perspectives from feminist media studies and post-colonial studies (see Clark & Chiou, 2013). However, few studies have yet gone beyond a descriptive level of gender differences in media use (Lövheim, 2013 c). In recent years the field has been debating claims of the Danish media scholar Stig Hjarvard's (2012: 27) about the mediatization of religion, or how the increased mediation of social and cultural activities through technical media in contemporary society implies "a new social condition in which the power to define and practice religion has changed" (Lövheim 2014). One of the clearest characteristics of this change, Hjarvard argues, is the weakening of institutional forms of religion and the rise of more individualized, bricolage-like forms of religion. However, a gendered analysis of how this shift from religious institutions to popular culture and the media as the prime channels, language and arenas for religion (Hjarvard 2008), can challenge gendered patterns of authority and normative boundaries established by traditional religious discourses is strongly needed.

Finally, the interest in analyzing gender and sexuality in relation to religion and media can be related to how the growth of the area of media, religion and culture studies during the past decades has meant a more interdisciplinary and international character of the field. Not least the emergence of female junior scholars and doctoral students. This growing plurality represents a resource but also a responsibility and a challenge for the field.

Before going further an explanation about my use of the term gender is needed. As a sociologist of religion I start from a basic understanding of gender as a social construct defining the attributes, behavior and roles that are generally associated with men and women. The history of feminist research, however, underlines that

there can be no single or privileged perspective from which to approach these issues. Debates during the last decades show how the category of gender needs to be problematized through addressing differences among women due to age, ethnicity, class and sexuality, as well as including the experiences of men. Nevertheless, some key points in my understanding of research with a gender perspective concerns to problematize and nuance stereotypical understandings of gender in media texts and cultures. Secondly, to highlight and critically analyze, social, cultural and religious structures that assign women and men different positions, value, and agency, and how they contribute to patterns of inequality, domination and oppression. Finally, to look for signs of empowerment, as well as discuss the intersection of gender, ethnicity, class, age and sexuality in the representations, identities and practices studied.

It is also important to mention that, so far, most published research on media and religion from a gender perspective focus on women and draw on feminist theories. The work by Curtis Coats and Stewart Hoover (2013) on how protestant evangelical men reflect on their gender identity through the images of men and masculinity provided in media and popular culture is an example of work that is urgently needed. How Lesbian, Gay, Bi- and Transsexual identities are connected to religion in media representation and how LGBTQ-people use media in constructing identities and meaning are topics that is even more marginal in the arena but crucial to explore further.

2. MEDIATING WOMEN IN RELIGION: THREE THEMES

When looking at mediations of women and religion in media and popular culture one salient theme is the connection of women, religion and virtue or morals. One particular example is the female action figures, heroes that have become more frequent in films, television series and computer games during recent years (cf. Butler & Winston, 2009: 260). Diane Winston (Winston 2013) discusses this issue through an analysis of the character Grace Hanadarko in the tv-series *Saving Grace,* which ran on the cable network TNT July 2007-June 2010. Grace is an Oklahoma City police detective troubled with a history of being repeatedly molested by her parish priest during her preteen years. Her work as a police detective is a way of seeking justice for others (ibid.).

Grace Hanadarko, as the character Trinity in the film *The Matrix* (1999), is a character easy to recognize in contemporary films and tv-series. These female characters illustrate the ambivalence and complexity of how contemporary media represent women. In being an active, capable person on a mission to save the world they, on the one hand, blur traditional gender roles assigned to men and women. On the other hand, they still feature attributes and values that position them, in relation to the "guys", as conventional female heroines: they are usually beautiful, slim, white, sexually attractive, caring, and deeply in love with the male hero.

The character of Grace Hanadarko impersonates the tensions over women, religion and morality in an interesting way: despite her dedication to her work she drinks, smokes, and has unsafe sex with several partners. Yet the series portray her as a spiritual woman who is given a particular calling: after a night of drinking she

hits a pedestrian with her car, and cries out "Dear God, help me". A scruffy, older man appears and presents himself as her guardian angel sent by God to help her, and the rest of the series explores Grace's spiritual path as well as her police cases and relationships. Thus, Winston argues, Grace mixes and blurs the two pre-eminent classifications for women within western Christianity: Madonna and whore.

The strength of Winston's analysis is that she does not stop at analyzing the representation of this female character. She also analyzes how the viewers of the show reacted to her, through an analysis of discussions boards. Television series, Winston argues drawing on anthropologist Elizabeth Bird, is a particularly interesting genre for this theme. TV drama draws on an assumption of faith "although leaving vague the question of exactly in what" (Bird 2009: 25). This "open-ended" religiosity allows viewers to engage with characters and become involved in their lives. And when they do, as Diane Winston's analysis shows, they also come to reflect on and challenge traditional understandings of gender, here femininity, and religion. Winston finds that most viewers treat Grace empathetically. Her sexuality, she writes, is accepted either as an understandable response to her past abuse. If her behavior is problematic it is because it is self-destructive rather than sinful. Winston argues that in removing morality from the discussion, viewers reject traditional religious teachings about women and sexuality, specifically the polarities of Madonna and whore (2013: 164). They accept Grace's spiritual journey and her behavior as a legitimate struggle for respect and self-acceptance.

This kind of study, where gender perspectives is brought into an analysis of how media represents religion and how people interpret this, sheds light on several key issues of how media may transform religion. Characters such as Grace Hanadarko illustrates media's capacity to challenge the ideas and authority of religious institutions, as well as the ways in which people discuss religious issues. But an analysis that focuses on gender also shows how the picture is more complex. As Diane Winston points out, Grace's attractiveness and the open-ended nature of her spiritual quest are characteristics that conform to the commercialization inherent in the entertainment media. What commercial demands will mean for the possibility of alternative representations of gender and religion in commercial media is an open question.

Examples of representations of women in religion through the theme of virtue and sexuality show how media portrayals of religion use and may reproduce traditional religious understandings of women and their place, their legitimate behavior, in religion. It also shows how they may be challenged by and changing when media plays religion in line with other purposes and formats. These have both a potential for invoking critique and reflection on traditional roles but the potential is ambiguous: some values and norms are challenged and changed, while other remains and might be reinforced. Gender as a lens helps us see this mix of traditional and alternative religiously informed gender attributes and roles.

3. WOMEN IN VEILS

Another salient topic in media representations of religion concerns the use of the veil in news media. In her chapter in the book Joyce Smith (2013) shows how women often are represented as victims, or associated with sexuality, personal opinion, emotions and the private or domestic sphere in news coverage of religion. Elisabeth Klaus and Susanne Kassel's (2005) analysis of the representation of gender in news reports on the wars in Afghanistan shows how the veil became a key symbol through the intersection of two "logics" or formats of the media used to present information: a gender logic, with the construction of male and female as a dichotomy, and a logic of war based on a similar dichotomy between perpetrators and victims. The veiling of women was used to show women as mute victims of oppressed by Muslim men, and this portrayal was reinforced by constructing the Taliban as perpetrators and as opponents to the ideals and freedoms of Western civilization. Finally, images of unveiled women following the defeat of the Taliban regime were used as proofs of their liberation and the success of the war, and thereby of the strength of the ideals of western civilization. This kind of analysis sheds light on the complexity of media representations of religion. In this particular case we see how the media stereotyping of women's position in a certain religion also become used for upholding an ideal of the media as guardians of gender equality and individual autonomy as core values of Western culture.

This is, as we know, the regular picture in the representation of Islam in Western news media. But looking though the lens of gender at representations of Islam in media we can also see variety and potential for change. This is not least done in studies of how Muslim women use new digital media. Farida Vis, Liesbet Van Zoonen and Sabina Mihelj (2011) for example studies women's uploaded YouTube video responses to the Dutch filmmaker and politician Gert Wilder's film "Fitna", and saw how that Muslim women there found a platform outside of mainstream media in which they gain a voice and speak with authority to interpret Islam, as well as to criticize stereotypical images of Muslim women as passive, oppressed and silent in these media. An example from my own research is the case of the blog of "Ana-Gina", a Swedish woman in her early twenties with a Palestinian origin (Lövheim, 2012). "Ana-Gina" started her blog in 2009 and has become one of the most famous young female bloggers in Sweden.

In 2011 she hosted her own humor talk show and in 2012 the national schlager festival on Swedish public television. "Ana-Gina's" blog became famous due to her humoristic, provoking videos on prejudices and stereotypes of Muslims and immigrants. This tendency of using irony, parody, and humor as a strategy to handle prejudices they as a religious minority encounter in everyday life about the dress codes and behavior of Muslim women is common also in other young Muslim women's use of social media. Even though these blogs often depict the private life and personal reflections of the blogger, they cannot be categorized as just "private" religion. On the contrary, they often address issues traditionally defined as belonging to the public sphere. "Ana-Gina" commented frequently on experiences of discrimination and issues relating to immigration and Swedish politics in her blog. A recurrent theme was the prescriptions of the Quran and Islamic custom for the behavior of Muslim girls in public spaces, and how these relate to the values and lifestyles of young women in Scandinavia.

In a previous chapter I analyzed the interplay between the blogger and her readers surrounding a post from August 22 2010 entitled "Am I a fake-muslim?" (Lövheim, 2012). The posting concerns an event when another blogger posted an image of "Ana-Gina" wearing a short dress at a dinner for bloggers, and develops

into a discussion about ideals and norms concerning the possibility of living a pious Muslim life while also actively partaking in the social life and culture surrounding young media celebrities. While a few of the commentators maintain that a pious Muslim girl should refrain from events involving alcohol and other "misleading activities", the majority of posters admire Ana-Gina for challenging prejudices and showing that the most important thing for a "modern Muslim" is the personal relationship with God. This negotiation of traditional norms and strictures of Islam by referring to individual choices and opinions shows how social media challenge traditional sources and positions of authority, and emphasize other sources such as personal choice and not least authenticity. To be authentic as a blogger, to follow your own heart, is crucial to ensure legitimacy according to the ideals and norms developing among personal bloggers, where – as pointed out by several previous studies – the personal opinion, intimacy and identification are core themes (Lövheim, 2013e).

Bringing gender into the discussion I argue that keeping to these ideals are even more crucial among female bloggers, and especially those who reach a position of fame and become, as "Ana-Gina", professionals able to live of the advertisements and engagements generated by their blogging. For these bloggers the suspicions of personal gains and pride threaten the connection between in particular female bloggers and readers, which is founded on empathy, intimacy and identification (Lövheim, 2013e).

This example shows how new digital media can provide arenas for women to assert their opinions about religion, often using parody and playfulness, and to find ways to negotiate traditional norms and ideals regarding a pious life-style. Bloggers can also try out new roles of authority as role models for how to live as a Muslim woman in contemporary Swedish society. However, the experiences of Ana-Gina also tell something about the ambiguities of this potential of social media. As we have seen, female bloggers in particular have to negotiate ideals of the majority society and culture of how to be an "authentic" woman, and their privileged position also bring out the influence within new media by the commercial market: Why and with what consequences do certain young women with religious "markers" become popular and famous? Clearly, this is not just an individual but collective process with social and political connotations.

4. VODOU: GLOBAL POLITICS OF MEDIA AND RELIGION

A third salient theme in analysis of women and religion in the media is the representation of "exotic" religious such as Haitian Vodou. Here I draw on the chapter by Andrea Boutros "*Lwa* like me: gender, sexuality and vodou online" (2013) in the volume *Media, Religion and Gender. Key Issues and New Challenges*. Boutros analysis is set against the background of how a non-western religion largely practiced and transferred in non-institutional form like Vodou has become represented in media and popular culture. In these media forms gender and sexuality have been salient themes, such as in the portrayals of rituals of possession. Furthermore, the images of gender and sexuality in Vodou have been constructed around Western fears of miscegenation and the fascination with the primitive and exotic other.

In her chapter Alexandra Boutros looks at the implications of how Haitian Vodou has become increasingly visible in the flows of networked digital communications. She analyzes online discussion forums, listservs and websites devoted to Vodou, and explores how both users and the technological affordances of networked, digital communication re-shape the religion – in particular understandings of gender and sexuality.

When Vodou goes online, Boutros argues, a new kind of dynamic around the Haitian deities (the *lwa*) emerges. Newcomers to the religion, often from Western countries, frequently justify their interest in Vodou by claiming that these deities mirror their own identities and experiences. This can create tensions among participants in the online forum, particularly when newcomers to Vodou emphasize aspects of Haitian Vodou that others may see as inauthentic. One particularly interesting example that Alexandra Boutros discusses concerns the stories and rituals around the deity Ezili Danto. This deity is a particular example of the attraction that Vodou *lwa* hold for newcomers since their stories include ambivalent gender and sexual identities. Ezili Danto is portrayed as a mother, but also called by the term of *madivin*, which could be translated as lesbian.

Some of the newcomers tend to compare Vodou to spiritual traditions such as neo-paganism and Wicca, and focus on the practice as part of a self-perceived spiritual journey. Often dissatisfied with institutional religions they consciously seek what they see as alternative religious or spiritual communities. And the fact that the deities can be read as blurring boundaries between male – female, hetero- and homosexual identities also becomes part of this process. Some individuals can for example justify their understanding of Vodou as tolerant by reading Ezili Danto as a clearly identified and identifiable lesbian. Others interpret her as an example of female empowerment. This, Alexandra Boutros shows, creates tensions for Haitian practitioners of Vodou. Some of them may argue that Vodou *is* a religion that is tolerant of queerness—lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people are, arguably, initiated into all levels of the religion, including as priests and priestesses—but this tolerance does not necessarily negate the stigma generally associated with homosexuality in Haiti.

What Alexandra Boutros analysis of Haitian Vodou online shows is an example of how religion when mediated can become decontextualized and fragmented. Stories, symbols, deities, practices are detached from their context and re-circulated across contexts, and then used in situations and for purposes that suit individual needs and trajectories. In this process certain themes and elements are picked up and used, while others that are more complicated to deal with are downplayed or left out. As Alexandra Boutros explains digital media can undo the hierarchies found in the real-life interactions of Haitian Vodou rituals and communities, but "what is potentially lost as Vodou crosses borders and becomes part of the digital public sphere is an understanding of the cultural specificity of the religion"—the significance which the narratives of Vodou have for Haitians in a particularly Haitian context (2013: 108). When it comes to issues of religion and gender this process may contribute to the challenging of norms and values that regulate and control women's lives or stigmatizes certain gendered and sexual identities. However, as the example of Vodou online shows, it can also mean that stereotypes are re-created and imbalances in power between, in this case, western newcomers and Haitian practitioners, are reinforced.

This example thus shows how bringing gender into an analysis of how various media portray religion, and how mediated interactions around religious symbols and practices may reshape these, bring out aspect of power – power and struggles over the "right" or "legitimate" understanding of a religion, over what is important and true ways of expressing and living one's religion. The analysis of Vodou also brings out how media portrayals and interactions around religion and gender today are globalized or rather glocalized – they do not only take place in a national setting but relate to and are intertwined with international relations such as the historical relations and current tensions between former colonial powers and colonized countries, and between the Western and the Muslim world.

5. THREE KEY INSIGHTS

From the discussion of these three examples of studies analyzing the intersection of media and religion from a gendered perspective three key insights emerge:

- A gendered analysis of media and religion broadens the category of religion to include experiences and expressions by women and other groups marginalized by religious establishments
- A gendered analysis of media and religion enhance a critical analysis of media as a resource for individual meaning making and for handling values and identities mediated through religious institutions as well as the media
- A gendered analysis of media and religion bring out issues of power, both with regard to the empirical realities we analyze and concerning the position of the researcher in relation to a wider social and political context of our research.

Starting with the first issue, a focus on how media portray the religious lives of women directs our attention to the traditionally silent majority of many religious communities, but also to the ways in which religion is lived and practiced beyond the pulpits, the dogmatic battles and the war and terror events that are usually focused in the media. Furthermore, looking for how women throughout history have made use of media shows us that they are not a passive and silent minority. In their contribution to the volume on Media, Religion and Gender, Pamela Klassen and Kathryn Lofton (2013) discuss how women in American Protestantism throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have found ways of expressing their knowledge, experiences and interpretations of religion through media. Examples such as Evangeline Booth of the Salvation Army and the more contemporary television talk show host Oprah Winfrey show how women have played an active part in initiating the use of new media forms with Christianity. Klassen and Lofton argue that there are certain similarities in how Christian women across time and medium have used new media formats, from the printing press to blogs, to articulate their religious experiences. One of the most salient is how women's bodies have played a key role in this mediation, at once as a source for their authority *and* for their exclusion as legitimate witnesses of faith. Another recurrent theme is the interaction between experiences and insights originating from women's personal, everyday life,

the social relations they are involved in, and the wider religion and social context in which they participate. This mode of discourse has been one significant strategy for women to carve out an alternative way of participation in a male dominated mediated public sphere. Klassen and Lofton further argue that there seem to have been an especially "unbound" relationship between women's mediation of their religious self and commercial aspects of mediation. This can be seen as related to women's exclusion from the traditional positions of authority within religious communities, and thus as having a creative and emancipating potential. However, as they point out, the commercial side of this religious mediation also brings in a tension between the testimony as a story about the saving power of God, and the danger of sliding into self-promotion. Thus, looking at how women are mediated brings out how "lived religion", or religion as expressed outside of institutions, is also situated in power structures that shape experiences, subjectivities and social interaction not least with regard to gender.

The second key insight concerns how the use of gender as a lens to look at the interplay between media and religion enhances a critical analysis of media as a resource for individual meaning making. How symbols, values and stories circulated through media play an increasingly important part as resources for the construction of religious identities is a theme well developed in previous studies of media and religion (cf. Hoover 2006). This research emphasizes the agency of individuals and groups to make use of media symbols and narratives to negotiate their relationship to traditional religious discourses. As the examples used in this paper have shown making gender a primary focus in the analysis and enhancing a critical analysis of how this agency is situated and structured. The example of *Saving Grace* and "Ana-Gina" show clearly how material dimensions and their gendered implications do not disappear with digital mediation but rather become even more complicated and contested. The power of traditional (male) authorities to control expressions of gender and sexuality and their implications in terms of inclusion or exclusion from a religious community or from divine grace might be weakened, but norms regulating appropriate gender and sexual behavior still structure these interactions. Not least if we add a commercial dimension and global geo-political dimension. The example of representations of Muslim women in news media and the interactions between Vodou-practitioners in online forum show how historical power relations between Western countries and their former colonies inform conceptions of and boundaries around sexuality and gender as well as the possibilities to negotiate their meaning.

The third and final key issue where gendered perspectives contribute to studies of media and religion concerns the emergence of issues of power; both power relations among the individuals we study but also concerning the position and role of the researcher. As argued by Lynn Schofield Clark and Grace Chiou (2013) the aims of feminist theory and research methods challenge the role of the researcher and participant in traditional research paradigms and also the goals of research as confined to the norms of the scholarly community. Feminist approaches bring out the importance of self-reflexivity on behalf of the researcher and point to new approaches such as participatory, collaborative, and reflexive research. And when we bring gender into our analysis, it is more difficult to refrain from addressing how our research may impact of the wider religious, cultural and political contexts of society.

6. THREE CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

I will end by listing three challenges for future research on media and religion that come out of my experience of working from a gendered perspective. The first challenge concerns the importance and complexities of analyzing the contexts of mediated religion. As contemporary religion cannot so easily be located within the traditional context of religious institutions, the researcher is faced with mapping and tracing individual and sometimes collective trajectories of interacting with religion across several contexts, where media in various forms become central sources of information and arenas for articulating religion. An important question for further research becomes to analyze how these contexts are structured by gender. This is not least important in evaluating if, how and when religion through mediation is "resurging" as a public matter or rather become more private and individualized. Different communicative spheres and genres are not only deemed public or private, but also as "masculine" and "feminine". What does this mean for the articulation of new forms of religious identities in the media? What is the relation between religious identities performed through various media, not least social media, and the theological discourses of various religious communities, or the contexts of face-to-face interaction? A focus on gender can inform our analysis of such intersections between mediated contexts and locally situated religious contexts in contemporary society.

The second challenge concerns how to analyze change in new forms of mediated religion. As I have tried to show is important not to overemphasis the transformations happening through new media and media cultures. The studies I have used here as examples show how attributes, norms and roles that assign women and men different positions, value, and agency remain also the new and complex ways in which religion and gender are being presented in contemporary media. A related challenge concerns a critical reflection on the concepts and theories used for identifying change and agency in the field of media and religion. As researchers drawing on feminist post-colonial perspectives have pointed out (cf. Mahmood, 2005) we need a critical reflection on how much these are saturated by Western ideals of individual choice, bodily self-expression and sexual freedom.

This brings us to the final challenge of how to analyze power in contemporary forms of mediated religion. The complexity of power and agency in new media culture challenges previously used models and theoretical perspectives used to analyze power in media studies as well as feminist studies. On the one hand, changes in the social forms of religion and in media structures from institutional control to a plurality of actors in a "symbolic marketplace" erodes the power of traditional authorities to enforce norms and control expressions of gender and sexuality. On the other hand, neo-liberal political discourses and the rules of the capitalist market introduce new regimes of power. How to analyze the potentials of new digital media for a more broadly dispersed agency with regard to the production, circulation and use of mediated stories of religion is one part of this challenge. Another part concerns how to interpret the potential for agency in uses of parody and play within contemporary media cultures.

Finally, the insights of working with editing a volume on media, religion and gender that I have shared in this paper shows that we have come further on the way toward addressing these crucial issues. I hope that what I have presented of this process here will inspire you to continue this important work.

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Sexual Difference and Transcendence

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INTRODUCTION

For several decades now, born out of the context of the sixties and seventies feminist movements that had a great impact in certain parts of the world, an attempt has and is being made to rethink the world from the perspective of sexual difference.[1]

There is not the scope in this article to go into this history too much. But, to summarize briefly, the philosophy and politics of sexual difference represent an endeavour to rethink the world from the starting point of the undeniable fact of the existence of two sexes. Luce Irigaray was to argue, in her groundbreaking PhD, Speculum, that western culture as passed down to us over the last centuries was predicated overall on the perspective and experience of only one of the sexes, the male one. Not only that, she argued, the dominance of that male-centred inter-pretation of human existence, meant that it took into itself and usurped the *free* meaning of what it signified to inhabit a body that was, to use her terms, *sexuate* in the female.

I will use the term patriarchy to refer to this history – meaning broadly the way in which nearly all cultures that we know of have established and maintained the dominance of one sex over another, often using violence of one kind or another to do this. We have to be clear that this is not an attack upon singular men who, on many occasions and in diverse ways, can also be victims of this system.

In the sixties and seventies, some Italian groups of women, the Milan Women's Bookstore Collective and Diotima, a philosophical community of women based at the University of Verona, and later Duoda, the Women's Research Centre at the University of Barcelona, responded to the challenge put forward by Irigaray and worked to develop notions and practices that might act as vehicles for bringing more strongly into the world the experience and flourishing of *both* sexes, each with their own relationship to history and the divine. The hope is that if both women and men are able to situate themselves in a *sexuate* relationship to their history and experience in life, as well as generating new starting out places for both sexes to give meaning to their existences, the relationship *between* them also has the potential for transformation.

Our modern history of feminism in general has sometimes made it difficult for the radical and transformative potential of these ideas to be understood. In the last centuries, from the period that we generally call the Enlightenment, feminism has been broadly understood to be the battle to be included in a project for human

freedom and democracy that is our modern European legacy and still forms much of the basis of the value systems of how we try to live together in a fraught and rapidly changing world.

We have to note that this modern political, philosophical and social project is rooted above all in a *secular* vision of humanity. Although the development and expression of the Enlightenment has manifested in a myriad of different and diverse ways over the last centuries, I think it is fairly safe to suggest that some of its main strands concern the dominance of reason over emotion, science and technology over religious or "magical" explanations of how our minds and bodies work and so on. We might consider the way in which we have to resort to law, and war, often unsuccessfully and at a great cost, to resolve conflicts that often just go on and on. Might we not at least consider the possibility that, through a different practice of relationships with one another, different results might obtain?

The feminism of the last centuries evolved through a historical period that had been divested of female authority and agency on many levels. The Inquisitions, whilst not only targeting female areas of expertise and authority, without a doubt had done a powerful job of eliminating most of the said areas. Science and developments in medicine signified the disappearance of women from the arenas of childbirth and women's knowledge and care of their own bodies.[2]

Thus, although it is important, indeed, fundamental, to know our feminist history and legacy in the context of this modern world – it *is* our history and our legacy - and not to throw it out, the thinking of sexual difference asks us to consider the idea that some aspects of the modern project for the equality of the sexes may be problematic, because that project was never conceived of or evolved with both the male and female sexual difference in mind.

If the historian Rosalind Miles is right in her powerfully documented *The Women's History of the World*, the last centuries have been particularly repressive for most women across the board. In terms of the perception of women's place and meaning in our shared world, she invites us to consider that the modern, largely secular, world, rather than representing a greater degree of freedom in terms of women's lives, as the western world would often have us believe, has not been such a great time for womankind:

> The devolution of power from Goddess to God, from Queen to King, from Mother to Father, took place in stages, which may be as plainly detected in world mythology as strata in rock. In the first phase, the Great Mother alone is or creates the world; she has casual lovers and many children, but she is primal and supreme. In the second she is described or illustrated as having a consort, who may be her son, little brother or primeval toy-boy; originally very much her junior, he grows in power to become her spouse. At the third stage, the God-King-Spouse rules equally with the Goddess, and the stage is set for her dethronement; finally the Man-God kings it alone, with Goddess, mother and woman, defeated and dispossessed, trapped in a downward spiral which humankind has only recently begun to arrest, let alone reverse (Miles, 1989: 63).

There is a tendency to think, however, in the so-called modern, or post-modern, western world that, as both men and women, we live with unprecedented levels of freedom or potential for freedom. However, perhaps we need to think about that. A secular world will evidently have a different notion of freedom than one that takes a spiritual dimension into account. Modern feminism and its objectives and evolution can be seen to reflect what many might consider rather confusing and not always enriching outcomes of a modern project that has, in the main, discarded God.

The patriarchal influence and nature of pretty much all the religions that we know of, is for many women enough of a reason to forget about God altogether. However, this is problematic if it turns out that we are in fact fundamentally spiritual beings with a need to make sense of our existence through an understanding of and relationship to the divine. Within the modern feminist project then, this has frequently been the source of discussion, dissension, and thought. In the nineteenth century, a period about which relatively little has been passed down, women debated this question, some wishing to abolish religion altogether, others to redefine it with women in a different place. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, for example wrote *The Women's Bible* in 1894-5. Although there is not much scope here to look further into these discussions, it may be that this tension in feminism and women's movements requires further reflection. On the one hand, as suggested before, for many there is no place for God in the modern western world. For others, a great amount of work has been done to find room for women within existing religious traditions – to transform the system from within, as it were. In the UK for example there seems to be a proliferation of women taking up roles in the priesthood since this was made possible. This is not without its paradoxes and contradictions. A recent one observed by this author was that a woman priest for seafarers was referred to as Padre Mandy, that is, Father Mandy! Despite these clear contradictions, there are many for whom there is obviously value in continuing to fight for the right to take on such roles, and who do find scope for transformation within them.

However, there are also women who do not wish to remain in those structures, which undoubtedly continue, to greater or lesser degrees, to reflect a history of male dominance. Some of these women nevertheless continue to seek a relationship with and understanding of God and the divine. I would understand this search as one that desires to develop a new understanding of the divine, of what we/some might conceive of God looking like if thought anew from a sexuate point of view.

If we do wish to retain and cultivate a spiritual and religious life, in my opinion, the need to think and develop a culture or symbolic, which reflects both the male *and female* relationship to God, is urgent. It is a challenge to all of us, women and men, to understand that we carry a historical and cultural baggage that may be blocking us from a more powerful and direct relationship with the divine.

1. IN THE PAST

If we consider that, as in many other areas of feminism, it is important, even fundamental to have strong points of previous reference in order to explore freely and confidently for ourselves what the previously-mentioned Italian women called genealogy, then the tradition of the female mystics might be of great wealth to us. From Hildegard of Bingen, to Margarite de Porete to Teresa of Avila to Julian of Norwich we can see just a few women who gave us signposts of a freer conception of the divine and of their relationship with it.

Unfortunately some of these women came to a rather sticky end, because of their daring and so, today we are faced with the fact that we might wish to be free in this way but not to meet similar ends.

2. IN THE MORE RECENT PAST

In the twentieth century, again we have many women who have opened up paths who also came to not such great ends, in part due to the wars of the first part of the twentieth century. To name just a few, we might think of Simone Weil, María Zambrano, Etty Hillsum, who, despite the circumstances in which they lived and died, nevertheless left us a legacy of writing and extraordinary thought.

In the nineteen sixties and seventies, with the great explosion of female desires for freedom and change a whole new tradition begins. Mary Daly stands out as one of the first thinkers who suggested that the feminist critique of a patriarchal world would lead naturally and logically to the need to rethink the concept of God and the language of religion.3 There are many others. What I would like us to contemplate however is what happens to these women, who may be thinking so freely and radically that they are not fully recognised, and definitely not given much room in our relatively superficial consumer society and systems that continue, some of us might think, to be patriarchal. For example, very few of these women are ever mentioned in mainstream education.

Karen Armstrong is a very interesting thinker on the topic of religion and the meaning of a spiritual life; I would particularly recommend her later autobiographical work, *The Spiral Staircase*, as very informative and interesting. From her first years training to be a nun, her abandonment of that journey, her academic career to her freelance one of writer and thinker about all the world's religions, despite no longer having any personal beliefs of her own, I believe that we find in her a transition perhaps taking place too in other modern day women that has hardly been articulated. This is, in my opinion, a journey undertaken by some women who leave behind religious structures and beliefs and yet, without necessarily using the language of religion, never stop seeking the divine or a relationship with their spiritual dimension. As far as I can see, Karen Armstrong is on a search for transcendence and it would appear that to some degree she finds it although she is tentative in naming it as such.

The tradition that I see forming over the last decades is that of women who, through the modern feminist movements, the formulation of the concept of patriarchy and the need to escape or transform it, and in bringing this to bear on their own particular lives and histories, are many of them trying to get towards an understanding of what God is or could be beyond the patriarchy.

3. LUCE IRIGARAY

Irigaray has worked extensively on this area. Grace Jantzen suggests, interestingly, that many of those committed quite passionately to Irigaray's thought and to making it accessible to non-continental readers partially ignore the extent to which

Irigaray's project is in fact rooted in this quest. This might be to do with the difficulty that we still have in finding a common language or, even any language at all for a conception of the divine that is not tainted at least to some extent by a patriarchal history, thought and practice.

Grace Jantzen is one of very few who has made the connection in language in the English speaking world with the idea of the symbolic. In her work on Julian of Norwich, like others, she glimpsed what we might call a free sexuate relationship with the divine and develops it as such in her book. Through her in-depth knowledge of Irigaray's work (and that of other continental thinkers) and her focus on its mystical dimension, Grace Jantzen formulates a concept that shares similarities with the politics of the symbolic that we will look briefly at now. She refers to "a feminist religious symbolic".

4. THE ITALIANS: TRANSCENDENCE - A STRONG DIMENSION OF THEIR FIRST POLITICAL VISION

One of the most significant initial realisations of the Italian women was that what historically had been referred to as the "Woman Question", implying that women were a *problem* for society, was actually a badly asked question. Perhaps women were not necessarily the problem after all – perhaps it was *society* which was the problem. This turns on its head the historical (male?) assumption that women *fail* in their process of adaptation to the world about them. It is not that women fail to adapt to the world but rather that the world fails women:

> Women are a social problem, the problem which cannot be solved until women on their part pose it as the problem which society is for them; that is, it cannot be solved as long as one goes on thinking and reasoning about women from the socio-historical point of view without ever turning the perspective upside down and putting women, putting ourselves as women, in the position of subjects who rethink history and society, starting with ourselves (Milan Women's Bookstore Collective, 1990: 35).

This can be seen to be a very important point in women's politics, since it transforms the idea that *they* are the political problem and throws back the idea that it is in fact what is *outside* of them that is the political problem. This means that the political point of departure is quite different, since it implies that it is not women who are to be modified but rather that which is outside of them. The political idea that sought only for women to enter the world as it already was came to be considered to be suspect.

As part of the process of coming to understand this and how it therefore challenged the whole idea of what it meant to be political for women, another perception began to emerge – that of transcendence. Changing the world was not only about changing women's material and social situation in the world; it was about freeing the sexual difference of being a woman (and a man) into that world. The Italian women were quick to realise that transcendence was key to this.

Back then, in the sixties and seventies, it was clear to these women that sexual difference was not articulated in the world and that it had become historically something terrible, something that had been inverted and used in the symbolic

order against women, against their own knowledge and experience of being themselves in a world which used their difference, as Luce Irigaray has pointed out, against them. It had become a "negative". These women say:

> Female experience is extraneous because others dictate its meaning according to their own experience, in lieu of the person who lives through it and who therefore finds herself ensnared in it like an animal in a trap. This is a sexual difference which marks the female body without leaving signs, words, reasons, and thus her body itself becomes a trap for her, or part of one. Hence the terrible invitation to "repudiate" a part of her own experience, the part that others have defined and used in order to dominate her (Milan Women's Bookstore, 1990: 37).

This idea makes us think about all of those women in history who were termed as mad, or hysterical, or simply eccentric, and who, to different degrees, often turned their difference against themselves by actually going mad, or committing suicide. We can think of all the cases when a woman was interpreted by the medical profession as ill, or unbalanced, when perhaps she was simply seeking to express her fidelity to her own experience, to what she was within.

Being able to see this operation at work, and the source of the vicious circle (or negative) that it had created in women's lives, that is, the manipulation of sexual difference for ends other than providing the setting out point for their free expression of their experience in the world, led to the Italian women seeing something else. This time it was something positive and attractive, something that was the other side of that repudiation. From traversing the negative in their own experience and that of other women they came to a perception of something that lay on the other side of that experience. They called it transcendence:

> The drastic determination which, when negative, forces one to repudiate experience, when positive calls forth a surprising, precious idea, that of a female "transcendence" (Milan Women's Bookstore, 1990: 37).

I would like to place great emphasis on this idea, and bring it clearly on to the table of contemporary discussion and thought, because, as the same women say, it was one that was born then but that was later lost in the feminist work that took place over the following decades, and my own personal conviction is that it is of great importance that it is not lost. Certainly, for many women involved in different aspects and moments of feminist work the idea of *transcendence* has not been central or necessarily understood as relevant. The thinkers of sexual difference since that time have, many of them, referred constantly to the sense of the infinite, or the divine as a necessary measure for the expression of sexual difference. These are difficult words for us, living as we do in times of rejection of traditional religious language and symbolisation.

The issue of the rejection of the word and ideas of feminism is even more salient now with generations of younger women who have relatively little awareness of or concern for the feminist history that has enabled them to live in such radically different ways to their grandmothers and great grandmothers.

Particular examples of the tension between a search for genuine freedom and the feminist ideals of the same led this author to a long in-depth study of the

Spanish writer, Carmen Martín Gaite. In my case, I came to understand that she had inspired me so greatly and taught me so much precisely because throughout her life and work she was seeking transcendence. To be true to herself and her experience in the world and her own definition of what freedom was. In her writing this is expressed over and over again in different ways. She rejected the feminism of her culture and time because she felt it to be prescriptive and dogmatic, which, in her particular context and history, it may well have been up to a point. Likewise Doris Lessing considered our modern world to be in such a state of crisis that the feminist movement and its aims would seem relatively insignificant, as she explains in a later preface to *The Golden Notebook*.

To put it in the most basic terms: we can seek to guarantee formal equality and rights for women, in law and in material aspects, and this is no doubt of great importance, but, without a notion of transcendence, things become complicated, since human beings appear to need it. The Milanese women say, and I think this is an important point to reflect on now:

> The act of female transcendence is missing in human culture as well as in women's freedom - that extra act of existence that we can acquire by symbolically surpassing the limits of individual experience and of natural living (Milan Women's Bookstore, 1990: 39).

The principle of transcendence, then, might be a necessary principle of women's freedom (and presumably the same is true for men, but it is not my place to speak for men). I think we need to ask ourselves if this has been sustained in women's movements, and what the cost of that not being so might have been. For the women of the Milan Women's Bookstore, the relationship between transcendence and women's freedom is clear. In their opinion the feminist movement that developed lost the idea of transcendence to a great extent and thus lost part of the principle from where freedom can come into being. They say:

> In the 70's, with the widespread growth of collective political consciousness, the idea of transcendence disappears from the frame, with the result that the other two terms (i.e., the desire to be free and the will to exist) also lose part of their semantic power. The development of a consciousness was, above all, in the sense of a consciousness of oppression, and on this basis the first identification with the oppressed female gender was carried out. Thus acquired, this new consciousness was not immediately consciousness of the self in a constitutive relationship with the world without any limits preset by nature or society. The scope of the liberty desired shrank correspondingly (Milan Women's Bookstore, 1990: 39).

That is, when the idea of transcendence became smaller, or even lost, in women's movements, so too in many ways did the capacity for human growth and freedom.

5. LUISA MURARO

Luisa Muraro suggests that transcendence and women's capacity for it and practice of it is something that is missing from the politics of emancipatory feminism, and

this is very important. It changes and challenges our versions of feminist history and asks us to be careful not to assume oppression in all circumstances. It changes the paradigm from which we measure freedom, both female and male.

What seemed suggestive to her, and we might consider that it is this perception that puts in motion the entire concept of the politics of the symbolic, was the potential to effect an operation of understanding that changed the very history, in the case she was dealing with at the time, of the witch hunt and how it was interpreted. She says:

> I was far more interested in what I had seen take place with feminism: which was that the mass cancelation of the women of human history was not irreversible. Something was reversible, and it came to me that, from the victims of the witch hunt, it was possible to make protagonists. As we did in the consciousness-raising groups: one woman had lived through something painful in darkness, now she told it to the other, we all listened to her, and the experience that had been cancelled took on an echo again because we were listening (Muraro, 2006: 33).

This was not a question only of returning a sense of subject-hood to those persecuted, at least through changing the historical perspective of them as not only victims but also significant actors in their own historical moment, although this is also implicit. This in itself was an important realisation of the feminist movement, especially amongst historians and literary critics, enabling as it did a new reading of the past which simultaneously had the potential to fire the women of the present with new understanding and passion for how the future could be different.

The women of those years did not tend to talk or write of themselves as seeking transcendence.4 Luisa Muraro goes a little further however, on this point, as she starts to name the dimension of the symbolic, and to understand that it is this upon which a new political point of departure might turn. As she starts to research through the history of the witches, she begins to understand that, although the brutality visited on the persecuted women was atrocious and this was very evident as she trawled through the documents, the human need is also there to seek what she calls symbolic existence, and this is a constant, whatever the degree of barbarity to which a human being might be subjected.

This idea of symbolic existence is something that we might relate to the notion of transcendence, the idea being that, however awful life might be, there is a human capacity to go beyond the suffering that seems to prevail. This is what Luisa Muraro discovered. Writing of the women persecuted as supposed witches, she explains:

> The underlying intuition is that these women were saying something that had to do with their culture. The idea behind it is that a human being, despite being crushed, within certain limits always seeks symbolic existence. I attributed to them, and I made for them, what I saw was taking place amongst us: the search for symbolic existence (Muraro, 2006: 33).

In her more recent book, *The God of Women*,5 Luisa Muraro goes much further into her exploration of this subject and it is clear that she, along with other theologians and/or philosophers, is opening up or going deeper into an area of thought and experience that we, and contemporary feminist thinking, may ignore at our peril.

CONCLUSIONS

The modern feminist movement, arguably one of the strongest social movements of the last couple of centuries, shows to us a history that has been and is very ambivalent about God. One of the difficulties of speaking of the divine, or God, when coming out of a patriarchal history is that many do not want to hear about God or religion at all, as Grace Jantzen explains in her introduction to *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion*. However, as we have seen, there are many women who do not want to relinquish this dimension of life.

Faced with the choice of fighting to participate in religious structures and hierarchies, many women do seek to find themselves a place there. There are many contradictions, however, in doing this and it is potentially quite exhausting since we might point to quite deep underlying tensions that are not easy to resolve within the already existing structures.

Some of those that do not, or cannot, remain there, are, as I have tried to show, seeking to sustain and name their own relationship with the divine. The thinking of sexual difference, in the daring freedom it has taken on to rethink the entire world from its perspective, allows us rein too to explore and invent freely, leaving behind that which frustrates and limits us.

Notes

1 This article, inspired by the invitation of Miriam Diez Bosch to speak and participate at a seminar in Barcelona in June 2014 at the Blanquerna Observatory on women and religion, is intended only as a suggestion that, whilst we may have moved forward in many aspects, there remain important questions in relation to the subject matter of the seminar, worked on for decades by those far more knowledgeable than myself. The article seeks to act as a pointer to this work and the need for more of it.

2 See, for example, Montserrat Cabre and Teresa Ortiz (editors), 2001, *Sanadoras, matronas y medicas en Europa: Siglos XII – XX*, Barcelona: Icaria.

3 *See Beyond God the Father* and her other work.

4 The realm of transcendence and all that it might entail is so great that it is not possible to enter into it too deeply here, since it is clearly a wide reaching subject. However, it is important to take note of that there is an important and fundamental relationship between the thinking of sexual difference, the politics of the symbolic and the notion and experience of transcendence.

5 *Il dio delle donne* (2003), Milan, Mondadori.

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God the Father and Christ's masculinity in the Male Question

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INTRODUCTION: THE ENTRY OF WOMEN IN THEOLOGY

T he entry of women in theological reflections has brought with it, among other aspects, a critique of the discourse regarding God the "Father"[1] in the search for a more inclusive language for the experience of God[2]. Feminist theology has accused the use of the masculine names of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as justifying the idea of a male God ("two males and an amorphous third") with the consequent legitimation of the androcentric system in social and ecclesiastical structures. M. Daly summarizes the charge against the ideology of a "male" God which would endorse a deification of masculinity, in turn reinforcing a completely masculine hierarchy, with the following phrase: "If God is male, then the male is God" [3].

It has in fact been shown that an image of God is not without impact in our manner of conceiving man and social relations, including gender relations and ethics[4]. The words reveal the manner in which we think and this also determines our action. As such, exclusively expressing masculinity risks justifying a world which excludes women[5]. A deification of masculinity in turn legitimates an androcentric system.

We must recognize that the Judeo-Christian tradition is polarized in its imagining of God expressed as male. Upon close inspection, most of the texts of the Old Testament which present God as a male are not interested in masculinity: God appears amiably above all when he speaks face to face with Moses "as one speaks with a friend" (Ex 33,11); God is not therefore only a father, but is described as an aristocrat who traverses his estate (Gen 3,8), as a messenger, as a king (around 50 texts). The king, in most cases, serves to protect and provide safekeeping: the king protects the people and guarantees them peace. God is described as a husband or a lover, but also as a lord (which in Hebrew is said with the same word, *baal*); this image categorically speaks of the era rather than the relationship and the passion of God for the people, and it is not principally linked to the fact that God is worshiped as a male.

One wonders, however, if the Bible's attribution of masculinity to God completely *prevents* integrating femininity into the theological discourse[6]. The rediscovery and study of the many feminine images that the Bible uses to speak of God answers this in the negative.

It is in fact taught that God has no sex and therefore that the male is not God.

The *Catechism* of the Catholic Church affirms in no. 370: "In no way is God in man's image. He is neither man nor woman. God is pure spirit in which there is no place for the difference between the sexes. But the respective 'perfections' of man and woman reflect something of the infinite perfection of God: those of a mother and those of a father and husband".

All this, however, remains a purely theoretical issue. In fact it is significant that if one tries to use the feminine noun "goddess" there is a certain feeling of discomfort. This discomfort may be indicative of the fact that we are in the grip of an uncritical assumption between God and masculinity[7]. The more that this connection works implicitly, the more we are prey to an ideology. Thomas of Aquinas further affirmed that *all* the forms to indicate God are metaphors (*S.Th*. i,12-13).

One may therefore wonder if the theological imagery has remained the same or if it has not become an idol in our religious unconscious self. Religious symbolism, as Paul Tillich explains, functions strongly in two directions: on God and on humanity[8]. As such, on the one hand, the mystery of God is limited not only to humanity but to a partial aspect of it, in a way that can only be called idolatrous; on the other hand, the symbol that has been created through which God is represented has become a "theonym", and thereby assumes a sacred character. As a consequence, although it is affirmed that God has no sex, masculinity arrives in a reified manner.

In the same biblical imagery applied to God, both parental roles are applied to God *via eminentiae* and in fact bring with them true and complete ruptures of gender roles. Shortly we will provide some examples.

1. GOD THE FATHER AND MASCULINITY IN GOD

From the moment that God has no sex, when we speak of the masculinity and feminity in/of God, we do not use the category of sex, but rather one of gender. That is, we interpret God according to the characteristics of the sexual roles which have historically emerged in a society. It follows that these roles have been conditioned by the culture of reference. One must therefore wonder what one intends by God when God is called male, that is what masculinity connotes in this case and which values are stereotypically attributed to it.

Normally, God is associated with concepts of activity, strength, self-hood, autonomy and independence (when not also a lack of emotion, violence and cruelty). If masculinity means these characteristics, then we must say that the link between the Biblical God and masculinity is far from strong.

Now that we know that God is also described with stereotypically feminine features such as compassion, tenderness, care etc. it would also be appropriate to wonder if characteristics such as these in fact belong to the female sex or whether or not they belong in general to the human capacity to be a *person*, whether man or woman? On the other hand, is it true that strength, rationality and dominion are solely masculine characteristics?

2. THEOMORPHIC FEMININITY

The Bible is truly the product of an androcentric culture, in which the principal metaphors to speak of God are naturally those coming from the male experience: father, warrior, jealous husband, king, etc. C. Geffré affirms that the Bible hesitates to designate God as father, a designation which however would be more prevalent in the Ancient East; rather God is called King or Lord, or spelled with the Tetragrammaton[9]. Even Römer supports the idea of the obviousness of the male descriptions of God in the OT, reminding that the Judaism of the Persian age was dominated by priests and scribes: these were the people who transmitted the Jewish Bible and they were certainly all men[10].

On the other hand, when women started to read and to deepen the knowledge of Biblical texts they became more sensitive to welcoming topics closer to their own experiences, making it so that in the Old Testament God is also spoken of with feminine images. This approach has led feminist exegesis to reveal some thematic lines which can be summarized as:

- the line of *ruah*, a feminine term in Hebrew, whose functions are also associated with feminine metaphors (nursing, creating space, giving life etc., Gen 1,1). This also encompasses the topic of *shekinah*, especially developed by rabbinic literature. Its etymological roots ("dwell") indicate the presence of God in the world, God's inhabitation with the world. In the Christian field, *ruah* later becomes linked to the functions of the Holy Spirit (Lk 3,22; Jn 3,5-6) and later of the Church and Mary.
- the terminological line of womb (*rehem*) through which God has loved as a woman, as a mother, with God having expressed his mercy through the womb (*rahamim*). The reference texts are: Hos 11; Ps 139 [138], 13; Deut 1,31; 32,18; *Numbers*, 11,2; Isa 1,2; 40; 42,14; 44,2.24; 45,10: 46,3; 49, 14-15.21; 63,9; 66,13; Ps 27,10; 110,3; Jer 2,27; 31,20; *Job*, 38,28-29;
- there has also been the entire research line which has rediscovered the imagery of Wisdom in the OT (Job 28; Wis 7,24-27; 8,2; Prov 1, 20-33; 8,2-16,22,30; 24; Sir 51; *Baruc*, 3,37) with its connections to the ancient sapiential Christology (cfr. 1Cor 24-26): Christ as Logos is identified with Wisdom (Lk 7,35; Mt 22,8; Jn 1; Col 1, Heb 1,2-3). He therefore has feminine traits, although Wisdom from the Old Testament does not in fact include descriptions which are stereotypically feminine (it says that Wisdom preaches, plays, is omnipotent, has authority, orders, guides, etc.). This biblical figure is interesting because if God, as Wisdom, is feminine, man must now search for God-Wisdom, as the philosophers sought the Truth, that is as a wife (cfr. *supra, par.* 4.5.3). Man is the lover of the truth and is in love with God. In addition to the erotic aspects of this experience (Prov 8, 17.30 ff.; 3,18), the metaphor implies that man is the husband and God the bride (Prov 8,2-7). This metaphor is as valid as the metaphor of God as Husband and the People as wife, although the latter in the course of theological history has assumed great social, ecclesiastical and symbolic importance. Jesus himself compares the reign of God (*basileia* in Greek is a feminine term) to the woman who seeks lost coins (Mt 13,33; 23,37; Lk 15,8-10). It is

revealed that this feminine aspect is not complementary to another aspect. Women are whole, that is, as the parable of sower or the many other narrations made by Jesus imply, the male or the female are complete images to speak of the Kingdom of God. They are not only a part which must be integrated by the sexual counterpart, an operation which never occurs among the other masculine images, as if they were complete in and of themselves or had integrated the female[11].

In fact, we should remember that as early as the 9th century, Agobard of Lyon reminded that Christ in the Bible is called *domina*, *mater*, and with many other feminine "titles": *virtus*, *sapientia*, *fortitudo*, *gloria*, *resurrectio*, *vita*, *via*, *veritas*, *inluminatio*, *salus*[12].

3. DE UTERO PATRIS

It has been shown that the use of the word "father" in the OT is connected not so much to images of patriarchal authority, but rather to values of care and helping, traditionally considered to be feminine. Going beyond assigning a certain subjectivity based on the binary male and female module, M. Althaus-Reid has shown how a "Queer God" allows this heralded transcendence to have meaning in a human being in transformation[13].

God is much more similar to the mother of whom Isaiah speaks, whose features are usually (and stereotypically) associated with women. The God of the OT is a God who gives birth (Dt 32,18): the verb *holel* means "to give birth with pain" (cfr. Ps 29,9; Is 51,2) but it is wedded to masculinity, which is almost to say that God transgresses the rules of common human birth. As Römer noted, it is clear that God here is not limited to the male: God creates the earth as through birth (Ps 90,2) and the metaphor of God who *carries* the people like a mother who carries a child in the womb is clear in the *Book of Numbers*, 11,12-15[14].

The idea of a creation *de utero patris,* variously professed by the fathers of the Church, is probably elaborated on the basis of Ps 110,3 and Jn 1,18,[15] and supported by anti-Arian controversies:

This creation is ineffable, albeit derived from the Father's womb: this is the meaning, because God created God through itself, that is out of God's own substance, just as when man procreates man from the mother's womb[16].

Dogmatically this concept, useful to describe the intra-Trinitarian relationships, intends to express that the Only-begotten son of God, born and generated from the Father, involves his consubstantiality. Once again this is a way of thinking about motherhood which emphasizes the bond and the continuity of nature. Even the 11th Council of Toledo, based on anti-Adoptionist positions, attributed a womb to the Father.[17] Moltmann saw in this expression of the Council a way to overcome the sexist language in the discourse about God. However, for some feminists, the fact that God is attributed a womb still does not signify in itself an appreciation of the female in God.

On the contrary, the fact that it deals with a divine womb and not a divine penis would be a way to doubly relativize feminine sexuality or to attribute to masculinity an absence of corporeality, deemed more suitable for God. Magdalene L. Frettlöh

hypothesizes that the ancient physiological conception of female genital morphology as being fundamentally identical to the male genitalia, but inside the body (from Aristotle and later Nemesius of Emesa, the womb was considered an internal penis) – could be the reason in having allowed God the Father to be endowed with a womb. The significance would go in the direction of an intra-Trinitarian creation (cfr. *logos endiathetos*). However, implying a God with a womb would not be proof of non-sexist language, much less of a feminine image applied to God, who remains masculine. Concluding, it is sufficient here to reveal that the significance of this metaphor emerges at the historical level as part of anti-Arianism.

The Trinitarian God is a God who lives in the believers. In the Spirit this typical cohabitation has the features of maternal gestation (cfr. Jn 14 ff.). This Trinitarian cohabitation has its primary analogy in the maternal body. Even Paul in his discourse in Areopagus refers to God as a womb, for "in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17,28). From this point of view, for example, one always reflects too little on the fact that women have the only human bodies capable of having another body live within them: a typically divine trait (of all the Trinity and therefore a "common" trait for divinity).

4. JESUS' FATHER

The God of Jesus, although he is called "father", has little of the patriarchal role of the father which would legitimate a sexist system and also presents traits that we would define as maternal.[18] Jesus' God is a caring father who solely promotes relationships of solidarity and reciprocal service between brothers and sisters (Mt 23,8-12). We must also add to this a reflection on the value of calling God "the Father" from a male's perspective. Some feminist theologians affirm that there are also many other things that Jesus said and did and that today are not binding for us: for example, he commanded us not to call anyone "father" on earth (Mt 23,9)[19].

Another reason, contributed to defending the exclusivity of the title of father for God, is that the Christian and Biblical idea of God the Father better preserves the transcendence of God and his loving and creative will, compared with the image of the mother. This point would be for many a fundamental reason to ascribe masculinity to the first divine Person[20]. The concept of a maternal or feminine God would imply in fact the idea of an immanent God that does not respond to the Judeo-Christian tradition: it would in fact be a fusion in this conception of God which would introduce a sort of pantheism, inadmissible to Christianity[21].

On this point the responses are varied: above all, the idea that the transcendence of God should be represented from a model of an absentee father is theologically incorrect and sociologically outdated. On the other hand, the process of motherhood is not only the biological aspect of the nine months in the womb; any mother who does not smother the child is a mother by that reasoning, but rather when the child is born in fact, that is, when the child detaches itself. It is no coincidence also that Jesus' mother arrives at the fullness of her motherhood under the cross, when the child detaches himself from her, entrusting her to the disciples[22].

Massimo Recalcati writes: "The task of the family bond in human terms [...] is not only in protecting and allowing life to grow but also in making life's humanity

effective. More than expressing a natural order of things, the family is structured on the emancipation from nature [...] because the biological presence of genetic inheritance is not sufficient for the family bond as, for example, it is not true that the sperm determines what a father is. This means that the family bond does not derive from the blood, but from a symbolic act which assumes all the consequences of a biological event such as a birth [...]. An act that instills upon a biological event – the birth of a life – the characteristic of a human event" [23].

The OT describes the motherhood of God in images which indicate the stages of maternal experience: this begins with gestation but it concludes with the child's independence[24]. In short, why should fatherhood be valued with humanizing and symbolic significance (transcendence and not, for example, only the fusion of gametes), while motherhood should solely maintain biological connotations? If motherhood is as described above, what would distinguish human motherhood from birth in the animal world?

The charge that a maternal terminology applied to God would imply an imma-nent and pantheist concept to God misunderstands women's experience with motherhood.

Furthermore, Jesus appears as a child who is special, not being inferior but equal (*homoousios*) to the father (Cfr. Jn 10,9).

5. THE MASCULINITY OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

Feminist reflection has shown how ancient culture had considered virility as the perfection and completeness of humanity, to the detriment of women. This concep-tion has been called *androcentrism*. Johnson affirms that Jesus had to be male for his message of compassionate service to be effective: "From a social position of male privilege Jesus preached and acted this way, and here lies the summons". According to the noted theologian, this deals with a function of the *kenosis* of the patriarchy itself: the emptying of the dominant male power in favor of the new humanity characterized by reciprocal service. It should be added that, by accepting *only one* of the two sexes, the Logos has assumed humanity in all the consequences derived from this *kenosis*, that is also the *partiality* of the sexualized human being.

The New Testament does not seem to have had great interest in Christ's masculin-ity with regards to its character of *sex*; the same can be said for the theologians of the first millennium, who insisted on his masculinity in its gender value (as the *head*).

Against the idea of the stoic sage and victorious male, Jesus on the other hand wept for the death of a friend, was angered by the traders in the temple and was afraid of death, even sweating blood. Against a phallic construction of gender, he renounces sexual affirmation through having a lineage, against a masculinity of male hegemony he lives and preaches a condition of "servitude", he recognizes the desire of subjects other than himself, including women, and places himself at their service ("What do you want me to do for you?"). Against the myth of masculine self-sufficiency, he promotes a fatherly and brotherly relationship; against the myth of self-affirmation he proposes and teaches obedience and clemency (Mt 11,29).

His incarnation can even be read as an ideal contrary to the idea of emancipa-tion from the body and from the typical emotions of a certain construction of the male (cfr. Heb 10,5; Jn 1). In general the *kenosis* which is spoken of in Phil 2,6ff can be seen as dismantling the "phallic" model of masculinity.

Excessive emphasis on the bond between the incarnation and Jesus Christ's masculinity risks falling into the affirmation that Christ could not have saved women, according to the adage that "what has not been assumed has not been healed" Instead, the Church has always baptized women and has never been in doubt on this point. In a rather drastic way, Ruether arrives to confirm that if women cannot represent Christ, then Christ cannot represent them either and in reality he had not redeemed them.

We must therefore affirm the inclusive, not exclusive, masculinity of Jesus with regards to women: this is the way in which Christ has assumed "all of *human nature* within him", proposing once the argumentation that Augustine applied to Eph 4,13 and understanding *vir* as *homo*. The reflection is already found developed in Anselm:

How will someone who does not yet understand how several men are one man in species be able to comprehend how in that highest and most mysterious Nature several persons—each one of whom, distinctly, is perfect God—are one God? [...]. Finally, someone who cannot understand a human being to be anything except an individual shall not at all understand a human being to be anything except a human person. For every individual man is a person. How, then, shall he be able to understand that a humanity [homo], though not a person, was assumed by the Word? That is, another nature but not another person was assumed[25].

In God, the *homo* is therefore assumed, in fact in Christ, the Person remains as something divine. Even the formulas of the symbols of the faith do not confess that Christ is in fact *vir*, but is rather *homo*.

The problem of Jesus' masculinity must then respond to two questions:

- if this were to reveal also the masculinity of God it transmits a double con-nection: the ontological connection of God to Logos-[male] and from that Logos-[male?] connection which reveals a possible masculinity of God. Yet, there are bodily similarities such as those between brother and sister, or between daughter and father, or mother and son, which do not imply that the two beings have the same sex;
- if Jesus' masculinity implies that masculinity is normative for human beings and therefore that masculinity is the only one capable of representing God (it would be that masculinity is totally created in the image of God, while women do not fully represent in themselves the image of God). Feminist theologians claim that this method of thinking is *androcentric*, the perfect human retains only the male and not the female.

Saint Thomas for example, on the basis of faulty biology borrowed from Aristotle, claimed that Jesus was male because only the male contained the entirety of human nature. Therefore only the male represented in himself the entire human race, while woman represented only the female sex and above all could not repre-sent God (his masculinity?). Additionally, the idea that masculinity includes femi-ninity and not the contrary is found in arguments for the male (Christ) as head of the female (the Church). This idea today is no longer sustainable based on the Catholic anthropology from the Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*[26].

In theological discourse, Christ's masculinity cannot be used in any way to install a male sexuality into divinity, nor can it justify a sexist discourse placing women at the bottom of an androcentric anthropology, nor can it be used to reinforce a patriarchal image of God. Rather Christ's masculinity is proposed as an aspect of the partiality and emptiness (*kenosis*) that he had assumed, by assuming human nature.

Christ's masculinity does not affirm the masculinity of God nor does it add value to masculine humanity over feminine humanity. We in fact know that masculinity is not the only sexuality for theomorphic beings (cfr. Gen 1,26-27).

The historical action of the male Jesus was therefore inclusive of women: he placed them among the disciples (Lk 8,1-3) and he made them witnesses of his Resurrection and the Gospel (Mk 16; Lk 24; Mt 28; Jn 20; 1Cor 15,6).

The hypostatic union is between divinity and Logos, not between divinity and masculinity. His masculinity is not a constituent aspect of the Mediator. Traditional information affirms that the union is between the two natures in the person of the Logos and not in Jesus' human (and therefore sexualized) being: Jesus' masculinity, therefore, does not seem to be a constituent part of him *as* the mediator.

Johnson highlights that the Chalcedonian dogma based on that which is called human (therefore also masculine) nature and divine nature (Logos) in Christ are united "without confusion or change". As such the masculinity of human nature does not filter the divine nature and therefore much less could it filter God (Ivi, p. 305).

What does Jesus' masculinity then not do? It does not undermine a masculinity in God. It does not justify a sexist discourse. It does not reinforce a patriarchal idea of God. It does not endorse masculinity as violent, victorious, exclusive, solitary, solipsistic, and impassible.

The God-Father that Jesus reveals instead breaks down the stereotypical model of patriarchal and hierarchical fatherhood. The mode in which Jesus experienced his masculinity constitutes a critique of androcentric masculinity and instead supports a possible communion of the Church, society and gender relations.

The masculinity of Jesus can even be a point of contrast and reconsideration for the new forms of constructing masculinity compared to the ones that we currently assume and gives space for everyone of all walks of life who wish to reflect on this.

Notes

1 S. McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, Fortress, Philadelphia (PA) 1982; R. R. Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*, Beacon, Boston (MA) 1983.

2 I have dealt with this argument, which I reformulate and deepen here, within the more global context of the discourse of the category of gender in theology, cfr. *Al di là del genio femminile. Donne e genere nella storia della teologia cristiana*, Carocci, Rome 2014.

3 M. Daly, *Al di là di Dio Padre. Verso una filosofia della liberazione delle donne* (1973), Editori Riuniti, Roma 1990, p. 27.

4 Cfr. Johnson, *Colei che è* cit., pp. 82-7, with an extensive bibliography.

5 S. McFague, *Modelli di Dio. Teologia per un'era nucleare ecologica*, Claudiana, Torino 1998, pp. 40-73. Cfr. also Johnson, *Colei che è*, cit., pp. 16-21, 41-92.

6 Cfr. T. Römer, *I lati oscuri di Dio. Crudeltà e violenza nell'Antico Testamento*, Claudiana, Torino 2002, p. 26.

7 E. A. Johnson, *The Incomprehensibility of God and the Image of God Male and Female*, "Theological Studies", 45, 1984, pp. 441-65. I. Gómez-Acebo, *Dio è anche madre. Riflessioni*

sull'Antico Testamento, San Paolo, Milano 1996, p. 12.

8 P. Tillich, *Teologia sistematica*, I. *Religione e Rivelazione. L'essere di Dio*, Claudiana, Torino 1996, p. 275, in Johnson, *Colei che è*, cit., p. 84.

9 Cfr. "Father" as God's proper name, in "Concilium", 3, 1981, pp. 72-85.

10 Cfr. *I lati oscuri*, cit., p. 25.

11 Johnson, *The Incomprehensibility*, cit., p. 461.

12 Cfr. *De modo regiminis ecclesiastici*, IV (Corpus Christianorum continuatio mediaevalis, 52).

13 Cfr. M. Althaus-Reid, *Il Dio queer*, Claudiana Editrice, Torino 2014.

14 For a summary of the texts on God the mother in the OT, cfr. Gómez-Acebo, *Dio è anche madre*.

15 *Gaster*; *kolpos*; cfr. Ilario, *De Trinitate*, vi,16; Eusebio di Cesarea, *Demonstrio evangelica*, iv,15; Atanasio, *Adversus Arianos*, iv,27; Basilio, *Contra Eunomium*, 353; Ambrogio, *De fide*, 4,10,132; cfr. P. M. Collins, *Constructing Masculinity:* De Utero Patris *(from the Womb of the Father)*, in "Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality", 4, 2010, 2, pp. 82-96, here p. 84, in http://www.jmmsweb.org/issues/volume4/number2/pp82-96; Fulgenzio di Ruspe, *Respons.* (*Clavis Patrum Latinorum*, 815: *Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina*, 91, pp. 88, 698-90, 747), cfr. T. Hainthaler, *God the Father in the Symbols of Toledo: Fons et origo totius trinitatis*, in "International Journal of Orthodox Theology", 1, 2010, 1, pp. 125-36. Also Dionigi Areopagita, *Ep*. ix,1, 1104C e 1105A.

16 Augustinus, *Contra Maximum*, I,7.

17 11th Council of Toledo (675), cfr. J. D. Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (referred to hereinafter as Denzinger), curated by P. Hünermann, edb, Bologna 2012, doc. 526.

18 Johnson, *Colei che è*, cit., p. 321; R. Ruether, *The Liberation of Christology from Patriarchy*, in A. Loades (ed.), *Feminist Theology: A Reader*, spck, London 1990, pp. 146-7.

19 Additionally he predicts the return of the Kingdom of God; he commands us to remember together at his death the gesture of the woman who anointed him (Mc 14,9), cfr. Johnson, *Colei che è*, cit., pp. 164-5.

20 D. T. Williams, *Gender in the Trinity*, in "Journal of Theology for Southern Africa", 106, 2000, pp. 51-9, here pp. 54-5.

21 This is the position of the Freudian psychologist T. Anatrella in *Psicologia delle religioni della madre*, in "Parola, Spirito e Vita", 39, 1999, 1, pp. 273-85.

22 Cfr. Gómez-Acebo, *Dio è anche madre*, cit., p. 13.

23 *Cosa resta del padre? La paternità nell'epoca ipermoderna*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano 2011, pp. 88-9.

24 Cfr. Gómez-Acebo, *Dio è anche madre*, cit., p. 13.

25 *On the incarnation of the Word*, i,1.

26 I have dealt with this in my *Al di là del genio femminile*.

Witches, Bitches and Princesses—Gendered Ritualizations around Mediated Death

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INTRODUCTION: RITUALIZING PUBLIC DEATH IN THE MEDIA

This article examines the ritual performance of death in and via the media. Special emphasis is placed on high-profile female death and the related symbolic communication[1]. This article begins with the premise that contemporary media, ranging from mainstream to social media, impacts our understanding of death, shape how we perceive it, and manage it individually and collectively. According to Hanusch (2010, 3), media affects what we consider to be normal or exceptional death and whose death we find important and worth mourning publicly (see also Sumiala, 2013; 2014a).

A debate on ritual suggests the need for a more detailed examination of the interplay between media and death. In this article, I refer to mediated death rituals as recurring and patterned forms of symbolic communication that cause us, through media-related performance, to attach ourselves to the questions related to the end of (female) life and its cultural and social consequences (cf. Sumiala, 2013). I argue that mediated death rituals make gendered boundaries and structures visible, for example, those in which suffering and loss of female life causes public ritualization and related identification with as a society (see, for example, Seaton, 2005).

Drawing on a seminal work of Judith Butler (1990), gender is perceived in this article not as a universal biological category, but as a historically, culturally, and socially constructed performative practice. Gender is approached as enacted in death ritual practices and related symbols, in norms and discourses structuring the interpretation of these practices and symbols, and social institutions formed around these interpretations (see also Lövheim, 2013, 156). Special focus is given to the narrative and visual performances of epithets that are historically associated with female lives such as 'daughter', 'woman', 'wife', or 'mother'. Historically speaking, the cultural narratives around these epithets have been profoundly shaped by mythical and religious writings associated with the role and place of women in community and society. In her widely influential book *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas (1966/2002) introduces the idea of 'pollution' as a fundamental factor that structures and organizes the social and cultural hierarchies between males and females. Douglas writes (2002, 4),

I suggest that many ideas about sexual dangers are better interpreted as symbols of the relation between parts of the society, as mirroring designs of hierarchy or symmetry which apply in the larger social system.

To follow Mary Douglas' (2002) insight, typical of these classifications is the construction of femininity around certain hierarchical and binary structures such as pure and impure, good and evil, innocent and deceitful woman, which is also known as the 'Madonna and Whore' syndrome, if you will (see e.g. Koivunen, 1994). A key to Douglas' thinking is that the boundaries between different elements in these hierarchies, such as pure and impure, need to be kept in order, otherwise there may be a danger (e.g. pollution) for a social order.

Zygmunt Bauman (1992) argues that only the representation of death can be approached, not death itself. Therefore, to understand the work of death rituals as gendered performances in the media, it is necessary to understand how the symbolic enters into media performance of death, and how the media utilise (gendered) symbols in given ritualized communication (Kertzer, 1988, 2–3). However, it must be acknowledged that it is very rarely that death rituals—whether these are death-bed scene rituals, rituals of mourning, funerary rituals or rituals of commemoration—appear in the media in a pure, unadulterated form. Rather, ritual elements of death occur in somewhat varied media-related activities. Journalists ritualize death through their patterned ways of telling stories of the loss of certain exceptional lives. Obituaries and necrologies are one established genre of ritualizing death in the mass media (see also Hanusch, 2010).

In today's world, ordinary people also contribute to ritualizing death in many different ways. Tweeting and posting messages of mourning and grief is one way of paying tribute to a deceased person. Facebook sites may be transformed into sites of public commemoration. Mourning videos on YouTube is yet another way of showing respect to the deceased and her loved ones. All these ritualized practices may be identified in a variety of media platforms and sites and appear dispersed in time and space (see also Lagerqvist, 2014; Haverinen, 2014). Consequently, it is more meaningful to discuss ritualization related to the media rather than individual death rituals in the media (cf. Grimes 2011). One way to develop our understanding of death and the related ritualization in and via the media is to discuss them in empirical contexts. As Cottle (2006) claims, how the interplay between media and ritual operates in a given situation should be an empirical question, not theoretically given *a priori*.

In this article, the analysis of ritualization focuses on two significant and high-profile public death events in the recent (media) history of the Western world—the deaths of Princess Diana in 1997 and former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 2013. These two cases provide valuable insight for the discussion of gendered and media-saturated ritual performances of death[2]. A massive amount of symbolic value was invested in both deaths, yet they clearly differ when it comes to the symbolic role of the deceased, the circumstances, and the nature of the death. Diana, the Princess of Wales and mother of two princes, died unexpectedly in a car accident in Paris at the age of 36. Meanwhile, Thatcher died aged 87 as an old lady after suffering from ill health for years. Thatcher's symbolic value was associated with the modern democratic system and political leadership, whereas Diana's death was

related to a long tradition of royal deaths in British history. The power she held was first and foremost symbolic.

In addition, the public perception of both deaths was far from unanimous. In the case of Diana, controversy was associated with the cause of her death, the role of the media in it, and the reactions of the Royal Family. In Thatcher's case, her contested public character as a female politician and the political heritage she left behind stimulated controversy. The issue of gender was certainly an important feature in both cases. Höijer (2004) reminds us of the gendered perceptions of victimhood, and this concept was indeed one of the themes evident in the public mourning of Diana's death. Diana was portrayed as a victim of an unhappy marriage, cold family, and extreme media interest. During the first week after Diana's death, she received praise for being a fragile and gentle 'People's Princess', a tragic victim of unfortunate circumstances, but who also kept fighting for her life in difficult situations.

On the other hand, the discourse around Thatcher was very different; she was portrayed as a powerful (and hence dangerous) female political leader, an 'Iron Lady' in both the good and bad contexts. For some, she was the most powerful and influential woman in the modern political history of Great Britain. For her supporters, she showed great leadership, while for the others she was a great victimizer, witch, or bitch—a political ruler with great and destructive powers.

In addition, the massive gendered ritualization after the deaths of Princess Diana and Lady Thatcher must be analysed against changes in the media landscape. At the time of Diana's death in 1997, the potential for Internet communication was emerging; it was not only used to circulate news but also to offer platforms for public grieving. To give one example, according to Davies (1999, 7), the Royal website received thirty-five million visits in the first two weeks after the death. Despite this, the most significant actor in the ensuing public ritualization was the mass media, particularly television and print media. In the case of Thatcher, the role of the Internet and, particularly, social media proved to be of considerable significance. A range of online applications was utilized to mourn and celebrate Thatcher's death, including YouTube videos, Facebook sites, and Twitter tweets. These practices of mourning and/or celebrating Thatcher's death also changed the public ritualization around her and even increased her significance as one of the most powerful women in Great Britain in her time.

In the following account, I discuss the similarities and differences in the ritualization of these two deaths by particularly examining the gendered aspects associated with the public performance of their death. By tackling this issue, I wish to shed light on the various ways in which ritualization of death performed by a variety of different media actors generated a certain hierarchical view of gender in these two cases.

A note on methodology is needed here; the ritual analysis of the death of Princess Diana draws on the existing empirical work on her death. Of particular significance for this chapter is a collected volume entitled *The Mourning for Diana*, edited by Walter (1999). This influential piece of work examines Diana's death from a variety of perspectives, placing special emphasis on the ritualized practices of mourning around her death. It should also be noted that the empirical material (fieldwork, interviews, and analysis of media materials) that I refer to in this volume

was largely collected during the week after Diana's death and her funeral.

In the case of Margaret Thatcher's death, I draw on my ongoing media ethnographic work on her death. In my fieldwork, I combine different forms of ethnography, ranging from urban ethnography, ethnography of representations, and virtual ethnography. In addition to participation observation and collecting media materials from, for example, The Guardian, the BBC, the Daily Mail, YouTube, and Facebook, I have also conducted interviews on people's reactions to Thatcher's death in London and elsewhere in Britain. As in the case of Princess Diana, most of the media materials collected encompass the same period—immediate reactions after Thatcher's death and in the time leading up to her funeral. In the case of public death, this period between the death and the burial witnesses the most intensive ritualization in the media (see e.g. Sumiala, 2014a; 2014b). In the ritual analysis, I place special emphasis on repetitive patterns of symbolic communication circulating in the media. These materials typically include visuals, discourses, and narratives associated with the deceased and what she means to the people mourning and commemorating the public loss.

1. DIANA—THE PRINCESS

> Diana, Princess of Wales, died in the early hours of Sunday, 31 August 1997. Sixteen years previously, she had fulfilled the romantic ideal of youthful bride when she married the heir to the British throne, Charles, Prince of Wales; she became the most photographed of all celebrities, and her marital troubles and eventual divorce were conducted in ablaze of media publicity. Many anticipated a new marriage because Diana spent part of the summer with Dodi Al Fayed, whose controversial Egyptian farther, Mohammed, owned London's famous Harrods store but remained largely unaccepted by the British. On the fateful night, Diana and Dodi dined at the Paris Ritz, itself a Fayed hotel, and then left at speed trying to avoid press photographers who pursued on motorcycles. Tragically, the chauffeur driven Mercedes sped through the city and, for whatever reason, crashed into a pillar in an underpass. Diana, Dodi and the driver were killed. The bodyguard alone survived.

The above description by the well-known British anthropologist of death, Douglas Davies (1999, 3), crystallizes the main aspects of the public life narrative of Diana—from a fairy tale wedding in 1981 at the age of twenty, through 'crowded marriage' to 'tragic divorce', and then finally to her unfortunate death (Kitzinger, 1999, 65). Lady Diana was one of the most extensively followed public figures during her years as a princess; she was young, pure, and beautiful, a fresh flower in the Royal Family who immediately attracted massive interest among the world's media. She gave birth to two princes, the second and third in line to the throne. Her unhappiness in the 'crowded marriage', the bitter divorce, rumours, love affairs, and new relationships provided endless material for the media. However, there was more to her public image, as Princess Diana was well known for her deep commitment to charity work. She visited terminally ill people all over the world, led campaigns for animal protection, AIDS awareness, and against the use of inhumane weapons like landmines, and all of these activities earned great media attention. From this perspective, she was not only an innocent victim exploited by the media, but also a protagonist who was able to employ that interest to achieve her personal agendas and goals.

Diana's death led immediately to a massive media response not only in the United Kingdom but also across the world, and her funeral attracted a larger global television audience than for any previous event (Davies, 1999, 3). The media was keen to report on the numerous spontaneous shrines established at various locations in London and elsewhere in Britain. The gates at Diana's home at Kensington Palace and the surrounding Kensington Gardens became the spontaneous centres for public grieving and the key sites for pilgrimage, as people brought in flowers, candles, and small personal notes and cards. Other central sites of spontaneous pilgrimage in London were Buckingham Palace and St James' Palace, where her body was laid out before the funeral; spur-of-the-moment shrines were also established in other parts of England (see Bowman, 1999).

The media saturation of death rituals surrounding Diana's death climaxed in the funeral held on 6 September 1997. The funerary ritual, carefully followed by the world's media, consisted of three parts: the street procession for the public; the service in Westminster Abbey for an invited congregation of dignitaries, which combined funeral and memorial services; and the private funeral at Althorp, the Spencer family estate, which was for family only. One of the most peculiar features of the funeral was the funeral cortege. The media reports revealed how the car carrying Diana's coffin was met by spontaneous applause from the crowds who had gathered to pay tribute to her last journey. The line of parked cars and people 'escorting their princess' was something rather unexpected in the media. In addition, a new spontaneous civic ritual was born on a highway, notes Davies (1999, 12), as people began to throw floral tributes with the aim of landing them on the car carrying Diana's coffin. This occurred on such a scale that the driver had to stop the car to clear the windscreen in order to see where he was going. The day after the funeral, large numbers of people who had watched the funeral on television were reported to have visited the Royal palaces in London. This kind of mass Royal pilgrimage continued for the next two weeks and eventually meant that Diana's residence, Kensington Palace, became the country's most visited tourist attraction at the time (Davies, 1999, 12–13).

2. THATCHER—THE QUEEN OF POLITICS

Baroness Margaret Thatcher died of a stroke on 8 April 2013 at the Ritz Hotel, where she was recuperating following a minor operation. She was eighty-seven years old and had suffered poor health for several years. News of her death broke in Britain locally and nationally, and globally in mainstream and social media, and immediately prompted mixed reactions. Her death brought about a rich variation of ritual practices of mourning, but also celebrations on different scales that emerged in and via diverse media.

The ritualization of her death began immediately after Thatcher's spokesman confirmed her death to the Press Association, which issued the first wire report to newsrooms. As a national symbol of mourning, the Union Flag was flown at half-mast at many sites associated with the late Prime Minister and at the nation's symbolic power centres, such as Downing Street (the official residence of the Prime

Minister in power), Buckingham Palace, and parliament. The ritualization of her death began to emerge simultaneously both in mainstream mass media—TV, radio, and print—and on social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. Indeed, in many cases, the line between the mass media and social media, and professional and amateur media, became blurred as ritual practices crossed over from one media-related context to another.

The mass media followed a pattern typical of ritualizing the deaths of world leaders (cf. Sumiala 2013). Thatcher's life story was repeated constantly, and in that narrative special emphasis was given to her rather humble origins as a grocer's daughter, her struggles in becoming a recognized politician and moving forward in the Conservative Party, and her eventual career as the first female British Prime Minster and one of the most powerful politicians in the history of the country, who ultimately had to step aside after being displaced by her own party. The highlights in her private life included her marriage in 1951 to Denis Thatcher, her loyal companion until his death in 2003, and the birth of their two children, twins Carol and Mark, in 1953. However, her private life as a mother and wife was not given nearly as much publicity as her public career as a politician and world leader.

Another thread in the narrative was the political analysis of her legacy and heritage in British society and the wider world. The key moments highlighted in her political career and constantly recaptured in mainstream media were, for example, her battle against the power of the trade unions—particularly the miners' strike in 1984—one of the most profound confrontations between the unions and the Thatcher government, and the seventy-four-day Falklands War in 1982, in which Argentina and the United Kingdom fought over two British territories in the South Atlantic. In the context of her foreign policy, she had a close ally in Ronald Reagan and shared his Cold War policies. Her deep distrust of communism led to the nickname the *Iron Lady*, which she proudly accepted. Subsequently, Thatcher became one of the first Western political leaders to respond positively to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and the reform policies of perestroika and glasnost.

In addition to narrativizing Thatcher's public life, another crucial aspect of ritualization in the mass media was the coverage of public reactions to Thatcher's death; a key theme in this ritual narrative was her divisive character. In the interviews conducted by professional media, many of her supporters praised Thatcher's political legacy and her exceptionality as a strong woman and powerful leader. However, there were many counter voices. The *Daily Mail* (8 April 2013) reported the *'Left's chorus of hatred: Champagne in the streets, students' union cheers and vile Internet taunts'*, and portrayed these 'leftist' activities with an open dislike:

> Baroness Thatcher's death unleashed a wave of vitriol and hatred from the Left. The first of several planned 'Thatcher death parties' across the country began last night with more than 200 revellers gathering in Brixton, South London. They danced the conga, drank champagne and chanted: 'Maggie, Maggie, Maggie—Dead, Dead, Dead.' … Banners were held stating 'Rejoice Thatcher is dead' by drunken crowds, many of whom were too young to remember her as prime minister. Similar disgraceful scenes were witnessed in Glasgow and further 'parties' were planned in Bristol, Liverpool, Newcastle and Manchester. Sickening messages also began flooding the Internet minutes after official announcement.

The ritualization in the mass media climaxed with Thatcher's funeral, which was transformed into a media-saturated death ritual similar to the case of Princess Diana. Thatcher's funeral took place on 17 April 2013, and, in line with her wishes, she received a ceremonial procession which included full military honours. Moreover, a church service was held at St Paul's Cathedral, attended by Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip. Later, Thatcher's ashes were interred in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, next to those of her husband Denis. The service and interment were unpublicized private events, but the funeral ceremony was transformed into a media event, broadcast widely on television, with print newspapers following the events online and updating material as the ceremony proceeded. In mainstream media, her funeral was associated with that of one of the most powerful prime ministers in British history, Winston Churchill. Ordinary people were given a voice, as mainstream media interviewed those who had gathered to pay their respects near St Paul's Cathedral. However, in contrast to the funeral of Princess Diana, mainstream media also reported on the protests that Thatcher's opponents held against the government's decision to spend money on her funeral—after all, she was an advocate of privatization.

Undoubtedly, the most characteristic element of this intensive ritualization around her death was the level of controversy surrounding Thatcher's personality and political heritage. This controversy was expressed in a deeply gendered manner. While certain mourning rituals were orchestrated by mainstream media, with the BBC and national newspapers playing a key role as national institutions, others were organized by ordinary social media users. A characteristic associated with Thatcher's death was that people had expected her to die due to her old age and ill health. As one British journalist informant indicated, the media was well prepared for Thatcher's death given her age and poor health, thereby implying that the obituaries were prewritten and her funeral broadcast rehearsed by many professional media organizations. However, the so-called ordinary people had also made preparations. A web page entitled *'Is Margaret Thatcher Dead Yet?'* was set up three years before her death. On the day of her death, it was updated with the word 'YES'. According to the *Daily Mail* (8 April 2013), within an hour of her death being announced, almost 155,000 people had 'liked' the page on Facebook and it was tweeted about on Twitter approximately 12,500 times.

Further, ordinary people participated in ritualizing her death by making and posting YouTube videos to pay tribute or celebrate her death. In a video entitled *'Tribute to Margaret Thatcher—A life to remember'* posted by the username *Maxence Mailloti,* Thatcher is portrayed as a charismatic and strong leader and her political achievements are presented in an admirable and respectful manner. The video contains sentimental music that underlines her unique character. Typical of YouTube, the video has received comments from the unknown audience. The comments are divided, as was much of the public response to her death. The posts that view Thatcher in a positive light include statements such as 'Rest in peace Maggie', 'Always wanted to meet her but never got a chance'. 'RIP Maggie, you're truly one of my heroes since I was just a boy', 'The old guard is dying but we must continue to light the flame of freedom, even if the road is dark. We miss you Lady Thatcher, may God keep you and bless your indomitable soul', and 'I didn't agree with some of her policies but she HAD A SENSE OF DIRECTION! NO POLITICIAN CAN RIVAL HER THESE DAYS!'

In the posts that dislike her, comments include statements such as 'You are scum', or 'The world got lighter when she died, we lost a wretched cunt!' Another way of ritualizing Thatcher's death among the parties that disliked her was to create a viral campaign via social media around a popular song. *Ding, Dong, the Witch is Dead*, originally from *The Wizard of Oz*, began to circulate in social media and is now associated with Thatcher. The aim of the viral campaign was to cause the song to make it to the top of the UK music charts. The song reached number two, but the BBC refused to play it on air and was accused of censorship. In many YouTube videos that celebrated Thatcher's death, she was constantly referred to as an evil woman, bitch, or witch who had finally got her punishment in death. Many of these videos include insulting and offensive material, such as images of different characters peeing on her grave, sending her to hell, or fantasies of torturing and humiliating her in a range of different ways.

3. THE RITUALIZED PERFORMANCE OF GENDER IN DEATH

In the case of Princess Diana, it is apparent that gender played a key role in the immediate ritualization after Diana's death. According to Walter (1999, 20) and many others, the mass media—particularly the BBC—was highly influential in creating an idealized image of Diana as a caring woman, mother, and great humanitarian. In this ritualized media narrative, Princess Diana became 'a cathartic object of grief, a symbol of hope, caring, and community, and bearer of many grand themes from personal transformation to 'people power', from woman as 'victim' to woman as 'survivor', as Kitzinger (1999, 65) puts it. Davies (1999, 17), drawing on Turner's (1969) vocabulary of symbolism, states that Diana became a 'condensed symbol of love, divorce, fragmented families, stardom and failure, beauty and eating disorders, also of marginalized groups of AIDS, leprosy and landmine victims'. In the eyes of many, she was one of the world's most famous women, who had been created and destroyed by the media (Kitzinger, 1999, 65). Studies also indicate that the public that mourned for Diana was deeply gendered. Based on public reaction, women, particularly younger women with lower-middle or upper-working-class backgrounds, were those most affected by Diana's death (Walter 1999; Braidotti, 1997; McKibbin, 1997). Griffin (1999, 248) writes about this virtual bond between Diana and her female mourners:

> Diana was young and uneducated when catapulted into fame, a pre-feminist Cinderella waiting the arrival of the prince. She had dropped out of school and worked in typically female jobs: cleaning woman, nanny, kindergarten's teacher's aide. That she married royalty marks a difference between her and the women who mourned her. But like her, many of them married before they developed an independent sense of self and tended to identify themselves through their husbands. This condition of romantic dependence is one of the old themes of female socialization. (…) This was the role that the young Diana embraced.

According to both Davies (1999, 6) and Walter (1999, 20), the ritualized narrative actively applied by the media was the indifference, interpreted as coldness and unconcern by the Royal Family towards the feelings of the people. Public disapproval was targeted first and foremost against the Queen. Put in the symbolic language of gender, the Queen was perceived as a 'Bad Mother', indifferent to the fate of the princess and the related suffering of her subjects. The imaginary 'reconciliation' between the Queen and the people only occurred after she had delivered a live television message to the nation, thereby apparently signalling that she, as a mother figure, and the rest of the Royal Family did care. Following Davies' (1999, 15) insight, we could claim that the ritualization around her death served to mediate the conflict between the people and the Queen.

Hey (1999, 60) interprets the Durkheimian moment of public mourning after Diana's death in the larger political context of British society and discusses how, by mourning Diana, people were able to connect symbolically to a larger society in that era of another powerful woman, Margaret Thatcher. Hey (1999, 60) cites John Vidal's and Matin Engel's words in the Guardian at the eve of Diana's funeral. Vidal says:

> Almost to a person they say they feel that Diana spoke to them personally, and gave them hope, when they were at the bottom. Ex-prisoners, single mothers, the death, the lame, the crippled, lie down together. She cared, they say. Others who should have known better did not. (Guardian, 6 September 1997)

Martin Engel puts it even more explicitly:

> This week has provided the final proof that Margaret Thatcher was wrong, there is such a thing as society. And it sometimes asserts itself in ways that no-one can predict and most struggle to comprehend. (Guardian, 6 September 1997)

Hey (1999) provides an appealing context for the analysis of the ritualization of Margaret Thatcher's death sixteen years later. Particular attention must be paid to the symbolic disconnection among the people as a public and the people and the Iron Lady, if you will. When analysing the ritualization of Thatcher's death through the lens of gender, a key observation is that the ritualization around her death clearly centred on her divisive personality and controversial political heritage as the first (and so far) and only female Prime Minister in Britain. A smaller role was ascribed to her as a private figure, a mother, and wife.

Walter (1999, 33) maintains that after Diana's death, a certain social code was activated—that 'whatever you personally feel, you do not undermine the prime mourners by publicly saying the deceased is not worth mourning. Later on, with the judicious passage of time, such sentiments may seep out, but not before the deceased is decently buried.' In the case of Diana, the category of prime mourners needs to be extended to those millions of people who mourned publicly. The moment, in its rarity, left very little room for immediate public criticism, and so it was that the criticism of Diana and the massive public reaction ritualized in this 'floral and emotional fascism', as some called it, only came to light after her funeral (Walter, 1999, 31). Part of this criticism also addressed Diana's feminine character and questioned her status as a modern sacred icon. Diana was criticised as having been too rich, too vain, and too much out of touch with reality (cf. Seidler 2013, 62-63).

In Thatcher's case, this code of respect no longer existed. Instead, judging by the enraged reactions evident in social media, it appeared that many people had waited for years for Thatcher to pass away, thereby allowing them to unleash their inhibitions against her and her political ideology labelled 'Thatcherism' that had taken over in Britain. The ritualized celebrations of Thatcher's death released these repressed emotions and legitimized certain public reactions, at least in certain places and publications. If the ritualization around Princess Diana's death was able to reconcile the fragmented and pluralist British society for a brief moment in history around this fragile and tragic princess figure, this was certainly not the case with Thatcher. Instead, the ritualization around her death underlined the nation's divisions. In contrast to Diana's death, Thatcher's death once again symbolically disconnected people from the idea of the unity of the nation as a family. In symbolic language, she was a powerful but Evil Mother who treated her people unjustly, favouring some already privileged groups over others.

Drawing on Rappaport's (2005) work on ritual, Altena, Notermans, & Widlock (2011, 134) argue that the possibility of inventing new rituals is often limited. This implies that the ritualization of death is typically connected with shared histories and draw on existing cultural traditions and conventions. In the cases of Princess Diana and Thatcher, the ritualization around their death was deeply embedded in cultural narratives and related classifications around good and bad, caring and cold, and protective and destructive 'women'. As the People's Princess, Diana was associated with what might be positioned in this narrative as the 'good and positive' sides of femininity. She was portrayed as a beautiful but fragile and suffering woman who struggled to live her life under many pressures—demands of the Royal Family (and the evil Queen), the media, and the global public. Her tragic death made Diana a tragic heroine, worthy of global sympathy. Wendy Griffin (1999) calls Diana 'an unlikely feminist hero' who women in different parts of the world (in Griffin's work particularly in the United States) identified with as they participated in her mourning. Griffin (1999, 249) writes,

> She [Diana, added by JS] was crucially unashamed of insisting on being a whole person, not just the mother of 'an heir and a spare'. As she struggled with the realities of divorce and joint custody, she was also searching for a life with meaning and where her needs might finally be met. 'In her ordeals, in the courage, stubbornness and idealism of her attempt to reinvent herself as an independent woman, women have found a model for themselves. It was this Diana, stronger for her own suffering, heroic for all she was vulnerable, with whom women will continue to identify' (Oates, 1997, cited in Griffin, 1999, 249).

On the other hand, Thatcher's female image was much more complex. In Butler's (1990) ritualized performance of gender, Thatcher's private side—as a grocer's daughter and daddy's girl, mother of two, and a wife to Denis Thatcher in a marriage that lasted until death separated the two—was clearly downplayed by her public career. In a public ritualization (whether mourning or celebration of her death), the gendered performance around Thatcher was centred around her powerfulness and strength. She was hard and unbending as iron. Those who admired her strength ritualized her courage and power and associated it with her leadership. For her supporters, she was a 'lady of not for turning', as she once famously put it her-

self in a public speech. These qualities—which can also be labelled as decisiveness, fearlessness, and willingness to take risks—are often considered masculine characteristics; hence, the Iron in the Lady. In these ritualizations, in which her politics and legitimacy were questioned, her powerfulness as a female leader was interpreted as evilness and viciousness, with destructive powers.

The 'bitch', one of Thatcher's epithets, can be defined as a vicious female, definitely powerful, but certainly not lovable—something to be detested in the ideal categorizations of the female gender (cf. Douglas, 2002). Another epithet for her that was heavily circulated in and via the media was 'witch'. This evil character of the legends, vernacular stories, and fairy tales—such as the white witch of *Narnia*—can be described as dangerous because of her wicked powers. And yet, as an epithet for a woman, 'witch' signals unattractiveness. In everyday parlance, to look or act like a witch is to behave in an unpleasant manner. Thus, the power that the words 'bitch' and 'witch' can hold is always twisted in some ways.

4. WITCHES, BITCHES, AND PRINCESSES

The analysis of ritualization of the death of Princess Diana and Margaret Thatcher reveals some of the complex dynamics related to how modern mediatized societies tackle issues that are enhanced by public death and the gendered hierarchies they highlight. Anthropologist Maurice Bloch (1992) famously claimed that nature begins with life and ends in death, but culture begins with death and transforms death into a life-affirming event. In the case of Princess Diana's public death, it can be suggested how the ritualization of her death in and via the media confirmed certain ideas regarding ideal womanhood and femininity. Griffin (1999, 250) writes,

> Princess Diana's life was as unexpected as her death. No longer the 'Prisoner of Wales' as she once had called herself, she fought a battle for identity, respect, and integrity of self.

According to Griffin, this was a battle many women in America, and I would like to add, elsewhere, believed she won. The ritualized performance of Princess Diana as a fragile but persistent 'fighter' for her own freedom gave hope to many. The mourning public could identify with the suffering and struggle of the People's Princess. For that liminal moment, she became an icon or a modern saint, if you will. Not pure and innocent, but vulnerable and not willing to give up in the face of her difficulties (eating disorders, broken relationships, separated from her children). In this sense, the ritualization around Diana's death may be interpreted as a life-affirming and hope-giving event in a modern society.

In Thatcher's case, the element of affirmation in the ritualization around her death is much more contested. Her supporters and admirers ritualized Thatcher as a kind of 'superwoman', one of the most influential women in British political history. She was a lady who stood up to her power. Thatcher's opponents turned her political and cultural significance against her. She was ritualized as an evil, twisted woman who used her powers not to enlighten her people, but to destroy them. From this perspective, the videos that laughed at her grave can be interpreted as acts of emancipation, as these videos made her look ridiculous and naked of power.

However, one may also find elements of misogyny in these morbid mediatized carnivals around her death. It is a well known historical myth that witches were to be burnt, this time only in post mortem and on the screen (cf. Gilmore, 2009 on misogyny). Overall, the gendered performance around Thatcher's death was centred around power, which made her appear more a woman fighter character performing a type of female masculinity rather than a traditional feminine character portrayed as a caring mother and loving, virtuous wife (cf. Halberstam, 1998; Koivunen, 1994).

To conclude, there are no *a priori* answers to how the dynamics between death, ritual, and gender are played out in today's mediatized societies, with Britain being a case in point here. Instead, it seems that different, even contradictory, dynamics can be activated depending on whose death is being discussed, the kind of death that is being discussed, and what is the given social context as well as the role of the public and media in ritualizing it. Thus, it can be said that the ritualization of death in and via the media has deep gendered aspects to it. Ritualization may confirm certain symbolic structures and binary hierarchies among different femininities under the umbrella of womanhood. Newsmagazine writer Marjory Williams (1997) takes us back to the question of princesses and queens as symbolic female figures:

> (…) it is the rare little girl who wants to grow up to be a queen. To wish to be a princess is not only to aspire upward, to royalty, but to aspire to endless daughterhood and perpetual shelter (cited in Griffin, 1999, 248).

Diana was ritualized as the People's Princess. The gendered media-saturated performances around her death gave hope to many who mourned her (see also Zeigler, 2013). In a reading inspired by Douglas' (2002) binary hierarchies, a modern princess does not need to be innocent and pure. She can fail in her marriage, have broken relationships, suffer from eating disorders, and mental health problems, but she must remain a princess. Diana struggled to live out the role the Royal Family and media had written for her, but in her life, she never left behind being a princess. In other words, she did not challenge the social hierarchy and order between princesses and queens, daughters and mothers.

On the other hand, Thatcher, as a powerful female ruler shares much more with the queen, the first symbolic matriarch of the country, both literally and metaphorically. Queens are dangerous female rulers as they have the power to not only protect but also destroy their subjects; princesses cannot have that power and, hence, they cannot challenge the hierarchical order between the two. As less threatening female figures, princesses might also prove to be much more likely subjects of public sympathy and empathy in their suffering and death. Douglas (2002) reminds us that the most dangerous act for social order is to attempt to separate elements of thought that need to be kept together or put together elements that need to remain separated. From this, perspective the ritualization around the death of Diana and Thatcher did not cause any 'danger' for the established social and cultural order of gender relationships.

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The Multiethnic Slavery Institution through the Eyes of Western Women and 'the real position of women in the religious system of Islam'

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INTRODUCTION

'Perhaps the sight of European women does them more harm than good' (Emily Beaufort 1861)

Through the eyes of western women of the 18th and 19th centuries, this paper discusses the Ottoman slavery institution and 'the real position of women in the religious system of Islam' (Garnett 1895: 61). Focusing on primary sources, first-hand accounts of European women travel writers, authors and journalists in Ottoman territories and principally in Asia Minor (Turkey), this article confirms that all the harem inmates were women of different nations and races: Islamized slaves, liberated slaves and descendants of slaves. Western women, in their intimate contacts with the harem inmates—free and slave—discuss the Ottoman dynasty's reproductive politics, forced abortion, marriage, divorce, *veiling* or Muslim women's attire, slave rights and social mobility, including requirements for slave liberation. This researcher concludes that the Multiethnic-Multiracial Harem Slavery Institution was the collective segregation, confinement or enslavement of the female gender in *one specific space* (household/harem), as *one collective identity* since all the women— slave and free—shared or legally belonged to *one man or master:* sultan, grand vizier, vizier, pacha, etc.

1. 'THE HAREM SYSTEM IS BASED ON SLAVERY.' (BLUNT 1878)

Women travel writers, authors, journalists and intellectuals from Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden and Austria, including harem inmates like Melek Hanum (1872) and Adalet (1890, 1892) repeatedly confirm that an Ottoman harem was made up of women from different nations (Kamberidou 2015). In reexamining the writings of 18th and 19th century western women travellers in Ottoman territories, this paper contributes additional evidence on the multiethnic harem slavery institution, which distinguished Ottoman (Osmanli) society, so as to provide a bigger picture and inspire new discussions. It spotlights the female

accounts that are illustrative of the multiethnic-multiracial synthesis of the Ottoman household: harem and selemlik (men's quarters), primarily in Asia Minor (Turkey).
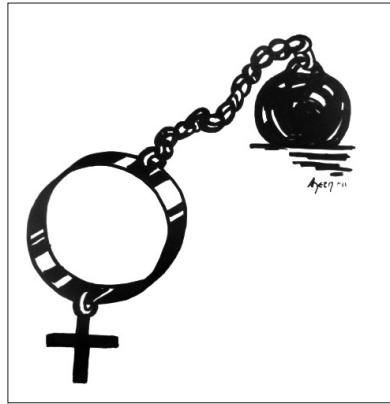
**Slavedom by
Areti Kamperidis[1]**

This article focuses chiefly on the female accounts of the 19th century that examine the social position of women in Ottoman society, which western women describe as 'the real position of women in the religious system of Islam' (Garnett 1895: 61); 'Slavedom' (Beaufort 1861: 399); 'the yoke of slavery' (Celine 1849: 34] and the 'yoke of the Harem' (Lott 1866: 296).

In re-consulting the first-hand accounts of European women who entered into a patriarchal system's domestic-social reality (the harem) that was founded on the institution of slavery (Kamberidou 2015), this article examines the writings of western women who were official guests, intimate friends or employees in harems that corresponded to all the Ottoman social classes, such as Lady Mary Montagu (1718), Lady Elizabeth Craven (1789), Louise Demont (1821a,b), Julia Pardoe (1837), Princess Celine (1849), Christine Trivulce de Belgiojoso (1855), Dora d'Istria (1859), Emmeline Lott (1866), Mary Adelaide Walker (1886), Fanny Janet Blunt (1878) and Lucy Garnett (1891, 1895). According to their accounts, an Ottoman harem was made up of Islamized slaves, liberated slaves and descendants of slaves, the prototype being the imperial harem, namely the sultan's harem.

Certainly, one could question the reliability of the female writings, if we take into consideration that these women, as their male counterparts, carried with them to that region their western values and social prejudices. A plethora of studies have extensively explored the *western gaze*: western men's and women's experience of imperialism, their observations on the *subordinate cultural Other*, the inferiority of the oriental ways of being and the superiority of the West, namely the *Orientalist gaze* and fantasizing about polygamy and the exotic Orient, including the differences between the male and female accounts[2] (Said 1986, Pratt 1992, Mills 1993, Melman 1995, Lewis 1996, Mohammad 1999).

Unquestionably, like their male counterparts, women also carried with them, to that region, their western or colonial gaze. However, in contrast to the male accounts and observations, the female ones are not based on second or third-hand information. Regardless of how they interpret what they observe, the fact is that they actually observed it. Their gender allowed them to become *experts* in areas where men had no access! Women's daily life and social gatherings. By actually entering the harems, for various reasons, and participating in harem life they demystify their subjects, namely they do not eroticize or *exoticize* them in the same manner or level as their male counterparts (Sarris 1994).

Accordingly, my focus is on the first-hand accounts of women who claim to be participant observers of the female microcosmos (private and public space) of Ottoman society. Such an example is Fanny Janet Blunt (1878 vol. 1: 250), who spoke the Turkish language fluently, and argues that: "The Harem system is based on slavery", on the enslavement of women and girls of different races, who she actually saw in the harems. Regardless of her own personal views on slavery, Blunt (1878) upholds, as did many before and after her, that the Ottoman social system (family, state, etc), in order to survive and reproduce itself, required the institution of slavery.

Blunt, formerly Sandison—daughter of the English Ambassador in Constantinople and wife of the English Ambassador in Thessaloniki—having lived for nearly 50 years (1848-1899) in different Ottoman territories, frequently visited the imperial harems: the Seraglio or serail (sultan's harem), the harems of the princesses (daughters and sisters of sultans), of the Grand Vezir's first wife, and many others. Being a consul's daughter and a consul's wife, she usually received *red carpet treatment* and welcomed into all female private and social spaces. In her accounts on the imperial harem, Blunt (1878) provides detailed descriptions of the Seraglio women and children, their nationalities, ranks, training and duties, stressing that they never lost their accent which usually revealed their country of origin.

2. 'WITHOUT EXCEPTION, OF SLAVE EXTRACTION' (BLUNT 1878)

The 19th century female accounts confirm that the population of the sultan's harem in Constantinople was made up of thousands of women and children from Circassia, Georgia, Greece, Africa, Arabia and Europe. All these women and children belonged to one man or master, the sultan. This was the basic model for the harems of all the so-called Ottoman social classes (Demont 1821a, Pardoe 1837, Celine 1849, Belgiojoso 1855, d'Istria 1859, Lott 1866, Walker 1886, Blunt 1878, Garnett 1891, 1895).

**In the yoke of the harem,
sexual slavery by Areti**

Western women use terms such as the harems of 'the bourgeois' (Belgiojoso 1855: 1039), those of 'the wealthy classes', 'the middle class' (Walker 1886, vol. 1: 205), 'the labouring classes' and 'the Turkish peasant' (Garnett 1895: 62). The majority, however, concentrate on the harems of the Ottoman elite, or as Melek Hanum (1872) describes them, the harems of 'the well-to-do middle-class man' (1872: 279), 'the rich Pasha with three tails', 'the minister with a portfolio' (1872: 280) and 'the Turkish grandees' (1872: 296). According to Adalet (1892), a Turkish author from Ankara, an average harem in Ankara was made up of approximately 100 women, of whom 97 were slaves and only three were born free Muslims.

All these harems had as a model or prototype the Seraglio, the imperial harem (the sultan's harem). For example, Blunt (1878, vol. 1: 250) informs us that the sultan's harem contained 1,500 women and girls "*without exception, of slave extraction* originating from the cargoes of slaves that yearly find their way to Turkey from Circassia, Georgia, Abyssinia, and Arabia, in spite of the prohibition of the slave trade. These slaves are sold in their native land by unnatural relations, or torn from their homes by hostile tribes to be handed over to slave dealers, and brought by them into the capital [Constantinople] and other large towns".

She also points out that that the new women and girls that were "drawn into the seraglio by chains of bondage" were called Adjemis (rustics) and were assigned to different harem departments in order to be trained for their future roles:

> Their training in the Seraglio received depends upon the career to which their age, personal attractions, and colour entitle them [...] the young and beautiful odalisk [concubine] receive a veneer composed of the formalities of Turkish etiquette, elegance of deportment, the art of beautifying the person, dancing, singing, or playing on some musical instrument. To the young and willing, instruction in the rudiments of the Turkish language are given; also initiated in the simpler forms of Mohammedanism. (Blunt 1878, vol. 1: 251)

The black slaves from Africa and Arabia and the white slaves of different nations who were considered unattractive or lacking in beauty, according to the criteria of the time, were never included in the harem's elite slavery system, that is to say they were never trained to become concubines, dancers, musicians or singers. They were usually assigned to the harem's lower pyramidical hierarchy or ranks and trained to become domestic servants. Their duties included cooking, laundry, ironing, scrubbing floors and services at the baths. This was also the case in the non-royal harems (Vivanti 1865, Blunt 1876, Walker 1886, Garnett 1895).

Regarding the training of children, namely child slavery, indeed women travellers are shocked by the socialization processes they witness in what they call 'le harem en miniature' (Belgiojoso, 1855: 1043). The children's harem was the Ottoman system's primary socialization agent. In the harems— western women describe *children's harem* or *the miniature harem* (Pardoe 1837 vol. 1., Lott 1866, Walker 1886, vol. 2). In other words they observe slave girls and boys (the children of non-Muslim populations) together with the children of their owners (little pachas and hanums, princes and princesses) interacting and being trained for their future roles and duties.

The children of non-Muslims, usually acquired as infants or between the ages of three to nine, were always preferred as slaves because their training process was easier and their loyalty and devotion assured. Their social integration into Ottoman society was absolute, in contrast to that of adult male and female slaves. Boys and girls— the playmates and *toys* of free Muslim children— were trained to serve and obey. The little female slaves that showed no promise of future beauty, according to the criteria of the time, were trained to become domestic servants. Those that were considered pretty or promised future beauty entered the harem's elite slavery system and were trained to become concubines, entertainers, dancers, musicians, singers etc.

Many western women visited the harems of free Muslim women (former slaves) who bought and trained female slaves, including slave children and infants of both genders, in order to re-sell them later for a profit or offer them as gifts to the sultan and other powerful state officials. The little slaves were taught to play musical instruments such as the def, the harp, the oboe, the flute, the lute, drums, the violin, the zebec and the kanun, described as a musical instrument which resembled the harp (Walker 1886, Montagu 1718, Vivanti 1865).

The English artist Mary Adelaide Walker, who worked and resided in the Ottoman territories for about 40 years (1857-1897), reports that these slaves were:

> Usually bought very young, at three or four years of age and taught some music, dancing and a little French. These accomplishments increase their value considerably, and it becomes with some people a matter of revolting speculation to educate batches of little Circassians, as you may fatten rabbits for market, buying them cheap in their infancy and native dirt, and selling them a few years later, with all their acquired graces, at a high price. The value of a halaik begins at about 80 or 100 (English pounds); an accomplished musician or dancer may bring her owner nearly ten times as much. (Walker 1886: 62-63)

Walker (1886: 35), who was employed as an artist in the harem of Princess Zeineb, the favourite daughter of Sultan Abdul Medjid (1839-1861), observes that a Jewish teacher had been hired to teach acrobatics to the very young children. In another *classroom*, little slave girls were given pantomime lessons, while in another area there was a dance class where the little slaves were being taught Turkish and French dances.

Fanny Janet Blunt informs us that "An ex-serail [concubine of the imperial harem] of my acquaintance had herself undertaken this task and had offered as many as fourteen young girls to the Seraglio of [sultan] Abdul Aziz … and at the same time had a fresh batch of slaves in hand to train … the youngest was eight years old" (Blunt 1878, vol. 1: 252-253).

Western women— beginning with Lady Montagu (1718), the wife of the English Ambassador in Constantinople, and ending with Lucy Garnett (1895), who had also been living in Ottoman territories a number of years and spoke the Turkish and Greek languages— argue that Islamic Law recognized as legal property only the non-Muslims who fell into the hands of the True Faithful as spoils of war from conquered races or expansionist raids. The Ottomans also acquired slaves from the pirates and corsairs who attacked European ships, from abductions, slave-markets, private sales and as gifts exchanged between the wealthier classes.

3. SEXUAL SLAVERY: THE MULTIETHNIC SLAVERY INSTITUTION

Slavery was vital for the Ottoman Empire's economy and social system and it certainly included the male population. The demand for slaves corresponded to the economic and socio-political needs of the period and political control involved sexuality and the control of sexuality (Sarris 1994).

Sexual slavery was a central part of the slave system and sexuality was linked to power. In Ottoman society a female slave was considered an *odalisques* (a concubine) and a male slave, respectively, an *oglani*. In the Ottoman patriarchal and phalocratic society male and female slaves were not considered communicative beings (*mal-I natik*), but sexual objects that represented a political meaning or political control, specifically that of sovereignty and subjugation (Sarris 1994: 333-334).

In other words, the Ottoman dynasty controlled the reproductive activity of an individual (male or female) by restraining it, delaying it or preventing it. To illustrate, in the 16th century the sons of sultans (princes) were secluded and no longer allowed to father children, their pregnant concubines were either executed or subjected to artificial abortion. Only after the sultan's death, the prince elevated to the position of sultan could produce heirs. Great care was also taken in the marriages arranged for the princesses (daughters of sultans), for if all the sultan's male children were assassinated—through the power struggles in the imperial harem and the Porte—then the surviving son of a princess (daughter or sister of a sultan) would become the next sultan. As a results, when a princess bore a son he was usually murdered. So princesses who had sons took great care to protect their infants from the frequent assassination attempts (Kamberidou 2014b).

The primary purpose of the imperial harem was to secure the male line, the birth of heirs for the throne. Sexuality being linked to power, concubinage became the matrix of the dynasty's reproductive politics. In other words, slave concubinage was inevitable, as interdynastic marriages had provided pretexts for political interventions by the relatives of royal wives, which included rights or entitlement to the throne. Consequently, Ottoman reproductive politics required severe limitations, controls or constraints on the rights of mothers. Such a constraint was the strict policy and custom of *one son per concubine mother*. Namely, a sultan's concubine could only produce one son (one prince and heir to the throne), although there were exceptions to this rule (eg. Alexandra or Hurrem Sultan). This meant that a woman's right to children was curtailed and her sexual needs disregarded after the birth of her son.One need add here that, as opposed to slave concubine mothers, legal wives (free Muslim women) had a right to children or as many children (male heirs) as they desired, the right to refuse certain forms of birth control and to expected sexual satisfaction, among other things (Kamberidou 2014b, Sarris 1994).

The patriarchal nature of political power, emphasized in the Islamic tradition, relied mainly on female slave reproduction (childbearing). As a result, women from Christian territories were enslaved, converted to Islam, became concubine mothers and eventually gained power. Having produced an heir to the throne, they were in a position to claim a share in the exercise of power and they usually took the necessary measures to preserve their sovereign authority. They played active roles in preparing their sons to receive power, to become sultans. They controlled his sexual activity, that is to say they chose and trained his concubines, ensured that the dynasty reproduced itself and imposed abortions when necessary.

For example, Blunt (1878 vol.1) repeatedly observes that since the offspring of all the sultan's female slaves were considered legitimate—from the scullery maid (the lowest ranks) to the fair and delicate beauty purchased to be trained as his concubine— many *valide sultans* (mothers of sultans) plotted to eliminate their rivals and their offspring, such as the mother of Sultan Abdul-Aziz (1861-1876), Pertevniyal Sultan. To reduce the number of future heirs to her son's throne and secure her powerful position as valide sultan, Pertevniyal brought forward an old palace regulation, according to which every seraglio woman found pregnant would be subjected to the operation of artificial abortion, with the exception of her son's first four slave concubines, which she had personally chosen, trained and controlled. In Ottoman society, as previously mentioned, political control involved sexuality and the control of sexuality (Kamberidou 2015).

In contrast to western societies, in Ottoman society slave offspring were considered legitimate and held the legal status of a free Muslim. In fact, all the Ottoman Sultans and princes (sons of sultans) from the 14th to the 20th century were the sons of female slaves (concubine mothers), women from different nations and races. Practically all the male and female offspring of the sultans—after the generations of Osman and Orhan—were born of slave concubine mothers.

To illustrate, the French traveler Mme de la Ferte-Meun (1822) observes that Sultan Mahmoud's mother–Aimee Dubucq de Rivery, known as Naksh-i-Dil sultan– was originally French of American origin, born at Nantes.Her parents set out for America when she was two and were captured by corsairs. They were taken to Alger where they perished and the child was bought by a slave merchant. At the age of 14 she was sold to the Bey of Algiers and later sent to Constantinople as gift for the Sultan (Meun 1822).

Not only the *royal* family, the sultan's wives and mothers, but the majority of the Ottoman Empire's state officials, since the 14th century, usually came from non-Muslim populations.[3] They too were Islamized slaves or liberated slaves, such as the grand viziers (prime ministers), the viziers (ministers) and the janissaries who were soldiers, an elite infantry taken during childhood from Christian populations. Male slaves achieved high status, especially after their training in palace schools like the Enderun, which prepared them for their future roles (Kamberidou 2015).

Slaves of both genders were easily integrated into Ottoman society, eventually becoming free Muslims: liberated through marriage, procreation-reproduction, adoption, military service or public service. An example of a male slave's social integration and rise to power in Ottoman society is that of Ismael Pacha, the Governor-General of the island of Crete who was a former slave from the Greek island of Chios. Ismael Pacha had been abducted and enslaved as a child, converted to Islam, sent to Europe and educated as a physician, becoming the Sultan's physician before his appointment as general governor.

Slavery provided a means of *social mobility* and formed an essential part of the patronage networks (Sarris 1994). It led to social status and political power. Western women like Lady Montagu (1718), Julia Pardoe (1837), Fanny Janet Blunt (1878) and Mary A. Walker (1886) observe that slaves were treated with respect and kindness in Turkish homes, as opposed to the treatment of the

African slaves in America and Europe, who could never aspire to be *elevated* to an official or public position. Moreover, how many western slave-owners or European prime ministers liberated and married their slaves or recognized their slave offspring?

> Turkish slavery is not so bad as it might be: the system is softened by many humane laws, and is marked by a kindly paternal character. Yet it is a blot on the country, and so soon as the harem system and polygamy can be got rid of, it too must go. (Blunt 1878, vol. 1: 126)

Worth mentioning here is that the American practice of breeding among slaves was never practiced in Ottoman society, so new slaves were always in demand with preference to children who were raised and trained in the harems and easily integrated into Ottoman society. The harem slavery institution was the Ottoman system's primary *socialization agent*, an indispensable part of its self-reproduction. It is important to reiterate here that many women travellers were shocked by the socialization processes they witness in the harems. As previously cited, they observe slave girls and boys, together with the children of their owners being trained for their future roles, duties and services (Pardoe 1837, vol. 1, Belgiojoso 1855, Lott 1866, Walker 1886, vol. 2).

> The institution of slavery being indispensable to the social system of the Osmanlis, its total abolition would involve the abolition of the harem, a revolution for which they are as yet by no means prepared. (Garnett 1891: 382)

As a result, the slave trade continued to flourish until the beginning of the 20th century, despite the pressures exercised on Turkey by Europe. Mary Frances Felicia Skene (1847), Fanny Janet Blunt (1878) and Mary Walker (1886) repeatedly observe that the sultan's laws abolishing slavery were openly violated since the institution of slavery was necessary for the Ottoman social system to survive. The slave trade continued to flourish, despite Sultan Abdul Medjid's successive firmans (laws, sultanic decisions) abolishing the slave trade in 1846, those prohibiting the slave traffic of Georgean and Circassian slaves in 1854, and the firman of 1857 prohibiting the sale and exportation of 'negroes':

> Slavery in Turkey now reduced mainly to one sex. Male slaves, except in the capacity of eunuchs, are now rare, though every now and then a cargo of them is smuggled into some port and privately disposed of, since the Government professes to share the anti-slavery views of England. But female slavery is a necessary part of the seraglio, and of the Turkish harem system. (Blunt 1878, vol. 1: 126)

The harem slavery population—a central feature of the Ottoman dynasty's reproductive politics— also included the eunuchs, castrated boys and men, usually from Africa or Arabia. According to the Chesson (1877) report on Turkey, the Muslim elite's great demand for human merchandise has led to the desolation, devastation and destruction of Africa. Africans were preferred as eunuchs as the mortality rate/death rate of the white boys castrated was much higher. African children, between the ages of five and eleven were abducted from their families and tribes, castrated

on the road (one in three died). Those that survived the painful surgery were sold to the Ottoman elite.

Many western women meet the Islamized eunuchs in the harems of the Ottoman elite. Some refer to the eunuchs as *misogynists* (Lott 1866) and others as *friends* (Melek Hanum 1872). They describe their pyramidical hierarchy or ranks, discuss their relationships with the harem women and describe their social roles and duties: eg. guards, body-guards, companions, messengers, advisors, babysitters, professional assassins, accomplices, state officials, musicians and poets. Their duties also included locking and unlocking harem doors, surveillance or watching who enters and who leaves the harem and being the master's confidant. All the eunuchs circulated freely in the harems and in the selamliks (men's apartments). The one and only *topos* where the eunuchs were not allowed to accompany the women, were in the public hammams/bathhouses (Kamberidou 2014b).

Lucy Garnett (1891) also confirms that the slave trade prohibitions had increased the horrors of slave trafficking:

> Although the Porte, in deference to European opinion, has closed the slave-market at Constantinople, and formally prohibited the slave-trade, no material change, so far as slave women are concerned, has in reality taken place in this respect. [...] The demand for slave women being thus undiminished, the only consequence of the enactment against slavery has been enormously to *increase the horrors of the traffic in its initial stage* by increasing the difficulties under which it is carried on. Those brought from Africa are now obliged to be shipped at out-of-the-way parts of the coast, confined under hatches in order to escape the vigilance of European cruisers; and, by being kept beating about at sea until an opportunity offers for landing them safe from Consular knowledge, the sufferings of the human cargoes are increased tenfold. (Garnett, 1891: 382-383)

Slaves, male and female, came from outside the Islamic lands. They were generally taken as war booty or purchased from slave traders, converted to Islam and integrated into Ottoman society (Peirce 1993, Sarris 1994). On the other hand, if an individual had converted to Islam before his/her capture he/she could not become a slave. If converted after enslavement he/she did not have the right to be freed. Moreover, according to Islamic law a slave of a Muslim was any non-Muslim, who had not gone to his "*door*" to ask for his protection or mercy prior to enslavement (Sarris 1994: 334).

Many western women argue that the enslavement of Muslims was forbidden in the Koran, however Blunt (1878) and Garnett (1891) repeatedly meet Muslim women and children of Circassian descent who were being sold to various harems due to the great demand for new slaves:

> Slavery, as now practiced in Turkey, is in direct contravention of the law of Islam, which only recognises as legitimate property non-Moslems who have fallen into the power of the True Believers during war. The vast majority of the slaves brought to Turkey at the present day [1891] are drawn from the Circassian race, who profess the creed of Islam; and their purchase and sale are consequently illegal acts which the Sheikh-ul-Islam himself would have some difficulty in justifying. The Turks, however, get over this difficulty by asking no questions concerning the origin of the women and children presented for sale by the slave-dealers. (Garnett 1891: 382-383)

In contrast to European demands regarding the immediate abolition of slavery, Adalet (1892) proposes the *gradual* abolition of slavery in Ottoman society, arguing that this would inevitably lead to the end of the multiethnic harem slavery system. In her article she appeals to her countrymen to no longer take Islamized slaves as their legal wives, but prefer to marry free Muslim women, Turkish girls who at least receive some education and are women they can respect, as opposed to the uneducated slaves they normally abuse.

She also claims that Turkish women are ashamed of being the daughters and grand-daughters of former slaves.Adalet (1892) argues that she is in favor of the abolition of slavery but feels the process must provide time for adaptation. She advises free Muslim men and women to stop buying new female and male slaves, stressing that they should, however, take care of the ones they already own and not throw them out into the street. She also insists on the immediate removal of all male children from the 'impure and degrading environment of the harems' while highlighting the necessity of promoting female education in order to save their race. The promotion of female education, she argues, would raise the level of the men in Ottoman society:'there is no hope for the Turk if women remain what they are and the social system continues to destroy the moral force of women and as a result that of the men' (Adalet 1892, 130).

The slave trade continued openly until the 20th century, although the Turkish government professed to share the anti-slavery views of England.The harem slavery institution was abolished in 1922 with Kemal Ataturk and the abolition of the Sultanate and *polygyny* was abolished in Turkey in 1926, with the adoption of Swiss Law (Kamberidou 2015).

4. 'THE YOKE OF SLAVERY':GREEK SLAVES

Hellenism by Areti

Western women who visited, resided or worked in the Ottoman harems observed their multiethnic synthesis using terms such as "slaves of all nations" (Celine 1849: 90-91), "women of different nations" and "unfortunate slaves" (Demont 1821b: 403).

Swiss traveler Louise Demont also refers to the harem inmates as women "buried alive" and "hapless victims" (1821a: 17-18). English governess Emmeline Lott (1866)—employed by the Viceroy of Egypt, Ismael Pacha, for his son and heir to the throne Ibrahim Pacha—having experienced harem life in Egypt and Constantinople also describes the women of different races and their daily life in the three royal harems using phrases like: 'melancholy madness' and 'the female mind immured''in the yoke of the harem' (Lott 1866 vol. 2, 289: 296).

**Wo-manity in the Harem
by Areti**

In expressing their solidarity, sympathy and understanding western women invent concepts or terms like 'Wo-manity' (Harvey 1871, 71) and'the yoke of slavery' (Celine 1849: 34), andin their writingsrepeatedly use terms such as womankind, liberty, freedom, emancipation and womanhood (Montagu 1718, Craven 1789,Lott 1866).

They also buy and liberate slaves. Celine (1849) and Louise Demont (1821a,b)—who accompanied Princess Caroline, then the future Queen of Great Britain in all her travels in 1814 -1820—both describe her custom or pattern of buying slaves, liberating them and providing them with the funds to return to their homelands. In 1816, at the slave market in Tunis, Princess Caroline bought and liberated 100 slaves, in Cairo she bought six female slaves and in Athens she bought three.

Regarding Greek slaves, Lady Montagu (1718) refers to the thousands that were taken from the Morea (Peloponnese) and Ann Vivanti (1865) to the thousands taken from the island of Scio (or Chio). During her visit to the island Vivanti observes:

> Ah! beautiful, unhappy Chio, so cruelly oppressed by the Turks, who fear the bold and daring spirit of its inhabitants, which has manifested itself so often in rebellion, and for which they have suffered so terribly. From the consequences of the massacre in 1822, when many thousands were killed, sold as slaves, or fled the country, it has not yet entirely recovered. (Vivanti 1865: 29-30)

Celine (1849) repeatedly expresses her gratitude to Caroline, the Princess of Wales, who saved her from slavery by adopting her 'on the 8th of December, 1814', otherwise her fate would have been that of the inhabitants of the Greek island of

Scio (Chio), who were massacred by the Turks in 1822 and thousands enslaved and sent to the Seraglio. When Celine visited the island after the massacre she remarked:

> Alas! Ill-fated country! [...] thou wert destined to fall under the barbarous scymitar of the Turk, whilst the powers of Europe looked on unmoved. Thou wert coolly sacrificed to the question of political equilibrium, and left to perish in spite of the noble patriotism of thy heroic sons. Islamism, that anomaly in the civilization of modern times, is implacable, and its leaden sceptre represses the genius of the noblest nation of the earth.Fallen Greece has become inured to the yoke of slavery, and her recent emancipation will not, for long lapse of years, restore her to the condition in which she was previously to the barbarous domination of the Turks.When I re-visited the land of my birth, unfortunate Scio was still bleeding from the wounds inflicted by her cruel oppressors. (Celine 1849: 34-35)

Emily Beaufort (1861) refers to the 2000 Greek women that were sold into slavery after the Turkish massacre on the Greek island of Kasos (or Caxo), stressing that the population which had been about 13,000 souls in 1820 was reduced to 3.000 and the island is only now, in 1859, beginning to recover from its losses.

5. THE CRYPTO-CHRISTIAN PACHA: SLAVE INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

One need reiterate here that slaves of both genders were socially integrated and assimilated into Ottoman society, eventually becoming free Muslims.For example, Anna Vivanti (1865), who was a guest in the harem of Ismael Pacha, the Governor-General of the island of Crete, informs us that he was a former slave of Greek descent, from the island of Chios (Scio) and she describes his rise to power from slave, to sultan's physician to Governor.

In examining Vivanti's detailed account, this researcher argues that there are reasons to believe that Ismael Pacha wasa *crypto-Christian*.

Specifically, we can make this hypothesis for the following reasons: firstly, if we take into account that the wife of Ismael Pacha was also of Greek descent, as were his father-in-law and his mother-in law; secondly, if we consider that he had not taken a second wife or a slave concubine; thirdly, he had no eunuchs in his harem as did all those of the Ottoman elite; fourthly, he was determined to find a husband for his daughter that would not take a second wife, perhaps another crypto-Christian.

One need also take into consideration that Ismael Pacha asked his daughter Leilla to play the piano and to sing some English and Greek songs as a special honour to his English guest, Anna Vivanti (1865). Additionally, his daughter's teacher and companion was an educated young Greek women, known as Elizabeth of Crete who is described as 'a warm patriot' who frequently advised the governor on political matters, specifically on measures or reforms he considered introducing. Moreover, as Vivanti (1865: 52) points out:

> He is respected and loved by all well disposed people. He encourages agriculture, makes roads, punishes crime, and judges justly. Under his mild and firm rule, the Greek inhabitants

have almost become reconciled to the hated dominion of the Turks; and have petitioned the Sublime Porte to prolong his Pashalik.

It is also important to also mention here that Leilla's teacher Elizabeth possessed several books, among which Vivanti noticed a Bible in Turkish and *Paul et Virginie*, a novel by Jacques Henri Bernardin de Saint Pierre who argues for the emancipation of slaves, attacked social divides and presents an Enlightenment view of religion.

Exceptionally illustrative of the *social mobility* of male slaves is Vivanti's account on the 'Governor-General of Crete':

> The history of this remarkable man is singular and romantic.He was born at Chio, of Greek parents, made a slave by the Turks when a boy of eleven years of age, and sold to a Turkish doctor in Constantinople. [...]When Ismael had grown to be a young man, he showed so much talent and ability, that his master most justly though his young assistant might, if he received an European education, become a competition of the French, German, and Italian doctors in Constantinople, who were more frequently consulted, and better paid by the wealthy Turks, than the practitioners of their own nation.He therefore sent the young man to Paris where he studied for five years. When he returned to Constantinople, he far surpassed his master's most sanguine expectations; and his great ability and success were soon generally acknowledged, and he rose in a short time to the dignity of physician to the late Sultan; and afterwards, when it was seen that his talents in other directions were equally remarkable, he became Governor of Provinces. (Vivanti 1865: 51-52)

On the other hand, on the topic of the *social mobility* of female slaves, the certain road to liberation was marriage.Ottoman Turks of different socioeconomic classes preferred to marry their Islamized slaves rather than women who were born free Muslims—as did all the sultan's from the 14th to the 20th centuries— for the following reasons: slaves had no families or relatives to interfere in family matters, protect their legal rights and social privileges or intervene in matters of the state when politically powerful families or dynasties were involved.Slaves had no demands or ambitions since they were trained in the harems to be obedient, submissive and servile. Marriages with slaves were much less expensive, as was divorce. It was less costly to divorce a wife who use to be a slave and did not have a family to protect her interests or legal rights.

6. SLAVE RIGHTS: 'THE HUMANITY OF THE TURKS'

> I know you will expect I should say something particular of the slaves; and you will imagine me half a Turk when I do not speak of it with the same horror other Christians have done before me.But I cannot forbear applauding *the humanity of the Turks* to these creatures; they are never ill-used, and their slavery is, in my opinion, no worse than servitude all over the world". (Lady Craven 1789)

Women travelers claim Ottoman slaves had rights: the right to be elevated; to change owners; to receive salaries or compensation; to be freed, etc. According to the female accounts slaves *enjoyed* the following rights or social privileges:

The right to change owner

Harem slaves, who were not pleased with their condition, had the right to demand to be resold and, when possible, to choose their new owners, although this right was not exercised regularly (Pardoe 1837, Walker 1886, Blunt 1878).

Slaves entitled to 'monthly salaries'

All harem inmates, in accordance with their master's or mistresses social class as well as their specific rank in the harem's hierarchy, received regular compensation: money, backsheesh, bribes, rewards, gratuities, tips, gifts, beautiful clothing and expensive jewelry. They also accumulated backshees and gifts from the female guests and visitors. Mary Adelaide Walker who lived over 40 years in the Ottoman territories claims they received 'monthly salaries' and 'bonuses', according to their position in the harem's pyramidical hierarchy (Walker 1886, vol. 2:64-65).

Slaves of the Ottoman elite accumulated great wealth from the regular "backsheesh" (Lott 1866, vol. 1: 66) and their *monthly salaries*, however they could not invest their money in land or property. The law specifically prohibited a slave from the right of ownership (Walker 1886, vol. 2). A slave could not legally bequeath her accumulated wealth to heirs, as an inheritance, unless her owners allowed it, or unless she gave everything away before her death. So what usually happened to her fortune? We can assume it went back to the master/mistress of the harem, if we consider Harvey's (1871) and Garnett's (1891) accounts regarding the imperial harem, according to which the accumulated fortunes of slaves, upon their death, went to the Seraglio.

Slave liberation

A slave, according to custom, had the right to demand her freedom after seven years of loyal service, and she usually got it, along with a marriage dowry and a husband (Blunt 1878, Walker 1886, Garnett 1891).

Slave manumission—formal emancipation from slavery, the act of slave owner freeing his/her slave—after seven years of service was a socio-religious custom which was not enforced by law. A prerequisite for liberation was conversion to Islam, including blind obedience, loyalty and marriage to a free Muslim.

There is no account about a slave being manumitted to marry a Christian or a non-Muslim or to return to her homeland. In fact, there is no account about a harem slave having maintained her religion, her national identity and her original name. The women who were freed were given dowries and married off to one of their owner's friends or family protégées, never losing touch with their former owners (patronage system and network). Moreover, no woman traveller or harem inmate refers to a slave buying her liberty, although the Koran allows slaves to buy their freedom.

> A slave is entitled to her liberty after seven years of bondage, and she generally gets it, and is dowered and married to a freeman, though sometimes a bad master will evade the law by selling her before the seven years have quite expired. But this case is a rare case, and the slave system in Turkey is, as a whole a widely different thing from American slavery. The only class who suffer much are the negressess. This is not the case with the Abyssinians or

the half-castes, who rank higher ... But the negresses are hardly worse off than the disabled slaves. (Blunt 1878, vol. 1: 126)

Children and especially slaves acquired at infancy, were not considered useful or productive until a later age. They had to be raised, trained and serve much longer before they were given 'their papers of freedom' (Blunt 1878, Garnett 1895). However, not all slave-owners respected this social custom. Many would sell their slaves in order not to lose their money and avoid marriage expenses. Slave-children were resold before the completion of their seven-year service.

Adoption, "a sacred duty"

The Turks believed that adoption was a sacred duty and many western women and harem inmates applauded and described this widespread custom, such as Montagu (1718), Pardoe (1837) Brassey (l880) Melek Hanum (1872), Lott (1866), Blunt (1878) and Garnett (1891).

Adopted slave children and infants were considered extremely fortunate, since they had become free Muslims, enjoying the legal rights, social status and privileges of their adopted parents. Western women meet many women in the harems of the Ottoman elite, who had been adopted. However, the most certain and prevalent means to liberation was not adoption, but marriage.

The certain road to liberation: marriage

> Many Turks, indeed, prefer to take a slave as a wife, as, in such case, there is no need to dread fathers, mothers, or brothers-in-law, and other undesirable relations. (Melek Hanum 1872: 160)

Marriages with Islamized slaves were socially and religiously acceptable in contrast to marriages with 'Christian dogs' or 'infidels' (Lott 1866: 150, Vivanti 1865: 53). Female Islamized slaves were 'generally given by fathers to their sons, to avoid the expense of marriage' (Blunt, 1878 vol. 1: 125), and not only.

Turkish author Adalet (1891) informs us that many Turkish families preferred marrying their daughters to liberated male slaves instead of Muslim men of a higher social rank. Why? When a family wanted to secure their daughter's social superiority, including her legal rights and social privileges, they chose a husband for her that use to be a slave so as to ensure he would respect her, not dare take a second wife, divorce her or abuse her.

The accounts reveal that Turkish men usually married slave concubines and not free Muslim women of their own social class. When a man married a free Muslim woman, he not only had to maintain her in the lifestyle she had been accustomed to before the marriage, but he had no idea what he was getting into. He could not see her face or converse with her until after the marriage. No wonder he preferred to liberate and marry his own slave concubine, having already *sampled the merchandise* (Kamberidou 2015).

Veiling by Areti

Walker (1886 vol. 2) argues that a Muslim wife had the legal right to ask for a divorce if her husband was unable to maintain her in the lifestyle she had been accustomed to before her marriage, whereas a former slave, having come from a much humbler social environment had no such rights. Harvey (1871) claims that the financial maintenance of a legal wife, even in Constantinople, was an expensive luxury. A legal wife had to be provided for in accordance to her socioeconomic status—with a separate dwelling or apartments, servants, slaves, coaches, money etc. (Harvey 1871).

As regards marriage, it is important to mention here that the European *institution of the old maid* was something absolutely unknown in Turkey, since an unmarried woman was severely stigmatized and girls were daily told that their sole purpose in life was marriage and childbearing. Parents encouraged the custom of early marriages, for both their sons and daughters, and in particular, placed greater pressure on girls to marry (Adalet 1892).

> The Turks generally marry early, from seventeen for the men, and from eleven for the girls—who all marry, so that an old maid like many other European institutions, is absolutely unknown in Turkey.This custom of early marriages is encouraged by parents as a check upon their sons contracting wild habits. (Blunt 1878, vol. 1: 79-81)

7. 'SLAVEDOM','EXTREME OF LUXURY' AND'HAPPY IGNORANCE'

"Perhaps the sight of European women does them more harm than good", argues Emily Beaufort (1861: 400) and advises against western women's interventions in the harems. In her description of Turkish women in Constantinople and referring to the harems of the Ottoman elite, she argues that the harem inmates are better off being left in their 'happy ignorance' (Beaufort 1861: 401), adding:

> Until the ideas of Turkish husbands and fathers are changed and elevated into something better for themselves and their families—until the whole corrupted system becomes healthier and sounder, we had better let alone the attempt to teach their women, with the conviction that their accustomed aimless and useless lives are far preferable in their unhappy case to greater knowledge, since, if they are ever so simple and silly there is at least a chance of their being more innocent. (Beaufort 1861: 401)

Emily Beaufort claims that many slave women, especially those of the Sultan's harem 'are petted up almost as much as their mistresses, and their Slavedom is sometimes the extreme of luxury' (Beaufort 1861: 399).In fact many western women claimed that the slaves were dressed so luxuriously and extravagantly that you could hardly ever distinguish who was the slave and who the mistress. Here, Beaufort (1861), with her play on words between *slavery* and *freedom* (slavedom), suggests that the harem inmates are better off in their *happy ignorance* rather than succumbing to western women's immorality:

> There is scarcely a hareem belonging to a tolerably rich person, where the ladies do not read French and play on the pianoforte, besides occupying themselves with many kinds of embroidery, and some even sing and draw…But these accomplishments are all learned from *French governesses* and *femmes de chambre*, with whom they are liberally supplied: and with these accomplishments they learn also the morals, or rather the *immorals*, of their teachers, who are invariably of a very disreputable class; 'progress' has indeed begun even in the Turkish hareems, but it is the *progress of vice* only; formerly they had not intelligence enough to be useful and good, they were at least in *happy ignorance* of many of the vices to which they are now addicted. (Beaufort 1861: 400-401)

8. RAPE AND ABORTION

When a Muslim husband had sexual relations with a slave that belonged to his wife, as her legal property, the wife had the right to divorce him. In most cases however, instead of divorcing her husband, the wife preferred to get rid of her slave:sell her to another harem or give her away as gift. What was considered an even worse punishment, according to (Harvey 1871), was to be given away as a gift to a harem of a lower social class.

Emmeline Lott (1866: 297) argues that free Muslim women—in particular those that were socially superior to their husbands—could kill their slaves as did one princess who had her slave's head served on a platter to her husband for dinner, as a punishment for his having sexual relations with her slave.

If a husband had sexual relations with a slave that belonged to his wife, it was the slave that was usually punished and not the husband!When a new slave entered a harem she was usually "taken advantage of by force", argues Melek Hanum (1872), the first wife of the Grand Vezier of Turkey. If the slave belonged to the mistress of the harem than her position was frightful.

It is significant to reiterate here that in Ottoman society, when a slave was "taken advantage of by force" it was not considered*rape*, an illegal act of violence or sexual assault, since a female slave was considered an *odalisques* (a concubine) and a male slave, respectively, an *oglani*: sexual objects that represented a political meaning or political control, specifically that of sovereignty and subjugation (Sarris 1994).

Nevertheless, if a husband had sexual relations with a slave that was his wife'slegal property, as a rule the slave was punished.If impregnated, according to Melek Hanum (1872:163), the wife usually arranged to terminate the pregnancy before selling her: 'her mistress, therefore, takes her to a mid-wife, in order to procure abortion.'

This was done in order to avoid future complications, viz. the husband recognizing the slave offspring.In Ottoman society slave offspring were considered legitimate, held the legal status of a free Muslim and and inherited their father's property in equal shares with the children of his four legal wives of which the Koran allows four.A slave that had conceived her master's offspring could not be resold. He was not obliged to take her as one of his legal wives, however, if he decided to keep her he had to provide her with certain social privileges, *elevating* her in the harem hierarchy. In general, when a slave conceived her master's offspring, he either liberated her by taking her as one of his legal wives or giving her away in marriage to a free Muslim (Blunt 1878, Walker 1886, Harvey 1871, Adalet 1890, Garnett 1895).

Childbearing was extremely important in Ottoman society. It provided social status, social mobility and political power when dynasties were involved (Kamberidou 2014b).Women enjoyed status and respect according to the number of children they had produced. A slave could not be resold even if her child died before she was favoured with a higher rank in the harem (Walker 1886, Garnett 1895).

Such a slave, although legally remaining in the status of slavery, had gained a social position because she had once been a mother, regardless of her child's death. She was distinguished with the honourable title of the 'mother of a bey' or 'mother of a hanum', (Walker 1886, vol.2: 72). According to custom, and not law, these slaves were usually provided with dowries and married off to free Muslim men.

Socially stigmatized and treated with disrespect were the women that had never conceived.As Lady Montagu (1718) aptly points out, in a Letter from Peran dated Jan. 4, 1716:

> In this country it is more despicable to be married and not fruitful, than it is with us to be fruitful before marriage [...] Without any exaggeration all the women of my acquaintance have twelve or thirteen children; and the old boast of having five-and-twenty or thirty a piece, and are respected according to the number they have produced.

9. PROTECTION AGAINST DIVORCE: THE NEKYAH

The legal position of free Muslim women—as opposed to that of Islamized slaves or slave concubines—was far superior to that of the women of Europe. The female accounts repeatedly observe that free Muslim women, *as far as the written law* was concerned, enjoyed greater legal rights than their European counterparts (Montagu 1718, Craven 1789, Pardoe 1837, Walker 1886, Blunt 1878, Adalet 1890, 1892).

Lucy Garnett (1895) argues that in the Islamic world, a (free) woman had the right to own, inherit and control property, to dispose of it as she wished and to plead her case in court. If her husband decided to divorce her, he had no rights to her property, wealth or belongings and was obliged to provide her with compensation (nekya and nafaka).Indeed, for all the aforementioned reasons men preferred to liberate and marry slave concubines who had no families to protect their legal rights.

European women claim that the legal rights of Muslim women were far superior to those of the Christian women of Europe, especially with regard to the laws concerning inheritance, marriage, divorce, alimony and property rights. In European societies,

it was not until the late 18th century and throughout the 19th century that social movements emerged demanding legal rights for women, like the right to divorce, own property and receive alimony. Consequently, a number of western women seem to envy Muslim women's legal rights concerning marriage and divorce. For example, Lady Craven (1789), who began her travels in 1786, after her divorce from William Craven, attacks abusive and tyrannical husbands in her introduction, as her husband had left her with no financial support and deprived her of her seven children!

Lady Craven claims that the behaviour of the Turks towards women is an example for all nations!As did Lady Montagu (1718) before her, Lady Craven argues that the legal position of Muslim wives is much superior to that of their western sisters, especially with regard to divorce and financial compensation. Lady Craven (1789) maintains that no woman enjoys so much 'Liberty' and security as does a Turkish wife, stressing that when a Turk is beheaded and his property confiscated, they never touch his wife's wealth, since the harem is considered a sacred place. She also observes that the Turkish lady has so much 'Liberty' that she is the happiest creature on earth:

> I think I never saw a country where women may enjoy so much Liberty, and free from all reproach as in Turkey. (Craven 1789: 205)

The legal position of free Muslim women was the same as it had been for the last thirteen hundred years, argues Lucy Garnett in her discussion on 'the real position of women in the religious system of Islam' (1895: 61), specifically on the rights of free Muslim women:

> As a daughter, she was entitled, on the decease of her father, to inherit his property in common with her brothers, in a proportion determined by law according to the number of his children. As a wife, she had the uncontrolled possession and disposal both of the wealth, which was hers before marriage, and of that, which may have subsequently been accrued to her. She could inherit property without the intervention of trustees, and dispose of it, as she pleased during her lifetime or at her death. [...] A husband is legally bound to support his wife, and her slaves or servants, according to her rank and his means, and to furnish her with a suitable residence. To quote from the Hedaya (or Guide, a commentary on Muslim law): 'It is incumbent on the husband to provide a separate apartment for his wife's habitation, to be solely and exclusively appropriated by her, because this is essentially necessary to her, and is therefore her due, the same as her maintenance. (Garnett 1895: 60-62).

The female accounts corroborate that a Muslim wife had to be provided for according to her socioeconomic status—with separate dwellings or apartments, servants, slaves, coaches, money, and not only!She had the legal right to ask for a divorce if her husband was unable to maintain her according to her rank, or in the lifestyle she had been accustomed to before the marriage. A serious obstacle to a man's facility to divorce, other than religious and social restrictions, including public opinion, was the custom of the nekyah (Harvey 1871, Melek Hanum 1873, Blunt 1878 vol. 1, Walker 1886, vol.2).

The nekyah was a marriage contract agreed upon before the marriage, during the betrothal ceremony, where they appointed a sum of money to be paid to the

wife in case of divorce. Without the payment of this money, a divorce could not be had legally. This contract protected a woman by maintaining her in the position of legal wife, for if her husband decided to divorce her, he would be obliged by law to pay her the nekyah settlement as well as the nafakah, which was a three-month alimony payment, a sum determined according to social class. It was the 'husband's marriage present' (Melek Hanum 1872: 372) for the woman's maintenance during the three months following the divorce.

In her article entitled *Turkish Marriages viewed from a Harem,* Adalet (1892) argues that women who are divorced are not socially stigmatized in Turkey:

> In Turkey a divorce has not all the weight attached to it by Europeans. A woman divorced from her husband is not treated with contumely, even in the highest classes, and often marries again, this being caused by the facility with which a man may divorce his wife. There is no court to go to, and no trial to ensue.[...] I know a lady who was divorced from five husbands, and is now living with her sixth, without having incurred any worse censure than that which an unaccommodating temper must bring to all who indulge in it. (Adalet 1892: 136-137)

As for the much-discussed question of the custody of children, Adalet (1892) stresses that this was settled for Muslims at the outset by Mohammed, who decreed that a son must remain with his mother so long as he requires her care and a daughter until she is of a marriageable age. If a child was born to a couple after their separation, and the mother nursed it, the father was required to pay her for doing so; and, if wealthy, he was required to spend proportionately for the maintenance of the mother and nurse out of his plenty.

Not all western women were envious of Muslim women's legal rights. Many were shocked by the facility with which a Muslim husband could capriciously divorce his wife three times by simply just pronouncing a few words, even in her absence and if he changed his mind he could reclaim her again with the same ease. On the other hand the wife had to have a legal reason to ask for a divorce, otherwise she would forfeit her right to any provision for her future maintenance (Melek Hanum 1873, Blunt1878).If a husband divorced his wife a third time, he could not re-claim her with the same ease.

> A man simply states to his wife that he has divorced her, on which she will go away, and the man having repeated the same to the cadi [judge] will have an act of divorce written, which he will send to her.If it is the first or second time that this occurs he may take her back again without any formality ensuing, and it will be only after the third that she will be lost to him forever. Seeing the ease with which this may be done, it is not surprising if men abuse it and divorce their wives for a fault which is hardly worthy of a harsh word [...] for a badly cooked dinner or an unsewed button, knowing very well that if he repents of it he may have her back before evening. (Adalet 1892: 136-137)

How did men get around this obstacle? According to Blunt (1878 vol. 2: 83),when a husband divorced his wife a third consecutive time, with the third degree or 'formula' of divorce stigmatized in the Koran as *Telakisalisseh,* in order to reclaim her, she had to marry another man, who would divorce her immediately after the marriage, after having spent the night with her. Only then could she

remarry her first husband. As a result, men who abused the divorce law would select discreet friends or hire poor men to marry their former wives and divorce them the next day, after the first wedding night.

Melek Hanum (1873), speaking from her own personal experience, claims that marriage and divorce were striking illustrations of the demoralizing tendency of Turkish institutions. She argues that violations of women's rights were daily phenomena.

After her divorce, her husband the Grand Vezir of Turkey, Kibrizli-Mehemet-Pasha, deprived her of all her legal rights: her nekya money, her nafaka, her property, her private fortune and her trousseau, and sent her into exile in the depths of Asia Minor:

> In Turkey, as in every other country where the arbitrator takes the place of the law, society is at the mercy of the powerful and of the greedy. In such countries everything is permitted to those who have power. The divine law, public opinion, all are nil; the only recognized law is the caprice of those who govern. (Melek Hanum 1872: 372)

Despite the written law protecting women's rights, the privileges of divorce so indulgently permitted to a man, were in reality entirely beyond the reach of a woman, whom no human power could release from her nehkyah vows without her husband's free consent. Not only did a wife need her husband's consent or approval to get a divorce, but she was required to state a reason, in contrast to the men who needed no excuse and could divorce their wives even in their absence by simply announcing it in public or before a witness, as did Melek Hanum's husband.

Women were forced to stay in their marriages as it was 'preferable for a wife to live unhappily with her husband rather than to leave him and starve,' argues Adalet (1892: 136-137).Women knew that if they were the ones to initiate the divorce they would lose their nekyah money/settlement/dowry which was necessary for their maintenance, their three-month compensation (the nafakah), their private fortunes and their trousseau (Melek Hanum 1873, Blunt 1878 vol. 2).

> It appears that women's rights are better established under the Mussulman than under the European law [...] But if from the written law we turn to the living one, from theory to practice, it is there one sees of what little use for the woman are her pretended rights. (Melek Hanum 1872: 352)

After thirty years of harem life, Melek Hanum (1872) escapes from Turkey with her daughter Aisheh Hanum, whose husband had also divorced her and deprived her of her legal rights. Both women, escaped from their harem, in December 1865, concealed under the cloaks and veils of their servants, what Melek Hanum calls a *Turkish woman's dress* or the *yasmak* and *feredje* (veil and coat). In this case, the veil, a metaphor for women's subjection is now reversed to stand for freedom.As soon as the two women went on board 'the America', the ship leaving Constantinople for Athens, according to Melek Hanum's account, they relieved themselves of their *oppressive coverings* and rejoiced that they were finally free from this restriction on the human body,finally free to breath the air, free to look at the sky and the sun, free to move around without the suffocating coverings, free to admire the beauties of nature, stressing that this was an oppressive custom and Mohammed

made a great mistake, forbidding women appear unveiled in front of the opposite sex(Melek Hanum 1872: 5-7).

10. VEILING : 'FINALLY FREE TO BREATH THE AIR!(MELEK HANUM 1872)

Finally Free to breath by Areti

The female accounts repeatedly confirm that no Muslim man had the right to look upon the unveiled face of a woman that belonged to his faith, whether free or slave, other than his own mother, his wives, his slaves, his daughters, his sisters, his nieces and in some instances, if permitted, his sister-in-laws (Demont 1821a,Meun 1822, Blunt, 1878, Garnett 1891,Adalet 1895).

Only one account, so far, upholds that the one and only Muslim woman in the Ottoman Empire allowed to be seen in public unveiled was the Valide Sultan, the mother of the reigning sultan, and this during the sultans procession to the mosque. According to Lady Brassey, as a son was allowed to see the face of his mother, the people were allowed to look upon the face of their 'General Mother' (Brassey 1880: 104).

Many western women took advantage of this covering of the female face and body to circulate freely and avoid harassment. They'masquerade' as Muslim women in order to visit the mosques, wearing what they call a *Turkish woman's dress* or the *yasmak* and *feredje* (veil and coat), associated here to spatial relations as it enabled them to integrate into Ottoman society, increasing their mobility in public and social spaces beyond the home or the harem, i.e. sacred space (Kamberidou 2015). For example, late in the evening during the Ramadan English author and artist Julia Pardoe (1837), disguised as a Turkish woman, visited two mosques in Constantinople, despite the warnings of her Turkish host that if she were discovered 'she would be dismembered' (Pardoe l837: 377).

Fanny Janet Blunt (1878) frequently dressed as a Turkish woman during her twenty year residency in Ottoman territories in order to visit the mosques, avoid harassment and circulate freely, as did Lady Craven (1789) and Lady Montagu (1718) before her. This 'Turkish costume' (Montagu 1718) which made a woman look like 'a package' (Belgiojoso 1855: 1043), 'a walking mummy' (Craven 1879) or a 'live mummy' (Skene 1847: 119) also provided women with protections and anonymity.

Western women describe the yasmak or yashmak as a veil, hood or face covering that concealed the nose, the mouth and the chin. The feridjee, which they also call feradjah, feridjes or ferigee, they describe as a sort of cape, coat, cloak or folding mantle that covered a woman's body entirely. Some claim that women used this attire as'a disguise' and'a masquerade' to meet their lovers, beginning with Lady Montagu (1718) who describes it as a 'perpetual masquerade', a symbol of sexual liberty enabling women, through anonymity,to follow their inclinations:

> They have more Liberty than we have… It is impossible for a jealous husband to know his wife when he meets her; and no man dare touch or follow a woman in the street.This perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery.The most usual method of intrigue is, to send an appointment to the lover to meet the lady at a Jew's shop, which are as notoriously convenient as our Indian houses…Upon all I look upon the Turkish women as the only free people in the empire. (Montagu 1718)

Montagu (1718) enjoyed veiling herself, since paradoxically the yashmak enabled her a freedom of movement denied to unveiled Christian females of Ottoman society.In her letters we learn that even the Christian female subjects of the Port had to cover their faces in order to avoid being molested, insulted or offended. According to Montagu (1718), in order for non-Muslim women to walk about freely in Peran, the Frank (European) district of Constantinople, they had to wear this 'Turkish costume', something they resented. Many European female residents in Peran had never really ever seen it, such as the wife of the French Ambassador who was returning to France.

Lady Craven (1789) continues this allegory or symbolism of the veil, claiming, that it not only allowed women sexual freedom and opportunities to meet their lovers, but it also provided a means for their lovers to enter the harems disguised as women:

> As to women, as many if not more than men, are to be seen in the streets—but they look like *Walking Mummies*. A large loose robe of dark green cloth covers them from the neck to the ground, over that a large piece of muslin, which wraps the shoulders and the arms, another which goes over the head and eyes; judge, Sir, if all these coverings do not confound all shape or air so much, that men or women, princesses and slaves, may be concealed under them.I think I never saw a country where women may enjoy so much Liberty, and free from all reproach as in Turkey. (Craven, 1789: 205)

Lucy Garnett(1895: 67) argues that this'disguise' enables a woman to go abroad freely and incognita while keeping her safe from insult or molestation, 'whether on foot in the streets, in train or tram, or on the deck of a Bosphorus steamboat':

> The unveiled Christian women and girls of the cities are, however, on the other hand, even when escorted by duenna or servant, exposed not only to impertinent remarks, but often to grave-insult. (Garnett 1895: 67)

The female accounts also reveal that harem inmates—risking death—used this dress (the veil and cape) to escape from the harems and from Turkey, as did Melek Hanum (1878) and her daughter Aisheh Hanum. Mary Frances Felicia Skene (1847)

also describes the adventure of a former Greek slave, who escaped with her baby from the harem of Muhtar Pacha, the son of Ali Pacha of Ioannina, after being accusedof conspiring to assassinate Muhtar. She initially went to Alexandria, and after the death of Ali Pacha and his two sons, she returned to Greece and was employed by Felicia Skene's family in Athens from 1838 to 1845.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This article has shown that the multiethnic harem slavery institution was the Ottoman system's primary *socialization agent* and an indispensable part of its self-reproduction. It has contributed to the discourse on sexual slavery, primarily through the first-hand accounts of western women and harem inmates of the 19th century. It has shown that multiethnic–multiracial slavery was vital for the Ottoman economy and social system and provided a means of social integration-assimilation and social mobility: status and political power. Sexual slavery was a central part of the slave system and slaves of both genders were easily integrated into Ottoman society, eventually becoming free Muslims.

Mainly *through the eyes* of western women and harem inmates of the 19th century, corroborating that the harem system was based on slavery, this article has contributed additional evidence confirming that:firstly, the expansionist views of Islam and the institution of slavery resulted in the multiethnic composition of the Ottoman households: harems and selemliks. Secondly, an Ottoman harem—especially that of the elite and so-called middle-class—was made up of women and children from different nations: Islamized slaves, liberated slaves and descendants of slaves, including islamized eunuchs. Thirdly, the Ottoman elite was responsible for the preservation of slavery until the early 20th century and, as a result, the prolongation of polygyny and the large-scale castration of African boys, which was another dehumanizing aspect of the Ottoman slavery institution.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1 The Greek artist Areti Kamperidis, born in Toronto Canada and raised in Boston, MA., has been living in Athens, Greece since 1980. She studied Fine Arts at Southeastern College and Sociology at Deree College, the American College of Greece. Email: areti.art@hotmail.com

2 The Orient, originally referring to Egypt and the Levant, has changed in scope several times. It included a vast region with a multitude of social structures, cultures and countries (Middle East, Asia etc.), especially during the Ottoman Empire when it included the Mediterranean region as well (Sarris 1994).

3 The multiethnic and multilingual Ottoman Empire, with Constantinople as its capital since 1453, for six centuries controlled vast lands in the Mediterranean region. In the 16th and 17th centuries it controlled much of Southeast Europe, Western Asia, the Caucasus, the Horn of Africa, North Africa, and so forth (Sarris 1994, Peirce 1993).

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Women and ISIS: the depiction of female recruits in the five most read newspapers in Catalonia

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INTRODUCTION

This article analyzes how the five most popular newspapers in Catalonia represent women who join the Islamic State (ISIS). The first part of the study has the objective of defining the importance of this topic in the news agenda and from what perspective journalists cover it. The second part analyzes whether there is a difference between the way the media portray female and male recruits, as well as the reasons why men and women join the organization and their roles in it. Finally, the article focuses specifically on different cases of women connected to the organization, published in these newspapers during the first three months of 2015.

The study analyses 120 articles about men and women linked to the Islamic State (ISIS) published in the five most widely read newspapers in Catalonia from the 1st of January to the 31st of March of 2015. According to the General Survey of Media (EGM, in Spanish), these newspapers are *La Vanguardia* (697,000 readers), *El Periódico de Catalunya* (488,000 readers), *El Punt Avui* (143,000 readers), *El País* (148,000 readers in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands) and *Ara* (128,000 readers).

From the total number of articles, 58 are about women who have a connection with ISIS, either because they wanted to join the organization, because they were already working for it, or because they were related to the organization somehow. An example of this last group is the Al-Qaeda fighter Sajida al-Rishawi. ISIS asked the Jordanian government for her freedom in exchange for the pilot Moaz al-Kasasbeth.

The rest of the articles are about male recruits or recruits in general. They talk about attacks they have carried out, the profile of an *average ISIS recruit* and ISIS's recruitment techniques. These articles have been included in the research for two reasons. The first is to establish whether there are differences between the way male and female recruits are depicted; the second is to verify whether the newspapers included in their general reports the reasons why women want to join ISIS, and what techniques are used by that organization to recruit them specifically.

Since male recruits are not the main subjects of interest, the analysis focuses mostly on the 58 articles about women and ISIS. These articles are also the basis for the analysis of the case studies. The rest of the articles will be mentioned in order to provide further understanding of the information compiled.

1. WOMEN AND ISIS IN THE NEWS

Most of the articles about women and ISIS were written based on one of six main events: the attacks that took place in Paris from the 7th to the 9th of January; the execution of the Jordanian pilot Moaz al-Kasasbeh on the 3rd of February; the manifesto on the role of women in ISIS by all the women of the Al-Khanssaa Brigade on the 6th of February; the escape of three British teenagers to Syria on the 23rd of February; the arrest of a woman living in Rubí (Catalonia) at El Prat Airport in March; and the arrest of eight recruits – two of them, women – in different Spanish towns on March 14th.

The rest of the events include: an interview with Anna Erelle, a French journalist who adopted the role of a Muslim girl in order to investigate ISIS recruitment techniques; the profile of a woman from Chile who was arrested by the Spanish police in December of 2014; and the escape of two German teenagers and of four British doctors, both escapes taking place in March 2015.

Newspaper sections

Most of the articles were published in a section covering international affairs. The second biggest group of articles was included in a section that deals with domestic affairs, such as "Spain" (*El País*) and "Politics" (*La Vanguardia, El Periódico, El Punt-Avui, Ara*). Finally, two articles from *El Periódico* and two articles from *Ara* were printed in the "Topic of the Day" section; and there is one article, written by the director of *La Vanguardia,* that focuses on women and ISIS.

Table 1. Distribution of the articles in different newspapers sections

	La Vanguardia	El Periódico	El Punt Avui	El País	Ara
International	7	9	9	7	6
National	4	4	1	4	2
Topic of the Day	-	2	-	-	2
Opinion	1	-	-	-	-

From the total sample of articles, four of them were in-depth reports, and nineteen of them were either short news pieces or short appendixes to longer articles.

Sources

In the International section, different sources were mentioned 101 times. The most frequently used sources were those connected to governments and those coming from ISIS members, families and their environment. Experts were quoted nine times, and members of religious communities only twice.

Table 2. Frequency of use of different types of sources in international news

Members of the government, state representatives	22
ISIS members, family, other people related to them	19
Police, investigators, intelligence units	16
Media	10
Experts and scholars	9
ISIS	9
Family of ISIS victims	6
Army	3
Judges, attorneys	2
Members of religious communities	2
Analysts	1
Diplomats	1
Al Qaeda	1

In articles published under domestic affairs sections, different kinds of sources were quoted 38 times. The most frequently named sources were those related to the police or the court system, the families of the women connected to ISIS, and sources linked to the government. In that last group, the Ministry of the Interior is the one that was the most frequently mentioned.

Table 3. Frequency of use of different types of sources in national news

Police, investigators, intelligence units	12
Judges, attorneys	9
ISIS members, family, other people related to them	8
ISIS	7
Experts and scholars	1
Media	1

Most of the articles dealing with women and ISIS on a national level cover police arrests. Therefore, it is normal that judges, police or the intelligence services are the most quoted sources, in addition to the families of these women. As far as articles found in International sections are concerned, although most of the articles are about affairs in which the police are involved, the fact that the foreign correspondents are not specialized in crime, but rather the country itself, and therefore deal with different types of sources could explain these differences.

Police sources are also very frequently quoted in articles found in the "Topic of the Day" section, only outnumbered by experts. The aim of the section is to provide in-depth knowledge about one topic, so it is understandable that experts have a more prominent role than in other kinds of news articles. In the article written

by the director of *La Vanguardia*, police sources and experts are, again, the most frequently quoted.

Table 4. Frequency of use of different types of sources in "Topic of the Day" news and opinion articles

Experts and scholars	6
Police, investigators, intelligence units	5
ISIS members, family, other people related to them	2
Members of the government, state representatives	2
Judges, attorneys	1
Media	1

During the course of the research, in addition to the 120 articles compiled, another seventy articles were spotted. They report on Islam in European societies, the role of religion in Europe and on violent Islamic extremism and international affairs. Most of them were written due to the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo*, when the question about the integration of Muslims in France and in other European countries was on the table. Although they haven't been analyzed here, a quick reading of these articles offers a more diverse range of sources. People from Muslim communities – and other religions as well – and experts have a more prominent role in these articles.

2. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE NEWS COVERAGE OF MALE AND FEMALE RECRUITS

No articles explaining why Western women join ISIS were published in the three months researched. Due to the fact that women are getting more and more involved in ISIS networks in European countries, every month the media wrote about female recruits, in most cases explaining their backgrounds and the role they had inside organizations connected to ISIS. By gathering all this information and putting it into context, we can get a clearer picture of what kind of women are joining ISIS and why.

Why European youngsters join ISIS

The articles explaining why young people join ISIS make no significant distinctions between men and women. *Ara* mentions that the organization publishes propaganda for women "that emphasizes their role as mothers, wives and cooks" (February 21st) and that ISIS offers women "an ideal life without the contradictions they face in Europe" (March 14th).

Most of the reports point out that the radicalization of young people takes place on the Internet. They highlight the effectiveness of ISIS propaganda at reaching Western youngsters with esthetics related to videogames, TV shows and rap songs, even when they are depicting the most brutal acts. One article in *El País* (January 11th) concludes that ISIS's success is due to a combination of factors that are closer

to Western culture than to Islamic culture: "These young people are the product of a Western society in which image is fundamental and where it is difficult to live in anonymity. Even with small amount of talent, you can be a star." The article also points out the ability of ISIS recruiters to reach people with different interests even when these interests, initially, are not linked to Islam.

Some articles support the theory that ISIS exploits the lack of Islamic culture of European Muslim youngsters and offers them a new Muslim identity. According to an article published in *La Vanguardia* on the 28th of February, "the new believer adopts a system of values that are supposed to be traditional and that make him different from the rest of the world." According to the analysts quoted, frugality, decency – in opposition to the Western vision of sexuality – and spirituality are some of these values. The article also states the need to study why women join ISIS.

By reading the articles analyzed, it is harder to understand why women join ISIS. "Police forces have detected an increasing number of women who travel into one of the most insecure areas of the world to be logistical and emotional support for the jihadists. This represents a failure of Spanish society, which has identified gender equality, women's rights and the fight against sexist violence as being among its main goals," says an editorial from *El País* published on the 3rd of January.

Protecting women's rights is commonly used to oppose ISIS – which uses rape as a weapon of war, enslaves Yazidi women and promotes forced marriages – although some Western societies – including Spanish society, where at least 50 women are killed every year – are far from having achieved gender equality. As is seen in some ISIS propaganda targeting women – like the *Dabiq* magazine section "To our sisters" or the all-female Al-Khanssaa Brigade's Manifesto – the two narratives have their own views about women's rights and the roles of men and women in society.

In general, the image of a submissive Muslim woman dressed in a niqab veil is present in most of the articles. Even when ISIS male fighters appear fully covered and dressed in black clothes, this fact is not highlighted in the same way as it is when images of women marching with weapons are released.

Erin Saltman, an expert on political radicalization, told the digital magazine *Vox* on February 18, 2015 that she sees "three reasons that ISIS may be appealing to some women in the West." She explains that the first two are gender-neutral messages that reach women as well as men, like "the adventure narrative" and the humanitarian appeal, "which presents the ISIS struggle as an effort that began as a fight against Bashar al-Assad's government." The third is the "romance narratives", some of them aimed at women. However, Saltman adds that these narratives are also addressed to men and talk about "how foreign fighters are marrying young, nubile, local women."

This romantic appeal to men is mentioned in an article published in *La Vanguardia* on March 15th, but, in general, it is not stressed as a main reason for men to go to Syria if indeed it is mentioned at all. In contrast, the romantic appeal factor is pointed out as being the main reason for women to leave Europe. It is also strong in the depiction of important recruits like Hayat Boumeddiene. She was Amedy Coulibaly's girlfriend, but she also had an important role in the preparation of the Paris attacks in January 2015, and was very active in Islamic extremist circles.

Another common trend spotted in the articles is to depict ISIS recruitment techniques as being those used by a sect. In this case, the main goal is to abduct the

weakest people, those who are isolated, and force them to break off relations with friends and relatives.

The role of women in ISIS

The articles about female recruits published in the five newspapers during the first three months of 2015 depict women being recruiters, wanting to marry fighters, perpetrating attacks or travelling to Syria due to humanitarian reasons. Since all the women arrested in Spain were recruiters, this profile is the most widely represented in the news. The other depiction is that of a woman who joins ISIS to marry a fighter.

According to the newspapers analyzed, ISIS is interested in female recruits for two reasons. The first is that the organization needs women so they can give sexual pleasure to fighters. The second is that women can have children who will become inhabitants of the new Islamic State

The contrast between what women – as well as men – are supposed to do once they arrive in Syria, and what they finally end up doing, is described quite frequently in the five newspapers. They especially point out the roles of submissive housewives or sexual slaves that are imposed on women. *Ara* reported on fights between Syrian and Iraqi recruits on the one hand, and the foreign recruits on the other, on March 14th, and *El Periódico* wrote about Moroccan male recruits who wanted to come back home.

3. CASE STUDIES

Hayat Boumeddiene

Hayat Boumeddiene is the girlfriend of Amedy Coulibaly, the man who assaulted a kosher grocery store in January of 2015. *El Periódico* and *El País* reported that Boumeddiene helped her boyfriend to prepare the attack and was the connection with the Kouachi brothers, the killers of the *Charlie Hebdo* staff members who died. Most of the newspapers reported on her escape to Syria as well as on her childhood, when she lost her mother and had to live with several foster families. According to *El Pais*, "she was not a difficult person, but she was very religious."

"An evil couple" is the headline of Boumeddiene and Coulibaly's profile in *El Periódico*. The article highlights that Boumeddiene lost her job because she wore a niqab, a fact that it is also pointed out in a profile of her in *El País* ("From wearing a bikini to wearing a burka"). The journalist in *El Periódico* writes that Boumeddiene was far from being a "submissive girlfriend" and joined Coulibaly in most of his activities, including shooting practice and meetings with jihadists. Another profile in *El Periódico,* written the previous day, reports that Boumeddiene was Coulibaly's girlfriend and that she lived in her boyfriend's apartment while he was in jail.

El Periódico's portrayal of Saïd Kouachi explains that his appearance didn't fit the Western image either (he wore a djellaba), but this fact was not highlighted in any of the other articles. As a matter of fact, in other profiles of male jihadists, the fact that these men ended up growing their beards and wearing a djellaba is

explained, but never highlighted with the same importance as that of women who wear a niqab.

The terrorist

Sajida al-Rishawi was one of the first women to become a suicide bomber in Iraq. This fact is reported by *Ara* newspaper. According to *El Punt Avui*, she was "one of the most important female Islamic fighters in the world," and *El Periódico* explains that she "was important to ISIS." The Jordanian government executed her, as a way of avenging the death Moaz al-Kasasbeh, burned alive by ISIS. A male terrorist was also executed, but no newspaper gathered as much information as they did in the case of al-Rishawi. Most of the newspapers explain what al-Rishawi did in order to get arrested by Amman and illustrate her profile with a picture of her in jail.

Two stories of two mothers

The most shocking fact about Samira Yerou – arrested by the Spanish police in March under the accusation of being a very important female recruiter – is that she indoctrinated her own son. "I'll visit you after I cut the policeman's throat" is one of the sentences she made him say when talking on the phone with an ISIS member. That sentence is also the headline of *Ara* and *El Periódico*'s articles. The conversations between Samira and the ISIS fighter are also quoted in *La Vanguardia* and *El País*.

According to the latter newspaper, her son was an important asset when recruiting women. This newspaper is the one that paints the most accurate picture of Samira, who told her husband that ISIS fighters were "real men." Samira's understanding of masculinity is similar to that stated in Al-Khanssaa's manifesto. Her process of radicalization is not very different from the ones experienced by some men reported on in the press. This process began after travelling to Morocco and, once back in Spain, she spent a lot of time alone surfing the Internet.

The director of *La Vanguardia* wrote in March 2015 that it was difficult to understand "why a married woman, with her three-year-old child by her side, wanted to join ISIS." He added that this attitude was also difficult to understand in the case of another mother arrested for the same reason three months earlier.

The other mother was Francis Peña, a Chilean women living in Barcelona. Under the headline "Single mother in the jihad," *La Vanguardia* describes her as a woman who converted to Islam in order to satisfy the family of her child's father. Despite this effort, she didn't get on well with his family and ended up leaving them and going out with some Muslim friends, "one of whom had extremist ideas," according to Francis' family.

The second half of the article explains her physical transformation by quoting neighbors who said that she dressed "like a beetle". The author of the report says that wearing a niqab is not synonymous with being a jihadist, "but most of the women recruited by ISIS have experienced a deliberate transformation of their way of dressing that has led them to cover themselves completely." The article concludes that, according to the experts, ISIS acts like a sect and tries to enlist the weakest.

The aim of the article is to convey what it is considered the story of a non-typical profile for a jihadist. Francis is a Latin-American single mother who works as a nurse. She remained in Spain because of her son, and she wanted to start life over by working as a nurse again and living with her aunt who has a house in Barcelona.

The motherhood of Samira and Francis is a central part of the construction of their profiles in the press. The parenthood of the male recruits mentioned in the articles analyzed was stated in two cases. The first one is Saïd Kouachi. *El Periódico* only mentions that he has two children, but does not say anything else about what influence the fact that he is a father has on his Islamic extremist activities. On March 16th, *Ara* published an article about the arrest of a recruitment group. The fact that one of the members recorded his own son saying that he wanted to be a jihadist and sending kisses to the ISIS leader is only stated in the second column of the article.

According to *Ara* and *El País*, most of the Spaniards that joined ISIS initially were men between 20 and 40 years old, and now the organization is focusing on recruiting women and younger men. Thus, it is possible that none of the male recruits arrested during the first months of 2015 was a father. To see if the press highlights fatherhood as frequently as it does motherhood, we should take a look at newspapers from 2012, 2013 and 2014.

What women 'really' do in ISIS

"The good jihadist" and "Married when they're nine years old" are the headlines chosen by *El Punt Avui* and *El Periódico* to analyze the manifesto on women and ISIS, released by the all-women Al-Khanssaa Brigade. The manifesto is used in both articles to explain what women are going to find in the territories ruled by ISIS when they join the organization. The article from *El Periódico* begins with the story of a Syrian woman raped by an ISIS fighter after being forced to marry him and continues by explaining what the manifesto says about the role of women in ISIS. The article concludes with some quotes from a leaflet in which ISIS allowed its fighters to capture women and rape them. In *El Punt Avui*, the manifesto is used as a proof that the images of ISIS women fighting and holding weapons featured on the Internet are propaganda. It also states that this manifesto is basically addressed to women living in the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia, and says that what ISIS wants women to be is "submissive housewife." According to the article, what ISIS gives women is a "perversion of feminism," because it defends the role of women in society, but always inside the limits imposed by the organization. That idea is also stated in the article from *El Periódico*.

As a matter of fact, the manifesto redefines the role of women in the new society as the opposite to the role that these women have in Western societies – or the one that societies expect them to have. The patriarchal discourse of ISIS uses feminism as a way to depict the failure of Western patriarchal discourse: because of gender equality, the roles of men and women have been diluted to the point that men are not *real men* and women are not *real women*. What's more, in this manifesto the Al-Khanssaa Brigade uses the same technique that Islamophobic movements use when attacking Islam: they criticize women's image. Beauty

salons and plastic surgery are shown as proof of the oppression that the materialistic West is imposing on women.

Although the manifesto is quite revealing, in order to know exactly what model ISIS offers to Western women, a thorough analysis of the Dabiq's section *To Our Sisters* must be made. The aesthetics, the language and the images of that section are closer to those that can be found in any typical women's magazine than what is stated in the manifesto.

In neither these two articles, nor in the rest of 120 articles, is the role of ISIS all-female brigades, Al-Khanssaa and Umm Al-Rayan depicted. According to an article in *Vox* magazine, "They do not fight on the front lines of battle, but serve primarily in a policing role. They enforce civilian women's compliance with ISIS's strict rules of Islamist morality, including wearing a full niqab and not going out in public without a male escort. There are also reports of ISIS female fighters accompanying male fighters at checkpoints and on home raids." Another article published in December 2014, in *Foreign Policy Journal* highlights the important role of these two all-female brigades in oppressing local communities in Syria and Iraq.

The photograph that accompanies *El Punt Avui's* article shows an Iraqi women giving food to some children, and *El Periódico* illustrates the story with a photograph of ISIS fighters marching.

The case of three British teenagers

Internet is, once again, the place where three British teenagers encountered the ideas that led them to run away from home and flee to Syria. Most of the articles focus on the fact that the police were not able to foresee their escape, since the three teenagers were interrogated in 2014 after one of their friends followed the same path. In addition to this, one of the three students contacted a woman who was living with ISIS days before their escape. The fact that the three girls were excellent students in a prestigious school is also highlighted.

In this case, their idealism and the fact that they didn't know their religion well were the reasons for their radicalization, reported the newspapers. What will happen to them once they are in Syria is another matter of concern. According to *El País*, the three girls wanted to join a group called "jihadist girlfriends." That romantic component is highlighted in *El Punt Avui*, too, whose headline for one of the articles about the three girls is "Seduced by ISIS."

Two women arrested in an operation against ISIS recruitment group

In March 2015, the police arrested eight people in Ávila, Ciudad-Real and different towns in Catalonia on the accusation of being part of an ISIS recruitment group. Of the eight of them, two were women. One was a mother of six, and the other one was eighteen and "was less radical than the other woman only in the way she dressed," according to *La Vanguardia*. Most of the articles focused on the fact that the organization was recruiting more women and young men than before. They explained this new trend by saying that ISIS needed citizens to live in the places ruled by their fighters.

Inside ISIS

On March 22nd, *El País* published an interview with Anna Erelle, a freelance journalist who adopted a false identity and contacted an important member of ISIS. She made him believe that she was a twenty-year-old Muslim woman who wanted to marry him. Erelle, who is under the protection of the French police forces, tells her story in the book *In the Skin of a Jihadist*.

She wanted to know why young European women "travel 40,000 kilometers, wear a burka and hold a Kalashnikov." However, the article does not provide information about these reasons. As a matter of fact, the conversation focuses on why Erelle did the report, how she did it, and the consequences she is facing for doing so. The interview also describes the personality of Abu Bilel, Erelle's ISIS fiancé.

In the book, she builds up her alter ego, Mélodie, according to what information she hopes to get from a person who is close to al-Bagdadi, ISIS leader. She adopts the role of a lost Muslim girl who falls in love with Bilel and is a little bit naïve, something that helps Erelle to obtain useful information from him. Most of the explanations in the book concerning the reasons why women join ISIS come from what she learned previously from talks with women who wanted to join this organization, her experience in forums on the internet, and the emotional attachment that her alter ego establishes with Abu Bilel. Again, the idea of romance is what seems to stimulate the desire to join ISIS, combined with the fact that she is a lost girl seeking her place in the world.

The information provided by Erelle about the way the organization recruits and the routes to go to Syria is very useful. As a matter of fact, it allegedly helped to dismantle two recruitment groups in Albertville and Strasbourg.

Other cases

The escape of two German teenagers and four British doctors who wanted to join ISIS in March was covered in two short articles that only provided basic information about their age and how they escaped. The case of the British doctors is the only one found in these three months of investigation that reports on women who have joined ISIS due to "humanitarian reasons." According to one of them, they wanted to help Syrian hospitals controlled by the organization.

CONCLUSIONS

During the first three months of 2015, a very diverse range of female recruits was depicted in all of the five newspapers. However, several common trends have been detected in the media coverage:

- The romantic narrative seems to be the principal reason to explain why so many women join ISIS, although some profiles published point out different reasons.
- The image of a submissive Muslim woman wearing a niqab is present in some articles.

- There is great concern about what happens to Western female recruits once they join ISIS.
- Being a mother and a recruit is highlighted more than being a father and a recruit.
- All the media agree that ISIS wants female recruits in order to give pleasure to its fighters and also to populate the areas controlled by them.
- Given ISIS's record of women's rights violations, it is harder to understand why a woman wants to join ISIS.

Since the question of why European women join ISIS is not addressed in any of the articles specifically, independent profiles of female recruits are very valuable in order to complete the reports that try to explain the reasons why so many young European citizens join ISIS.

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