

Representations of Masculinity/ies, Islam and Migration

Par:

Pr. Kamal El Aissaoui

The School of Arts and Humanities

Department of English, Meknes – Morocco.

Résumé:

Ce travail vise à déconstruire les modes de présence de la masculinité et du féminin selon la conception du Coran, de la poésie arabe ancienne, de la culture populaire et dans les médias francophones à travers l'analyse de deux sources : « le courrier international » et « Tel Quel » en focalisant l'étude sur deux articles respectivement intitulés : "Islam : le terroriste, le déposte, le démocrate" et " Quel Islam voulons nous ?."

Cette recherche traite aussi du jeu de la masculinité, l'islam, et la migration chez Jacques Derrida de «différance» et Umberto Eco.

L'accent est mis sur la diversité de l'islam lui même (sa conception de foi personnelle, culture ou terme justifiant le mystérieux joins à certaines pré conceptions et modes d'exercices que l'on peut qualifier d'islam mythique, qui produisent des représentations excentriques par rapport au texte religieux.

Mots clés :

Masculinité – virilité – Islam – migration – différence – culture populaire.

Abstract:

This paper digs into the concept of masculinity/ies in both its individualist and its pluralist dimensions. Interestingly enough, neither Moroccan Arabic nor standard Arabic have a plural form of masculinity; a linguistic/symbolic way of legitimating masculinity as a homogeneous category that resists unloading. The researcher thematically addresses the interplay of masculinity/ies, Islam, and migration from the lens of Jacques Derrida's theory of 'Differance' and Umberto Eco's "limits of interpretation".

Attention is also paid to underlying diversity in Islam (its conception as a personal faith, culture or a name/ label for justifying 'mysterious'¹ assumptions along with deeds which can be conceived as a "mythical Islam" developed out mis-representations of the religious text.

Keywords:

Masculinity/ies, virility, Islam and migration, difference, and folk culture.

¹ I use the word "mysterious" here to refer to the haughty attitudes of some Muslim practitioners who grant themselves the right to recommend and forbid subjectively certain religious behaviors under the name of Islam.

I. Introduction

This paper is in essence a matter of surveying the representations of masculinity/ies, Islam, and migration both in the Moroccan and Arab theoretical literature. The researcher has conducted an empirical study of how masculinity/ies, Islam and migration are perceived by four social categories: high school students, high school teachers, graduate office workers, and illiterate people whose ages vary from 15 to 50 years old. A reasonable focus is laid upon the interplay among Masculinity/ies, Islam and migration through pluralist dimensions or 'différance'² as Jacques Derrida argues. Allowing an open chain of the meanings/ semiosis of the three issues studied not only help us get to the gist of what each element stands for in the Moroccan context, but it will lead to a theoretical elucidation of conceptions as well. In this perspective, one feels the need to seek answers to the following questions: What does it mean to be a (male) Muslim? How does Islam identify Masculinity/ies? Why masculinity is mostly depicted in the Arabic language and in the religious text as a homogeneous category that resists unpacking?

III. The Meanings of Masculinity/ies in "Lisan al Arab" Dictionary

While the concept of masculinity in Lisan Al Arab dictionary refers to the concept as one packed category, the word masculine takes different contextual meanings. It is initially contrasted to the feminine and in case a woman takes up some male traits, she is referred to as a "tomboy". Interestingly, the adjective masculine may modify the following examples. A masculine day (a day full of harshness, obstacles and a great deal of "killings"), a masculine road (a scaring place with unexpected dangers), a masculine rain (heavy/ torrential rain), masculine / virile poetic verses (prolific / inexhaustible verses), a masculine discourse (a strong and sound discourse), a masculine earth (an earth that grows male herbs) and a

² Différance itself, is neither a word, nor a concept, nor a thing. Words and concepts/theories are themselves *different* from other words or concepts and this difference gives their meaning. Despite differences between the word signifier is relevant here, differentials between the picture signified are also covered by Différance. Deferral is also important here, the words that occur after "house" in any expression will revise the meaning of that word, and sometimes dramatically.

masculine wife (a wife who bears male babies). The entry refers interestingly to a "masculine man" who stands for a strong, courageous man with a passionate sense of dignity. Yet, masculinity boils down to stand for possessing the traits of manhood that harmoniously match with the socio-cultural representations of being a “man”.

IV. Conceptions of Masculinity/ ies , Social Roles of Men and Women in Islam

Conceptions of masculinity along with the social roles of males and females in Islam can be derived from three main issues in *A-Shari'a*³, which stand for the Islamic law in the Qur'an and the Sunnah⁴. The researcher deems it judicious to point out three topics that reflect these conceptions, and they are dealt with respectively: inheritance, "alqiwama" the ability to take responsibility of the household, and "being a witness"

11- “Allah (thus) directs you as regards your children’s inheritance: to the male, a portion equal to that of two females: if only daughters, two or more, their share is two thirds of the inheritance; if only one, her share is half.”⁵

It becomes self-evident from these verses that the male heir takes the portion of two females. While most Muslims might consider this partition as fair and beyond dispute, many rising liberal feminist movements are calling for modern readings of the text. The religious “Oulemas”⁶ interpret this favor as the word and the gift of God to the males since God is infallible and the text is beyond the boundaries of space-time. On the other hand, the researcher argues that this apparent disparity should be interpreted on the grounds of the historical and the socio-cultural roles of the males as breadwinners and women as homemakers whose property is mostly kept intact. We should bear in mind that the socio-cultural conditions of women at the time of Jahilia and early Islam was worse, yet Islam emancipated women and allowed these rights in accordance with their daily engagements in society. The issue remains that women have had these “rights” for 14 centuries and the socio-economic conditions of women are changing, the text is however implemented in a verbatim

³ A-Shari'a means the Islamic law according to the interpretations of the Qur'an in one of the four doctrines of Islam

⁴ The Sunnah means the explanations of the Islamic religion in three different ways : verbal, Imitative and practical.

⁵ Qur'an Chapter 4: An-Nisa (Women) Verse 11.

⁶ The Oulemas are specialized scholars in theology.

way by the Moroccan patriarchal regime. Whilst the Qur'an remains immutable as a revealed text, interpretations of it should be judiciously adapted to the socio-economic conditions of both genders. The second rightly guided caliph is a model to be emulated especially when he banned the cutting of the hands, notwithstanding the clarity of the aya of cutting off the hands of stealers. The clairvoyance and the audacity of Omar was unparalleled since he had stopped the mutilation hands could weaken the workforce and hence put the community at stake especially in cases of foreign attacks. The nation could have gotten weaker hadn't he stopped the common judgement; each hand is an empowering asset. The bottom line is that the empowerment of the community is the byproduct of the empowerment of both genders through impelling them to contribute physically and mentally to the making of the nation.

34. "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means"⁷

The verse "men are the protectors and the maintainers of women" is usually advanced by a good deal of Moroccan Muslims as an irrefutable argument for the low rank of women in Islam in order to contribute to the consolidation of a patriarchal society. The researcher argues however that the issue relies in understanding the language of the Qur'an., whilst lay people understand 'Al Qiwwama' as having a religiously legitimate authority over all members of the family, in Standard Arabic the word 'Al Qiwwama' in this context means simply taking the responsibility to run the household. Again the context of the Arabian peninsula, where the text is revealed, matches perfectly with the Aya, but when both partners become breadwinners, they evenly contribute to the maintenance and protection of the household. With the advance of technology and the transformation of society, physical strength is increasingly falling while mental strength is the conspicuous token of success. Being both active agents, they perform "Qiwwama" on each other, and thus would constitute healthy building blocks of a egalitarian and equitable society.

It is high time that Moroccans focused on the complementarity of both genders instead of who should have Qiwwama on the other. The issue of power has always been a source of contention among men and women., but compromise and concession remain one of the solutions to establish a healthy zone of exchange of know-how and know-what.

⁷ QUR'AN Chapter 4: An-Nisa (Women) Verse 34

Witnessing

282. ‘O ye who believe when you deal with each other, in transaction involving future obligation in a fixed period of time, reduce them to writing , let a scribe write down faithfully as between the parties: let not the scribe refuse to write: as Allah taught him, so let him write. Let him who incurs the liability dictate, but let him fear his lord Allah, and not diminish aught of what he owes. If they part liable is mentally deficient, or weak or unable himself to dictate, let his guardian dictate faithfully, and get two witnesses, out of your own men, and if there are not two men, then a man and two women, such as ye choose, for witnesses, so that if one of them errs, the other can remind her. The witnesses should not refuse when they are called on for evidence⁸.

The above verse shows clearly that in any business transaction we need two men as witnesses or a man and two women. The argument advanced for this ‘difference’ is that one woman may err and the other woman can remind her. Drawing on critical discourse analysis, we may say that two women equal one man at least in terms of mental and memory capabilities. Yet, the legitimate question that one may ask is what type of two women (educated or illiterate) who equal one man? Bearing in mind that the religious deals initially with an antique epoch, thus any interpretation must consider the historical changes; as a case in point, today it would be inconceivable to have two female doctors equaling one illiterate male in whatever business deal. The issue of witnessing is still a bone of contention among conservative and liberal readings of the Qur’an. The researcher argues that the ‘Oulamas’ religious scholars need to revisit the text and preferably adopt multi-perspectival approaches to produce deeper and minute interpretations. Asmaa Lmrabet in her book (*Femmes; Islam, Occident: Chemins Vers L’Universel*) is opening new venues into a daring adoption of feminist approaches in her readings of the Qur’an.

V. Masculinity and Migration in the ancient Arab poetry and Folk culture

In American culture, masculinity and migration or travel are closely intertwined since proving that one is a man, he has to walk west as the saying goes. Migration in the ancient Arab poetry was solely linked to the pursuit of knowledge and openness to the culture of the host country. Interestingly, most antique and modern poetry tackle only male migration as a

⁸ Qur'an chapter 2: Al-Baqara (the cow) verse 282.

sign of maturity, responsibility and an innate sense of discovery and adventure. While masculinity in most of the antique Arab poetry in 'AL Jahilia' entails both manhood and manliness, the most popular poet Aboû Nouwâs broke new grounds through portraying masculinity as a source of inspiration and a means of satisfying one's visual pleasure. Not only does Aboû Nouwâs add other dimensions to the meanings of masculinity, but also he replaces the desired subject from a feminine figure to a masculine one as expressed below:

**I am dying and you do not know you are killing me
 Have you ever known, you could have mercy on me?
 My fear hinders me from revealing my love to you
 Neither do I let it slip nor do you feel it
 Both my heart and tongue conceal my passion
 Yet my tears speak volumes
 Those tears may not reveal my sufferings
 Yet my slimness is a clear token of my inner love⁹ (My own translation).**

Masculinity in Folk Culture

Masculinity and virility are used interchangeably in Moroccan jokes, proverbs, and even folk stories. It is no exaggeration to say that most jokes depict males as extremely virile and sexually dominating partners while females are pictured as submissive and passive respondents in any love relationship. Due to some rising economic crises, folk culture through the above-mentioned elements promotes both legal and illegal migration if it yields noticeable economic results shortly. Given the proximity of Morocco to Europe (15 kilometers from Sebta and only 30 minutes trip), folk culture pictures the prototype masculine figure as someone who is capable of achieving wealth in The European 'Paradise' and thus has the power to help other members of his family to migrate as well.

VI. Masculinity and Islam in the Media in two Special Issues in 'Courier International' and 'Tel Quel' magazines entitled "Islam: le terroriste, le despote et le démocrate" and "Quel Islam Voulons Nous?"

In this subsection, the focus is laid upon how the Moroccan as well as the French media represent both masculinity and Islam in pictographic along with linguistic texts through

⁹ Almohalhal Ben Yamout Ben Mozarad, Selected Verses of Abu Nawass, in the world of Knowledge series, N°110, 2003.

an analysis of two special issues in “Courrier International” and “Tel Quel” magazines. Drawing on Jacques Derrida’s theory of deconstruction, in each text, there are internal contradictions that need to be instigated in order to deconstruct the text from within¹⁰. Accordingly, a focal interest hovers around highlighting representational contradictions. It seems from the two magazines that the connotations are mostly culture-bound. Since Islam in Morocco is a state religion thus any endeavor to review or to question the basement of this religion is referred to in the media as a criticism being leveled against the power of the palace and the king who is considered as “the Commander of the Faithful”. In the history of Islam, only two rulers named themselves “commander of the Faithful”. The second rightly guided caliph Omar and late king Hassan. The current king inherited the title and consequently should shoulder the responsibility of keeping Islam as the main religion of the state.

The researcher deals initially with the texts and the pictures used in ‘Courrier International’. The magazine starts with very insightful pluralist visions of Islam that illustrate the diversity of the Islamic rituals (see figure2). However, the most striking picture in this magazine is the juxtaposition of the wreckages of the world trade center due to the extremist attacks of 9/11 and a veiled Turkish girl. At the denotative level, the combination of two pictures represents simply two facts: an aftermath of an attack and an oriental dress code (The veil). Yet, at the connotative level, we can deduce a relationship of causality in that the attacks have brought about an international shock due to the veil (a symbol of Islam). The binary opposition of the two pictures and the caption ‘choc ou dialogue’ may also connote that the shocks of the attacks have triggered more dialogs on the veil and Islam. Drawing on Derrida’s supposition of internal contradictions, The researcher would argue that the attacks have nothing to do with the true spirit of Islam, which is a literal equivalent of peace, yet the attacks are simply the results of an organization of “psychotic” extremists under the pretext of reviving the conquest of Islam. At a deeper level of reading, the combination of the two pictures looks incompatible as there was no direct relationship of a veiled woman and in particular, this veiled young Turkish girl with the attacks and vice-versa.

The same technique of binary opposition is also applied in figure 3. At the denotative level, the picture portrays two types of women dressed and shot differently with a prominent caption “Islam and Modernity”. At the connotative level, the vivid colors of the setting, the sofa, the light dresses all define the two females as ‘modern and westernised. However, the

¹⁰.- Jacques Derrida, (1982) The Theory of Differance University of Chicago Press, PP 3-27.

black and white full dresses, the black and white oriental background, and the product of Pepsi all define her as having an identity crisis or at least a troubled identity. At a deeper level of interpretation, the first modern picture dates back to 1950 in Tehran and the second gloomy one was shot in 2000 in Tehran too. This fact highlights an apparent contradiction in the sense that we are regressing back from vividness to gloominess or from openness and modernity to backwardness and loss of identity. The pertinent question in this context is what do Islam and modernity mean in this shot? In an attempt to answer this question, Islam can be illustrated either in a dress code or internally in one's heart as a firm conviction. The same thing goes for modernity if one understands by the latter anything new that makes a rupture with past models, and then the two dress codes are new to the Arab world, thus actually make an enrichment to the oriental culture. While many people would believe that the dressing of the veiled represents a return to traditions, the researcher argues that this is a modern outlook under the name of the Beldi¹¹ traditions, and a revival of an antique dress code that is probably taken for granted to stand for simplicity, purity and even beauty.

To continue with the veil, The Algerian journalist Daikha Dridi uses the veil in an utterly derogatory way to the extent that faces of women are substituted by some kitchen tools that symbolize the dehumanization of these females (see figure 4). The title 'Les femmes paient toujours pour l'humiliation des hommes' adds up to the deviation as well as decentralization of the message to denounce the worse conditions of women in Algeria. The article deals precisely with a monstrous murdering of four bar maids by some puritan Islamists in the city of Tebessa during the summer of 2001 and ends up with the audacity of some young girls who linger around with their lovers to defy both the authorities and the frightening extremists themselves. The article as a whole implies that all Algerian and Muslim women have a worse condition brought about by Arab men, still the arguments put forward deal only with a small tribe in Algeria. Both the pictographic and the linguistic messages entail that women may avoid being humiliated only if they accept to operate as docile machines that are always ready to meet the needs of the patriarchs. The article as one entity shows an apparent lack of media literacy since it foregrounds the dehumanization of these women and eclipses the worse female conditions in Algeria and the Arab world.

¹¹ - The Beldi means the traditional dresses or Kaftans that are usually worn for special occasions especially marriage feasts. The researcher refers to an unpublished Ph. D. thesis titled Re-fashioning Women: Representation and Ideology on Moroccan Francophone Women's Magazines;2004.

The patriarches and the Oulamas are severely criticized in an article titled '*Pourquoi les Arabes sont-ils les derniers à ne pas avancer?*' (See figure 5)- *why are the Arabs the only people who never progress?* while women are reflected as mere machines in the eyes of the Arab patriarches, the latter are similarly viewed as programmed robots by The Algerian Journalist Howayda Taha. The core question of his article is why do the Islamists in Malaysia and in Turkey co-exist with secular regimes? And why do the Islamists in the Maghreb fight vehemently against secularism in their countries? The main difference relies in how the holy book is dealt with. While the Turkish and Malaysian Muslims are not obsessed with a search of scientific certainties in the holy book, the Islamists in the Maghreb take the holy book as the sole governmental regime. According to the author, the scientific research had flared up in the Abbassi era thanks to the adoption of secularism, it follow then that Islam is purported to be the main obstacle to the development of the Arab nations. Like the conception of masculinity as one tightly arranged entity, the Arabs with all their diversity constitute to the journalist only one jam-packed category. He deliberately asserts that the main problem is "to be an Arab"; his assertion makes it clear that he admits some form of alienation and even a refusal of one's belonging to the Arab community.

Having tackled how the francophone media represent Islam and masculinity, the researcher moves to explore a heated controversy about the modernization of Islam and the Islamization of modernity. These oppositions show some parts of the political battles between the liberals and the Islamists about the calls for more moderate interpretations of the Qur'an primarily the texts that deal with the socio-cultural status of women. Figure 6 shows the "commander of the faithful" Mohamed VI in a religious meeting, but the connotative level of this figure shows the centrality of the king in legitimating the right type of Islam to be practiced. Thus, the issue of 'Tel Quel' titled 'Quel Islam voulons Nous?' levels an outspoken criticism against the imposition of Islam as a state religion. In a parallel fashion, the image of the mother standing behind some young men, who are leading their prayers, positions her as a neutral person in the Moroccan family that stands for the first place where the modernization of Islam can take place. (See figure 6 & 7)

VII. Islam as Faith, culture or a name/label and a 'mythical religion'

literally, the term Islam means peace; obviously a spiritual peace or an unremitting purification of the soul through the Islamic rituals; metaphorically Islam entails an ability to

inhibit oneself from doing any verbal or non-verbal acts to hurt another Muslim. Islam as an ideology in the Moroccan context is manipulated as a powerful tool to legitimize the absolute power of the king who stands for the commander of the faithful' as he is claimed to be a descendant of the prophet. The king's power is continuously sustained by his use of the Qur'an in his speeches along with an incorporation of a religious formula that starts with 'In the name of Allah, the All-merciful, the All-compassionate' and ends with some prayers on the prophet 'Mohamed'. Of equal importance, Islam, at a state level, operates ideologically as a pacifier that appeases people through convincing them that life after death is the ultimate goal ; and all hardships encountered are mere godly tests of one's piety. Citizens should consequently accept their lot as the wish of God and thus rebellion is the beginning of ungodliness. By the same token Islam operates as an ideology by the Islamist movement' Al Adl wa Al Ihsan' for the downfall of the kingdom and the rise of a Moroccan system of "Khilafa". Islam as a personal faith means an independent conviction to perform one's spirituality according to the requirement stipulated by the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

If one approaches Islam through pluralist perspectives, Islam as a celestial text remains unique, yet the rituals vary from one place to another according to the four main religious doctrines (Al Maliki, Al Hanbali, Ashafihi and Al Hanafi). As for Islam as a culture in Morocco, almost everybody claims to be a "Muslim," no matter how less or more he/she performs any of the required Islamic rituals. (including the five pillars of Islam). To say that you are a Muslim means for most Moroccans to declare proudly an essence of the Moroccan identity. If an interactant refers to another addressee as non-Muslim, it is mostly taken as a bitter insult. In daily conversations, one can hear people say "that person is not a Muslim; he/she must be a Jew, which pejoratively stands for acting like an evildoer. Islam in its entirety constitutes a part and parcel of most Moroccans' culture and identity. Worse is that people through Islam as a culture or the inherited Islam'¹² seem not to allow themselves a critical vision towards the type of Islam they believe in.

Ultimately, the researcher argues that people who manipulate Islam to bombard foreign countries and even one's nation should be ranked as psychotic human beings who are constantly seeking justifications for their destructive instincts from the Qur'an. Thus, the word 'Al Jihad' is taken as an irrefutable argument for fighting any non-Muslim, yet 'Al

¹² - the inherited Islam is a common expression among most Moroccans and it means believing in a religion not out of conviction but out of seeing one's parents practicing The Islamic rituals.

jihad' means, inter alia, fighting back when there is an attack from other enemies, and more importantly an internal fight to curb one's greed together with love of amassing worldly possessions. The recent Paris Terrorist attacks are a continuation of the same belief of Jihad as a holy war against pagans and evildoers. In this context, the researcher refers to an article in 'Courier International' by Samuel Huntington entitled "Allo, je voudrais parler au monde musulman". Huntington maintains that Islam had been spread by the sword, yet he does not believe that violence is an inherent element in the Islamic theology. There were three Islamist attacks in Morocco, the first on May 16th 2003 and which killed around 42 civilians. The second on the 11th March 2007 with victims including the suicide bomber and three other civilians. The third blast took place on April 28, 2011 in Jemma Lafna square in Marrakesh where 17 tourists were innocently killed. The Moroccan government declared al-Qaida to be the responsible, but controversy is still maintained over the issue especially after Alqaida's denial of any implication in the attack. The most remarkable thing about these suicide bombers is their incredible destitution, illiteracy, and unemployment. In the same vein, Lahmidani (2015) advances that the sacrifice of the self and the other takes place to achieve the ideal value.

This social and economic failure leads them to convert to Islam as a refuge for serenity and to be among the winners of an eternal life in Paradise. This category of people are easy preys for extremist movements to manipulate as well as to engulf with hatred against the 'unfaithful' and "ungodly". It becomes evident that both economic and educational crises had led to religious crises, and hence emerged spiritual abuses in the name of reviving a holy war. Thus, religion is transformed from a ritual practice that promotes serenity to a new form of impregnating hatred. Not only do the extremists teach their disciples to be humbler and less ambitious, but also brainwash and paralyze their creativity through inculcating in their minds that they are what they are because it was written and their lives are simply enacting the celestial scenario. By sacrificing themselves, they reach a high level of spirituality, a whole ouma will pay tribute to them as heroic martyrs, and consequently will deservedly get an eternal and blissful life in heaven.

VIII. Discussion of results

Not only do the questionnaires aim at gathering data about how the three elements are viewed in proportion to four different social categories: high school teachers, high school students, graduate office workers and illiterate people whose ages vary from 15 to 50 years old, but also at sensitizing them to the need of looking at masculinity through pluralist perspectives. The most striking thing about respondents is a latent reluctance to fill in the questionnaires or at least to skip some questions that touch upon 'A sharia' Islamic law or Islam in general.

Graph N ° 1 shows that most members in the category of teachers understand masculinity as a socio-cultural construction, yet 20% understand it in the traditional way as one entity and it is physical. Students have a clearer understanding of masculinity as 33% say it is a behavior and 20% as a socio-cultural, but 34 % are unable to provide any answer. As for graduate office workers, masculinity is either a socio-cultural construction or a physical trait with 33% on each side. 40 % of people of low educational levels say it is a behavior and 33 % are unable to provide any answer. Many respondents comment that there is no difference between masculinity and virility.

Graph N° 2 seeks answers about the meaning of masculinity in the religious text. The results of this graph show an intense impact of religion on how my respondents perceive masculinity. 53 % of teachers, 53 % of students, 33 % of graduate office workers, and 40 % of categories of low educational levels state blatantly that masculinity is "Al Qiwama". While 'Al Qiwama' means in the Qur'an maintaining and protecting women, most of respondents claim that Al Qiwama should be understood as ' the male/ the father being the Boss' or as Abdelhak Serhane¹³ prefers to call it "Dieu de la famille". The father represents a godly figure whose presence guarantees protection, peace, order and even awe; the god should not only be respected but venerated. Through implementing Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, we find out that the text of the Qur'an addresses generally men and women on equal footing; however, some historical facts should be incorporated while interpreting the verses dealing with inheritance, Al Qiwama, and Witnessing. Masculinity in the Qur'an is viewed not only as a physical trait but emphatically as an assigned socio-cultural role. While the Qur'an is conspicuously gender conscious as it addresses men and women on equal footing, none of the respondents is utterly gender-conscious, nor aware that both femininity and masculinity are

¹³ Abdelhak Serhane is Moroccan Writer and one of his famous Publications is "L'amour Circoncis".

mere socio-cultural constructions. It follows then that one is not born man, one becomes man as De-beauvoir argues for femininity in the Second Sex.

Graph N ° 3: A higher percentage in all the four categories of respondents perceive migration as a search for prosperity. 46% of students, 46% of teachers, 33% of graduate office workers, and 73% of respondents of low- educational levels claim migration as a search for prosperity. Students and low-educational diploma holders seem to be more seduced by the migrants who return during the summer holidays with luxurious cars and an apparent high standard of living. Most teachers and graduate office workers seem to be less seduced by what migrants show as a reasonably high standard of living, nonetheless they also dream of making a better life across the seas in case they could be blessed one day with a ticket to the modern and free world. Migration consequently stands as an excellent opportunity to escape an undesirable economic situation no matter what problems or identity crises might emerge. Some of the respondents after handing their questionnaires, claim that they are not as lucky as some of their friends abroad.

As a case in point, many people in Morocco both men and women choose willingly to take the risk of migrating illegally in some boats of "Haraga"¹⁴ to reach Spain. Despite the fact that the Moroccan media presents a striking number of dead illegal migrants on the sea, a good deal of prospective illegal migrants say vehemently on the media that they will stop at nothing until they reach their dreams. They believe that life in their home country is deprived of any promising horizons, hence a decent and genuine life can only be led on the other side of the ocean. Nonetheless, after the 2008 economic recession, migration started to decrease as migrants suffered the repercussions of the economic free fall and scarcity of job opportunities. Migration had been a recurrent topic among many families as a pervasive part of the make-up of popular culture (Sabry 2005), but recently only a fraction of highly skilled professionals still cling to the topic.

Graph N° 4 aims at how my respondents see the representations of the Muslim migrants in both national as well as international media. 54 % of students and 40 % of teachers see the representations as negative. 40 % of graduate workers see the portrayals of the Muslim migrants as positive, and 60 % of low educational respondents judge the images as both positive and negative.

¹⁴ "Haraga» has become a popular name in Morocco for migration traffickers.

In comparison with the portrayals on the “Courrier International”, The Muslim and the Muslim migrants are generally depicted as a schizophrenic beings and rarely as a mere believer in the spirit of a religion of Islam. Islam in the ‘Courrier International’ media is related mostly to the fundamentalist movements, attacks and the aftermaths of September 11th. While Islam in the European media is related mostly to the Islamist, but Islam in Morocco is a state religion that legitimizes the monarch as a commander of the faithful and unites the nation on the whole. The researcher largely argues that economic and intellectual crises have lead to the creation of religious crises or more accurately a mythical Islam that extremists adhere to in order to justify their acts as holy deeds. The heterogeneity/ diversity of Islam does not reside in the texts themselves (Qur’an and Sunnah), but in its implementation as ideology, culture faith or a justifiable proof that a holy war ‘jihad’ is an obligation to achieve justice and ideal value.

x. Conclusion

This paper shows that there is a lack of conceptual clarity and consensus on the meaning of the representation of Masculinity, Islam and migration. Literally these concepts are represented in Standard Arabic as notions that do not allow the plural form, thus most of respondents at least understand them as one unburdened unit. The either or mode of thinking (things get their meaning by their oppositions), which is supported with the grammar of standard Arabic, deprives the groups under study from opening themselves to the chain of signification as an infinite slippage from signifier to signifier as Echo states in the Limits of interpretation. Put simply, respondents do not allow themselves to doubt at least that there are no limits to the interpretations of Masculinities, Islam, and migration, and the intention of the researcher remains far more modest as it boils down to an attempt to provoke a critical thinking towards the representations of the three concepts in the Arab and the Western World.

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