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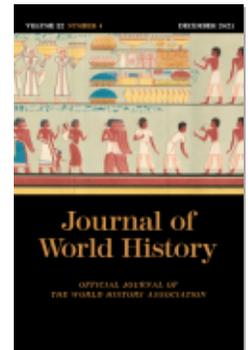
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Missionary Encounters and Consuming the Exotic

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The New Woman, Her New Clothes, and Her New Education: Missionary Encounters and Consuming the Exotic

MONA L. RUSSELL

The New Woman appeared on the world stage between 1850 and 1950. One of her distinguishing features was new habits of consumption. Outside of Europe and the United States, these new forms of consumption were tied to new forms of education. Missionary education played a significant role in the process of this education, promoting competition among other schools, and creating a discourse about women in the press. In turn, missionary women were also profoundly affected by these encounters.

KEYWORDS: New Woman, Middle East, Lebanon, Egypt, Iran, Turkey.

AN EGYPTIAN newspaper, *al-Lata'if al-musawwara* (*Illustrated Quips*) published a cartoon entitled “Yesterday and Tomorrow” in July of 1919. In it, a nubile young woman in stylish clothing appeared inside a much larger woman in traditional clothing.¹ For more than twenty years, I have used this image in the classroom to discuss both the New Woman and the 1919 Revolution. Without the ability to read the caption, American students are often quick to assume that the author’s point is that a new and better (westernized) woman exists within every (traditional) woman. Usually after some time and discussion, someone notices how frail the inner woman appears compared to her counterpart. Her posture is slumped as she teeters on her ridiculously high heels, perhaps indicating a different message from the artist. Indeed, the caption draws a stark contrast between the appropriate

¹ (July 21, 1919), 3.

clothing women used to wear and the outrageous lengths to which their granddaughters have gone.²

The appearance of the New Woman caused a great deal of male anxiety worldwide, and Egypt was no different.³ In many parts of the world adopting some form of Western consumption marked a part of this transition. Nonetheless, the foreigners who helped bring about this change were not always at the forefront of change in their own countries. Furthermore, residence in other parts of the world helped shape and enlighten women around the globe. Thus, the construct of New Womanhood was not simply a Western construction that traveled. As this article will examine, the New Woman shared certain characteristics; however, she had distinctly local features. The New Woman emerged on the world stage between 1850 and 1950 worldwide. She was connected to new forms of education, questions of political rights, and suffrage, as well as new habits of consumption. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, she was a woman of “advanced” views advocating the independence of her sex.⁴ She debuted first in Europe and the United States, as well as their colonies, connecting to larger concerns for human rights. Beginning in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, as bourgeois, male nationalists worked out citizenship rights for themselves, new questions emerged about other men, namely slaves. If black men were to receive rights, then what about women?

Outside Western Europe and the United States, the New Woman was not a monolith, nor did she arrive with the same force at the same time. Nevertheless, there are a few generalizations that can be made. First, the “New” Woman created a dichotomy with the traditional woman, forcing a duality that associated the latter with authenticity and cultural authority and the former with Westernization and modernity. I argue that the shift to New Womanhood was marked by new habits in consumption and grooming. These changes were associated with new and/or increased education, which took her into

² Ihab Effendi Kholoussy drew the caricature, but the editors of the journal provided commentary, referring to Ihab Effendi in the third person. *Al-Lata'if al-musawwara* (July 21, 1919), 3.

³ On the European context, see Enrica Asquer, “Domesticity and Beyond: Gender, Family, and Consumption in Modern Europe,” in *Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, ed. Frank Trentmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 568–599.

⁴ OED, “woman,” second edition. Note that the third edition has an updated entry for “new woman”; however, this author challenges a portion of the new entry which states that she “challenges or rejects traditional roles as mother, wife, and homemaker.” In some parts of the world, this was true; however, in the Middle East, this role was reified. <http://www.oed.com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/view/Entry/276487?redirectedFrom=New+Woman&>.

the public realm. This education sometimes came at the hands of foreign women, who may or may not have been “New Women” in their own societies. Moreover, I argue that the women who stepped into these colonial realms as missionaries, educators, and wives of civil servants were also changed by the experience. For missionaries this work offered not only spiritual satisfaction but also, in some instances, professional opportunity beyond what was available at home. The case studies examined will be Middle Eastern countries, which experienced some form of imperialism and had some contact with missionaries. Similar examples from outside the Middle East will be discussed to support the generalizations, and a few comparisons with Europe and the United States will be drawn. The conclusion examines the inherent tensions within the construct of “colonized” New Womanhood with the experience of Selma Ekrem in the United States.

THE NEW WOMAN IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In Muslim majority countries, a single garment, the veil, became central to the debate on New Womanhood and on modernity.⁵ Throughout the Middle East, for example in Egypt, Lebanon, and Iraq, which had mixed populations that included Muslims, Jews, and Christians, veiling was common among all women through most of the nineteenth century. It was only under the scrutiny of colonialism that minority communities slowly began to unveil, shortly before Muslim New Women at the turn of the twentieth century.⁶ Veiling was part of a Western critique, a collection of practices that made “Eastern” households inferior, a justification for the imperial project.⁷ While other practices, for example, seclusion or polygamy, were not easily seen or enumerated, the sheer (in)visibility of women on the street could not be denied. Writing in her employer’s journal for divinity students in 1898, American pedagogy professor Julia Bulkeley began her discussion

⁵ Note that “veiling” has many meanings and might imply different garments and levels of covering depending upon the location. See Saher Amer, *What is Veiling* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2014).

⁶ Leila Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 36; Toufoul Abou-Hodeib, *A Taste for Home* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017) 3, 138.

⁷ The practices also included seclusion, polygamy, and divorce. Ken Cuno has astutely pointed out, as Western divorce rates rose over the course of the twentieth century, divorce was removed from the litany of complaints about the Middle Eastern family. See “Divorce and the Fate of the Modern Family,” in *Family in the Middle East*, ed. Kathryn Yount and Hoda Rashad (London: Routledge, 2008), 210.

of women in Palestine by discussing the veil and her opinion of its origins:

Women in Palestine are under somewhat similar social conditions as in Turkey and Egypt. Their Moslem conquerors have imposed upon them the veil, the [sic] seclusion, and many other limitations.⁸

In this article, only a few lines are devoted to customs of dress; however, multiple images of veiled women accompany the text. Bulkley links a whole host of problems, including (literally) treating women as animals, to a lack of education and faith. She readily admits that she did not witness yoking women to plows in Palestine, only in Europe.⁹ Nevertheless, she readily accepts the authority of missionary Henry Jessup, who she quotes at length in the article.¹⁰ Having visited schools throughout the region, Bulkley chose to cite “Dr. Jessup,” her academic equal. Yet, male missionaries depended heavily upon women for the task of reaching other women. In fact more than a quarter of a century earlier Jessup himself proclaimed that “one of the greatest events” of the (nineteenth) century was the “remarkable uprising of christian [sic] women in Christian lands to a new interest to the welfare of women in heathen and Mohammedan countries.”¹¹

At the time that Bulkley was writing, missionaries had been active in the region for about 75 years.¹² Education became the centerpiece of missionary efforts as it was the means for purifying local Christians without alienating local authorities or potential students. Missionaries

⁸ Julia Bulkley, *The Biblical World* 11, no. 2 (1898): 69. Note that the practice of veiling in the Middle East significantly predated Islam. See Amer, *Veiling*, 5–7.

⁹ Notably, Bulkley completed her doctoral studies in Germany and Switzerland. In fact, it was not possible for her to earn a PhD at a German institute, which is why she finished her studies in Zurich. Katherine Cruikshank, “In Dewey’s Shadow: Julia Bulkley and University of Chicago Department of Pedagogy,” *History of Education Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (1998): 380.

¹⁰ Bulkley, “Women,” 69.

¹¹ Ellen Fleischmann, “The Impact of American Protestant Missions in Lebanon on the Construction of Female Identity, c.1860–1950,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 13, no. 4 (2002): 412. Ironically, Bulkley herself was hired at University of Chicago two years before John Dewey with a higher caliber academic pedigree; however, he took the leadership role in the department of pedagogy and Bulkley received a “lesser” leadership position as Dean of Women. See Cruikshank, “In Dewey’s Shadow,” 373.

¹² The British Church Mission Society (CMS) created an Arabic press in Malta in 1815 and began missions in earnest about a decade later, around the same time that American Board began work. The arrival of Protestant missions invigorated local churches as well as Catholic orders, some of which had long-standing ties to the region. Heleen Murre-van den Berg, “Introduction,” in *New Faith in Ancient Lands: Western Missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Heleen Murre-van den Berg (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 5.

also viewed education as the best long-term strategy for conversion of Muslims.¹³ In addition to the gospel, British and French educational ventures were unapologetically civilizing missions, particularly with respect to women. In contrast, the initial inclination of the American Board was to avoid cultural conflict and encourage women to maintain their language, dress, habits, and customs.¹⁴ Indeed one of the influential secretaries of the board, Rufus Anderson, threatened closure of the Female Seminary in Beirut (later Beirut College for Women).¹⁵ The connection between learning foreign languages and adopting new habits of consumption was clear from the ultimatum that Anderson sent to administrators:

Unless the school be made strictly Arabic in the methods and results of its instruction, teaching the pupils through the medium of the Arabic language, making that the language of conversation, and securing the pupils from adopting Frank manners and customs to such an extent that they will be rendered unfit by their expensive tastes and habits to become the wives of native preachers and pastors living on small salaries, the Prudential Committee will feel bound to withhold the means of sustaining the institution on its present scale, and the new female teacher is to be engaged and sent with a distinct knowledge of these conditions on the subject.¹⁶

Despite the pressure from administrators in the United States, missionaries on the ground felt urgency from prospective clientele to offer programs with the foreign languages for their students even if the funding from the American Board was dropped. The girls and their families saw benefit to the programs of language study with the accompanying cultural and material baggage. The American Mission had difficulty finding the balance between spreading the gospel, attracting the fee-paying, language-seeking students (of many sects), and not over-selling locals on the American dream to the point of emigration.¹⁷

¹³ Murre-van den Berg, "Introduction," 13.

¹⁴ The American Board refers to the Boston-based, nondenominational, Protestant American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions. Ellen Fleischmann, "Evangelization or Education," in *New Faith in Ancient Lands*, 273–278.

¹⁵ In 1904, the school became the American School for Girls (ASG), and in 1927 the American Junior College for Girls (AJCG) split from ASG. In the late 1940s, the school reorganized the curriculum and became the Beirut College for Women (BCW). Ellen Fleischmann, "Under an American Roof: The Beginnings of the American Junior College for Women in Beirut," *The Arab Studies Journal* 17, no. 1 (2009): 62–84.

¹⁶ As quoted in Fleischmann, "Evangelization or Education," 275.

¹⁷ Fleischmann, "Evangelization or Education," 278–280.

The patrons of the schools reflected these tensions in debates in Lebanon's turn-of-the-century press. Female education, the proper roles of women, and the dichotomy between tradition and modernity were recurring topics. Men critiqued women who had gone too far in the adoption of western habits. Women were instructed to focus upon their domestic duties and qualities, for example, "simplicity, propriety, and moderation."¹⁸ Educated female writers also supported this construct of new womanhood that balanced an appropriate adoption of Western habits with local authenticity. These writers mocked the "frivolous," "modern" woman who wore too much make-up, extravagant clothing, and fancy hats. Instead, in 1914, an image on the cover of *Fatat Lubnan (Young Woman of Lebanon)*, demonstrated the pragmatic ideal that combined local industry and simplicity with modernity: a woman donning a simple ponytail, jacket, calf-revealing skirt, and practical boots.¹⁹

The women who founded and contributed to these magazines were upper-middle class and upper-class women who graduated from missionary schools.²⁰ The impact of missionary education on this locale and on women in the region cannot be underscored. While the percentage of girls attending schools compared to the total population might seem miniscule (2.35), it was more than double the district (of the Ottoman Empire) with the second highest number of girls in school, Sivas, with 1 percent. Put in different terms, seventeen percent of school-attending children in Mount Lebanon at the turn of the twentieth century were girls, whereas regionally few districts reached over 6 percent.²¹ What made this region particularly distinctive was the spread of schools beyond major urban centers into rural districts. The small village schools, which might simply be a room or study with a female missionary, fed into the larger boarding schools in Lebanon and throughout greater Syria.²²

Egypt too had a significant missionary presence. Additionally, it had greater government involvement in girls' education, and a population that reacted by creating its own schools. The efforts of Egypt's

¹⁸ Abou-Hodeib, *A Taste for Home*, 136–138.

¹⁹ Both descriptions provided by Akram Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class, 1870–1920* (Berkeley: University of CA Press, 2001), 151–152.

²⁰ Malek Abisaab, *Militant Women of a Fragile Nation* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2010), 37. There were no secondary schools for girls in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire (excluding Egypt). The only secondary schools that existed were missionary, private, or religious schools. Fleischmann, "Beginnings of the American Junior College for Women," 63–64.

²¹ Khater, *Inventing Home*, 137–138.

²² Fleischmann, "Impact of American Missions," 414.

missionaries were divided among groups that proselytized among certain faiths (e.g., those working with exclusively Christians or Jews), groups working with those of all faiths, as well as missions that worked with a specific goal in mind. For example, a number of Catholic and Protestant groups targeted abolition (of the female slave trade) and assisting women who were emancipated slaves.²³ By the turn of the twentieth century, the American Mission was most visible group with 119 schools serving 8000 students.²⁴ Having arrived in 1854, the group profited from bankruptcy of British and Scottish missions, acquiring school buildings in Cairo and Alexandria, while simultaneously using a riverboat to move the message to Upper Egypt.²⁵

Just as the missionary presence was increasing in Egypt and larger numbers of Europeans arriving to take advantage of capitulations, the royal household began consuming Western goods in increasing quantities.²⁶ The royal household since the time of Muhammad Ali began to employ Western, female governesses on an ad hoc basis. By the reign of Ismail (r. 1863–1879) both the process of procuring Western governesses and consuming Western goods had become cemented. His consorts and his daughters were indulgent consumers of Western-style clothing, accessories, and beauty products.²⁷ Although social functions remained gender-segregated, this did not prohibit exorbitant spending on clothing. As one female observer noted, it was not uncommon for the princesses to be unrecognizable (as such) to foreign observers and miraculously transform themselves with brocades, diamonds, and Parisian fashion.²⁸ The royal family set the tone for consumption among the upper classes. While women, or even elite women, did not immediately change patterns of consumption, within two decades a discourse was clear in both the mainstream and women's press that

²³ Girgis Salama, *Tarikh ta'lim ajnaby fi Misr* (Wakil Madrasat al-Nasr, 1963), 42–46; Mona Russell, *Creating the New Egyptian Woman: Consumerism, Education, and National Identity, 1863–1922* (NY: Palgrave, 2004), 108–112.

²⁴ This statistic cited in Russell, *Creating the New Egyptian Woman* referencing missionary sources, which could have been inflated, see 113.

²⁵ Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 29–30. The CMS returned to Egypt after the British occupation, but its mission, organization, and educational success was not as profound as the American Mission. Neither group was successful in terms of conversions.

²⁶ Since the time of Muhammad Ali (r. 1805–1848) missionaries, often connected to business interests, were granted free passage in Egypt. Capitulations, or trading agreements with the Ottoman Empire, allowed Europeans to trade in Egypt without being subject to local laws.

²⁷ Russell, *Creating the New Egyptian Woman*, 16.

²⁸ Remarks by Agenoria Rhodes to Douglas Sladen. See his *Queer Things About Egypt* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1911), “Chips from the Court.”

change was taking place. The ability to utilize modesty garments and wear Western clothing in homosocial environments allowed women the flexibility to experiment with new styles without breaking social taboos.

The discourse that erupted in the Egyptian press at the turn of the twentieth century regarding veiling was not rooted in “local meaning” but rather was in reaction to and reproducing Western fears of Muslim women and a subsequent defense of Egyptian manhood.²⁹ Thus, in writing *The Liberation of Women* (1899) and *The New Woman* (1900) Egyptian lawyer Qasim Amin was arguing that rather than solving Egypt’s problems by fixing its men, the solution remained in the domestic realm, which could be physically and metaphorically uncovered (unveiled), examined, and remedied through education and companionate marriage. Notably, the latter two solutions had been put forward by other (male) writers in the region for the last half century before Amin.³⁰ These arguments had traction in the press as Egyptians clamored for more education for their daughters and what that education should entail.³¹

The debate on women, education, and marriage in the turn-of-the-century Egyptian press had previously been vigorous, and the response to Amin’s work stoked the fire in the press. His most vocal critic was entrepreneur M. Talaat Harb. While many might focus on the contrast between the two men in terms of veiling/unveiling and nationalist justification versus religious, there was quite a bit of similarity. Like missionaries working across the region and like reformers of the previous half century, both men saw women in need of a primary education to better serve the function of wives and mothers. With respect to grooming, consumption, and public space, for Harb, all of these things could be encapsulated in the veil (*hijab*). Women should wear the *hijab*. Furthermore, the *hijab* marked a distinction between public and private, and women’s space was in the domestic realm, the private, the home.³²

Articles in the mainstream and women’s press in Egypt covered changes in fashion for the “New Woman” as did advertising in the press

²⁹ Ahmed, *Quiet Revolution*, 44; Abou-Hodeib, *A Taste for Home*, 176; Wilson Jacob, *Working Out Egypt* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 59–62.

³⁰ See, for example, the writings of Rifaat al-Tahtawi (Egyptian), Ibrahim Şinasi (Ottoman), and Mirza Fathi ‘Ali Akhunzadeh (Iranian).

³¹ Russell, *Creating the New Egyptian Woman*, chapter 7.

³² M. Talaat Harb, *Tarbiyat al-mar’a wal-hijab*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Matba’at al-Manar, 1905 [1899]). See also his *The Definitive Message on the Woman and the Veil (Fasl al-Khitab fi al-mar’a wal-hijab)* in 1901.

for department stores and boutiques, which carried the latest designs and fashions. *Anis al-jalis* (*The Intimate Companion*), a magazine founded by a Christian Syrian woman in Alexandria at turn of the twentieth century, had several issues with fashion sections containing western style dresses, hats, and gloves.³³ One even had instructions for placement of hair accessories.³⁴ Articles in the mainstream press were more likely to mock fashion or display contempt for its power over women. For example, in a 1916 fashion column in *al-Lata'if al-musawara*, the author explicates the term “*moda*” as new fashion, a “force that no other force can challenge in the civilized world.”³⁵ The single image that accompanies the text is a tea-length, sleeveless dress with a v-neck.³⁶ Even the upper and upper-middle class women who might adopt these new fashions did not wear them on the street without modesty garments. Women who removed the *yashmak* or facial veil, still continued to wear hats/scarves, as well as *habaras* (cloaks). As late as the mid-1920s, one could still find advertisements for these modesty garments. For example, a 1924 advertisement in *al-Mar'a al-jadida* (*New Woman*) contains three women and displays three styles, with text indicating two silk charmeuse [cloaks] and one (silk) crepe [cloak] available at Morum department store where one could find “gentle taste, the latest goods, the best quality, and the lowest prices.”³⁷

Slowly during the interwar period in Egypt, urban women of the upper classes not only shed these outer garments but also ventured into bold new areas of fashion, for example, sports apparel, vacation attire, and swimwear. A general trend toward the body and physicality could be seen in advertising for fitness centers, body building pills, and sexual rejuvenating supplements, which filled the pages of the Egyptian press 1930s and 40s, often linking their products to women (and men) in bathing suits or fitness wear.³⁸ Women and mixed gender swimming became a topic of debate in the press in the early 1940s, with

³³ See for example *Anis al-jalis* 1, no. 3 (1898); 1, no. 5 (1898); 4, no. 9 (1901): 814–815. The magazine ran from 1898 to 1907.

³⁴ *Anis al-jalis* 5, no. 2 (1902): 968–969.

³⁵ *Al-Lata'if al-musawwara*, “Fashion,” (February 21, 1916), 7.

³⁶ “Fashion,” 7.

³⁷ Advertisement for Morum Department Store, *al-Mar'a al-jadida* (October 23, 1924).

³⁸ See advertisement for Barenhoff pills, *al-Ithnayn wal-dunya* (July 22, 1935); Ad for New weight loss product, *Al-Ahram* (September 4, 1936), 12; Ad for weight loss salts, *Akhr Sa'a* (March 27, 1938), 37; Ad for Vikelp body building tablets, *al-Ithnayn wal-dunya* (March 9, 1938), 33; Ad for Egyptian Institute for Beauty and Health, *al-Ithnayn wal-dunya* (January 31, 1938), 43; Ad for Marzuq Medical Institute, *al-Ithnayn wal-dunya* (September 8, 1941), 22; Ad for Re-zex the Sex rejuvenator (April 21, 1940), 41; Ad for Marzuq Gymnasium, *al-Ithnayn wa dunya* (August 28, 1944) and (March 18, 1946), 15; Ad for Bile Beans, *al-Ithnayn wal-dunya* (October 22, 1945), 26.

conservative Shaykh Abul Ayun and female educator Nabawiya Musa defending the practice of segregated swimming and modesty.³⁹ Both figures were lampooned by the press for their “outdated” views, and both were given grotesque faces and features in these caricatures. These critiques were gendered as Musa was satirized based on her appearance and the notion that her less than stunning looks might be a reason to continue segregated swimming. For example, in a 1943 cartoon regarding the decision to keep men off the beach before 9, a police officer rushes to stop Musa from stepping on the beach, informing her that it is still five minutes before nine.⁴⁰

The voice for change was not unified in post-WWI Egypt. The angst about women, their changing roles, and the future was most vehemently expressed in publications emanating from the Muslim Brotherhood. This organization was founded in 1928 by a school-teacher who began his career in Ismailia, where there was a heavy presence of foreigners in the Suez Canal zone. Additionally, there was a significant missionary presence known for its heavy-handed tactics, some of which the Brotherhood itself adopted.⁴¹ Its Supreme Guide, Hasan al-Banna, explicitly supported women’s role outside the home if necessity dictated such circumstances. Nonetheless, he was critical of Western professions, for example, hostess, salesgirl, and model, which commodified a woman’s beauty and body. He noted that greater virtue could be found caring for the home and the family.⁴²

Compared to Egypt and Lebanon, in Qajar Iran, there are some striking similarities in the discourse regarding education and the New Woman. Nevertheless, there is a stark contrast between these cases. Despite the limited state sponsorship of female education in Lebanon and Egypt (as elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire), it was far greater than that which existed in Qajar Iran, where missionary and (minority) community schools (Armenian, Jewish, Baha’i, Zoroastrian)

³⁹ Nabawiya Musa was the first Egyptian woman to sit for the secondary exam. She studied on her own for the exam and took it in a room full of (young) men. In 1923, She accompanied feminist Huda Shaarawi during an international women’s conference in Italy, during which the latter famously removed her facial veil. Musa too removed her facial veil. Notably, she continued to cover her hair and advocate for modesty.

⁴⁰ *Al-Ithnayn al-dunya* (June 28, 1943), 7. This joke would resonate with Egyptian viewers as the most famous image of Nabawiya Musa is one in which she dons a (men’s) suit with a tie, along with a headscarf. This portrait hangs in the Museum of Education in Egypt.

⁴¹ Beth Baron, *The Orphan Scandal: Christian Missionaries and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

⁴² Richard Mitchell, *The Society of Muslim Brothers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 257.

dominated the educational landscape in the late nineteenth century.⁴³ According to Rostam-Kolayi, American Presbyterians were at the forefront of these endeavors.⁴⁴ Although Iranian Christians were the original target of the missionaries, Mohamed Shah (r. 1834–1848) encouraged creating separate schools for Muslims.⁴⁵ The succeeding two monarchs, Nasir al-Din (r. 1848–1896) and Mozaffar al-Din (r. 1896–1907), waffled between neglect, half-hearted support, and closure of the schools.⁴⁶ A trigger point for the latter ruler was the change in consumption habits promoted by the missionaries. Mozaffar al-Din Shah instructed parents to remove daughters from the Bethel school “where they were being taught to wear high shoes and long shirts” presumably in emulation of their teachers, who unabashedly claimed to be “develop[ing]” the women of Iran.⁴⁷ Missionary Sarah Sherwood Hawkes noted the pressure of “being a conscious role model for the keen eyes [who] took in every detail of [her] conduct and speech.”⁴⁸ A noted scholar of the Presbyterian mission observed of Hawkes’ work that her efforts were to “spread the gospel of Christ,” but there was little to distinguish it from what we might term “Americanization.”⁴⁹ Embedded in the notion of Americanization were new habits of consumption, just as Mozaffar al-Din observed.

Even after the state became more proactive in girls’ education, first after the Constitutional Crisis (1906–1911) and more so after the creation of the Pahlavi state in 1925, the government could not meet the demand for girls’ education.⁵⁰ Furthermore, government schools remained inferior to missionary and minority schools.⁵¹ In the 1920s/30s, the perception was that the Americans lacked the financial

⁴³ Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi, “Origins of Iran’s National Schools for Girls: From Private/National to Public/State,” *JMEWS* 4, no. 3 (Fall 2008).

⁴⁴ Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi, “From Evangelizing to Modernizing Iranians: Presbyterian Mission and its Iranian Students,” *Iranian Studies* 41, no. 2 (2008): 214.

⁴⁵ Rostam-Kolayi, “Presbyterian Mission,” 216.

⁴⁶ Rostam-Kolayi, “Presbyterian Mission,” 220.

⁴⁷ Rostam-Kolayi, “Presbyterian Mission,” 216, 220. This order caused only a minor disruption in the functioning of the school.

⁴⁸ Hawkes was active in Iran from 1883 to 1919. Michael Zirinsky, “Harbingers of Change: Presbyterian Women in Iran,” *American Presbyterians* 70, no. 3 (1992): 179.

⁴⁹ Zirinsky, “Presbyterian Women,” 179. For a discussion of changes in consumption regarding homes and interiors, see Pamela Karimi, *Domesticity and Consumer Culture in Iran* (NY: Routledge, 2017), 39–50.

⁵⁰ The Constitutional Crisis in Iran was an era in which citizens demanded a constitution and a parliament. It was characterized by social activism, civic engagement, demands for education, and a nascent press. The Qajar monarchy, which only grudgingly and incompletely enacted reforms, was brought down in a series of maneuvers by Muhammad Reza Pahlavi between 1921 and 1925.

⁵¹ Amin, *Modern Iranian Woman*, 147.

interests in the region that other foreigners, for example, British or Russians had.⁵² Steadily the Iranian government increased control over curriculum and standards, before finally bringing all missionary, private, and minority schools under direct supervision of the government in 1940.⁵³

While Iran lagged behind Egypt and Lebanon with respect to government support of education in the nineteenth century, the debate among its scholars represented the vigor of its intellectual elite. Mirza Aqa Khan (1854–1897), for example, advocated companionate marriage, argued against forced veiling, and promoted education for women. Others, similarly weighed in on the role of the New Woman, including Yusuf Ashtiani (1874–1938), who translated Qasim Amin’s famous text a year after its publication in Egypt. Nevertheless, he was selective in his translation, focusing only on education and not veiling, thus selectively modifying the work.⁵⁴

Debate in the turn-of-the-century Iranian press reflected the hope that the New Woman might achieve the best results from both cultures rather than a Frankensteinian combination that brought together the worst characteristics of each.⁵⁵ In the tension between “New” and “Old,” “Farangi” [foreigner] and “local,” the female form in many ways remained literally and metaphorically protected from critique due to the presence of the *chador*.⁵⁶ This contrast was perhaps more striking, since the male reader confronted the westernized female form in a capitalist, commodified sense on a regular basis through print advertising. Iranian women were not permitted in advertising as late as 1949, which led to a deeper aesthetic and moral division between “New” and “Old” women.⁵⁷

⁵² Rostam-Kolayi, “Presbyterian Mission,” 226. On imperialism in Iran, see Firuz Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia: A Study in Imperial Ambition* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2013).

⁵³ Amin, *Modern Iranian Woman*, 147.

⁵⁴ Afsaneh Najmabadi, “Crafting the Educated Housewife,” in *Remaking Women*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton: Princeton University, 1998), 92–96, 100–101.

⁵⁵ Monica Ringer as cited in Russell, *Creating the New Egyptian Woman*, 3.

⁵⁶ Sivan Balslev argues that Ottoman women were the target of press images, while Iranians focused on the overly westernized dandy. This remained the case until the 1936 law calling for the removal of the *chador*. See his “Dressed for Success: Hegemonic Masculinity, Elite Men, and Westernisation in Iran, c. 1900–1940,” in *Gender, Imperialism, & Global Exchanges*, ed. Stephen Miescher, et al. (Malden: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 173. On Ottoman women, see Palmira Brummett, “New Woman and Old Nag: Images of Ottoman Women in Cartoon Space,” *Princeton Papers: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (Spring/Summer 1997): 13–58.

⁵⁷ Karimi, *Consumer Culture*, 36–37.

The press and circulating publications were also an indication of both the lengths to which there was male opposition to female education and the New Woman, as well as her defense. A handwritten (widely circulated) treatise entitled *The Disciplining of Women* (c. 1882–1889) advised men on how their women should endeavor to gratify their needs: to be available, congenial, and “inoffensive.” Not surprisingly, women also read this treatise, and Bibi Astrabadi responded with *The Vices of Men*.⁵⁸ At the turn of the twentieth century, clerics circulated letters and petitions warning parents about new schools and potential morality risks. The response of educated women, who created these schools, was to give them names, for example, “Chastity, Honor, Veil” to “communicate their goals in the face of vocal opposition.”⁵⁹ Bibi Astrabadi, for example, publicly pronounced that she had an all-female staff, with only a male janitor in the building to reinforce this message. Furthermore, she added cooking and handicrafts to the curriculum to please parents.⁶⁰

The notion of the “educated housewife” in Iran and the proliferation of literature on scientific household management is key to understanding the New Woman there. It was a message that jibed with both itinerant evangelicals and male reformers. Only someone skilled in domestic science, a companionate wife, and a breastfeeding mother could produce proper citizens. It was from this stepping-stone in the early twentieth century that women could logically argue for more education and connect the domestic realm to “national duty” in the 1930s and beyond.⁶¹

In the mid-1930s, nearly decade after Reza Shah imposed sartorial reforms upon men, regulations regarding unveiling began.⁶² Unlike Egypt, Lebanon, or Turkey where educated women slowly started disposing of the garment on their own, in Iran, the *chador* remained a staple. There was a “relaxation” of habits, as most women no longer wore a facial mask, discussion of unveiling received widespread

⁵⁸ Amin, *Iranian Woman*, 34–35. This work delivers on its title and highlights what the author considered to be specifically male problems: alcohol, gambling, marital infidelity, and pederasty.

⁵⁹ Rostam-Kolayi, “Origins,” 78.

⁶⁰ Janet Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906–1911* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1996), 188.

⁶¹ Najmabadi, “Crafting the Educated Housewife,” 109–115. For the biography of an itinerant female missionary, see Zirinsky, “Presbyterian Women,” 176–178.

⁶² These changes began with military uniforms in 1923; however, the most significant change for men came with the 1927 Dress Law, which required them to wear a suit and a western-style hat.

attention in the press, and there were some female activists who called for unveiling.⁶³

Before mandating “unveiling” Reza Shah used a gradual approach to lay the groundwork for securing the change. He began by enacting a law that allowed women the ability to appear in public unveiled in 1928. He encouraged his ministers to bring their unveiled wives to the Iran Club, a social club for Tehran’s elite.⁶⁴ The second logical track for him was in the schools, where most girls already attended unveiled, by asking teachers to do so as well in the schoolyear 1935–1936.⁶⁵ The schools and elite society would lay the foundation for urban society generally. The connection between education and New Womanhood was clear in the mind of Reza Shah. When he made his official pronouncement of his westernized dress for women in January of 1936, he did so in the company of his unveiled daughters and spouse at a Teacher Training college graduation. All those in attendance were informed of the dress requirement.⁶⁶

The case of Iran visibly highlights the linkages between education and new habits of consumption. The first individuals unveiled were schoolgirls, and educated women participated in the discourse about education, the merits of (un)veiling, and the politics of the day. One of the women’s magazines that was popular as Reza Shah was laying groundwork for change was *Women’s World* (*Alem-e Nisvan*), a publication started by the alumni association of the (American) Bethel school.⁶⁷ Compliance, acceptance, and views about the decree differed by class and region. The areas of contestation were urban and public: movie theaters, bathhouses, public transportation, and even streets. While the schools, government offices, and fine shops of the capital found little problem with compliance, women continued to wear traditional clothing in more remote cities, particularly for accessing the bathhouse, where the government pushed back by placing undercover agents at entrances.⁶⁸ In short, compliance came easily for New Women, but Iran lagged behind in education and in New Women. Reza

⁶³ Houchang Chehabi, “Staging the Emperor’s New Clothing: Dress Codes and Nation Building Under Reza Shah,” *Iranian Studies* 26, no. 3/4 (1993): 211–212. Notably there were also female activists who defended the *chador*.

⁶⁴ Chehabi, “Emperor’s New Clothing,” 214–216.

⁶⁵ Chehabi, “Emperor’s New Clothing,” 216. An uprising in response to the men’s clothing law in Gowharshad prevented implementation of this law.

⁶⁶ Chehabi, “Emperor’s New Clothing,” 218.

⁶⁷ Amin, *Iranian Woman*, 8, 60–63. Amin quotes an interview with missionary Jane Doolittle in which she cannot remember whether circulation was 400 or 4000. He notes longevity in a tight market regardless of figure indicates some degree of success.

⁶⁸ Chehabi, “Emperor’s New Clothing,” 219.

Shah's new policies did increase the numbers of girls in school, including the daughters of some prominent clerics; however, there were also clerical families, particularly around Qom, that chose to keep their daughters home. Women who opposed the dress regulations found ways to cope, adapt, or resist.⁶⁹

MISSIONARY WOMEN, "NEW WOMEN," AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

The role of missionaries in creating schools, setting trends, and spurring to communities to focus on girls' education happened not only in the Middle East, but also in China, Korea, Uganda, and South Africa. The women who dedicated their lives to these missions cannot be painted with one stroke. Whether European or American, they shared the goal of elevating modern housewifery to a science. These women ran the gamut from "Old" to "New" Women in their orientation and many changed with the experience.

Hyaewool Choi argues that we cannot assume that female missionaries contributed to a positive construct of modern womanhood. Using an unpublished novel by a Southern Methodist missionary, Ellasue Canter Wagner, she discusses the way in which missionary women reinforced traditional gender roles. Wagner juxtaposes the character of a "godless" American flapper who ends up as a concubine in Korea with Pobai, a virtuous figure, who has been educated at a mission school. For Wagner, Pobai has all the positive attributes of a[n] ("old") woman: docile, faithful, and filial. By creating this dichotomy and racializing the distinction between new and old, Wagner adds an extra layer of critique to the (American) New Woman.⁷⁰ While Wagner might have brought change through Western education, this education connected easily with traditional Confucian gender norms. Male and female reformers would make sense of these teachings by advocating for "women's work for women" and emphasizing maternal values for the sake of family and nation.⁷¹

In contrast, missionaries in Uganda in the period after WWI, were a distinctive brand of educators according to Aili Marie Tripp. These

⁶⁹ Chehabi, "Emperor's New Clothing," 220.

⁷⁰ Choi has no publication date on the manuscript (*The Concubine*), but speculates it was written between the 1920s and 1948. Choi, "An American Concubine in Old Korea: Missionary Discourse on Gender, Race and Modernity," *Frontiers* 25, no. 3 (2004): 134–139, 156.

⁷¹ Hyaewool Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters: New Women, Old Ways* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 177–179.

women, most of whom were single, came to the country shaped by the experience of war in one of two ways. Either they were widowed, or they grew up in a context understanding that career could be a substitute for a family. Later as the British settler presence increased, female civil servants, teachers, and the wives of civil servants engaged Ugandan women in a club movement that promoted domestic skills. The club movement encouraged the creation of New Women who later became active in politics and community affairs.⁷² They learned far more than hygiene and domesticity, but also networking and leadership skills that carried them forward in the years after WWII.⁷³

Similarly, Faith Childress writes of the exceptionalism of the women who came to teach at the American Colleges for Girls (Izmir and Istanbul) in Turkey. They came from prestigious universities with advanced degrees and chose career over marriage and family, living far from home. Both by example and through instruction they created generations of New Women in late Ottoman and early Republican Turkey. Although the curriculum was domestic and geared toward home/family, some graduates were able to transcend these barriers and become professors, research scientists, and physicians.⁷⁴ Childress argues that despite the fact that many have criticized the curriculum at the schools for its domestic emphasis, liberation of women was not a goal of either government schools or the mission schools.⁷⁵

The American women who served in Iran share some similarities with those at the American College in Turkey, highly educated and often single; however, there were some differences. These women did not come necessarily come from elite schools, nor did they all remain single. It was not uncommon to marry in the field. To place their higher education in context, only about a quarter of American women had higher education during this period in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century.⁷⁶

Doctors, for example, Mary Eddy (1864–1923), a second-generation missionary born the field, and Clara Swain (1834–1910) practiced medicine in a setting more rewarding, personally and professionally,

⁷² Aili Mari Tripp, "A New Look at Colonial Women: British Teachers and Activists in Uganda, 1898–1962," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 38, no. 1 (2004): 148.

⁷³ Tripp, "A New Look," 142–143.

⁷⁴ Faith Childress, "Creating the 'New Woman' in Early Republican Turkey: The Contributions of The American Collegiate Institute and The American College for Girls," *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 4 (July 2008): 556–557.

⁷⁵ Childress, "Creating the 'New Woman,'" 565.

⁷⁶ This statistic comes from Zirinsky, whose research runs from 1883 to 1949. "Presbyterian Women," 175.

than their “home” in the United States.⁷⁷ Mary Eddy was the first (and only) woman to obtain a license to practice medicine in the Ottoman Empire and provided itinerant care throughout Greater Syria before her own health failed in 1914.⁷⁸ In India, as in the Middle East, women’s reluctance to see male doctors made Clara Swain’s mission training other women to care for female patients particularly gratifying.⁷⁹ Women, for example, Eddy and Swain had greater opportunity for education as American women came to be seen as natural healers and nurturers in the mid-late nineteenth century by the allies that trained them. Nevertheless, there were structural limitations inside and outside the system that prohibited advancement and professional fulfillment including (but not limited to) access to specializations, societies, and clubs.⁸⁰ Even in remote locations women suffered discrimination. Jane Waterston, a Scottish woman who became South Africa’s first female doctor, complained about being relegated to “women’s work” despite her advanced training in medicine.⁸¹

The experience of being a missionary transformed women and their families. Jane Hunter notes that in early twentieth century China, single and married women together numbered about sixty percent of the missionary workforce. Single women formed a variety of households and relationships ranging from kinship-like within homes of other missionaries to alternative lifestyles with a companion of the same sex. She underscores the changes that married women encountered as they raised their own children in China and attempted to apply American domestic science in this foreign setting. Not only were these women changed, but so too were their children. American author Pearl Buck first experienced feminism as outrage at the patriarchy within her home and within the Presbyterian Church in China, where women were not even allowed to speak at meetings.⁸² Similarly, feminist Olive Schreiner (1855–1920), also the daughter of missionaries, after returning from Europe to her home in South Africa, felt extreme

⁷⁷ Ellen Fleischmann, “I Only Wish I Had A Home on This Globe: A Transnational Biography of Dr. Mary Eddy,” *Journal of Women’s History* 21, no. 3 (2009): 108–130; Gouri Srivastva, “The Christian Missionaries: The Evolution of Female Education in Western India, 1857–1921,” *The Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* (1991): 741.

⁷⁸ Fleischmann, “Mary Eddy,” 108–117.

⁷⁹ Srivastva, “Christian Missionaries,” 741.

⁸⁰ Steven Peitzman, “Why Support a Woman’s Medical College? Early Male Medical Feminists,” *Bulletin of History of Medicine* 77, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 580, 582.

⁸¹ Norman Etherington, *Missions and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 186.

⁸² Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 52–89, 128–173, 102.

alienation. Her writings advocate an openness regarding sexuality and her activism a concern for the well-being black South Africans. At the same time, she openly disavowed the religious teachings of her parents.⁸³ A generation (or more) of women growing up under proselytizing, patriarchy, and imperialism would either remain in their adopted homes or return to the metropole changed by the experience. They were in many ways transnational in the sense that Fleischmann describes it: prone to a physical and emotional grounding in more than one place.⁸⁴

Contact between and among women worldwide, women's magazines, sewing patterns, and new technologies, for example, the sewing machine, helped to disseminate notions of fashion and beauty beginning in the nineteenth century and continuing in the twentieth.⁸⁵ This traffic did not simply flow from West to East or from metropole to colony. One of the most distinctive markers of the American New Woman was her bloomers, adopted from Turkish harem pants.⁸⁶ Many credit the adoption of this garment with the ability to fight for political freedom. The attire caused outrage, arousing comparison with Ottoman women as the following quip from 1864 suggests:

Talk of the Turkish women in their harem coop,—
Are we less inhuman, Hampering with a hoop?
All free motion thwarted; Mortals *a la mort*;
Life's a thing aborted, Through your drabble skirt.⁸⁷

By this point, some suffragists, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton, found that their new costume was more a detraction than a benefit.⁸⁸ Stanton herself did not initially connect clothing to reform, only to health, but later the two became intertwined—quite literally as the freedom dress. Among the first to wear it, Stanton was also the first to abandon it by 1853 when it caused more harm than good by drawing the public's attention away from education, work, and suffrage. Others,

⁸³ Carolyn Burdett, *Olive Schreiner and the Progress of Feminism: Evolution, Gender, and Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 114.

⁸⁴ See Ellen Fleischmann, "Mary Eddy," 112–113.

⁸⁵ Nancy Mickelwright, "London, Paris, Istanbul, and Cairo: Fashion and International Trade in the 19th Century," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 7 (1992): 134.

⁸⁶ Gülen Cevek, "American Missionaries and the Harem: Cultural Exchanges Behind the Scenes," *Journal of American Studies* 45, no. 3 (2011): 479.

⁸⁷ See Gayle Fischer, *Pantaloons and Power* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2001), 86.

⁸⁸ Fischer, *Pantaloons*, 79–86.

for example, Susan B. Anthony, adopted the “freedom” garment, after a number of the other prominent women stopped wearing it.⁸⁹

Not only clothing but also decorations, furniture, and designs from around the globe made their way into American homes through missionaries.⁹⁰ Over the course of the nineteenth century, urbanization, industrialization, and the expansion of the middle class allowed more women to experiment with these new forms of decoration. They learned about home décor from magazines, photographs, museum displays, and missionary presentations.⁹¹ Missionary women used their distinctive knowledge to recreate “charming” replicas of Turkish interiors and displays of curios to solicit cash for funding of further missions.⁹² The emergence of the “Turkish corner” or “Turkish chair” in homes across America is testimony to these efforts. Missionary women helped to lay the foundation for the turn of the (twentieth) century “fictive” travel club movement, in which participants toured the world through food, drink, clothing, décor, images, guest lectures, music, dancing, etc.⁹³ Hoganson states that while it is difficult to estimate the number of participants in this movement, a “safe” figure is tens of thousands between the 1880s and 1920s.⁹⁴

CONCLUSION: TURKISH MODERN GIRL IN A CURIO CABINET OR NEW AMERICAN WOMAN

The tastes evoked by the travel club movement demonstrate the movement of ideas, products, and cultures in more than one direction. Missionary women considered themselves role models for the women they taught and an inspiration for those at home waiting to peek at their collections from the “orient.” But what of the generations of their students? While the record on missionary scholarship is clear that very few individuals converted, it does seem that the education had an impact on the students. Their language, habits, and grooming marked them as distinctive. Nevertheless, the experience of Selma Ekrem

⁸⁹ Fischer, *Pantaloons*, 102–104.

⁹⁰ Cevek, “Cultural Exchange,” 476–477.

⁹¹ Kristin Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium: Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865–1920* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2007), 24. Chinese, Japanese, Turkish, and Persian, were all popular motifs.

⁹² Cevek, “Cultural Exchange,” 477–478.

⁹³ Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium*, 155.

⁹⁴ Hoganson, *Consumer's Imperium*, 158.

(1902–1986) in the United States highlights the tensions inherent in the colonial New Woman.⁹⁵

Selma Ekrem embodied New Womanhood. Her grandfather, Namik Kemal (1840–1888) addressed the “Woman Question” decades before Qasim Amin, and he was a co-founder of the Young Ottoman movement.⁹⁶ Her father, Ali Ekram Boyalır (1867–1937), was a civil servant, who was assigned to posts including Jerusalem, Beirut, and the Archipelago islands where Ekrem followed and experienced the multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multireligious dimensions of the empire.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, she felt alienated by the many restrictions placed upon her by patriarchal society. Some of her happiest moments in her youth were at the American College, playing sports, during which time she had the freedom to wear different clothing, go with her head uncovered, and not think about the ravages of WWI.⁹⁸

Ekrem made a conscious decision to immigrate to the United States with the blessings of her family in 1923, when the process of transition to Kemalist republicanism was just beginning in Turkey. Had Ekrem stayed in Turkey, like many of her alma mater’s prestigious alumnae, she might have gone on to graduate study and continued to a professional career of her choice.⁹⁹

Although she did not know what type of work she would find in the United States, her missionary education gave her the faith that it would come as easily as “drinking a glass of water.”¹⁰⁰ What she did not anticipate was the combined fascination and antipathy with her ethnicity. She repeatedly insists that “no one believes” she is a Turk: she is “not the type.”¹⁰¹ However, her accent, cultural unfamiliarity, and otherness betrayed her—everything from the pace of American life to dating.¹⁰² Aside from those obstacles, having to write “nationality” on

⁹⁵ The Ottoman Empire was never directly colonized, economic concessions and capitulations put it in a state of financial dependence. Although the Young Turks cast off the capitulations during WWI, these disadvantageous trading terms returned at the end of the war.

⁹⁶ Nermin Menemencioglu, “Namik Kemal Abroad: A Centenary,” *Middle East Journal* 4, no. 1 (1967): 29–32.

⁹⁷ Selma Ekrem, *Unveiled: The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* (NY: Ives Washburn, 1930), 1–175.

⁹⁸ Ekrem, *Unveiled*, 268–272.

⁹⁹ Childress, “Creating the New Woman,” 563–565. Her sister Baraet continued her education, see Ekrem, *Unveiled*, 306.

¹⁰⁰ Ekrem, *Unveiled*, 304. She used this phrase with her father before leaving Turkey.

¹⁰¹ See for example Ekrem, *Unveiled*, 301–302.

¹⁰² With respect to her accent, the only hint the reader observes is in the author’s recollection of gossip after a lecture, someone mentions an Irish brogue. She did not have one; however, it was perhaps code for foreign/immigrant in 1920s New York. Multiple anecdotes of her awkwardness are related in the final chapter of *Unveiled*, “Turn to the East and to the West.”

the job application was another: “We need an American for this work.”¹⁰³

Ultimately she found her niche on the lecture circuit discussing her homeland from her perspective as a “New Woman.”¹⁰⁴ She would parlay this successful career into one as an author. The first book she intended to write was indicative of her version of New Womanhood. She wanted to share the women’s world of her homeland by translating the Turkish fairy tales she heard from her Armenian nurse when she was child. She took these to a publisher, who instead advised her to tell the story of a “modern Turkish girl.”¹⁰⁵ The memoir was an extended version of the ladies’ club lecture. It used the veil as a metaphor for traditionalism that could then be contrasted with her decision to wear a hat, the marker of Western, modernity.¹⁰⁶ Just as Ekrem could neither accept all of American culture nor could she disregard the gems of her nurse’s wisdom. These would be told and retold many times before the actual publication of her collection of *Turkish Fairy Tales* in 1964, whether in folksy adaptations of Turkish to English in *Unveiled* or in wisdom dispersed to audiences at churches and women’s clubs.

Examining one of Ekrem’s speeches highlights the hybridity of her views, particularly the importance of a moral compass for the New Woman of Turkey. She begins a 1942 speech by mentioning the idea that arranged marriages were not uncommon just twenty years earlier in her home country. She quickly moves her remarks to “a few years ago,” to discuss the first beauty contest there. Ekrem’s summary of events is open to some interpretation:

¹⁰³ Ekrem, *Unveiled*, 306–307.

¹⁰⁴ Ekrem, *Unveiled*, 315–316.

¹⁰⁵ Nilüfer Hatemi, “What Fairy Tales Meant to Selma Ekrem,” *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children’s Literature* 56, no. 2 (2018): 65. While it is unclear exactly when this encounter took place, it was clearly before the publication of her memoir *Unveiled* in 1930, which contained ample quantities of her nurse’s wisdom. It would take more than three decades for this work to be published under the title *Turkish Fairy Tales* (NY: D. Van Nostrand, 1964). Between the two works, she published *Turkey: Old and New* to explain the transition between Ottoman and Republican Turkey (NY: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1947) in which one fairy tale appeared. On the implications of the term, “modern girl,” see Alys Eve Weinbaum et al., “Modern Girl as Heuristic Device: Collaboration, Connective Comparison, Multidirectional Citation,” in *Modern Girl Around the World*, ed. Alys Eve Weinbaum, et al. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 1–24.

¹⁰⁶ Gönül Pultar, “An ‘American Venture’: Self Representation and Self-Orientalization in Selma Ekrem’s *Unveiled*,” in *How Far is America From Here*, ed. Theo d’Haen, et al. (Amsterdam: Brill, 2005), 303–304.

. . . young Turkish girls in full evening dress, faces painted, hair curled, were hoisted one by one on a table before the scrutinizing glance of thousands of Turkish men. Thus, was Turkey's first beauty queen chosen. This amazing change did not take place with proverbial American speed, nor was the outcome a very bloody and violent revolution. It was rather peaceful change and dates back to the mid nineteenth century.¹⁰⁷

She uses the adjective “amazing” to describe the event; however, the vision of young women, stylized and painted, hoisted like cattle for the male gaze does not seem like a century of progress. She touts the advances in personal status laws and describes women working in high offices of government: police, foreign affairs, and medicine. These advances she equates with Atatürk's admonition for the Turkish woman to “show her face to the world,” meaning unveil. Ekrem, nonetheless, warns that with the equal right to education also comes the equal right to “recreation.” Once again, it is with a note of condemnation regarding unfettered consumption that she remarks:

Now a Turkish woman can go wherever she wants. She wears evening clothes, goes out to cabarets and dance halls with Turkish men and dances the rumba. She does it well it seems.¹⁰⁸

After discussing the plight of peasant women, she returns to the topic of companionate marriage and the crux of the issue raised by women in the dance hall. Women are now responsible for deciding “what is right” and the “tragedy” for Ekrem is that too many women have made poor decisions and have had difficulty finding men to marry them.¹⁰⁹ Interestingly enough, Ekrem herself never married.¹¹⁰ Her conclusion is the paradox of New Womanhood in the colonial contexts: “Her greatest problem is to find herself . . . She has tasted of both

¹⁰⁷ Rebecca Stiles Taylor, “Activities of Women's National Organizations: Selma Ekrem of Turkey Tells Woman Movement Story of The Near East,” *The Chicago Defender (National Edition)* (1921–1967), March 14, 1942, 18. <https://search-proquest-com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/docview/492595689?accountid=10639>. Atatürk, the leader of Turkey, believed the contest to be an advancement for women.

¹⁰⁸ Taylor, “Activities,” 18.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Pultar speculates that Ekrem had an “affective bond” with her female roommate in the United States; however, it would not be common for lesbians anywhere in the world in 1930 to discuss their sexual orientation publicly or in memoirs. Aydogdu is more tentative in her conclusions, stating that there was an “ambivalence about her sexuality.” Pultar, “An American Venture,” 299–300; Zeynep Aydogdu, “Beyond the Binaries of Orientalism: The Making of Identity in Selma Ekrem's *Unveiled*,” (PhD Diss., Univ. of Wyoming, 2012), 88.

civilizations and it is up to the Turkish woman to interpret the East to the West and the West to the East and bring about a better understanding of our common cause—CIVILIZATION.”¹¹¹ Pultar writes that Ekrem created a zoo, both in speeches like this one and in her publications, in which she displayed her Orientalized self.¹¹² This constant production and reproduction of self was her effort to negotiate her boundaries and understand her place in the world, her adaptation to new womanhood. She became a living curio for the venues in which she spoke, seeking to find that accommodation between East and West.

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¹¹¹ Emphasis in the original. Taylor, “Activities,” 18.

¹¹² Pultar, “An American Venture,” 317.