

Women, Religion, and Social Change II

PANEL: RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE, EXTREMISM AND FUNDAMENTALISMS

HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL

SPERRY ROOM

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4:00 - 5:45 PM

LEILA AHMED: [Introductions missing due to taping error] ... So, let me not take any more of their time and invite our first speaker, and that is Veena Das.

VEENA DAS: Thank you, Leila, for your introduction and thank you very much to Diana and Dorothy and Ellie and everyone for inviting me here. I'm very deeply conscious of the fact that I'm one of those who would have been identified yesterday as someone who goes on and on and cannot get to a solution. Because, in a way, I feel that there is a certain kind of urge towards understanding and that I don't actually understand much of what has happened in India, despite many, many years of working on violence and working very closely with communities affected by violence. You can see my nervousness. So, I'm just going to put some issues on the table, and I apologize in advance for the disappointment after such a powerful panel, and I actually feel myself suffocating. I'm just going to put some things on the panel, and if you have questions, I'd be very happy to engage with them.

I'm going to start by saying that the entire question of the growth of extremism, exclusivist, chauvinist religious elements, in fact, does raise very interesting questions as to whether the violence that we are witnessing is, in fact, a religious event. I mean this is something which struck me straight away on September 11, that there was an assumption that we were dealing with a religious event. But it was not clear to me as to what the contours of such an event are, and I'm going to ask that question with reference to some of the issues in India.

So, the first point I want to make is that we have a certain kind of way in which terms have become portable. So, the term 'fundamentalism,' which, in fact, did not have its origin in the Islamic context or the Hindu context. It had its origin in the middle 19th century. Within Christianity it's a strongly intellectual movement, and it is a movement that was very much, in a certain sense, against the new kind of evangelical reforms that were evolving and against new forms of experiences, which were very much central to the way in which Christianity was evolving. And I had the occasion last time when I was here in 1983. After that in 1986, I taught a course for a year on fundamentalism and, so, two questions of genealogy of these terms. And it's very interesting to me how certain terms then come to function in some ways as if they were terms of abuse and they come to be put onto certain other religious groups.

So, in some ways, when we think about this portability and we apply terms like fundamentalism to Islam, we have really sometimes very shoddy thinking on this. So, even as in 1993, Tom Stoppard, this famous British playwright, who said that the 18th century

Enlightenment made the discovery that man was perfectible, that change was good, and that change was always progress. And then he went on to say, "We Westerners have moved with times. Muslim fundamentalists have not moved with time." And he says, "Is that what we are saying? Evidently so. Our entire culture is saying that the Muslims have not moved with the times." And then he said, "I believe it." Now, it's a very strange kind of statement with which the entire issue of what is the history of fundamentalism, where it is being located, and how it is being characterized.

So, in some ways, it's interesting that in the context of India-- I want to actually also look at the way that these things get very tied to questions of the masculine and the feminine in the Indian context. So, part of the whole question of a certain kind of reform, Islam then began to be identified as a fundamentalist Islam, was related to issues in India of purging the lived Islam from its particular relationship to Hinduism and Sikhism. And in that sense, it was interesting that it became part of the aspirations of a certain kind of global Islam, which was also tied to local Islam. But I do also want to put here the fact that in some ways even the question of what is a global Islam often takes the Middle East as if that is the center of Islam, and that's not very clear to me that, indeed, that is so. For example, if I look at Malaysian Islam, it's very interesting. One of my students is working on this, and ...(inaudible) makes this point sometimes when he says that Malaysia is already a completely Islamic state. And he says that Muslims have always been very modern and that it's the Ulema that came in the way of modernity of Muslims and that the West learned from us to be modern.

So, all I want to say is that there are, in that sense, very many different voices that enrich even such issues as to what is it to be a reform Islam or what is it to be a fundamentalist or what is it to be an Islamic state are completely in discussion with each other and we should not assume that there is some kind of issue that is operating over here.

I want to come to the questions of Hinduism, but please don't take me as representing any of these positions. And it's very interesting that instead of assuming that once we have named something as fundamentalist, we know what it is about. I'm going to argue that, in fact, we need to do a very careful analysis of what the aspirations even of something called fundamentalism are in particular contexts. So, in the context of Hinduism, I think it's interesting that in some ways, the move away from the reform movement has been towards what is seen as the growth of the right, in the Hindu context is a certain sense of growth of making public spaces recognizably Hindu. And it is in some ways a fundamental hatred, I would say, of the Muslims and the idea that Muslims should be made to live reduced civil lives. And this is, obviously, I think, completely unacceptable both within the context of the Indian Constitution and from the context, in some ways, of how one would look at issues of relatedness and belongingness in terms of what it is to be a national community.

I worked with violence and communal rights from 1984, and, yet, I think Gujarat was a time that was deeply disturbing. It was the kind of time when one would say that you felt how could anybody inflict that kind of pain on my name to anybody else? So, you can see that with Gujarat why people felt that something had completely changed. One, despite the

representation of communal riots as two groups unable to live with each other, occasionally bursting into these terrible conflicts, it's been very clear that this kind of communal rights was part of the mentality and increasingly has become part of the mentality so that the state is deeply implicated in the way in which these riots are organized.

I don't want to say, therefore, that somehow the state is guilty and people are innocent, because what strikes me is how many Indian intellectuals will actually sit down and say this is all a result of the fact that the modern state, this is a form of modern mentality, but, in fact, there are deep genealogies of this particular kind of hatred. And I think we need to really seriously address how to deal with these particular genealogies. I will just put two points for discussion on the table.

First, in some ways there has been a tremendous lack of maturity, I think, in the Indian notion of how to inherit a history. The assumption has been that you can create this kind of belongingness of a plural tolerant society, somehow it is histories of conflict. And that never works. So, you could simply say, actually, temples were never broken by invading Muslim groups. This is untrue, and there is historical and archaeological evidence of that. What you have to say is that this is not the only history that was there. There was also a history of mutual education by Hindus and Muslims of each other, so to say, and a history of mutual living with each other. This is not a conflict-free history. I mean no history of any relationship is a conflict-free history.

So, one of the interesting things that has happened after Gujarat, which I see as a hopeful event, is that people have begun to say, let's see how we can actually talk about this conflict and assume that we are not bound to repeat it. We are mature enough that we don't actually have to repeat it.

The second interesting thing, I think, is that since 1984-- And in some ways, I was someone who was very closely associated in 1984 when there were riots against the Sikhs and the government completely denied that Sikhs were killed all over, saying that they were just sporadic incidents of killing. I was one of the persons who was quite strongly implicated in setting up a citizen's commission and, in some ways, publishing in newspapers and so on, saying here are these, we've been there, we've counted the number of people who have died, and this many number of people have, indeed, died.

So, in some ways, these reports have become established. And I think that's quite an interesting development, which is that people are not willing to let the state write the history of any particular conflict. So, every time there is a communal right, before the government sets up a commission, people have already set up a commission with retired jurists and so on. And those reports are available for people to actually see. I see that as a hopeful development.

The second hopeful development, I think, was the fact that although it was very disappointing that in Gujarat we did not get a reaction from within Gujarat. And one has to ask oneself, you know, for people who say that secularism really deprives us of spirituality,

I think we have to note that it was the secular groups that, in fact, created the entire structure by which they went, set up camps, lived with these people from Delhi University itself. All the NGOs got together and, in fact, set up this under a women's organization called Jagori, which sent people every week to Gujarat to work in these particular camps. And for me personally this was a very moving experience. In 1984 when I was working with the victims, the survivors, one of the women I was working closely with whose husband and four children had burned, the crowds had burned them to death, committed suicide. And I brought two of her daughters to come and live with me for awhile while we could make arrangements for them. The youngest daughter would only speak to my youngest son, who was then about four years old, and he's a Ph.D. student at MIT now. But he's the only one she would speak to, so his coming into language in a certain sense was by hearing stories about how her father and brothers were burned to death.

In the Gujarat riots, I read an article very recently "My Work in Amman Chowk." And I thought, who is this person? And I saw the person's name was Ragupati Singh. And he happened to be Sunmay's best friend when they were little children. And I thought, well, as long as at least-- And I thought, okay, some of these rioters were people who were children at that particular time. And I think that that's what we really need to probably attend to, namely, not simply how to bandy about words and say "Is religion good or is secularism good?"-- we've got to see what is the practice through which people actually either become killers or they become people who are so moved by the suffering that they're willing even as very young people to take this upon themselves to say that a certain kind of correction has to be done.

Lastly, I have more material if you want, I could talk about it. But I can tell you that in some ways unless one can attend to the questions of hatred and not assume that somehow the state is guilty but people are innocent, we're not going to get to this particular problem. One of the persons in the work that I'm doing in Delhi right now is a schizophrenic. For 20 years, he has had this delusion that he is constantly abducted by Allah and that he has to be rescued from Allah by the Hindu god Shiva. And it seems to me that there is something here where this kind of fear and paranoia has gotten into the body. It is not just a question of ideology.

And, so, I end by simply sort of saying, because I know my time is running out, I want to end by saying that I feel somewhat disturbed by the notion that one must represent one's religion or one's nation or whatever. Because, really, I feel that if Hindu-- You know, I'm a believer of some sort, at any rate. I read The Upanishads, I read the Gita, I worship the goddess Kali. And it seems to me that if we cannot survive as a moral entity, we'd better not survive as a material entity. There is no state I have of thinking that we must survive if this is the kind of hatred with which we are going to survive. Thank you.

AHMED: Thank you, Veena, for this wonderfully rich and thoughtful presentation. Our next speaker is Nawal, and she will speak --

NAWAL EL SAADAWI: To enter into the subject very, very quickly, because I don't have much time. Excuse my English, which is not very subtle, and excuse me, I'm extremely

exhausted. But I am very much interested in this dialogue, in this discussion. Thank you, Diana, for bringing us. After 20 years, I hope this will continue.

I had discussions. I live in Egypt, and I write in Egypt. I'm a writer, a medical doctor, and I do not separate between writing and fighting, between action and theory, between global and local. We don't use the word global or local, it is one word, glocal. I am very fond of this integration between dichotomies, between heaven and earth, body and mind, and spirit and all that. You know, I've been teaching that with Sherif for almost 10 years, in the last 10 years, to break the boundaries, to integrate things. We inherited a lot from the patriarchal class system, a lot of dichotomies and splits between things. And this affects women mainly, in fact. So, we have to integrate. We have to undo the split.

Some people say, you know, why do you live in Egypt and the masses in Egypt are religious, so why should you criticize religion? I'll tell you, the masses in Egypt are not religious. The masses in Egypt are secular. And when Nasser came and spoke to the poor people in Egypt, who represent 95%-- We have 5% people in Egypt who own everything and 95% who own nothing. So, when Nasser came after King Farouk and after we kicked the British out, he spoke to the poor people, to the Egyptian people, in economic language about equality, about dissolving the differences between classes. They heard him, they loved him. And he was against Islamization, against Christianization and all that. And they listened to him and he was popular, and Egypt was secular.

When Sadat came, he started the religious fundamentalism with the support of the United States. And now in Iraq. Now you find what's happening in Iraq, the religious strife between the Shi'ah, the Sunnah, the Kurds. They want to divide Iraq, divide and rule. So, we have to be aware of that.

So, the masses are not religious at all. The masses are secular, they need bread, they need education, they need health, they need knowledge, they need technology. They need faith, but faith in what? Because everybody is speaking about faith. Faith in a god that is not just? I am not ready to believe in a god that discriminates between me and men, or between me and other people. I am not ready. And I wonder, sometimes I'm amazed at women who believe in a god that is not just and discriminates. Why should I? My grandmother, who was a woman, a peasant, poor woman, who never read the Qur'an. She was a believer in faith, but her god was justice. And she gave me this lesson when I was five years old. She said, "...[inaudible]." She said, "." That's my grandmother. And that's the philosophy of faith, real faith, faith in social justice, in global justice, social responsibility, individual responsibility. We should not separate between social responsibility and individual responsibility.

So, I shift from this to this. Encouragement, I am with Leila Ahmed when she says, "We have a passport and people impose on us our Islamic identity or Arab identity." When we travel, they pass us because we are Christian or Muslim, you know, all this. But not because I have a passport that says I'm Arab or Egyptian or Muslim I should confirm this identity that is enforced on me. I should fight against it, not to submit to it, not to confirm it. I have to change it all the time. Because this identity, even the national identity, the class identity, the gender identity, every identity is imposed on us to divide us. Even under the so-called

diversity, which is a benign, lovely word. Diversity is used to divide us. So, we have to be careful how to emphasize similarities between us rather than differences. There are a lot of people who are fond of the word differences. I don't like it. I don't like it. I like similarities. I feel we are similar rather than we are different. So, we have to be careful.

Language is very important. You know, I was very offended by people who speak about Third World. They tell me, you are a Third World writer. This is degrading. Or Middle East. Middle to whom? Who named us. It's the British. British colonizers said we are the Middle East. When I go now to Britain, I say I'm going to the Middle West. And when I come to the U.S., I say I'm coming to the Far West. And people laugh, because it's laughable. This is not a name, Middle East. The other thing is postcolonial. This is a word that we should not use. Colonialism is not behind us. We are not in the postcolonial. Everywhere they say Nawal is a postcolonial African writer. What's that? I am not a postcolonial. I am living in the neocolonial period. So, we have to correct our language. And the word "spirituality" also. If we have this imagination, creativity, and we are undoing the split between spirit and mind and body, we have to create a new language. Because if you create new ideas with old language, people are confused.

Then I shift to action. Action deserves differences. What I'm talking, I learned to be similar, I learned to undo all my obsessions. I'm no more all these identities that were forced on me since I was born. I criticized, and I was able to shed, to transcend through action. Not through academic work or books, through action with people, with women and men. Because through action, you know each other, you become more human. Because I see the Jewish, the Christian, the American, the Chinese, and I love them, they are similar. So, we emphasize our similarities through action and work through that. And that's what happened to us in the Arab Women's Solidarity Association. We have non-Arabs. Of course, we started as Arab women, but we have now American, all nationalities, we have Muslims, Christians, Jews. We have men and women. We have 35% men. Sherif is one of the founding members of the Arab Women's Solidarity Association.

Some people say we need religion because of morality, spirituality and morality. I didn't find any morality in any religion. It's double morality, morality for men, morality for women, morality for the ruler. There is a classist, racist attitude against gender, against women in religions. So, we have to be careful when we say we need religion for spirituality. As if people who have no religion are not spiritual or don't have a spirit. They have. Or we need religion because we need morality, a moral code. Who said that religion has a moral code? I studied the three holy books. I didn't find any morality. Double morality, yes, double standards, yes. So, are we going to continue with the double code? Now, I'm not against religion per se. I need faith, but faith in myself, in justice, in god or goddess, all that. So, I don't say I'm an atheist, I don't like it, or I don't have faith. I have faith, but my faith in what? So, we have to know how to answer people.

I have to skip some of the identity and all. State terrorism. Now we cannot do anything. When we try to have funds-- Many of the associations in Egypt or in Africa, they need funds from other rich countries to do conferences. So, we are not funded at all unless we do something about Islam, you know, like that. Like that. If we don't make a conference with

this "Islam, sexuality in Islam, beyond the veil, circumcision of women and all that, female genital mutilation," nobody funds us, nobody. But when we connect female genital mutilation with George Bush policy, with neocolonial power, with capitalism, with war, never. Nobody funds us. So, we have to know why they have all this.

So, then I come to-- We need to humanize God. I didn't find God very human. I didn't find him very human. Excuse me, I am speaking from the three holy books. Even when I was a child, I felt God is very inhuman to me. I used to close the door and cry because of God, how I was discriminated against as a female poor child from the books, the holy books, the three holy, monotheistic books. So, we need to humanize the holy books, we need to humanize God.

I would like to end by saying, because there are many people who would like to speak, I met Jacques Derrida. You know, I met a lot of those very famous philosophers everywhere. So, I met Jacques Derrida in Norway last year. You know him? He's everywhere as a philosopher. And I love what somebody here said, he is an atheist. I discussed with him, he doesn't believe in any religion. But suddenly, when we were discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he became Jewish suddenly. And I was amazed how he shifted from atheism or from non-believer in cultural and philosophical things. And when we came to the political, concrete, real situation between the bloodshed in Palestine, he became Jewish. Thank you very much.

AHMED: Thank you for a wonderful presentation, Nawal. And our next speaker is Sherif Hetata.

SHERIF HETATA: Well, I suppose that many of you are wondering what I'm doing here. But, you know, this is not the first experience that I've had attending meetings where there are only women. And I must say, and these are not token words, that these are the meetings that during the past years I've learned something new. I've attended many conferences, and they have always, almost always been the most interesting ones. And I'm not saying that because I am surrounded by women, but because it is a fact that, you know, reading books about women, dealing with problems of feminism, living with a wife like Nawal El Saadawi has opened another world for me.

Now let me talk of my own country. Because you have your own experience, you are dealing with religious variety, multicultural variety, and you have your way of dealing with it. But I would like to tell you what's happening in Egypt today. What is happening in Egypt today where women are concerned is that they are divided between mainly between two tendencies, two currents. On the one hand, the religious fundamentalist movement. And the religious movement is mainly fundamentalist at this moment because in the absence of a strong democratic progressive movement in society, it is very difficult to change the religious movements. You can try to change them from within a little, but unless there is pressure from the outside, a power, a people's powerful move that is acting within society, you can't have a dialogue with these religious fundamentalists or even with the religious movements in Egypt.

So, women, some women are going towards the fundamentalist movement. The other women are going towards what you could consider the postmodern society, that is, they are becoming involved in consumerism, in makeup, in going to the discotheque, or even if they are professional women, they are becoming, and I'm using this word not in a bad sense, they are becoming co-opted to this globalization process or this privatization process. And this co-option, or co-optation, I don't know how you express it, is something that is happening not only to women but to intellectuals in my country. And, so, women are torn between these two movements. And that is not an independent democratic movement which is functioning between the two, which can help women to find their way and to create a really feminist democratic movement. That is the first thing I would like to say.

The second issue that comes to my mind is that, to me at least, I can't separate between patriarchy and between class. I can't separate between patriarchy and between class, because if it is a question of women being promoted to certain positions or to becoming equal to men in some areas, the society in which we live can encourage this process because it doesn't change anything fundamentally. You know, you've all read Fukiama maybe. And Fukiama one year or two years ago said, "Well, the coming age will be the age of women." So, the society in which we live, this global, capitalist, consumerist society in which we live is not worried about having women in different professional positions or in the academy or elsewhere. But what is important is for the power to remain in the hands of the men. For the women to become like the men. And in this postmodern group of women, these professional women have become women who are cooperating with men and they get jobs and they work, etc. But as far as the general run of women in society is concerned, they are not worried about that. So, you have these two poles, which are functioning in such a way that they are preserving the society as it is but coming from different directions. And this is something that is very important where the feminist movement is concerned.

The third point that I would like to make is that, of course, there is violence, there is extremism. If I talk to you about the increasing violence in Egypt, the fact that maybe genital mutilation is increasing again, veiling of women is increasing again, all these problems are increasing again. But at the same time, we cannot separate between fundamentalism and between the neocolonial, what Nawal called the neocolonial power. And I give you a very simple example. As Nawal said, you know, all this talk about war, about terror, about fighting against the fundamentalists is not weakening the fundamentalist movement. It's reinforcing the fundamentalist movement. It's reinforcing terror. It's even going to reinforce the production of arms of mass destruction. Because people are going to say to themselves, okay, if our fate is going to be like that of Iraq, then we'll produce weapons to protect ourselves. So, this situation is breeding violence in both directions, is breeding terror in both directions, is maintaining the situation as it is.

And then, in our area at least, it is making it very difficult for women to fight what is happening, because instead of creating a unified movement, they are being divided on a religious basis. They are being divided on an ethnic basis. They are being divided on a cultural basis. And I wonder why it is that in a world which is becoming more and more unified at the top, more and more powerful at the top, more and more integrated at the top, more and more culturally united in a consumer society, at the bottom you are getting an

increasing fragmentation on ethnic, cultural, religious bases. And why it is that when we speak to many of the people who are in top positions, they have no problem in talking about multiculturalism or differences in religion, but they have a problem when we talk about plunder, economic plunder, war, and what are you doing in our country, and why are you occupying us. Thank you.

AHMED: Thank you for another terrific and I'm sure, as we see in the question period, provocative talk, as we've had already. Our next speaker is Melanie May.

MELANIE MAY: I think it is good to begin with a word of thanks, Diana, and your marvelous staff and all our hosts and hostesses here, for bringing us together. I'm somewhat daunted to be standing before you on such a hot, late afternoon. And also to see so many of you I count as older sisters in this struggle. But it's also my great joy. I struggled a long time with what to say this afternoon about this massive topic. Here's what I propose. I will speak as a woman, a Christian woman living in the United States. I speak also as a woman raised in a radical and pacifist and a Baptist tradition, akin to the tradition in which Jean Zaru was raised. I speak as a woman whose ordination was revoked in that tradition a year and a half ago when the watchdogs of the religious right newly ensconced in that tradition discovered many years after the fact that I'm a lesbian living very happily, thank you very much, in a loving relationship. All of those things inform how I'm speaking. But in the end, I've decided to look at the "s" at the very end of the title, "Fundamentalisms." And I want to speak about a face of fundamentalism that I think is particularly and perniciously dangerous for women today. And I want to give some historical perspective as I do so, because I think a brief genealogy, as Veena refers us to, is helpful for clear sight in the present.

Now, one other prefatory comment. I was very struck as I was thinking about coming. Last week, television screens in this country were saturated with images of the Shiite faithful thronging into Karbala to commemorate the martyrdom of Al Hussain. Cameras zoomed in on scenes of self-flagellation, featured bloody heads as acts of atonement, and in the next days newspapers were crowded with articles, screaming headlines such as "U.S. Unprepared for Rising Power of Shiites," the text of these articles going on to elaborate great concern that the force of Shiite aspirations could derail U.S. attempts to establish a secular democracy by coalescing an Islamic fundamentalist government. Okay, all of that's in the backdrop. It has lots to do with what we have talked about, even in the short time we've been together, about media and who controls it, about disinformation and who perpetuates it.

But there is another face of fundamentalism in this country that is being masked. Bev reminded us already yesterday that fundamentalism as a phenomenon is a homegrown U.S. commodity. It's one we've well exported. There is, that is to say, a primary face of fundamentalism that mouths the politics of liberal democracy. It is a face of fundamentalism born not of nostalgia or secret wounds, as some scholars of fundamentalism have it, although that may be true in other contexts. In this context, it's the face of fundamentalism not born of nostalgia or secret wounds, not born of feelings of humiliation and defection, feelings that leave people so "bereft" of everything, they have

nothing to lose, and come like Sampson to pray to God for the temple to collapse on top of them and their enemies alike. As Amin Maalouf puts it so eloquently in his essays, in the name of identity. It's a fundamentalism born not of irrationalism, not of what appears to be emotional extremism. It is a face of fundamentalism, this is to say, born not on the margins of power and privilege but precisely to power and privilege, of power and privilege. This is fundamentalism at the top that then fuels the fundamentalism that we feature at the grassroots.

This is a face of fundamentalism which I have come to call imperial fundamentalism. And it is currently resident in the highest offices of this country. It is a fundamentalism determined to discipline and punish, to borrow a phrase from Foucault's brilliant study of prisons in the "Panopticon," determined to discipline and punish anyone in the world, indeed, the world, that stands in the way of its attempt to secure its own power and privilege.

Now I want to trace just briefly this genealogy of imperial fundamentalism and then make a connection to how I see it working today, particularly with regard to the state of women in this country and the world. This brief genealogy, three parts. Remember, again, as Bev already reminded us, the term came into common usage in the second decade in the 20th century in the United States with the publication of a series of pamphlets called "The Fundamentals." They appear between 1910 and 1915. They were in defense of doctrinal orthodoxy. Historians of the fundamentalist movements that surrounded these pamphlets have described it in at least three different ways, in sociological terms, political terms, as well as theological terms. But it was the defense of an establishment way of life seen to be rapidly disappearing. First point.

Second point. Remember, the authors of "The Fundamentals" were not social outcasts or outsiders. Most of the early leaders were white middle class, well educated, protestant, Christian and, yes, male.

Third point in the genealogy. Remember, this was an age of anxiety about gender roles, given the accomplishments of women suffragists and social reformers, a time during which fundamentalists perceived their world to be dangerously feminized, therefore, sought a reassertion of masculinity. Remember, this was also the time of the movement called muscular Christianity. Here I think we have the intersection of the patriarchal and the class, in the way that you speak of, Sherif. Now, today we have a white, middle, and upper class, well educated, protestant, Christian, male fundamentalist establishment no less anxious about gender roles.

To dip another step back deeper into the genealogy, I'm helped to recall Anne Barstow's brilliant study on witch hunts, European witch hunts. I did not want to have to remember her study in this connection, but I do. Barstow argues in her book, which she calls Witchcraze, that the European witch hunts were not the final act in an age of unenlightenment. They were the opening act in an age of discovery, which was an age of the extension of empire. I didn't want to have to remember that. Sixteenth century leaders of Western expansion, based on precedented challenges, it was an age of anxiety, it was an

age that needed witches as well as slaves, both groups of human beings no longer treated as human beings. It needed witches along with slaves to become guideposts for a confused society with colonialist ambitions. Barstow continues, "While Western men were carrying out their extraordinary conquest of much of the world, they were forcing off onto other groups the characteristics of evil. In other words, the men of power and privilege were able to do what they did to extend their sphere of influence abroad, often brutally, by sacrificing women at home during what has been called one of the most disturbed periods of human history."

Centuries later, men of power and privilege in the United States are replicating this pattern. George W. Bush, one of the upper class, well educated, if not well spoken, protestant, Christian, male fundamentalists to which I refer, seems to be directing a similar drama. Two and a half years into his presidency, it's clear that a war on women was actually the first act in a drama, the war on terrorism is the second act. Already in his first day in office, remember, the president reimposed a global gag rule. First instituted by President Ronald Reagan and then lifted by President Bill Clinton in 1993, this rule barred healthcare providers receiving American family planning assistance from counseling women about abortion, from engaging in political speech on abortion, or providing abortion services, even with their own money. Not only did this ruling cripple international family planning services and programs that worked to prevent hundreds of thousands of infant and maternal deaths worldwide each year, with this ruling the new president broadcast a chilling disdain for freedom of speech, a disdain that has been confirmed by what we have already talked about as the Patriot Act and now the draft enhanced Domestic Security Act. The war against women's right to control our bodies is on with a vengeance, and it was from day one of the Bush Administration.

That was but the opening volley. There is a now lengthening string of anti-choice executive orders, regulations, legal briefs, legislative maneuvers, key appointments that step by step undermine women's reproductive freedom and health, including measures to combat HIV AIDS. Don't be fooled by his Africa initiatives. This is, in the words of a New York Times editorial, "a steady march to the past, to a time before Roe v. Wade, when abortion was illegal and pregnancy was more a matter of fate than choice." But, make no mistake, I take issue. This is not simply a steady march into the past. This is not a throwback. This is a movement, a juggernaut. It is not reactive, but inventive. This is a very intentional creation of what I will call a bold new world and a dangerous one for women.

Now, whether Mr. Bush's step by step measures derive from his own moral and religious convictions is debatable. But the alignment of evangelical and fundamentalist Christians behind him is telling. This group of Christians overwhelmingly supported the preemptive strike in Iraq, failing to notice or ignoring its contradiction to the teachings of Jesus. And Bush's own increasing public use of a certain brand of theological discourse. Did you notice last evening? He choked up, became teary when he was quoting the Prophet Isaiah. Very telling. Seems to confirm that religious ideology is being tangled in with this imperial fundamentalism, determined to discipline and to punish those who are not with us, beginning with the war on women at home to set the stage for new foreign adventures of the American empire abroad. To set the stage for the use of whatever force it takes to

remake the world in its own image, just as the Kremlin once did through the Soviet Communist Party's Department of Ideology.

Okay, one last word. We have to create and honor spaces for dissent, for loyal dissent, in order to face honestly into the harsh realities of our time. Yes, sister Devaki, wherever you are, now I'm saying harsh realities of our time. Including the way in which women assume, and I'm coining a new phrase, if you will indulge me, the way in which women assume a literally symbolic role in this imperial fundamentalism. It's literally symbolic because it's over and in our bodies. Our sexuality, the sexual division of labor, the way we dress, the expected demeanor, ritual and social position, it is a literal symbolic role we are to play in this emerging imperial fundamentalism, aimed to secure the proper and, yes, the sacred order of things. So, we must face all of this in spaces of dissent. So also we may nurture hope in one another for anything remotely like a credible future of peace and flourishing for all sentient beings.

AHMED: Thank you, Melanie, for the very major issues you raise. Our final speaker is Yifa.

YIFA: The ordeal will be over soon. I really appreciate this conference, because you also see it's a variety. Diana really has this kind of sensibility to bring people from all traditions. We have two people from Buddhism, it's me and Dhammananda. In the last session when we talked about the Middle East conflict, sometimes I find myself, being a Buddhist, after the September 11, being a Buddhist you feel like you are kind of an outsider and hard to engage with the dialogue. And also if you look at the Buddhist population, I think the population of Buddhists in the Middle East is very low, I think. We should have more Buddhist temples there or Buddhists there, but not conquered or conquest, but engaging with the dialogue. On this session, I'd like to share with you kind of a fundamentalist view within Buddhism and also the violence within religion or in the culture in general in a wider sense. We talk about the fundamentalist view in Buddhism. Yesterday someone told me she heard from a speaker a few months ago, just came here, and she was surprised to hear that a Buddhist monk opposed Buddhist nuns for ordination, because she just assumed that Buddhism is very peaceful and very inclusive. And here is the topic. When we talk about fundamentalist view, we think that the women in Buddhism struggle is their ordination issue. And I'd like to share with you a kind of episode. This is what really happened in 1998.

I come from a monastery. I joined a Buddhist order, 1500 monks and nuns. We call it the monastics. And among these numbers, it's about 1200 nuns. So, nuns are the majority. And until I came to the United States, I just realized how lucky I am because I took everything for granted. I joined this order with women in the majority, and I had no problem, received the ordination. And then I was sent to the United States for education, and I was put in a kind of leadership, as an administrator in the university funded by the temple. But I really came to this culture to learn about the other religions, or even within Buddhism, the women's struggle with their legitimacy. And for the ordination, maybe you will find why it is important for women? In 1998, Fo Guang Shan, my temple, held ordination in India, Bodhi Gaya. Because Chinese Buddhist tradition, you have kind of a continual lineage for the women's ordination. So, that's why Chinese Buddhist traditions are legitimated, to give the ordination to the other tradition. For example, the women from Thailand or Laos or Sri

Lanka or Cambodia, those ... lineages of women or nuns are disconnected, or Tibetan Buddhism, the women from Tibetan tradition.

So, in 1998, when our temple held its ordination, there were women from South India. They walked for a week by foot, for a week, just to come here for the ordination. And one of them is over 70 years old. And one of the monks from our temple, our abbot, he is very compassionate. He said, "You know, you are in this old age, you don't have to go through this ordination training, a lot harsher for you. You don't have to become a nun." And this nun said, "If you don't let me become ordained, I will kill myself." She used suicide to threaten the abbot. The abbot said, okay, fine. And why? Why do they have to take one week and then come here? Because they say a day after their ordination, when they go back to their village, their status, social status, is different. These women, because they are women, they are low caste in their society. Sometimes they walk four miles to a river to take water and people will hit them and beat them. But she said, if I go back there as a nun, my social status is different. And this is something she struggled with for her life.

So, just to illustrate why the women are in Buddhism. Even though you shave your head, your robe, they don't consider you as the same status as a monk. And what we were doing-- You know, the temple I come from is called Humanistic Buddhism, and it emphasizes on the responsibility of being a human being. And the temple has granted ordination to women from non-Chinese tradition. Like Sri Lanka, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and includes the Tibetan tradition. For these 10 years, over 100 nuns came to receive the ordination from our tradition. And also the women from India and then Nepal or Ladakh to be educated in our temple. They become a nun and receive the education from the temple.

What we are doing with the women's ordination-- Of course, you hear lots of opposition from monks. Basically, they were saying, "Okay, you are the different tradition, you are Chinese tradition, and we are the Theravada tradition or Sri Lanka or from Thailand." And then they prohibited, they threatened the women who received this ordination. So, what we had to do is negotiate a communication with them. Basically, it's to just go ahead and give the ordination. Of course, the monks, the reason they are opposed to this one is because they say the rule is laid down by the Buddha and we cannot change it. So, what we had to do is not just deal with the action, the practice, you give the ordination but you also have to deal with the theoretical issue. Then you deal with the rules. This is something I work around right now, is to make an argument that, the rules are conditioned by the social background, by the social environment. There were two issues here. One is, the women are conditioned by so-called eight rules. This morning, Janet Gyatso asked this question: "When the women first time joined the order and there was eight rules laid down by the Buddha"-- But, you know, I will not go into the detail, but if you study very carefully in the what we call the Vinaya or the Precepts text, those rules were never considered as the ultimate or the absolute. Buddha even made exceptions to challenge the rules himself. And the Buddha, he himself also made the statement that ... whenever the monks go to another country, you had to follow the local condition.

So I think it's also a task to work on this theoretical issue, and to challenge and make an argument that the rules depend on the social condition. So we need to change the social

condition in order to change the women's social status. Also very important is the Buddha, himself. He claimed that the women can attain the enlightenment just like the men. This is also very important.

And finally, I know I maybe have just one minute ... I think the first day I was talking about, I know they want me to talk about September 11th, because I wrote a book after the September 11th, published last year about the Buddhist response to September 11th. And, you know, that situation developed so far, I feel like the only thing I want to emphasize is just like the first day when I made a statement about "the doing and doer." Right now with the situation, from Buddhist view, what I'm really concerned about the justification for killing. Sometimes we feel like victims have the right to kind of punish the other people. And so that's why sometimes when victims or abused are doing the killing, we [see that it is] so easy to find it justified. And I find after September 11th, this country so easily [went] out to start the war. It's like the abused has become the abuser, and has the excuse for the killing. But from the Buddhist view, we look at the action-- not the doer, not that because you are the victim, you then have the excuse to kill.

Even though-- and this one I'd like to say even in Buddhist teaching-- if you are Buddhist, you commit killing, it's also bad. It doesn't mean because you're Buddhist and you kill for some good thing that then you will go to Heaven. And this is what Buddhists would challenge. That's why when we talk about "Where is God when the September 11 happened?" we [Buddhists] always say that "God is in the law of cause and effect." And of course some people say, "Oh, maybe we can kill out of self-defense." And right now we talked about pre-emptive war, and from Buddha's view there was the idea about upaya: the skillful means. Before you start the war, we have to try all the means. But from this instance, the Buddhists haven't seen that the government has tried by all means to prevent the war. And so I know they were saying like, the Chinese have the "art of war." Okay. But the highest art of war is to win the war without battle. So I find that so far we haven't seen this government really understand this philosophy.

[APPLAUSE]

AHMED: Thank you all very much, all of you, for a wonderful panel. How much time do we have for questions then? So I think we'll collect two or three questions at a time and then field them.

I just would like to take the privilege of being Chair to make a comment and to raise a question. And this is really related to the kind of thing that Nawal said, which is about the "glocal." And as someone living in this community, my comment is firstly, regarding the poster that Nawal held up, when you talked about foundations giving money and they would give money if you had a poster like that, well, actually, the poster that you held up, as far as I know, was made by our students and had no donations. And I think it's important to know that. And as you have seen that are listed, I think this is very much about context. And I live here, and I'm very aware that the things that they listed-- wearing the veil, for example, on the poster-- this is a country in which people have been beaten or abused or

denied jobs because they wear a hijab. So obviously, it has different meanings locally and in different places.

And it's in that connection that I wanted to-- I may have misheard, I don't know: something in relation to what Sherif said. And one point he was speaking about fundamentalism in Egypt, and I don't know-- did I hear or did I mishear that you spoke about the veil along the lines of genital mutilation as if they were equivalent in any way?

HETATA: They're going parallel.

AHMED: Well, they're going parallel. Yeah, okay. But I think in our context it's very important to separate that the veil is not by definition oppressive in the way the genital mutation is. Or at least I don't think. Oh, I'd love to hear what you think about it.

LAILA AL-MARAYATI: I have a-- it's a comment. But we can see if people have an opinion about it. What's very interesting in Melanie's points about this administration and the direction they're moving forward that's being perceived as backwards as far as women's rights. Yet at the same time, George Bush has taken credit for liberating the women of Afghanistan from a horrible repressive extremist regime. And now they're talking about protecting Iraqi women from what could become, in following up on that whole Shi'ah story, something that will take them down the same path: that even though Saddam Hussein was so horrible, well, at least he was secular and the women had rights. Although when you speak to Iraqi women, I mean, that's sort of a fantasy picture that was painted that really oversimplifies it.

So I think that it's been very interesting that on the one hand, he can make sacrifices in women's rights, but on the other hand, take credit for promoting women's rights somewhere else. So it's obviously politically expedient and at the same time it's very painful, because the women of Afghanistan needed to be liberated a long time ago and there was as huge movement or an attempt to try to bring their issue to light for the five years that the Taliban was in place, and nobody listened. And it's almost as if by Bush saying that, it's that the women of Afghanistan should have been grateful that 9/11 happened because we never would have gone in there if we hadn't been attacked. And so there's all these other ways of looking at this issue, of course, never discussed in that context. It's very superficial. But thank you for bringing that up. So that's just one comment.

SHARIFA ALKHATEEB: I agree with both Nawal and Sherif that the introduction and the encouragement for fundamentalisms as they exist in most of the Middle East are encouraged, in fact, by super-powers. And I think they do destroy the society and make us lean toward violence and misery in a society and a continuing cycle of violence. And I wanted to know what your thoughts are, both of you, on how we can break that cycle of violence instead of how can we societally and economically and psychologically reject the incitement to fundamentalism? And I don't, by the way, consider, you know, doing the basics of Islam as fundamentalism, while many people in our government here do: like if you just pray and fast, you're a fundamentalist. Well, I don't agree with that at all.

But fundamentalists who are close-minded and don't want to hear anything anyone else has to say, and want to force their way of thinking on everyone else, that's what I consider a fundamentalist, and I think that in fact, it is encouraged by those who are powerful. And I wanted to know your thoughts on how can we remove that cycle of violence. And I have a question for Yifa. If you don't call to account the perpetrators of violence and you just quietly and peacefully think about it, how will you ever achieve justice?

DIANA ECK: I had a question that sort of uses one of those phrases you used as well, Sharifa: "the cycle of violence." And thinking about the ways in which various -- what are often described as idealistic traditions, peacemaking traditions -- speak about nonviolence and war and peacemaking, and question this idea of what it really means to win anything. I mean, we're in the United States in this very odd position now of having had some sort of "winning" declared, but recognizing that there is, in some ways, a convergence of what some would call realpolitik and the most wild-eyed idealism, at least to me, which is that violence really does sow violence.

That the kind of war making that we have engaged in or that we have seen engaged on both sides in many, many conflicts, does feed upon itself: the sort of sowing of dragon's teeth, that we will not have any idea until we think about the next few decades, what has been sown in the wars that we have conducted in Afghanistan and in Iraq, no matter how justified we -- "we" I say advisedly, in the United States -- might have thought they are. Because they do create more and more and more enemies. I mean, trying to think about a way beyond this that is realistic, because I think the realism is more in the kind of insight that the Buddhist tradition has that, you know, the more-- whatever that first line of the Dhammapada is-- that the more you sow hatred, the more of it you will reap. And that is really not a possibility for the future, unless that is what we envision. So it does seem to me to be realism and not idealism. But I could stand corrected on this.

AHMED: We have two more questions, and then we go to the panel.

SHULAMITH KOENIG: Veena, you finished with a very powerful statement, saying "Can this kind of hatred be allowed to survive?" And I would ask you, how do you take into consideration fear, the issue of fear? The other thing is, earlier you speak about justice. And our friend Melanie spoke about mentioned patriarchy. We have to really understand that patriarchy is a place where justice is injustice, and where people exchange their equality for survival. So speaking of a new language of justice, I would offer to you to speak of human rights, which can give it a new language, which brings me to the female genital mutilation, where we don't call it mutilation in our work in Senegal and in Mali. We call it female genital cutting. And in Senegal, 1,500 villages stopped the cutting because they have learned human rights. So if we speak of reality, Diana, maybe the new reality we should speak about could be drawn from human rights.

And last but not least, I wonder why you didn't mention the witch trials in the United States, which I believe that since the witch trials in the United States, the fundamental core of white protestant men didn't change. Thank you.

AHMED: Last comment, please, briefly.

AZZA KARAM: Two comments, very, very briefly. First of all, I would like to pick up on Leila's point to Dr. Hetata. The idea that you could put on a par veiling with female genital mutilation is somewhat disturbing to me. Also, the idea that somehow there's only these two ways that women are active in Egypt is at best a gross simplification of the different forms of activism that women are engaged in and have been engaged in, and are not waiting for guidance to be engaged in.

Last comment to Melanie. I very much enjoyed your presentation. I wanted to know, where would you situate those who-- the Baptists or the Protestant fundamentalist movement doesn't just have men in it-- where would you situate, and how would you analyze, the women who are also active in the name of that movement? Thank you.

AHMED: Wonderful questions... you can start from here.

YIFA: ... There was a good question someone asked me. Chris Queen, he asked me, "You know, the Buddhists emphasize so much no killing. Then everyone goes to become a policeman and goes to become a soldier, and lets the Christians do it. And the Buddhists just sit there." I said, "Well, I think to become a soldier or become a policeman, it's out of a personal choice. And then, I think the Buddhist if out of choice because you go there, you kill, the difference is, for a Buddhist, you also need to be aware, this is a killing. It's no good. The action, the killing action, is no good, when you have to resort [to it]. So that means that even for the killing, you have to face the retribution. This is very interesting in the Buddhist text. You know, the Buddha, before he attained the enlightenment, many previous lives, he did kill one person-- to save 99 merchants.

And of course, the Buddha also was aware, even after he attained enlightenment, sometimes he had a headache, sometimes he suffered, and he said, "It's all the retribution from the past karma." So that means that for the enlightened ones we're not able to avoid what we've called the law of cause and effect. And it's very important: we need to distinguish [between] the punishment and the justice. Right now we are looking for the justice. How much we are just looking for, indeed, just punishment? And so the whole environment we live in right now, indeed, is just, it's the function of the justice, the function of the law and cause and effect. And what I want to mention is about also there was a concept about suffering and illusion and bad action or bad karma, and [that it] brings more suffering. So this is when we talk about vicious cycle. And it's not that we don't have to do anything, but we have to do the right things. So when we have the suffering, we have to work on this illusion and find out what is the real cause of the event, and not to get into the vicious circle. So this is the part we need to work on, is to break the cycle by more wisdom.

[Applause]

AHMED: Thank you. Melanie?

MAY: Just very quickly, in response to Laila's comment: it's political expedience. We helped create the Taliban, from which we then liberated women. And Bush could use that to great political advantage, partly to mask realities at home. So when you start untangling, as you did so well, you're quite right. And, you know, just as we once—there are these wonderful old pictures of Rummy, Rumsfeld, over talking with Saddam Hussein, his great buddy. And now we have made an alliance which some people are calling extraordinary, with one of the very marginal, extremist groups that Saddam used for his own purposes with the Kurds. Well, now we're going to use them for our own purposes. So this is political expedience, and all under the rhetoric of liberal democracy. But you're right that I covered a lot in a big hurry, and there's much more to unpack.

Second, Diana's comment about realism: yes, I think you're right. I think when I mentioned at the outset that I grew up in a pacifist tradition, I would say I grew up an idealist, a pacifist. And I find that position, like I find all of the traditional Christian responses to violence, no longer credible. I mean, the project I'm doing when I have time, being a Dean, is rethinking a credible Christian response to war and peace. I find none of the traditions we've inherited credible because each of them has embedded in it an idealism which is an ideology, which is a pretended innocence. And we simply cannot begin there. We must begin with reality. So you heard me rightly.

Yes, Shulamith, I should have put in the witch trials. I just-- it's part of the genealogy. You couldn't be more right. And hopefully, when I have time, they'll find their place. Women in Fundamentalism—I'm out of time, right? No, I'm joking because I don't want to address it. [Laughter.] There are lots and lots of studies that have been done. The only way that I can begin to understand it is-- and who addressed this question? Azza. Just very quickly-- is there are women who choose to survive by making their place within the patriarchy and who abdicate the struggle. And I don't know how to respond.

AHMED: Can I just come in myself in response to Laila's question? In fact, one of the amazing things in the last few months is watching not only the replay of colonialism, but the replay of exactly the game that was played out 100 years ago. And that is exactly the tactic they used in England in the Imperial-- They oppressed women, they fought the women's rights movement within the country and claimed to be liberating brown women from brown men abroad. And that's exactly how it works, and that's what they're doing now. In fact, I think the claim to be liberating Afghan women was very much to cover up what they were doing to women at home, and it's been used over and over throughout colonialism.

DAS: There are two questions. One, I think-- although this was not addressed to me, I would still like to respond to it. So there were two questions I thought I might address. One, I think, is this question about if you let perpetrators of violence go, where is justice? And I just want to say that whenever you work in a situation where violence becomes long-term, where, in fact, it's constantly embedded, it becomes very hard to actually distinguish the perpetrators from the victims. So the typical thing that I think of-- and I'm really haunted by this-- is the entire question of child soldiers in Sierra Leone in which even parents were bringing out accusations against their children as witches. Instead of concentrating on the

moment of killing, if one were to say what kind of ways do these actually get completely embedded in each other ... I did FIRs-- that is, First Information Reports, and I made presentations in the Supreme Court against particular persons in the communal riots in 1984, but I knew all the time, also, that the worst offenders were the ones who could make the evidence disappear.

So, in fact, they were the ones who could get away with it, because they didn't have to be there to actually do the killing. So I think we need to think very carefully on this entire set of questions.

Shula, I thank you for the question on fear, because I mean, there are two things I just want to say in response, and very quickly. One, that it's amazing to me how much simulated fear is actually created. So that in the context of India-- I didn't have time to go through this, but this entire notion that Hindus are now discovering their masculinity-- because they've always been emasculated by Muslims, and there are stories of that; I mean, Pakistan Radio would sort of broadcast things like saying they are the meat eaters and the Hindus are the ones who just eat papad and vadais, you know, vegetarian sorts of stuff, so how could they ever stand up to them... And this is very dangerous, because it's completely simulated in many kinds of ways. And I think we need to watch that very, very carefully.

And the second point: I think it's not that there's no fear. But I often sort of tend to tell myself that what's the maximum that could be taken from me-- my life. Right? And, you know, it's important, but it's not that important for me to be sort of so fearful that I can't actually act. And I think that's something interesting to think about.

AHMED: Thank you very much, Veena. Sherif?

HETATA: I'd like to add something very small about fear. Because, you know, fear is like anything else. It's like putting your feet in the water, and then learning to swim. I mean, you overcome fear by doing things, by action. Then what looks terrible at one moment looks easy at the next, and it's a process. And it goes on and on and on, and you do feel fear, but you are able to overcome it. And that's the only way. There's no theoretical way of overcoming fear.

I wanted to say about Sharifa, who asked me "How do you deal with the fundamentalists in Egypt?"-- that was your question?

ALKHATEEB: "How can you stop this cycle of violence?"

HETATA: What I want to say-- and I don't know whether this applies to you here or not-- but in our country, neither the government, which is allied to the United States and to this global system, nor the fundamentalists, which to my mind are allied to the system in a different way, have anything substantial to offer to people-- whether it's related to housing, to health, to economic reform or changes, to political changes, to democracy, all these. They avoid these issues completely. The government talks about them and doesn't do anything, and the fundamentalists absolutely refuse to be drawn onto this ground. And the problem

is that the fundamentalists and the religious parties in our country have succeeded in drawing people onto their religious ground so that people -- instead of talking about how to reform the health system, how to change education, how to give people proper housing and things like that -- are now busy discussing whether women should be veiled or not, and so on and so forth. So that's the only way.

And now as regards veiling and female genital mutilation, of course, I don't think that you can put both of them on the same level. But nevertheless, they're related. I'll give you an example. When I was in medical college, there was not a single veiled woman. The veiling began when these political Islamic movements grew. And what does this veiling mean? Of course, there are some women who put on veils because they can't go to the hairdresser because they're poor, so they cover their hair. And some women put on veils because they don't want to be aggressed by young boys in the streets who talk to them. You know, boys, when they see a veiled woman, they keep away from her a little. And some of them, because their peers are veiled, and so they veil like them. And some of them, because they belong to the fundamentalist movement. But on the whole, veiling has become a declaration of something: which is that you consider yourself a body and not a mind. Because why do you cover your heads?

Q: ...(inaudible)
[simultaneous conversation]

AHMED: We have students in the audience who are ready to argue with you, but they can argue later. Thank you, Sherif.

EL SAADAWI: What's the difference when you cover your head by a hat? What's the difference between covering your head by a hat and covering your head by a veil? If I cover my head by a hat to protect myself from the sun or rain, I understand that, because it has a function. But to cover my head as a religious identity, that's dangerous, because it's a political symbol. It became a political symbol. And there is relationship between veiling and cutting the clitoris. It's not only that. There is a package which patriarchy-- women are oppressed by a package of measures by patriarchy. Veiling is something that-- Because some people say "Why, Nawal, are you against the veil?" They think it's so simple. It's not that simple... A girl was killed in Egypt by her parents because she took off the veil in a summer day-- she was hot, it was hot. And the girl took off the veil, so her parents killed her. So it's a matter of life and death. Okay. So there's a package of patriarchy that oppresses veiling, cutting the clitoris. Why cutting the clitoris, why veiling, seclusion of women, unpaid work?

The family codes, being the husband or guardians, etc., there is a package. And this is very much related to patriarchy, to one husband, monotheism, to know the father. If I marry two husbands, then fatherhood will not be known; patriarchy would collapse. If I am veiled, nobody will look at me, so no man will have sex with me, so my husband will be sure of his children, etc., etc. It's that whole package.

And the other thing-- give me just half a minute-- the other thing is I would like to respond to Diana. You know, peace without justice has no meaning. And also, justice without power, you cannot have justice without power. But what power? The power of the people. The US uses military power, but we use the power of the people, of our unity. So there must be power.

The other thing is, last thing about makeup: I am very much against it. It's a veil. I call it post-modern veil. [Laughter.] It's exactly like the veil, but it is different. Okay, thank you very much. [Laughter.]

[APPLAUSE]

ECK: Before you all get up, I'd like to thank Leila Ahmed for this remarkable panel. [Applause] Of course, we wanted to hear Leila on one of these panels, and at some point she said, "Oh, no, no, no;" she was very deferential toward all who were coming. But we will hear Leila's voice, as we have in previous sessions. For those of you who are participants in this conference, we have a dinner over at Rockefeller Hall-- and there are many of you who are guests tonight, as well, and we're happy to have you.

END OF PANEL